



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 13, 2026

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Sikh Heritage Month and Turban Day

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): I rise today to recognize and celebrate Sikh Heritage Month and Vaisakhi in Manitoba.

Mr. Diljeet Brar, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Manitoba is a beautifully diverse province, home to people of many different cultural backgrounds and faiths. The Sikh community is one of these dynamic, active and engaged communities which has enriched all of Manitoba for generations.

Historically, the Sikh community recognizes April as a significant month for their faith. It features the celebration of Vaisakhi and Khalsa Day, commemorating the birth of the Khalsa. These observances

honour the core principles: equality, selfless service and social justice—values that resonate deeply with all Canadians.

Since 2022, Manitoba has also commemorated Turban Day on April 13 as part of Sikh Heritage Month. The turban remains an important outward expression of Sikh faith and identity.

I am honoured to recognize my friend and colleague, the MLA for Burrows, the province's first turbaned MLA, to sit in this esteemed chair—Chamber, and the MLA who introduced this legislation.

For over 100 years, Sikhs have called Manitoba home. They served in the Canadian army during World War I, at a time when they could—would not have been offered citizenship due to their Sikh identity.

In the succeeding years, generations of Sikh Manitobans have continued to embody the core commitment to seva or service, creating businesses, working in education, health care, manufacturing and other industries, all while raising families and building strong connections in communities all across Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, cultural diversity is a driving force of development and progress, not only with respect to innovation and economic growth, but also as a means of leading a more fulfilling intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual life.

In Manitoba, we are fortunate that we can build meaningful connections with people from diverse cultures and faiths, celebrating that we are really one Manitoba.

By celebrating April as Sikh Heritage Month in Manitoba, we bring attention to the diverse history of our province, the contributions of all those who steered its development and why the values of service, equality, fairness and justice are intrinsically important to our identity and progress.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I rise today to celebrate Sikh Heritage Month, as well as recognize the 4th annual Turban Day here in Manitoba.

Sikh heritage is a living, growing story in Manitoba. Every year, we see more Sikh Manitobans starting businesses, becoming teachers, working in

health care and doing seva in our communities. Over time, there is more to be proud of, more progress made and more stories to share.

Today in the eastern hemisphere and tomorrow in Canada, Sikhs and Pujabis [*phonetic*] will be celebrating Vaisakhi. It was on this day in 1699 that the practice of wearing the turban was formalized as a pillar of the Sikh faith and a symbol of protecting the innocent from religious persecution.

Centuries onward, we see this same value of courage and strength live in this Sikh diaspora here in Manitoba. We've seen through organizations like Khalsa Aid that Sikh community will go above and beyond to help Manitobans and people across the world in their greatest time of need.

Staying true to the warrior spirit, Sikhs have also dedicated a century of service in our Canadian military. We now know of at least two Sikhs from Winnipeg who answered the call of duty during World War I. We thank them for their sacrifice and we thank all Sikh Manitobans who've contributed to the collective prosperity of our great province here in Manitoba.

I encourage all Manitobans to take part in Sikh Heritage Month activities throughout April and learn more about Sikh history and traditions.

Thank you, and happy Vasika [*phonetic*]-Vaisakhi-sorry.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mia Danyluk

MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo): Honourable Speaker, today it is my absolute honour to recognize an outstanding young leader from Tuxedo: Mia Danyluk.

Mia is a 2026 recipient of the prestigious Vimy Pilgrimage Award, an honour given to just 20 youth across Canada. This award recognizes academic excellence, a deep commitment to history and a dedication to honouring those who served in the First World War. Through this opportunity, Mia travelled to France and Belgium to study historic sites and help ensure the stories of our veterans are never forgotten.

This award highlights how remarkable Mia is. Her leadership abilities and commitment to serve others is impressive. She is actively involved in her school and community, supports her peers and helps create inclusive and welcoming spaces. She demonstrates maturity, compassion and a strong sense of responsibility well beyond her years.

* (13:40)

Following her Vimy pilgrimage, Mia shared that she returned home with a deeper appreciation for—of the sacrifices made by Canadians who served and those who lost their lives. She described the experience as life-changing and strengthening her commitment to remembrance and to promoting peace for future generations.

Honourable Speaker, Mia represents the very best of our next generation. She shows us that leadership is not defined by age, but by character, curiosity and a willingness to serve others. I know she will continue to do great things; this is only the beginning.

So please join me in congratulating Mia Danyluk on this incredible achievement and in wishing her continued success.

Thank you.

Health Care in Manitoba

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I recently attended the unveiling of former premier Brian Pallister's portrait here in the Legislature. It was a moment to reflect on leadership and on foresight.

Premier Pallister understood that Manitoba needed serious infrastructure investment. He knew communities like Portage la Prairie and Neepawa had long outgrown their facilities and he acted, moving forward with new hospitals and major upgrades across the province.

He also knew if these projects were not started before the government left office, they might never get done under the NDP. With some facilities, like the one in Portage la Prairie, already far exceeding its lifespan, he knew further delay would only make things worse. And now, Manitobans are seeing just that.

The NDP likes to complain about the actions of the former PC government, and yet it is only because of the leadership of Premier Pallister that we have new and improved facilities for staff and patients.

Make no mistakes: this facility is 100 per cent complete and staff are trained and ready to go—the same staff who are hanging on by a thread, trying to care for patients in hazardous conditions and now being forced to work in an unsafe building for another six months.

While the NDP points fingers at the past, their record over the past two and a half years has only made health care continually worse.

Without the actions of Premier Pallister, we would be facing an even deeper crisis today. That is the difference that leadership makes.

Thank you, honourable deputy Speaker.

Dauphin General Hospital 125th Anniversary

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): I rise today to recognize a remarkable milestone in the Parkland region: the 125th anniversary of the Dauphin General Hospital.

Since its beginning in 1900, when care was first provided by Dr. Bottomley—home during a typhoid epidemic, the hospital has stood as a pillar of compassion and service.

By 1901, the formal charter place, Dauphin General Hospital, opens its doors and began a legacy of care that continues to this day.

Over the past 125 years, the hospital has grown alongside the community it serves, from the modest facility treating just over 200 patients in the early years to a modern health-care centre providing essential services.

Expansions in 1928, 1935 and the redevelopment in 1985, along with investments in the diagnostic services, emergency care and specialized units, reflect a strong commitment in the meeting of the region's needs.

A major milestone in this journey came in 1999, when the installation of the hospital's CT scanner enhanced the diagnostic care for the region.

The Speaker in the Chair

Over the past three decades, key developments have included the addition of the Dauphin Personal Care Home, the community health building and expanding of the Dauphin health services.

This special anniversary celebrates not only infrastructure, but the dedicated health-care professionals, staff, volunteers and community members who care and have shaped the generations.

I also acknowledge local historian Al Gray, whose research put—helps preserve the hospital's history.

Reflecting on 125 years of care, we look ahead in confidence, knowing Dauphin Regional Health Centre will remain a cornerstone of health and well-being for the Parkland region.

Thank you.

Power of the Purse

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I'm honoured to rise today to speak about an event I attended on Saturday that truly captures the spirit of our community: Power of the Purse.

Held annually in Morden, this event is more than just a fundraiser; it's a celebration of women coming together to uplift each other and create lasting change in the lives of women and children in our region.

We were all encouraged to wear black and pink to the event to symbolize solidarity and support of what we were doing that day. It was inspiring to be in a room filled with such incredible women, all contributing to their—in their own way to bettering our community.

At Power of the Purse, each woman designates \$100 to one or more of three organizations being supported at the brunch that day. This generosity is a testament to the power of—that we hold as women when we unite for a common cause.

This year, the funds raised will support three amazing organizations: Genesis House, which will be using the donations to create a beautiful backyard space for women at the shelter; the Discovery Trails school parent advisory, which is raising funds for a play structure for children; and the care and share school lunch program, ensuring that more children have access to 'nutritious'—nutritious meals at school.

The generosity, compassion and dedication on display at the brunch on Saturday were humbling. The women who attended the Power of the Purse are not only raising money; they are raising hopes, voices and ensuring that no one in need is forgotten.

On behalf of all those women impacted, I want to express my deepest gratitude to each one of them that were there that day: to the sponsors, the volunteers and everyone in attendance who makes this event possible. Together, we are building a community where women and children are supported, celebrated and empowered.

Thank you to the Morden foundation for hosting this event and for all that you do for our community. I ask my colleagues in the Chamber to rise in thanking those that are joining us online today.

Turban Day

Punjabi spoken

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Maanyog Speaker Sahib, Sikh bhaichaarey wastey dastar kewal sadey pehrawey da hissa Nahin, sagon ih brabri, azadi atey dharmik vishwas da chin hai—ik aisa taaj jo asin maan naal atey zimmewari naal pehndey haan.

Mere wallon pesh keetay turban day bill nu paas karn uprant 13 Aprail nu adhikarit dastar diharey vajon ailan ke Manitoba vidhan sabha ne sadey mulk andar vakhra naa kamaia hai. Is vidhan sabha andar pehle dastardhari MLA vajon main is mahattavpooran sanmaan wastey samuchey Manitoba da teh dilon shukar guzar haan.

Sadey maan mattey dastardhari Manitoba vaasi jithey sadey samaj di behtri layi bahumulla yogdan paonde ne othey kaian nu nitt din nasli nafrat da sahmna vi karna painda hai.

Haaley langhe haftey hi mere staff ne jad dastar diharey da poster social media te sanjha keeta tan pehle comment vich kisey ne ek lachechar Ishara kar ditta. Edan hi kisey nasalwadi ne mere bete di ik video clip Bharti mool de Canadian lokan khilaaf apni nafraati bharaas kadhan lai varti haalan ki os video vich mera beta Jets di game de mauke fakhar naal apni peshkari kar riha si.

Par asin aise naah pakhi vateerian di challan Nahin denii, jo sanu thidkaun di koshish vich ne. Asin nafrat de izhar virudh awaaz chukde rahangey tan jo aapan ral ke ik sarab sanjha samaaj sirjan lai vachan badh rahiey.

Asin bhaant subhantey bhaichareyan vichaley saanjh dian tandan bunnndey rahangey atey sacai atey sulah-safai di bhawna nu parnaia ikk ahla samaaj sirjan de anthakk jatan karde rahangey.

Iss layi main atey mere sehkarmi Rotunda vikhey ajj shaam 5 vajey chauthey dastar diharey de Sarkari smagamdi peshkari di garv lai rahey haan jis da theme hai sabhyachar saanjh bhiali duara meil jol di mur sathapti.

Mein iss smagam layi tuhanu dilis adda dinda haan atey naal hi ih guzarish karda haan ki asin sarey bauh bhanti sabhyacharak pehrawey pehn ke shaamil hoiye, te apne siran dastar sajaun da Anubhav laiye atey ral-mil Jashan manaiye.

Dastar Dihara Mubarak.

Visakhi Mubarak.

Khalsa Saajna Diwas Diyan Vadhaiyan.

Translation

Honourable Speaker, the turban for the Sikh community is not just a dress. It is rather a symbol of equality, sovereignty, and faith—a crown we wear with pride and responsibility.

The Manitoba Legislature stands uniquely in our country, having officially recognized April 13 as Turban Day through the passing of my bill—The Turban Day Act. As the first turbaned MLA to sit in this Legislature, I extend my deepest gratitude to Manitoba for this meaningful recognition.

While Turbaned Manitobans contribute immensely to our society, many continue to face racism in their daily lives.

Just last week, my staff shared a Turban Day poster on social media. The very first comment was a middle finger emoji. In another instance, a racist individual misused a video clip of my son to spread hateful rhetoric targeting Canadians of Indian origin—where he was proudly performing at a Jets game.

But we will not allow such negativity to distract us from our goals. We will continue to call out hate and remain committed to build a stronger, more inclusive society.

We will keep building bridges among diverse communities and continue fostering a society grounded in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

That is why my colleagues and I are proud to host the 4th Official Turban Day, under the theme: Reconciliation through Cultural Collaboration in the Rotunda at 5 p.m. today.

I invite and encourage you all to wear attires reflecting diverse cultures, experience a turban on you and celebrate together.

Happy Turban Day.

Happy Vaisakhi.

Happy Khalsa Saajna Diwas.

** (13:50)*

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before moving on, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Mehak Khosa, Gurjaspal Bala, Raymond Melnyk, Philius McKenzie, Patricia Martinez, Rahul Singh, Pranboor [phonetic] Singh, Mangal Singh Brar, Amarjeet Kaur, who are guests of the honourable member for Burrows.

And on behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

I would also like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Mia Danyluk; Theresa Vandean; David Danyluk; Maximilian Danyluk; Cathy Danyluk; Wayne Maston [*phonetic*]; David Danyluk, Sr.; Sheila Anderson; Lieutenant Susan Chadwick, Commanding Officer, 49 Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps JT Cornwall, VC; Lieutenant Lorne Palmquist, Civilian Officer, 49 Royal Canadian Sea Cadet Corps, JT Cornwall, VC; Lieutenant JP Ruiz, Regional Training Officer, Regional Cadet Support Unit-Northwest, Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers Group, Vice Chief of Defence Staff, Canadian Armed Forces, who are guests of the honourable member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton).

And we welcome you all here today.

And now I would draw all honourable members' attention to the public gallery where we have seated, from Henry G. Izatt Middle School, 75 Grade 6 students under the direction of Michelle Menzies. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan).

And we welcome you all here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Economic Growth for Manitoba Concern for Energy and Resource Sector

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, it's unfortunate, but life just keeps getting more expensive under this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and his failed NDP government.

And it's because our economy is one of the weakest now in Canada, with a meagre 1.1 GDP growth. In Alberta and Saskatchewan we see booming economies, while under this Premier we see businesses, jobs and investment dollars fleeing the province. A strong economy is essential to an affordable cost of living for families.

When will this Premier get serious about growing Manitoba's economy?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, first I want to acknowledge our wonderful colleague for the Burrows for making history today in the Chamber with that member's statement. That is really wonderful. He sets such a wonderful example for Manitobans.

And there's a number of students in the gallery here today. I know that we are not to interact with them, but I hope that they see, you know, the

representation and the history being made. I hope that they see themselves reflected in this Chamber, that there are jobs in our communities for them as elected officials that they can aspire to and step into in their futures.

I will answer the member opposite's question. I wish he wouldn't be so pessimistic. I'm going to share some great news in my response next.

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

Mr. Narth: Well, Honourable Speaker, we welcome good economic news and it's because we should have. Manitoba shares many of the same benefits as our neighbours. We are rich in resources and critical minerals: nickel, lithium, copper—energy resources that are essential for building a modern economy. And we have it all here in Manitoba. We have what the world wants.

Unfortunately, we also have this Premier who wants to leave those minerals in the same place as we can find his economic numbers, and that's in the ground. Critical minerals are essential to economic growth. We need growth to have affordability.

Why won't this Premier let Manitobans grow our economy rather than leave Manitobans struggling—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I don't know if that member opposite has already forgotten about the gold mine our government has made sure is creating great jobs in this province and delivering.

Honourable Speaker, our government, our province is leading the country in creating jobs. Job growth here in Manitoba is outpacing the rest of Canada. Couple that with the fact that our Finance Minister—who also happens to be the best finance minister in all of Canada—has brought forward a budget that has countless ways for Manitobans to save, improving the lives of Manitobans around affordability.

We know that there's much more work to do, but it's important for us to acknowledge the good work that's been done and how much there would be to lose under a failed—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, we sure haven't forgotten about the gold mine because it's us, the PCs,

who started the development on it. And we have many more resources.

But under this Premier (Mr. Kinew), unfortunately, we're falling further and further behind. In just one year, we've dropped from six—under the PCs—to 26. And then, guess what? This year, big announcement: another 10 spots in the attractiveness for critical mineral exploration.

And why? Because under this government, it takes far too long to open a new mine or develop resource projects because of their lengthy, confusing and 'duplicicious' approvals process.

Other provinces are responsibly—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I'm really glad that that member acknowledged that it's our government that's got that gold mine going here in Manitoba, digging up that gold—digging up that gold here in Manitoba.

Manitoba, in March: the strongest growth in jobs and employment across all of Canada, Honourable Speaker. Our labour force increased by almost 11,000 Manitobans. That is something to be proud of. We are paving the way for generations of Manitobans to have great jobs right here at home.

And when you go to those job sites, what do you see? You don't see cars with Alberta or Saskatchewan licence plates, or maybe even Ontario. Guess what, Honourable Speaker? Thanks to our government, Manitoba job plates, Manitoba—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a new question.

Major Projects—Permitting Delays Impact on Business Investment

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, one of the biggest barriers to investment in Manitoba is the lack of a co-ordinated permitting system. Right now, proponents must navigate multiple departments, overlapping approvals and no clear timelines.

Why has this government failed to implement a single co-ordinated permitting system for our major projects?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, I want to take a moment to shout out our incredible minister who's responsible for business,

mining, jobs—trades, job creation here. He's doing a phenomenal job—some might say the best minister in all of Canada in terms of building our economy—and he just announced \$2.5 million for mineral development here in our province.

We are investing in making sure that we are responsibly getting those minerals out of the ground, making the most of our economy here in Manitoba. And the job growth numbers tell that story plainly. We are leading Canada; we are paving a path forward for generations of Manitobans that they can be proud of. None of that happened for two terms of the failed PCs.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Narth: Honourable Speaker, that's really hard to believe because, according to the Fraser Institute Annual Survey of Mining Companies, firms operating in Manitoba report losing an entire construction season—or many construction seasons—due to the permitting delays and describe the process as inconsistent and unpredictable.

The Alamos Gold project in Lynn Lake was approved and advanced under our PC government. That's proof that projects can move forward when government works with industry. Since then, unfortunately, progress has stalled and investor confidence has dropped.

* (14:00)

Why is this government allowing a broken approval system to drive investment outside of our province?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, nobody believes that MLA. And do you want to know why? It's because nobody can believe the Leader of the Opposition on anything he says. That is—been proven time and time and time again. So, no; nobody believes what that MLA has to say.

And, in fact, the labour force survey, which was just released on Friday for March, makes explicitly clear in black and white with graphs; there's tables in here; it's even in colour. I encourage him to look at it. Manitoba is leading the country. We are doing a phenomenal job. We're investing in creating great jobs and a stronger economy. Never happened for seven and a half years under the failed PCs. We're doing that work for Manitobans.

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

Mr. Narth: Well, Honourable Speaker, while Manitoba is falling behind in global rankings, once again, our neighbours are ranked amongst the top. Ontario is now ranked among the top mining jurisdictions in the world and is actively cutting approval timelines through a one-project, one-process approach. That's attracting global investment while here, in Manitoba, projects are stalled.

Why is this government driving investment and jobs in communities like Flin Flon, Lynn Lake and Snow Lake out of our province instead of bringing them here?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I'll table the document for the member opposite because I'm pretty confident he hasn't bothered to read it. The data is here in black and white. Manitoba's leading the country in job creation. We are training folks in the trades. We are training folks in this province to numbers we'd never seen before to make sure that our workforce is as strong as it can possibly be. That is work that didn't happen for seven and a half years.

But the most important question here for Manitobans is who can you trust? It's not the failed PCs, Honourable Speaker; Manitobans have made that clear. It's our government that works for Manitobans each and every day. We'll take no lessons from that member or any member on that side of the House.

Income, Property and Sales Taxes Manitoba's Ranking Among Provinces

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): The numbers are in: The latest 2026 inter-city tax comparison shows that a Manitoba family earning \$75,000 is paying nearly double in taxes compared to what families pay in Saskatchewan and British Columbia and three times higher than what families are paying in Alberta. Alberta has no provincial sales tax. Saskatchewan is increasing their basic personal exemption to \$65,000 and BC have increased tax rebates.

Yet the NDP have ended indexation, failed to increase the basic personal amount and skyrocketed education property taxes by 20 per cent since just last year.

Why is this NDP making Manitoba one of the most expensive provinces for families to live in, west of the Maritimes?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Acting Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, I'm happy to say that we've got the strongest budget in the country. That's a record

that we're very proud of. That not only delivers on our effective budgeting skills, something Manitobans haven't seen under two terms of the former failed government, but at the same time, well, what have we done?

We've delivered with some real affordability for Manitobans by taking the PST off of all groceries in the stores. That continues on our track record of hydro freezes, of cutting a permanent cut to the gas tax, of delivering real affordability to Manitobans' homes, both renters and property owners.

This is real affordability that Manitobans can count on. They can't trust the PCs—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Midland, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Stone: Manitobans are well aware that this NDP government is picking and choosing winners and losers within their budget. Manitoba remains one of the most highly taxed provinces in the country for families.

In fact, a family earning \$75,000 in Winnipeg faces higher provincial income taxes than Regina, Calgary, Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal. A family in Vancouver is paying \$1,500 in provincial income taxes. A family in Toronto is paying less than a thousand dollars and a family in Calgary is paying \$1,700. Yet, in Winnipeg they're paying almost \$3,500 in provincial income taxes.

Why is this government choosing higher income taxes when Manitoba families are struggling the most?

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, look at the track record on taxes. We suggested and brought in a permanent cut to the gas tax. What did members opposite do? They voted against it.

We brought in taxes to reduce the amount you pay on your property. What did members opposite do? They voted against it. And just on Thursday, we had the vote to cut PST off of all groceries, and members opposite voted against it. That's their record on taxes. They want higher taxes on Manitobans. We want to deliver affordability and we'll keep doing it every day.

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

Mrs. Stone: Let's talk about that track record, Honourable Speaker, when the PCs reduced the PST after his former boss increased it to 8 per cent. What else did the PCs do? We increased and almost doubled the

basic personal exemption during the seven years—
[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stone: —in office.

What has this NDP government done? They haven't increased the BPA. They ended indexation of income taxes thus pursuing—pushing more Manitobans into a higher tax bracket. All the while, Manitoba remains one of the highest taxed provinces in the entire country.

Why is this NDP choosing to pay—take more from Manitoba's paycheques every single month rather than supporting our plan to increase the BPA to \$30,000?

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, if she talks about former bosses, she's talking about her former boss and Pallister who fired hundreds of nurses. Is she talking about her former boss Stefanson who tried to fire hundreds of school trustees and getting rid of the school boards?

Well, I'll tell you what we're doing: We're hiring more Manitobans to work right here in Manitoba. Manitoba jobs agreement does that. We show our proof in the pudding by 11,000 new jobs just last month right here in Manitoba. That's our track record on building a strong economy for all Manitobans.

Portage Regional Health Centre New Opening Date

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Last week, staff at the Portage district general hospital were informed that the opening day to the new hospital would be pushed back until April of next year. No explanation was given, no transparency with the public. The new facility is 100 per cent complete and staff are ready and eager and are being trained to move in.

Can the minister explain why they made this disappointing and very harmful decision?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, that member made a statement in this House today saying that Brian Pallister's decisions on health care were a good thing.

Honourable Speaker, Brian Pallister is the same person who closed our largest emergency rooms. Brian Pallister is the same person who fired hundreds of nurses. Brian Pallister is the same person who wouldn't allow health-care workers on the front lines, including during a pandemic, get a pay raise.
[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: And they can heckle me and shout at me all they want. Their record on health care is disgusting; it is shameful. And using Brian Pallister as an example of what to do in health care is a disgrace.

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

MLA Bereza: The existing Portage district general hospital has served the area well, but there are serious concerns about health and safety in the building. I know the minister is aware of this because staff raised it during the so-called listening tour. Dedicated health-care staff have been holding on by a thread—
[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Bereza: —doing all they can to ensure patient safety.

So why—why is the minister forcing them to stay in this old facility until next April?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I had a really great conversation with Mayor Knox last week, the mayor of Portage la Prairie. And we talked about the fact that the former failed PC government, under Brian Pallister who chose to take scissors to health care every single day of every single year that they had power, didn't bother to do the basic work of planning in advance to staff the Portage hospital. That is work our government did from day one to make sure that the health human resources would be in place.

And we're going to keep working with the region and with the hospital to make sure that as many health-care workers as possible are there so that first patient day one is a success.

* (14:10)

But he should ask his colleagues on that side of the House, who were around the Cabinet table, why did they cut hare—cut health care and fail to—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

MLA Bereza: The staff and patients are the ones raising concerns. It's too bad the minister has chosen not to listen. There are concerns about black mould, mice and cockroaches throughout this facility. There is a leaking roof in the operating room.

The minister wouldn't be comfortable being operated on in these conditions, so why did they expect my constituents to be comfortable with it?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I'm going to go back to that member's own statements. He thinks that what Brian Pallister did for health care was a good thing.

Brian Pallister decimated health care in Manitoba. He spent years and then passed the torch to Heather Stefanson to cut health care, fire health-care workers and have no plan for rural medicine. In fact, they cut the very fund that retained and attracted doctors to rural communities like Portage la Prairie.

We've restored those funds. We restored relationships, and we're making sure that hospital opens with the right staff, the right resources and a modernized digital infrastructure, something they didn't do for seven and a half years. His statements thanking Brian Pallister are an absolute embarrassment.

Manitoba Jobs Agreement Remittance to Manitoba Building Trades

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Right before entering the Chamber, I heard from open-shop contractors directly about the impact of this NDP job-killing Manitoba jobs agreement. Honourable Speaker, 88 per cent of contractors in Manitoba have chosen not to be unionized for a whole variety of reasons, and that is their right. That's their choice.

Yet, this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and his colleagues refuse to respect the decision by workers, and they are overriding the democratic will of these workers and forcing union dues on Manitobans through this Manitoba jobs agreement. These workers didn't have a say, and now a portion of their pay on a job site will be diverted to the Premier's union buddies himself.

Why is the Premier undermining Manitobans' freedom of association choice?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): On this side of the House, we support all workers: private, public. All workers in Manitoba are better off with an NDP government that supports workers no matter where they are in this province.

And our labour force numbers tell that story in black and white. I'd be happy to table another copy of those documents for the Leader of the Opposition. Honourable Speaker, 11,000 new jobs here in our province in March alone. The proof is in the pudding, the work is being done and we're getting results for Manitobans in every corner of our province.

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

Mr. Khan: Under this NDP government, 88 per cent of Manitobans have been cut out under this Manitoba jobs agreement by this NDP government. Freedom goes both ways regardless of what the Premier wants to pretend.

Manitobans didn't choose to have a surcharge charged to them, to Manitoba Building Trades on their job site. Workers didn't choose to associate with Premier's allies and union buddies. This is funneling taxpayer money—your money—to groups that run partisan ads for this Premier and his NDP government. Manitoba workers are in an affordability crisis. It's not fair for the NDP to impose surcharges on their wages.

Will the Premier explain today to Manitobans why he thinks it's good policy to take money from Manitoba workers and hand it off to his union slush-fund buddies?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, let me be clear that Manitoba jobs agreement is better for all workers right across our province. It's very clear. More job—more workers can earn better wages, have safer work environments; and, on Manitoba job agreement's work sites, we train—turn a job site into a training site as well.

More Manitobans are going to have opportunities to get trained and apprentices, build their skills and meet the needs of our labour force for today, but also for generations to come. It's a comprehensive plan, something members opposite never understood. Under their side, their record was job sites turning into vehicles from Saskatchewan and Ontario taking jobs. Instead, we're having Manitoba plates on those job sites so more Manitobans can work in this great province.

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

Mr. Khan: This is about democracy. This is about Manitobans' choice to choose if they work for a union or non-union. Why is the Premier removing—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —Manitobans' choice to choose where they work? Instead the Premier is inserting himself in overruling union and non-union workers. He is forcing the Manitoba jobs agreement upon them.

Honourable Speaker, 88 per cent of Manitobans do not work in a union. Why does the Premier (Mr. Kinew) think it's okay to charge a surcharge—85 cents for every hour worked—and force them to join a union and force them to pay union dues when it's their democratic choice to not join a union?

Will the Premier stand up today and explain to Manitobans why he's forcing unionization on Manitobans?

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, member opposite's assertions are clearly inaccurate. The reality is that Manitoba jobs agreement creates more opportunities for more Manitobans. Higher wages, safer job sites and more training opportunities means that we can fill the wage gap and the employment workforce gap of today by training the folks for tomorrow and next generation.

More Manitobans working on construction sites right here. That's our plan; that's—we're delivering for. And you know what a—know what the proof is? We have No. 1 in Canada for job growth: 11,000 new jobs just this month. That's our record for creating jobs for more Manitobans, and we'll keep doing that good work on behalf of all Manitobans.

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

Economic Development—Budget 2026 Concern for Energy and Resource Sector

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): You don't have to look any farther than their federal NDP leader to see how wrong this NDP government is. The Premier's new boss has made it clear, there is no room in the modern NDP for projects—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —that actually grow our economy, and I'll quote from their leader: If you're building new pipelines or fossil infrastructure, this shall not pass. End quote.

Who said that, Honourable Speaker? The federal NDP leader. After Avi Lewis delivered those remarks, the Premier, right here in Manitoba, went out of his way to support that message, saying it was timely and he endorsed the position.

How does the Premier think he will be helping to move Manitoba forward when their federal leader wants to crush energy and resource sector ahead of Manitoba's future?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, I know—I know the idea of working with partners, the idea of building relationships with leaders at the federal level, municipal level—I know that that is a foreign concept for the Leader of the Opposition. This is a person who can't even get along with everybody on his side of the House. So I get it. That's tough.

But, on this side of the House, we believe in building relationships. We believe in doing the work that wasn't done for two terms of the failed PCs, and that results in results for Manitobans. You can see it in our labour workforce numbers and you're going to continue to see it as we build schools, build hospitals and build infrastructure for generations of Manitobans to come.

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

Mr. Khan: Manitoba's economy is dead last in Canada under this NDP government. Manitoba is also the only province that was left off the list of Major Projects Office. The recent disappointing budget only sets aside \$10 million for further studies into a Churchill project, an uncertain Churchill project that is at least 10 years away from viability.

The Premier promised Manitobans he would increase provincial revenue by 30 per cent in five years, but instead, under this Premier's 'mismanagement,' Manitoba is receiving the largest federal transfer payments of \$9 billion in the history of this province. The business community is struggling to find hope in this budget.

Will the Premier tell Manitobans how this budget is designed to help boost Manitoba's economy when this Premier has now said he's against pipelines, natural gas, minerals and energy?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, Manitobans are squarely against the Leader of the Opposition. They know that they can't trust a single thing that comes out of his mouth. Not only is he negative and divisive and incredibly hateful, but this is a person who, time after time after time, has shown Manitobans he simply cannot be trusted.

* (14:20)

So, on this side of the House, we're going to build relationships with every level of government, build relationships with our partners in key sectors, and we are going to keep building, building, building Manitoba into a province that is stronger for generations to come.

On that side of the House, he should focus on building his own party that is falling apart under his watch.

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

Major Projects for Manitoba Request for Information

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Manitoba's economy is dead last in Canada under this NDP government. Manitobans need to be able to predict where the economy is going to have faith that projects are 'sustansive' and not just radical.

If the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and his real projects are under way, he would be telling Manitobans about them. In October of last year, he said details were coming on three major Manitoba projects. It's been seven months and not one word on these three projects. Now the Premier has to get permission from his federal boss, Avi Lewis, about how to run Manitoba. The fear is that these projects have been shelved and investors have been scared away.

What are these three projects the Premier talked about? Where will they be located? And what are the details? Or is this more hot air coming out of the Premier's mouth?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, nobody's listening to the Leader of the Opposition because everybody knows they can't trust a word that comes out of his mouth.

Our Premier is the premier that got Churchill on the map. Our Premier is the premier that made Churchill a very real economic opportunity by building relationships. Our Premier who has conversations in the relationship he's built with the Prime Minister—the Prime Minister now knows that Churchill is a very real and important opportunity for our entire country.

For seven and a half years, the failed PCs could have been talking about Churchill, but they didn't. For seven and a half years, the failed PCs could have been building up our economy, but they didn't.

Honourable Speaker—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

St. Boniface Hospital's Cardiac Centre Re-opening Announcement

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): Honourable Speaker, under the previous government, cardiac centre at St. Boniface Hospital was dismantled piece

by piece, putting Manitoban lives at risk. Families deserve better than cuts and closures.

Our government is taking action to protect and rebuild cardiac services, and last week, we made an announce—important announcement at St. Boniface Hospital.

Can the Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care please tell Manitobans more about this exciting announcement?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, the previous government dismantled cardiac care at St. Boniface Hospital, and Manitobans paid the price with longer waits and reduced access to care.

That's why I was so proud to stand at St. Boniface Hospital last week and announce that our government is investing \$22.1 million to re-establish the Cardiac Centre of Excellence as Heart Care Manitoba. This includes more beds and rapid access to cardiac assessments. This is about saving lives, reducing wait times and improving heart care here in our province.

Much done, much more to do.

Teacher Professional Conduct Commissioner Termination of Employment with Province

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Well, well, well. The NDP-appointed commissioner of the teacher registry is no longer in their position.

What does the Education Minister have to say? The Education Minister has to say this, Honourable Speaker: Bobbi Taillefer has resigned as the commissioner and is no longer acting as the commissioner for the registry here in Manitoba.

What does the Premier say? The Premier says she was fired.

So can anyone on that side of the bench who's—actually knows what's going on stand up and tell Manitobans, parents, guardians and students what happened? What's the real story on Bobbi Taillefer, the commissioner of the teacher registry?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I want to speak directly to Manitobans and to reassure them that there is nothing more important than the safety and security of every single student in Manitoba. That is why it is our government that brought in the teacher registry. That is why our government appointed the first-ever office of the independent commissioner.

I want to reassure Manitobans, however, that just earlier today, we have appointed our new interim commissioner. The hunt is well under way for the permanent commissioner.

And in the meantime, Honourable Speaker, I want to reassure Manitobans that the office remains open to receive complaints, to investigate complaints, again, because our top priority is serving the students and the families here in Manitoba.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Ewasko: So I'm glad, Honourable Speaker, that the Premier (Mr. Kinew) actually let the Education Minister get up to put a few words on the record.

Because it's interesting, on Thursday, the Education Minister said, and I quote: She was entirely unaware of the commissioner's whereabouts until confronted with the allegations. And the Education Minister—I wonder if she's standing by these words—in September of 2024, said that this was the right person at the right time for this job. And this Education Minister actually went on the record also saying that she has full confidence in Mrs. Taillefer in performing this role, said this Education Minister.

So Manitoba students, parents and guardians are asking today: Which is it? Did—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Schmidt: It's very important. One of the reasons that we brought in the office of the independent commissioner is to restore trust in our public education system, Honourable Speaker, after years of broken trust. And we realize that that trust is going to take time to repair.

That's why it is our government—after years, two terms of the previous government failing to take any action, failing to appoint an office of an independent commissioner, failing to provide this extra layer of public accountability to protect students in school, that is why our government came in and we acted. That's why we brought in the office of the independent commissioner.

And I want to reassure Manitobans that this office remains open, and it is more than just one person—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Ewasko: So after years of debt, decline and disaster under the previous NDP government, it was our government that brought in the teacher registry, and it was them that appointed the NDP conflict commissioner that now has either resigned, according to the Education Minister, or was fired, according to the Premier.

Unfortunately, the Education Minister obviously has bungled this file so the Premier felt it was his time to stand up on the weekend and bring forward the fact that he had actually fired her.

So I'm asking her to come clean today. Which is it? Did she resign or did she get fired, Honourable Speaker?

MLA Schmidt: Certainly, Manitobans decided who was fired in October of 2023.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

MLA Schmidt: That's right.

The truth is, Honourable Speaker, Manitobans know who they can trust when it comes to publication—public education here in Manitoba. That is why Manitobans showed the member from Lac du Bonnet the door during his time as a failed Education minister, who did not appoint a commissioner, who failed to protect kids here in this province.

On this side of the House, Manitobans absolutely understand who they can trust. In fact, Honourable Speaker, it was under the failed interim leadership of the member of Lac du Bonnet that the previous PC government saw so many—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Labour Market Update New Job Numbers

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): Honourable Speaker, Manitobans know that a good, stable job is the foundation for building a good life. At a time when there's so much global uncertainty, families want to know that their economy is strong and that opportunities are growing here at home.

Can the Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation tell the House what the latest job numbers mean for Manitoba workers and our economy?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, just like the Artemis II mission that went to the moon soaring, so are our job numbers here in Manitoba: 11,000 new jobs right here in Manitoba this month. Huge shout-out to Jeremy Hansen and the entire crew.

We're so proud of our Canadian on that mission. But we're proud of the new 11,000 new Manitobans who are working here because of the incredible job we're building and a strong economy right here in Manitoba.

* (14:30)

Manitoba Jobs Agreement Additional Charge Per Worker—Use of Funds Inquiry

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): You know, after Manitoba's construction industry formally requested that the Auditor General investigate this NDP government's job-killing Manitoba jobs agreement, and focusing on the 85 cent per hour per worker surcharge and the potentially millions of dollars diverted from public investment with zero transparency, the building trades—this NDP government's allies—ran out and said, well, that fund—that money is for administration. And then this NDP Minister for Public Service Delivery runs out and tells media, that money is actually for safety.

So which is it, Honourable Speaker? Can the minister tell us today, where exactly is this money going?

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): We are building Manitoba and we are making sure Manitoba workers are the ones who are building it. The Manitoba jobs agreement means good jobs, fair wages, safe work sites and real training opportunities on job—public job projects.

When we build schools, hospitals and roads, we accept Manitobans to benefit from those jobs that comes with them. The Manitoba jobs agreement makes sure it does that.

Honourable Speaker, I will continue to listen to Manitoba workers and I will continue to listen to the Manitoba businesses as well.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

Request for Third-Party Review

Mr. Guenter: You know, the minister talks about safety. I'd like the minister to know that safety outcomes in the industry—construction industry have been driven by industry-based programs.

For example, the Construction Safety Association of Manitoba was created by the Winnipeg Construction Association; WorkSafely was created by Manitoba Heavy. So the industry has got that matter settled.

But I'm wondering if the minister could commit to an independent third-party review of the Manitoba jobs agreement. If he thinks it's so great, would he agree—could he guarantee evidence-based accountability and transparency oversight? Would he agree to an independent review to assess competition and bidder participation?

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Sandhu: Every single worker that works on that job site is better off because of MJA, Honourable Speaker. We will continue to listen to Manitoba workers, and we will continue to listen to the Manitoba businesses as well.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: And I would like to acknowledge some students in the public gallery.

We have seated in the public gallery, from Hamiota Collegiate, 25 grade 9 students under the direction of Chris Obach, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt).

We welcome you here today.

* * *

The Speaker: Petitions? No petitions.

Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Can you call for second reading debate Bill 49, Bill 13, Bill 15 and Bill 48?

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now proceed with second reading of Bill 49, Bill 13, Bill 15 and Bill 48.

So, without further ado, the honourable Minister of Public Service Delivery.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 49—The Business Practices Amendment Act

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I move that Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act—

The Speaker: Order, please.

You need a seconder.

MLA Sandhu: I move, seconded by the member—sorry, Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Moyes), that Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to the committee of this House.

Motion presented.

MLA Sandhu: Manitobans continue to experience affordability pressures, including rising food costs. At the same time, evolving pricing practices such as personalized data-based pricing have raised concerns about fairness.

Bill 49 amends The Business Practices Act to make it an unfair business practice to use personal data to increase the price for the consumers. This applies to both online retailers as well as electronic self-labelling in stores. By doing so, this will respond to concerns that companies may be using an individual's personal data against them by charging them more for goods, including groceries, than other consumers.

The amendments also include definitions that reflect the current and evolving changes to Manitoba's retail landscape by adding definitions for online platforms, online retailers, online distributors, personalized data-based pricing and electronic self-labelling systems. This will demonstrate our government's commitment to making life more affordable and helping you with grocery prices.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Speaker: So 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 official 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.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Can the minister explain how this bill will lower the cost of groceries in Manitoba?

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): Honourable Speaker, we have heard from

Manitobans that their personal data is sometimes being used against them when this comes to grocery prices or the services and goods.

Very simple, Honourable Speaker: using two phones—have it side by side—looking at one of them is, you see a—totally a different price, and the second one you will see a different price because they are—companies are using your personal data. They are seeing your practices, what you buy mostly or what you are searching online mostly. So that's where we want to make sure the companies are not out charging you more than the other person their charging—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

No further questions?

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): How much can Manitobans expect to save directly at a grocery store as the result of this bill? Is there a specific number in savings that this minister can point to?

MLA Sandhu: We have heard from Manitobans that grocery prices are the main cost these days after rent. And, Honourable Speaker, that's where we are taking action after listening to Manitobans and where they are seeing, when they buy online, their personal data is used.

And we want to make sure we protect people's personal data and also we want to make sure, when they are buying something online, everyone is paying the same price, not someone who is buying more, who is regularly, by one stop, being charged more than the other person.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): Can the minister of consumer protection point to a single receipt from a grocery store, gas station or any other day-to-day business, that'll be cheaper because of Bill 49?

* (14:40)

MLA Sandhu: I want the opposition to pass this bill so we can bring this practice into law, and we will go out and ask Manitobans to help us develop the regulations as well. So I'm just asking the opposition to pass this bill today.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Nesbitt: What evidence can this minister share with this House that proves that this bill will result in lower prices for consumers?

MLA Sandhu: I have shared this information earlier when he came to our office that even having two phones side by side, the one you are using for—to buy groceries online and the one you are not using to buy something online, is that you are seeing two different prices, Honourable Speaker. We want to make sure we are protecting Manitobans against these arbitrary pricing. So that's why we brought this bill forward, so it's going to help with the grocery prices.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Stone: Can the minister point to any other jurisdiction, either across Canada, the United States or possibly Europe, where a similar precedent is already set? And if so, what kind of learnings can this minister take from those other jurisdictions while implementing this bill?

MLA Sandhu: We are taking the lead on this. We are hearing from Manitobans. We are hearing from Canadians as well. We are out in the community listening to Manitobans, what their concerns are. This is one of the concerns that they have raised with us. So we are delivering on the priority that Manitobans asked to deliver on.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Robbins: Does the minister actually believe that the regulation alone will make the life more affordable for Manitobans?

MLA Sandhu: Sorry, Honourable Speaker, I missed that question, but our main objective with this bill is making sure—like, companies are not using your personal data to charge you more. That's the main objective of this bill.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker. And also, lowering your grocery prices.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, can this minister explain why his government is prioritizing virtue signalling over direct affordability measures like tax relief?

MLA Sandhu: We are talking about Bill 49. Bill 49 is about protecting Manitobans, and this is also about lowering the grocery prices. This is where companies are using your personal data to charge you more, and we are saying, not anymore.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Stone: Can the minister please list the performance targets and measurable outcomes that will result as a result of this legislation being passed?

MLA Sandhu: Again, my—as I said earlier, people are facing affordability prices—crisis, and this is where we brought this bill forward to make sure we are protecting Manitobans against those companies that are using predatory pricing to lower their grocery prices.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Robbins: Does the minister agree that Manitobans deserve concrete tax relief to address the cost of living?

MLA Sandhu: Honourable Speaker, the member is not maybe aware. We are debating Bill 49 right now. The Bill 49 is The Business Practices Amendment Act, and this is where we are talking about how we can lower the grocery prices, and this is about where people are—companies are using your personal data to charge you more, and we are saying, not anymore.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, would the minister agree that Manitobans would rather see a larger paycheque through a higher basic personal amount than another lay of—layer of regulation for a problem that doesn't exist?

MLA Sandhu: Honourable Speaker, the member is aware we are taking concrete action when our—the best Finance Minister in Canada who brought the budget forward, where we are bringing real, real affordability measures into this, and part of that affordability measure is also Bill 49. This is where we are protecting people's data, we are making sure the companies are not charging you more, and we will continue to listen to Manitobans on this.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Stone: I didn't receive an answer to my previous question, so I'll give the minister an opportunity to answer again as to what specific performance targets the minister has laid out to better understand if this legislation will be successful for Manitobans.

If he can't list a measurable outcome or a performance target, then can Manitobans assume that he doesn't have any, and if not why?

MLA Sandhu: Honourable Speaker, the member wants Manitobans to pay for more—for the grocery prices and the consumer goods. On this side of the House we are against that. That's why we brought this bill forward where we want to protect your data and also lower your grocery prices on this.

We will continue to listen to Manitobans. Manitobans have asked us to deliver on these priorities,

and that's why our best Finance Minister in Canada has brought an excellent, excellent, excellent budget.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Stone: So, again, I'll give the minister another opportunity. I'm asking specifically about measurable outcomes and performance targets. How will Manitobans know if this legislation is successful unless the minister has some performance targets as what he would like to see this legislation accomplish?

So I'll ask him again if he can lay out whether it's three performance targets, five performance targets, whatever that number may be, what are some of those specific performance targets that he has laid out if—to show Manitobans that this legislation will be successful once implemented?

MLA Sandhu: I want the member to pass this bill, and let's put this on to a vote, and we want to make sure we deliver real results for Manitobans; that's what Manitobans asked—want to do it. I will continue to listen to Manitobans on this.

And it—I know that affordability is the main issue here in Manitoba and across Canada, and that's why we brought this bill forward. This is the first of its kind in Canada, and I—we also want other provinces to follow our lead.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Robbins: If this bill passes and prices do not come down, will this minister admit that he has failed to protect consumers?

MLA Sandhu: Once again, Honourable Speaker, the member hasn't really read the bill on this. This is about data being used to charge you more, and this is where we are saying this is not going to be allowed in Manitoba.

We will continue to listen to Manitobans. We know that affordability are the—affordability is the issue here in Manitoba and across Canada. That's why we are delivering real results. Recently, presented a budget by our Finance Minister, and which is the excellent, excellent budget that he had presented.

We will continue to listen to Manitobans, and we will continue to deliver on their priorities.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: No further questions?

Debate

The Speaker: Then the floor is open for debate.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act.

Bill 49 proposes amendments to The Business Practices Act to address what is described as personalized algorithmic pricing. In essence, the bill seeks to regulate situations in which businesses may use data algorithms or automatic systems to adjust the price of goods for individual consumers. It expands the definition of unfair business practices to include cases where a consumer may be charged more based on their personal data, behaviour or inferred willingness to pay.

The legislation all to—introduces a number of new definitions, including online retailers, online distributors and electronic shelf labelling systems. It clarifies that unfair business practices can occur through the use of algorithms, artificial intelligence or machine learning, even in cases where a transaction is not ultimately completed. Additionally, it establishes requirements for disclosure and consent where personalized pricing is used.

* (14:50)

At a high level, the intent of the bill is to protect consumers. That is a principle that all members of this House can support. Manitobans expect fairness in the marketplace. They expect that the price they see is the price they pay and that they are not being treated differently based on factors beyond their control or awareness. In that sense, there is value in ensuring that our legislative framework keeps pace with technological change.

The increasing use of data analytics and digital platforms has transformed how businesses operate. It is reasonable for governments to consider whether existing consumer protection laws remain adequate in that evolving environment.

However, while the intent of Bill 49 is understandable, it is equally important to examine its relevance, its timing and its likely impact.

One of the central considerations in evaluating this bill is the question of whether the issue it seeks to address is currently present in Manitoba or, more broadly, in Canada. To date, there have been no widely documented cases of personalized algorithmic pricing being used in a way that disadvantages consumers in everyday transactions such as groceries, fuel or basic retail purchases.

This raises an important point. Bill 49 is, by its own nature, a proactive or preventative measure. It is designed to address a potential future scenario rather than an existing demonstrated problem. While there can be value in forward-looking legislation, it is also important that such measures are balanced against present-day priorities. Manitobans today are facing very real and immediate financial pressures. The cost of living continues to be a significant concern for families across the province. Whether it is at the grocery store, at the gas pump or in managing household expenses, many residents are feeling the strain.

In that context, is it reasonable to ask which direct impact this bill will have on affordability? Will it lower the price of groceries? Will it reduce the cost of fuel? Will it make everyday purchases more accessible for families who are already struggling to make ends meet?

Based on the provisions of the bill, the answer appears to be that it will not have an immediate or measurable effect on prices. Instead, it establishes a regulatory framework that may become relevant if certain business practices emerge in the future. That distinction is important. There is a difference between legislation that addresses a current problem and legislation that anticipates a potential one. Both have their place, but they should not be confused.

Another aspect to consider is a potential impact on businesses. Manitoba's economy includes a wide range of enterprises, from small local retailers to larger companies operating online platforms. These businesses rely on clear and predictable rules in order to operate effectively. Bill 49 introduces new compliance considerations related to data use, pricing practices and consumer disclosure. While these requirements are intended to protect consumers, they may also create additional administrative burdens for businesses, particularly small ones that may not have the resources to navigate complex regulatory frameworks.

It is also important to ensure that the legislation does not inadvertently restrict legitimate business practices. For example, many businesses offer discounts, loyalty programs or targeted promotions as a way to attract and retain customers. These practices are generally understood and accepted by consumers, and they play a role in maintaining competitive markets.

As such, it will be important to clarify that the provisions of Bill 49 are not interpreted in a way that discourages or penalizes businesses for offering value to their customers. Clear guidance and, if necessary, amendments may be required to ensure that the line

between unfair pricing and legitimate promotional activity is well understood.

The bill also raises questions about enforcement and implementation. While the financial implications are described as 'minimal', there will inevitably be costs associated with monitoring compliance, investigating potential violations and enforcement. These costs may not be significant in the short term, but they could increase over time, particularly if the scope of the legislation expands or if cases begin to arise.

In addition, regulators will need to develop the expertise required to assess complex algorithmic systems and data practices. This is not a straightforward task. It involves technical knowledge, access to information and the ability to interpret how pricing decisions are made within digital systems.

Transparency will be another key factor. The bill includes provisions related to disclosure and consent, requiring businesses to clearly 'explain'—explain when and why a higher price is being charged. While this is a positive step in principle, its effectiveness will depend on how it is implemented in practice. Information must be presented in a way that is understandable and meaningful to consumers, rather than buried in lengthy terms and conditions.

As we consider this legislation, it is also worth noting that Manitoba would be among the first jurisdictions in Canada to introduce such measures. Being a leader in consumer protection can be positive, but it also comes with responsibility. It is important to ensure that the approach we take is informed by evidence, aligned with broader trends, and adaptable as circumstances evolve.

There are also several questions that merit further discussion as this bill moves forward. For example, what specific evidence has informed the development of this legislation? How will success be measured? What outcomes should Manitobans expect to see if the bill is implemented? Additionally, how will the government ensure that consumers are aware of their rights under this new framework?

Legislation alone is not sufficient. It must be accompanied by education and outreach to ensure it has a meaningful impact.

Another important consideration is the balance between consumer protection and innovation. Digital technologies and data analytics have the potential to improve efficiency, enhance services and create new opportunities. Regulatory frameworks should aim to protect consumers without unduly restricting these benefits.

Bill 49 is a forward-looking piece of legislation that seeks to address the potential risks associated with personalized algorithmic pricing. Its intent to protect consumers and ensure fairness in the marketplace is one that deserves support.

At the same time, the bill does not address the immediate affordability challenges facing Manitobans. It does not lower prices, increase outcomes or provide direct relief to families who are struggling with the cost of living.

As legislators, it is our responsibility to carefully consider both the intent and the impact of the laws we pass. In the case of Bill 49, that means acknowledging its potential value while also recognizing its limitations.

I encourage the government to continue engaging with stakeholders, including businesses, consumer advocates and technical experts, to ensure that this legislation is clear, effective and appropriately targeted. I also encourage a continued focus on policies that address the immediate economic realities faced by Manitobans.

With those considerations in mind, I look forward to further discussion of this bill as it proceeds through the legislative process.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: No further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: So then the question before the House is second reading of Bill 49, The Business Practices Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 13—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

The Speaker: As previously announced then, we will now go on to second reading of Bill 13, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), that Bill 13, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

* (15:00)

MLA Sandhu: The Residential Tenancies Act amendment aimed to deliver an immediate and meaningful improvement to the rental housing affordability while ensuring a fair and transparent regulatory environment for both tenants and landlords.

That will introduce a requirement for the 'landslide'—landlords to file information about each of their rental units with the director of the Residential Tenancies Branch, including contact information for themselves and their property managers so that the branch has a comprehensive database of all landlords and the rental units and the tenants know who to reach to discuss any concerns that they may have regarding rent and repair.

Furthermore, when a tenant has given notice that they are not renewing their lease, this will require landlords to provide at least 24 hours' notice to the current tenant before showing a rental unit to a prospective tenant. The act would also be amended to remove an order against a tenant from the public orders system after seven years, provided that the order does not relate to impairment of safety or unlawful activities. If after seven or more years have passed after—since an order of impairment or safety or unlawful activity was issued, a tenant can apply to the director to have it removed.

As well, it will require the director to review the provision of The Residential Tenancies Act dealing with the rent regulation every five years, which includes engagement with Manitobans and with the ministers, the Landlord and Tenant Advisory Committee, and that the report be tabled in the Assembly. This will authorize an administrative penalty to be issued for failing to comply with any order made by the director under The Residential Tenancies Act. As well, it will increase the maximum administrative penalty amount from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

All these proposed amendments align with the mandate to review The Residential Tenancies Act to strengthen renters' rights and protect affordable housing and align with the commitment in the 2025 Speech from the Throne to bring in new rules to stop unfair rent increase and strengthen renters' rights.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): 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; and 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 open for questions.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): How does the government ensure that increased regulation does not discourage landlords from investing in upgrades to aging rental units?

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I want to let the member know, from member for Borderland, this bill is not what he's talking about. He hasn't even read the bill. So hopefully he can read the bill first and then ask the question.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Yes, I think the minister might be the one who needs to read the bill. This increases regulation and discourages investment. If somebody can't invest in their—or won't invest in their building because they can't increase the rents, obviously it'll discourage investment. So if the minister can answer the question.

MLA Sandhu: Honourable assistant deputy Speaker, I just want to let the member know, as well, this—the landlords are in favour of this bill.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Johnson: Well, that begs the question then: Who did the minister consult with? Obviously, different landlords than the ones who've come forward with concerns to us. So if the member can explain who he's actually consulted with on this bill.

MLA Sandhu: We have consulted the landlords on this and—as well as the renters on this bill.

The member is talking about the regulation. He don't even know what he's talking about.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Guenter: Under this bill, the amount a landlord can spend on capital expenditures, like a new roof or windows, and is eligible to claim as an above-guideline rent increase application would be cut in half. The stated intent is to significantly reduce the cost to renters, but what it would actually do is reduce the likelihood of getting units repaired, renovated, built or even basic maintenance.

So I wonder why the minister is putting forward a bill that would further limit new builds in the province and only serve to lower the standard of living for Manitobans.

MLA Sandhu: Manitobans, you have seen the member from Borderland talking about the regulation. We are debating the bill today here. The bill is about the—which the landlords and the renters agree on this bill, honourable Speaker. We have a really, really positive discussion with the renters as well as landlords. We have recently met at both sides.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Johnson: The minister keeps saying that, we've met with; we've met with. He hasn't listed anybody or any associations that he claims to have met with so far.

Has he met with them—any mom-and-pop landlords, and how is this going to affect them? What if somebody only has one rental unit? Are they still required to register with the Province of Manitoba, for example?

MLA Sandhu: Honourable assistant deputy minister, this is—this bill—as I said, I have been hearing from Manitobans that there's a concern that whenever they want to repair something and they have no information for the landlord or they have no information about the agency that's taking care of that block.

So we have brought this bill forward to make sure the information we collect for the tenants to—in case of emergency or if they want to get information about the rent or if they want to have their units repaired. So we want to make sure that that information is with the RTB.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): What evidence does government have that more reporting requirements lead to improved housing quality rather than stagnation?

MLA Sandhu: Honourable assistant deputy Speaker, I just—the last answer that I have given exactly why we want to make sure we collect the data that we need to improve the access for the renters. They know exactly, in case of emergency, in case of repair, that they have that information, the information that they are missing. Sometimes they don't have that on.

Honourable Speaker, we want to make sure we collect that information and we are better informed later on as we make decisions on this, as well.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, the minister mentions potential missing information. So if somebody accidentally fails to comply because they didn't check a box, are they facing a \$10,000 fine, and is this an acceptable omission, or where do they draw the line?

MLA Sandhu: RTB is always here. We want to make sure we have given enough time to the landlords whenever there is a repair needs to be fixed, whenever there is an order. It's not that we can have that stick in our hand and we can tell the folks that, you know what, every single small order that's against you is going to cost you \$10,000.

That's not the intent of this bill. This is to make sure those bad actors that there are—and they are not, even after repeated requests, that they are not fixing their units—that this can be applied to those folks.

*(15:10)

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, I think the minister's mistaken. He said \$10,000 won't bankrupt the tenant, but if there's a mom-and-pop that have one rental suite and they make one error because they've missed to check a box somewhere, \$10,000 could be more than the whole entire annual rent.

So that begs the question, then: Who is going to conduct these reviews and who's going to police them? Keep saying that we are going to have a stick. Will they be independent from government as well? These are questions that are still unanswered.

MLA Sandhu: This bill will authorize administrative penalty to be issued for failing to comply with any order made by the director under The Residential Tenancies Act; as well as it will increase the maximum administrative penalty from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Honourable Speaker, this is where we are talking about in case there's a repair needs to be done on the building. The landlord is not doing the repair. Does the member from the opposite side want those tenants to be unsafe in their units?

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Johnson: Well, the tenants that we talked to would like to know who is going to conduct these reviews and will they be independent from government? A straightforward question; please answer it.

MLA Sandhu: I really don't know where—what the member is really talking about. Not really understanding either. I know when they're—my critic is unable to come and be briefed on the bill and none of

the PC members read this bill. This is what he's talking about.

They really don't care about the renters. They don't want them to have a safe place to live. They want people to live in unsafe places, which is—under our NDP government, will not going to happen, honourable Speaker. We will continue to listen to renters as well as the landlords and we will—

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

Mr. Guenter: Yes, I wonder if the minister can say whether or not the government has estimated the compliance cost of the new registry system?

MLA Sandhu: Sorry, I did not hear the question, but this is about the strengthening renters' rights; also protecting them whenever there are orders against the landlords. And those are not the first time that you will going to get those fines, honourable Speaker.

Our RTB department is reasonable, and they go out and work with the landlord to make sure the units are fixed and they're safe for the renter to stay. And our focus will always be listening to both renters and landlords.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Wowchuk: Will tenants and landlords both have input into these reviews?

MLA Sandhu: Yes, there's both sides. Landlords and the renters have input in developing of this bill. We had a very good discussion with the landlords on this bill. As I said, they are in favour of this bill and there's nothing—like, they also want to make sure they have safe units, and they're also known that there are certain landlords, which are not a good actor in the industry and they are themselves telling us, hey, you know what, we need this kind of bill to protect the renters.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, the minister failed to answer the question of how much this will cost government in the compliance of this new registry system. How many FTEs are attributed to this? How many vehicles do they get? How many jobs, bureaucratic jobs, are going to be dedicated to this?

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Before acknowledging the minister, I just want to remind all members to direct questions and comments through the Chair.

MLA Sandhu: I want to let the member know it's going to cost \$0 to the government. We already have the registry. It's not in-written in the law that they have to provide this information, but it was honorary that they should provide this information. This is where we are making it a law that they should be providing this information.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Guenter: You know, the real issue with rental housing stock in Manitoba is that it is a matter of supply. We want more stock, not less. And so, you know, when the government proposes legislation like this, I'm wondering how they will ensure that this bill does not reduce private investment in rental housing construction and upgrades.

MLA Sandhu: Once again, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, the member hasn't read the bill. He don't know what he's talking about. This bill is about the protection for the renters. This is about—make sure they have a safe place to live. We are making sure the landlords are keeping their building up to date.

This is making sure—and as I said earlier, both sides, landlords are agree with us on this bill, and also the renters are agree with this. And they—both sides, when we met recently, and they were happy with this bill—

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

Mr. Johnson: Yes, according to this bill, there's mandatory registration of every unit. So if somebody has 100 units, that's fine and dandy.

Then the question needs to be asked: If somebody has one unit and they're renting it to a family member, for example, does that have to be registered with this government if this legislation moves forward?

MLA Sandhu: As I said earlier, this is about protecting the renters and the units the people are renting, if they're family members, you know.

But I can say about that one is, this is about protecting the—every single renter that is out there. This is about having that phone number that, in case that person needs it, this is about making sure we know who the landlord is, honourable assistant deputy Speaker. This is where we want to make sure we have that full data that we needed to make a decision going forward as well, making sure how many units there are and how many are—

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

Mr. Wowchuk: Yes, could the minister elaborate a little more on what specific data will landlords be required to submit and at what frequency, or how often must it be updated?

MLA Sandhu: I want to thank the member for that question. This is about filing each rental unit with the director of the Residential Tenancies Branch, including contact information for themselves, their property managers, so that the branch has a comprehensive database of all landlords and rental units and tenants who know to—where to reach whenever they have a concern regarding rent or regarding a peer.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The time for question period is over.

Debate

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

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Bill 13 requires—*[interjection]*—Bill 13, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, is a bill that introduces a series of administrative changes to the residential tenancies framework.

And while there are elements within it that speak to process, oversight and certain aspects of tenant protection, it doesn't address the fundamental driver of rising rents in this province, which is the imbalance between housing supply and housing demand.

* (15:20)

Bill 13 requires landlords to file information about rental units with the director of residential tenancies, establishes a requirement for 24 hours notice before showing a unit to a prospective tenant, mandates a five-year review of rent regulation, limits public access to certain historical tenant decisions and increases administrative penalties for noncompliance, including raising the maximum penalty from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

These are procedural changes and they may improve record keeping, they may enhance oversight, they may adjust the balance of enforcement, but they do not increase the number of housing units in Manitoba and they do not reduce the cost of rent for Manitobans.

The central issue, as I said, facing renters today is not lack of regulation; it's a lack of supply. When demand for housing exceeds the available supply, prices rise. It's economics 101, and of course that's probably why this NDP government doesn't understand that simple principle: supply and demand.

But this is not a matter of ideology; it's a matter of basic economics. When more people are competing for fewer units, landlords are placed in a position where rents increase because the market allows it. If this Legislature is serious about affordability, then it must be serious about increasing the number of housing units available to Manitobans.

And it's also important to ground this debate in the long-term realities of Manitoba's housing stock. Approximately 90,000 rental units exist in Manitoba today, which represents growth from roughly 66,000 units 35 years ago.

And it's important to note that this did not occur by accident, this increase. It was the result—it is the result of a sustained investment, stable financing conditions and a regulatory environment that allowed developers and lenders to proceed with confidence. If we are serious about affordability, then we must be equally serious about encouraging that same growth in housing stock going forward, because without a continuous expansion of supply, the pressures we are seeing today will only intensify for the next generation of Manitobans.

This bill risks moving us in the opposite direction. There is an important distinction that must be made in this debate. Landlords must treat tenants with respect and dignity; that is not optional. That is a fundamental expectation in any civilized society and it is one that should be upheld in both law and practice. The provisions in this bill relating to notice for showings and the removal of historical decisions from public access speak to that principle of fairness and dignity.

However, the issue of how tenants are treated is separate from the issue of why rents are increasing. The one is a question of conduct; the other is a question of supply and demand.

And so conflating the two doesn't do anything to solve or ameliorate the affordability crisis. When governments introduce changes that create uncertainty in the housing market, they must be very careful about the consequences of that uncertainty.

Housing development, particularly multi-family housing, is capital intensive. It relies on long planning horizons, predictable regulatory environments and

stable financing arrangements. When those conditions are disrupted, investment decisions change.

A significant portion of multi-family housing development in Manitoba is financed through syndicated mortgages, often provided by credit unions. These are not speculative instruments. They are structured investments that rely on the pooled capital of Manitobans and they are governed by a regulatory framework that prioritizes the protection of members' deposits. Credit unions do not operate with the same profit-maximizing incentives as traditional financial institutions, but they are nevertheless bound by the need for prudence, stability and risk management.

Credit unions operate under clear regulatory constraints. They must assess risk carefully. They must ensure that projects they finance are viable over the long term. They must protect the savings of their members. When the rules governing multi-family housing are changed in ways that introduce uncertainty, that uncertainty is reflected in lending decisions. Projects that might have proceeded under a stable regime are delayed, scaled back or cancelled entirely when the financial outlook becomes less predictable.

And this isn't a theoretical concern; this is how capital markets function. When lenders perceive increased risk, they respond by tightening lending criteria, increasing required returns or withdrawing from certain types of projects altogether. In the context of housing, that means fewer new developments. It means fewer rental units coming onto the market. It means that the supply of housing grows more slowly than it otherwise would. And when supply fails to keep pace with demand, the result is entirely predictable: rents increase.

Honourable Speaker, this is the central flaw in Bill 13. It approaches the housing crisis as though it is primarily a regulatory issue when, in fact, it is a supply issue. By focusing on administrative controls and enforcement mechanisms without addressing the conditions necessary for new housing construction, the bill risks discouraging the very investment that is needed to increase supply.

The requirement for landlords to file detailed information about each rental unit with the director may improve data collection, but it also introduces an additional administrative burden. The expansion of enforcement powers and the increase in administrative penalties may enhance compliance, but they also increase the regulatory risk associated with operating rental housing. The requirement for periodic

reviews of rent regulation introduces a degree of ongoing uncertainty about the future regulatory environment.

Each of these measures taken individually may appear modest. Taken together, they contribute to a climate in which investors and lenders must reassess the risk profile of housing projects. For large institutional landlords, these changes may be manageable. They have the scale and the resources to absorb regulatory complexity. For smaller developers, local builders and community-based housing providers, the cumulative effect of these changes can be far more significant. These are often the very actors who contribute to incremental increases in housing supply. And they are also the ones most sensitive to changes in financing conditions.

It's also important to consider the long-term implications of discouraging investment in rental housing. Housing markets do not respond overnight. The decisions made today about whether to proceed with a development project will affect the availability of housing years into the future. When projects are delayed or cancelled, the impact is not immediately visible, but it accumulates over time. The result is a persistent shortfall in supply that continues to put upward pressure on rents.

If the government's objective is really to improve affordability, then it must recognize that affordability is directly linked to supply. Increasing supply requires policies that encourage construction, reduce uncertainty and support financing. It requires a regulatory environment that is stable, predictable and conducive to long-term investment. It requires a partnership with the financial institutions, including credit unions, that play a critical role in funding housing development.

Bill 13 does not advance those objectives. It does not provide incentives for new construction. It does not reduce barriers to development. It does not address the cost pressures associated with building new housing. Instead, it introduces additional layers of administration and enforcement without addressing the underlying economic dynamics of the housing market.

The consequences of this approach are not abstract. When fewer units are built, more people are competing for the units that exist. And when competition increases, rents rise. When rents rise, affordability declines. This is the cycle that Manitobans are experiencing today. And this is the cycle that will continue if supply is not addressed.

It's also worth noting that the financial implications of this bill extend beyond the private sector. The requirement for the Province to collect and manage detailed information on all rental units will entail administrative costs. The expansion of enforcement mechanisms will require resources. These costs are—these are costs that will ultimately be borne by taxpayers, and they must be considered in the broader context of fiscal responsibility. And that's why it was so disappointing, honourable Speaker, that the minister couldn't answer any questions on this topic.

There is a path forward that would more directly address affordability. It involves creating the conditions necessary for increased housing supply. It involves working with municipalities to streamline approvals, supporting infrastructure that enables new development and ensuring that financing remains accessible and predictable. And it also involves recognizing the role of both private and community-based developers in meeting housing needs. And this government ought to respect them, the role they play and their concerns.

* (15:30)

It also involves maintaining a clear distinction between the treatment of tenants and the economics of housing supply. Ensuring that tenants are treated with dignity is essential; it is a matter of fairness and justice. However, it does not, on its own, reduce rents. Reducing rents requires increasing supply. That is the reality that must guide policy decisions.

So ultimately, Bill 13 is a missed opportunity. It could've been a vehicle for meaningful action on affordability. It could have addressed the structural issues in the housing market and provided a framework for increasing supply while maintaining fairness for tenants. Instead, however, it focuses on administrative adjustments that do not change the fundamental dynamics of the market.

As legislators, we have a responsibility to address the real challenges facing Manitobans. Housing affordability is one of the most pressing issues in our time today. It demands solutions that are grounded in economic reality and informed by the experience of those who build, finance and manage housing.

Unfortunately, this bill does not meet that standard. It does not improve affordability. It does not increase supply. It introduces uncertainty that may discourage investment, and in doing so it risks making the problem it seeks to address even more acute.

For these reasons, this government continues to miss the mark with this bill in its current form.

Manitobans deserve policies that will increase the availability of housing, stabilize rents and ensure that everyone has access to a place they can afford to call home.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Are there any other members who wish to speak to debate?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The question before the House is second reading of Bill 13, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

It is the—is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): I heard a no.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Acting Government House Leader): Sorry, I may be premature. I was going to say on division.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The motion is accordingly passed, on division.

Bill 15—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The next matter before the House is Bill 15, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act.

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn), that Bill 15, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to the committee of this House.

Motion presented.

MLA Sandhu: Many consumer products have been harder to fix and maintain. Repairs today often require specialized tools, difficult-to-obtain parts and access to software and information such as manuals. Right-to-repair legislation gives consumers greater choices and information on the repair options for the products they buy.

This bill introduces the requirement for a seller or manufacturer of a designated consumer good to provide the buyer with the parts, tools, software and manuals necessary to maintain or repair the goods.

It will also require that a seller or manufacturer make such means of repair available for a reasonable period of time after the sale, at a reasonable price and within a reasonable time period after the buyer makes the request.

The amendments also include numerous regulation-making powers, including designating goods or class of manufacturers' goods, prescribing means of repair and remedies that a seller or manufacturer must provide for failing to comply. This will include designating consumer goods to be included under the legislation, beginning with household appliances. The government looks forward to engaging with industry and consumer stakeholders on these matters.

Manitoba would be the second province in Canada, after Quebec, to introduce right-to-repair legislation aimed at protecting consumers. These amendments also align Manitoba with the federal government, which, in 2024, enacted a legislation to address the right to repair through the changes to the Copyright Act, permitting the circumvention of software locks for the solo purpose of diagnosis, maintaining or repairing product.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the standard rotation. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Can the government provide a complete list of designated consumer goods that will be covered under Bill 15?

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): We are starting with the household appliances first, honourable assistant deputy Speaker. From there on, we will move to the second phase, to the auto industry. And the third phase will be the agriculture industry.

Thank you, assistant deputy Speaker.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, it's many times been discussed and debated about the right to repair for farm equipment, as modern farm equipment has become much more technologically dependent. Does this bill include modern farm equipment, and could the minister explain?

MLA Sandhu: Yes, this will include. As I said earlier, we are starting this with the household appliances, then it will be auto industry, then it's going to be manufacturing. And we will enter—we will bring the regulations in, and we will be consulting with the industry as well.

This is an important bill. We are—right now, sometimes you have no other option other than just going to the dealership to get something fixed. So this is—we are making more choices available for the consumers.

This is—also will be directly related to affordability as well, assistant deputy Speaker—

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

Mr. Guenter: I'm wondering how the government will ensure that replacement parts and repair tools are actually available in rural communities and smaller towns.

MLA Sandhu: I want to thank the member for that question. I think the member are really aware of, especially, the agriculture industry because he came from the agriculture industry there. So they have more knowledge, pretty much, on this. Even they don't have to read the bill on this one, pretty much, and they know the issues that the agriculture industry is facing with the machinery and everything.

* (15:40)

Honourable assistant deputy Speaker, we will be talking with the stakeholders and—as well as in the—with industry as well to make sure the parts that people are required are available wherever they are, be through, they might have to—

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

Mr. Narth: As we've seen as recently as a few weeks ago, major litigation in the United States around the right to repair and manufacturers paying large fines for legislation that's been tried to be forced onto the manufacturer.

So my question for the minister is: Which dealer representation for manufacturers has he met with; or which manufacturers, which industries have been consulted with this bill?

MLA Sandhu: People have reached out to our office. We are in regular communication with the industry.

Recently, we have a discussion with the Retail Council of Canada where we have folks from Apple, Home Depot, Walmart and many, many big industries. There were around 17 manufacturers were represented on that one, honourable Speaker. We will continue to listen.

I also want to thank our member from Elmwood. Actually, he was the one—brought so many times this legislation and the opposition never—the government at that time never passed it. So here we are, listening to the member from Elmwood and making sure that people have the choices where they want to repair their goods.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mr. Guenter: What enforcement mechanisms will be in place if suppliers fail to provide repair resources in a timely manner?

MLA Sandhu: Thank you to the member for that question.

Yes, we will be consulting with the industry. We will be consulting with the stakeholders on this and—as we develop the regulations—and want to make sure the products are available for a reasonable time and the repair parts are also available.

This is—again, as affordability measures. We want to make sure the consumers have the choice wherever they want to fix their parts right now, most of the time. All you have to do is—there's no other choice than just going to dealership. And where we—in my next answer, I'll probably share my own personal experience in this.

Thank you.

Mr. Narth: I would like to thank the member from Elmwood for his experience on a bill exactly like this, because it's been a number of times that he's brought forward legislation around the right to repair. And we've met with industry that has discussed the cost that this brings to our Manitoba Public Insurance system, and it's amounting to millions upon millions of additional costs to the Crown corporation.

So with automotive repair, how soon of a timeline can we see, and have they consulted with Manitoba Public Insurance on the effect to our Crown corporation that this would have? What is the effect that this will have in the immediate to our Crown corporation?

MLA Sandhu: The question is exactly where I was going with my answer. As I said, I'll go to my next answer.

Recently, my truck broke down and wouldn't move, wouldn't start. Towed it over to a garage and was sitting there for a couple of days. They said: Sorry, can't fix it. You have to take it to the dealership. The software that required to know exactly what's wrong with the truck is not going to—we don't have it, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

So this is—again, we want to make sure those software are available for the garages that they want to have it. This is also where now, at the dealership, I have to pay extra, extra, extra cost where, instead of fixing it at the—

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

Mr. Guenter: The minister talked about a reasonable time. It's a phrase used in the bill. I wonder how he defines reasonable time for repair resources. Of course, the concern is, without clear standards, that small businesses and farmers will be impacted.

I wonder if the minister can define reasonable time.

MLA Sandhu: As I said, reasonable times, yes; and, as I said, we are developing the regulation with the industry and the stakeholders. That's where the reasonable times will come into play.

I'm sure I will—maybe asking the member to maybe give us input, because the member, being from the farming community, maybe he'll have some more ideas how to make that a reasonable time frame, honourable assistant deputy Speaker. I'm sure I'll ask the member from La Vérendrye, as well, to help us in this, give their feedback on this, and also the member from Elmwood also will be providing very, very good feedback on this as well.

Thank you.

Mr. Narth: I'd like to ask the minister how they would potentially mitigate the additional costs and effects that this could have on the consumer, because this, at the end of the day, is for the consumer; but we do know from the litigation that we've seen in the United States, in far larger markets, that putting legislation and requirements against large manufacturers could just limit their activity in our market.

So, when we look at John Deere, Ford Motor Company, those manufacturers, how can we ensure

that this isn't going to affect competition and also availability of products in our marketplace?

MLA Sandhu: On the one hand, the member wants to make sure the parts are available for the farming community when they want to repair their parts. And then, on the other hand, he's saying no, sorry, we don't want those parts to be available. So I don't know which side you want to go—going.

Yes, we will be talking to the manufacturers to give us their input as well, and as well as the stakeholders we will be talking to—it's going to be going or not. Once we develop those regulations we will—going to know exactly how we will have—proceeded with this. This is where the bill is going to help the regular folks here in Manitoba. But the cost of everything is going up—

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

Mr. Guenter: I also want to echo my colleague, the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth), and in thanking the MLA for Elmwood on his work on the right to repair issue.

The right to repair concept is an important one, but the legislation that he brought forward in previous sessions included definitions for designated consumer goods. I'm wondering why Bill 15 does not.

MLA Sandhu: Yes, this is about protecting the consumers here in Manitoba, and we will continue to listen to Manitobans on this, and we will definitely discuss with the manufacturer on this.

Very recently, we had a discussion with the Retail Council of Canada. There were, like, over 17 different companies were represented and we had a really, really good discussion on this one. And we will continue to ask those people to provide us the feedback, as well as our stakeholders here in Manitoba.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Mr. Narth: I'd just like to clarify that the minister has, just in my last question, noted that they would like to consult with industry organizations and even extended that, that they might consult with myself and my colleague.

So I'm just unsure, and I'd like some clarification, why they haven't consulted with the industry organizations, as well as those different manufacturers—specific—prior to drafting this legislation and bringing it forward. Why would these discussions happen after

to create the rest of what actually would be included in a normally drafted bill?

* (15:50)

MLA Sandhu: This is the difference between Conservatives and the NDP on this side. We are out in the public listening to the public every single day, where they are not out in the public. They don't want to listen to the people, and they don't want to listen to their concerns.

This is where I said we will consult with them when we develop the regulation, honourable assistant deputy Speaker. Again, we will continue to listen to Manitobans, unlike opposition: they don't want to listen to Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Mr. Guenter: Well, it sounds like, from the minister's answers, that this is all really just an exercise in futility then this afternoon, then. We're going to pass this bill. The opposition is expected to support it, and we're going to pass it. And then the minister and his department are going to write the regulations and conduct the consultation after the fact. And that's obviously a big concern as a legislator and something, I think, that would concern many Manitobans.

So I'll try this question: I wonder how the government plans to update the list of designated consumer goods as technology evolves, especially in agriculture and the small-business sectors.

MLA Sandhu: I want to thank the member for the question. Yes, the invitation is open to the opposition as well, to give us their feedback on this bill, honourable assistant deputy Speaker. I'm sure the member from Elmwood will be on my side, providing me a guidance on this bill as well.

And our government is a listening government. We will continue to listen to Manitobans, honourable assistant deputy Speaker, and we will not, kind of—like opposition, not going to go out into the public and not listen to them.

But on this side of the House, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) has given us special instruction: Don't sit in this office; go into the public and listen to them.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The time for question period has expired.

Debate

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

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Bill 15 amends The Consumer Protection Act to require suppliers of designated consumer goods to provide what is defined as: the means of repair, including diagnostic repair, repair manuals, replacement parts and specialized tools for a reasonable period of time at a reasonable cost and within a reasonable time frame upon request.

It further allows for exemptions to be created by regulation and requires that those exemptions be disclosed—disclosed prior to sale.

On its face, this is an attempt to respond to a growing concern among consumers, farmers and small businesses that they are increasingly unable to repair the products that they own. The concern that underpins right-to-repair legislation is real, and it's been building for decades.

The modern economy has seen the rise of what many refer to as planned obsolescence, where products are designed in ways that limit their lifespan, restrict access to repair or render them uneconomical to fix, even when the physical components remain largely functional. This phenomenon affects everything from consumer electronics to agricultural machinery, and it places a recurring financial burden on Manitobans who are forced to replace rather than repair.

The response to this issue has not been limited to Manitoba, nor is it a new concept. There is a long and well-documented history of right to repair efforts across North America. In the United States, numerous states have introduced or enacted right-to-repair legislation in various forms, covering sectors such as electronics, automotive equipment and agricultural machinery. Some jurisdictions have achieved meaningful progress while others have encountered significant challenges related to enforcement, scope and unintended consequences.

The legislative landscape is varied, and it provides a wealth of lessons for those willing to examine it carefully. We're also seeing the movement across Canada. Other provinces have introduced or passed right-to-repair-legislation or related measures aimed at improving access to parts, tools and diagnostic information. In some cases, these efforts have advanced through amendments to consumer protection statutes or sector-specific frameworks, while in others they

have installed—they have stalled due to unresolved concerns about scope enforcement and industry impact.

It is worth noting that Prince Edward Island introduced right-to-repair legislation that did not ultimately—but did not ultimately pass it, which underscores the importance of getting the details right before proceeding. These provincial experiences provide valuable lessons and they reinforce the need for clarity, consultation and precision in Manitoba's approach.

And that is precisely where the concern with Bill 15 arises. This PC team has been engaged on this issue for a considerable period of time. We have consulted with consumer electronics groups, with independent repair businesses, with automotive stakeholders and with representatives from the agricultural sector, including both producers and equipment dealers. And that's more than can be said for the members opposite, the minister opposite as well, who apparently hasn't done any consultation yet.

These consultations by our team were not undertaken lightly, and they were not undertaken simply recently. They reflect years of engagement with stakeholders who are directly affected by the challenges this bill tries to address.

What we have heard consistently from those stakeholders is that right-to-repair legislation must be carefully crafted. It must clearly define which goods are covered. It must establish precise standards for what constitutes a reasonable time and a reasonable price. It must account for the complexity of modern equipment, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, where machinery relies on sophisticated software and integrated systems. It must balance access to repair with legitimate concerns about safety, security and intellectual property.

Bill 15 does not provide that level of clarity. The legislation relies heavily on future regulations to define the scope of its application, including which consumer goods will be designated. It does not provide a list of those goods within the statute itself. It does not define what constitutes a reasonable time period or a reasonable amount for the provision of repair service—resources. These are not minor details. These are the central elements that will determine whether the law is effective or merely symbolic. And, again, disappointing that when asked about these matters, the minister had no answer.

The absence of these definitions creates uncertainty for consumers, for small businesses and for the very sectors that this legislation is intended to support.

A farmer considering whether they will be able to repair a modern tractor cannot rely on a promise of future regulations. An independent repair shop cannot build a business model around undefined standards. A consumer cannot assess their rights when those rights are contingent on terms that have yet to be established.

The concerns raised by stakeholders during our consultations reflected—are not theoretical. They are reflected directly in the structure of this bill. Consumer electronics groups have raised concerns about access to proprietary software and the risk of creating obligations that cannot be practically fulfilled. Automotive stakeholders have highlighted the importance of maintaining safety and security systems while enabling repair. Agricultural producers have emphasized the critical need for timely access to repair resources during peak seasons where delays can have significant economic consequences. Equipment dealers have pointed to the complexity of modern machinery and the need for clarity in how repair obligations are defined and enforced.

These are serious concerns and they require serious consideration. It's troubling that this legislation appears to have been brought forward without addressing any of the very issues that stakeholders have identified over the course of years. The bill as drafted contains the same gaps and uncertainties that have been raised repeatedly by those who will be most affected by it. And that raises legitimate questions about the extent of consultation undertaken—going to be undertaken by the government in developing this legislation.

Affordability is a central concern for Manitobans and it is one that this government likes to reference. Right-to-repair legislation has the potential to contribute to affordability by allowing consumers to extend the life of their products and avoid the cost of replacement. But that potential is not realized simply by passing a law. It is realized through the details of how that law is structured and implemented.

* (16:00)

Bill 15, in its current form, does not provide a clear pathway to improved affordability. The reliance on undefined terms, such as reasonable time and reasonable price creates ambiguity that may ultimately limit the effectiveness of this legislation. The absence of a defined list of covered goods creates uncertainty about who will benefit and to what extent. The broad regulatory powers granted to the Lieutenant Governor and Council allow for significant variation in how

the law is applied, which may further complicate its impact.

There is also a need to consider how this legislation will function in practice. Enforcement mechanisms must be clear and effective. Remedies for non-compliance must be accessible and meaningful. The availability of repair resources must be consistent across urban and rural areas. These are practical considerations that determine whether a law achieves its intended purpose.

This PC team supports the principle of right to repair. We support the idea that consumers, farmers and small-business owners should have the ability to maintain and repair the products they rely on. We support the strengthening of local repair industries and the retention of skilled jobs in our communities. We recognize the role that right-to-repair legislation can play in addressing the issue of planned obsolescence and reducing unnecessary waste.

However, support for the principle does not equate to support for flawed legislation. It requires that the legislation be refined, clarified and strengthened to ensure that it delivers on its promise, and that is why we on this side of the House are looking forward to the committee stage of this bill.

Committee provides an opportunity to hear directly from Manitobans, including the stakeholders who have been engaged on this issue for many years. It provides an opportunity to identify the gaps in—in this legislation and to propose amendments that address those gaps, as well as an opportunity to ensure that the final product reflects the input of those who will be most affected by it.

I fully expect that there be numerous suggestions for amendments and I encourage the government to approach that process with an open mind. This is not an issue that benefits from rigidity. It benefits, it requires collaboration, careful consideration and a willingness to incorporate the expertise of those who understand the practical realities of repair, manufacturing and service.

And I would also encourage the minister to extend an invitation to Mr. Willie Cade to appear before 'committitee'—before committee. Mr. Cade is widely recognized as an advocate for right to repair. He has extensive experience working with jurisdictions that have implemented such legislation. His insights would be valuable to this House as we seek to ensure that Manitoba's approach is informed by best

practices and avoids the pitfalls that others have encountered.

So, in closing, Bill 15 addresses an important issue, but it does so in a manner that clearly requires further work. The principle of right to repair is sound. The need to address planned obsolescence is clear. The opportunity to improve affordability is real. However, the legislation before us does not meet those standards required to achieve those objectives.

And so we stand ready. As a PC team, we stand ready to engage constructively in the process of improving this bill, we stand ready to listen to Manitobans and we stand ready to ensure that when this House acts on right to repair, that it does so in a way that is clear, effective and truly beneficial to the people of this province.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Are there any other members who wish to speak in debate?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The question before the House is second reading of Bill 15, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

**Bill 48—The Real Property Amendment
and Planning Amendment Act
(Land Conveyed for Public Purposes)**

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The next order of business on the agenda is Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act (Land Conveyed for Public Purposes).

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): I move, seconded by Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Moyes), that the Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act (Land Conveyed for Public Purposes), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

MLA Sandhu: This amendment will allow statutory easement to continue on a title for land designated as a public reserve and allow new statutory easement to be registered after registration of a plan of subdivision.

Bill 48 will also give authority to grant statutory easement over land shown as a public reserve on plans of subdivision. A public reserve is a common green space in a residential development such as park, playground, retention pond, pathway or protected environment space. Right now, the public cannot check for most easement locations on a public reserve which causes issues for developers, utility companies and for the general public. Bill 48 will make it easier and less time consuming to locate and serve gas, water or Internet lines. It will also reduce cost for extending utility services through public reserve.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the standard rotation and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): What specific problem is this legislation trying to solve that cannot already be addressed under existing law?

Hon. Mintu Sandhu (Minister of Public Service Delivery): Honourable assistant deputy Speaker, easy way to explain is not going to nitty and gritty things. You have a playground structure or playground where, if somebody wants to have the Internet or a hydro line under those go through the park, is not currently allowed. It has to go over the land. So this is where it's going to make it easier for the companies, Manitoba Hydro and also the—whoever is developing that subdivision to have easier access on this.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I would like the minister to share with us here in the Chamber what consultation was done with municipalities before introducing these changes here.

MLA Sandhu: We have extended consultation on this with the City of Winnipeg, AMM and also the Indigenous communities on this. And they were the ones who suggested to bring this bill forward, and this bill was in the development for almost over three years. After consulting with the City of Winnipeg, AMM and Indigenous communities, we brought this bill forward.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Just a question about—another question about municipalities:

How will this bill affect long-term municipal planning and zoning certainty?

* (16:10)

MLA Sandhu: This was the ask from the municipalities, to bring this bill forward. As I said, this is not a one-week, two-week consultation; this was in the development for almost three years, this bill. We consulted with the City of Winnipeg, the AMM; so all the municipalities are represented at AMM, and this was their ask to bring this bill forward.

So this is going to make it easier to locate these lines, as well also have it easier—well, make it less expensive for people to develop the land for the subdivision that they want to develop.

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

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable deputy Speaker, what safeguards will be in place to ensure that these new powers are not used inconsistently across municipalities and in Indigenous communities?

MLA Sandhu: This was the ask from the municipalities. And as I said, there was a—we have a very robust consultation on this. And they are all in favour of this, and this is their ask—the municipalities' ask. And this is AMM's ask that we need this bill. And this is, again, the public will know exactly where those lines are. And also this Internet line series, and it's easier to locate with this bill.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Ms. Byram: I'm wondering if the minister can share with us here what role, if any, will the provincial government have in approving disputes over these land designations?

MLA Sandhu: Again, as I said, this is related to the utilities passing through public land. So this is, again, the City of Winnipeg were asking for this. And this was—AMM was asking for this, and we have a very robust conversation with the municipalities and as well as Indigenous communities. And I want to make sure that the ask from those—from AMM and the City of Winnipeg are delivered, so we will know exactly where those lines are. And—

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

Mrs. Hiebert: I know that you've repeated several times that you were asked to do this by the municipal government and by the City of Winnipeg, but my question is how can we ensure that public lands are

still being used responsibly? Even though they've asked for this and you're saying, yes, we'll do this for you, how are you going to ensure that that's being done responsibly?

MLA Sandhu: We all know municipalities are responsible and they will definitely follow the rules and the regulations that there are. And this is, again, public parks, public recreation areas, natural areas, planted buffer, airstrips and public work such as retention ponds are covered in this. And we will, again, continue to discuss this with the City of Winnipeg, AMM, and Indigenous communities on this.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Before acknowledging the next speaker, just a gentle reminder for questions to go through the Chair, please.

Mr. Nesbitt: The minister's department told the Association of Manitoba Municipalities that this bill will speed up development.

How much faster does the minister anticipate development taking place across the province?

MLA Sandhu: Honourable assistant deputy Speaker, again, the member knows that municipalities have said that this bill cannot fast those developments that there are.

Again, as I said earlier, simple way of putting it is why is it costing more right now to develop a subdivision is because 10 per cent of the subdivisions that they have to protect for a public land, and that's where, right now, those 'detilities' have to go around it and they cannot go underneath it. And we are making those ones available for developers to have those lines under the public land so that they can have access—

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

Ms. Byram: Can the minister tell us here today: How will this bill impact the use of parks and other green space in urban areas, rural areas and First Nations communities?

MLA Sandhu: As I said, this is—will not going to have a—public will still have the access to the parks and there will not be restricted that you cannot use the parks because we have the lines going underneath it. There's an Internet line going through the park. Or, again, as I said, we have a consultation done with the municipalities, with AMM, Indigenous communities.

And this is also not infringing—or like, we—it's Indigenous communities. Land will not be covered under this where they have the rights to the land.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Mrs. Hiebert: Question is: Could this bill unintentionally restrict development in designated public lands? Is there anything that could happen in any scenarios that could affect and cause this to be a problem rather than a help for municipalities?

MLA Sandhu: I don't see any issues with this where it can have issues of having a development. This is, again, every subdivision have 10 per cent protected land for public use and this is where we are making those land—where they can use those lines under that land that, again, is going to cost less for the developers and in return it's going to cost less for someone to have—buy that land or to build a new house on that land. So this is where also affordability—we are helping with the affordability.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable deputy Speaker, can the minister tell this House what legal ambiguity currently exists in The Real Property Act that necessitates this amendment?

MLA Sandhu: Thank you for the member for asking me the question. The member was really, really in support of this bill. Looks like today he doesn't want to support this bill and—while sitting—and he, well, actually thanked me for bringing this bill forward and where, today, looks like it he doesn't want to support this bill. So hopefully he will support this bill.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

Ms. Byram: Can the member tell us how many cases in Manitoba have involved disputes over easements on land set aside for public purposes in the last 10 years?

MLA Sandhu: As I said, this bill is brought forward because the municipalities were looking for this kind of bill and this is—again, we are helping with the affordability. It's going to cost less to develop a subdivision. In return, when people build their houses, it's going to cost them less.

So, again, we are here. We are listening to Manitobans, also listening to the municipalities where the Conservatives didn't want to even sit down with the mayor of the City of Winnipeg.

Thank you, honourable assistant deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Seeing no further questions—or are there any other further questions?

Debate

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

* (16:20)

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I rise today to speak to Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act.

At its core, Bill 48 proposes targeted amendments to The Real Property Act and The Planning Act. These changes are technical in nature but they carry practical implications for municipalities, developers and communities across Manitoba.

Specifically, the bill clarifies the use of land reserved for public purposes and introduces provisions allowing statutory easements to be granted over such lands to eligible entities. It also expands the definition of permitted uses to include works of municipalities, which is intended to facilitate infrastructure development and provide additional clarity to municipal governments.

The Speaker in the Chair

Let me begin by acknowledging that there is merit in clarifying legislation where ambiguity exists. Municipal governments often face delays and complications when statutory frameworks are unclear, outdated or inconsistent. In that sense, efforts to streamline processes and remove unnecessary red tape can be beneficial, particularly in a province where infrastructure needs continue to grow and where timely project delivery is critical to economic development and quality of life.

Municipalities are on the front lines of service delivery. They manage roads, water systems, drainage, recreation facilities and other essential infrastructure that Manitobans rely on every day. If Bill 48 helps municipalities move more efficiently in planning and executing these responsibilities, then that is a positive step.

The addition of works of municipalities as a permitted use of public reserve land may provide a needed flexibility, particularly in smaller or rapidly growing communities where land availability can be constrained and options may be limited.

Simmerly—'similarly', the introduction of statutory easements over public reserve lands, once registered,

could offer a clearer legal framework for infrastructure projects such as utilities, pipelines or drainage systems. By ensuring that these easements are formally recognized and legally binding, the legislation may reduce uncertainty, improve co-ordination among stakeholders and minimize the risk of disputes or delays.

However, while the administrative intent of the bill is understandable, it is equally important that we examine its broader implications. Public reserve lands are not simply parcels of land waiting for development. They are often set aside for specific community purposes: green spaces, recreational areas, buffers and other uses that contribute to the well-being of residents and the character of neighbourhoods.

One of the cautionary aspects of Bill 48 is that it could, in practice, allow for these lands to be repurposed more easily. While the bill does not explicitly remove protections, it does expand the range of permissible uses without clearly defining limits or criteria. This raises important questions about how decisions will be made, who will be consulted and what safeguards will be in place to ensure that public interests are preserved.

Communities place significant value on green space and public reserves. These areas provide environmental benefits, support mental and physical health and contribute to the overall livability of neighbourhoods. They are also important for long-term sustainability, particularly as communities grow and urbanize. Any legislative change that affects how these lands can be used should be approached with careful consideration, transparency and respect for local priorities.

It is also worth noting that the bill enables various authorities—including municipalities, the Province and the Crown—to grant statutory easements over public reserve land. While this flexibility may be useful, it also underscores the need for clear guidelines and accountability. Without consistent standards, there is a risk of uneven application across jurisdictions, which could lead to confusion, inconsistency or unintended consequences over time.

From a financial perspective, the bill appears to have minimal direct administrative costs. That is not unusual for legislation of this nature. However, the indirect implications, such as the potential for accelerated development or changes in land use, could have longer term impacts that are more difficult to quantify. These include effects on municipal planning

processes, environmental considerations, infrastructure maintenance and community engagement.

In reviewing this legislation, it is also important to consider the broader context. Municipalities across Manitoba are facing increasing pressures from population growth in some areas, to infrastructure deficits in others. They are being asked to do more, often with limited resources and rising costs. In that environment, any measure that genuinely supports efficient service delivery is welcome, but efficiency must always be balanced with responsibility and foresight. As opposition members, our role is not simply to support or oppose legislation outright but to ensure that it is thoroughly examined and improved where necessary.

In the case of Bill 48, there are several questions that merit further discussion and clarification as the bill proceeds through the legislative process. For instance, what mechanisms will be in place to ensure that the use of public reserve lands for municipal works does not come at the expense of community needs? Will there be requirements for public consultation before such lands are repurposed or encumbered by easements? How will the government monitor and report on the use of statutory easements granted under this new framework?

Additionally, how does the government intend to define and regulate eligible grantees in practice? While the bill references existing definitions in The Real Property Act, it would be helpful to understand how these entities will be evaluated and what criteria they must meet to access easements over public lands. Clarity in this area will be important to ensure fairness, transparency and public confidence.

Another consideration is the potential cumulative impact of these changes. While a single easement or project may seem minor in isolation, multiple decisions over time could significantly alter the character and availability of public reserve lands within a community. This underscores the importance of strategic planning, co-ordination and oversight at both the municipal and provincial levels.

I would also note that the government has indicated that this bill is intended to speed up development. While that may be a worthwhile goal, it is not in itself a sufficient justification. Development should be guided by thoughtful planning, community input and long-term sustainability. Speed should not come at the expense of due diligence, nor should it override

the interests of residents who rely on these shared public spaces.

It will be important to understand how this legislation aligns with community needs and priorities. Some municipalities may welcome the added flexibility and clarity, while others may have concerns about the potential implications or unintended consequences. Their perspectives should inform how this bill is implemented and, if necessary, amended in the future.

It is also an appropriate moment to reflect on infrastructure needs across the province. There are many communities that are in urgent need of investment: roads, water systems, flood protection and community facilities all require attention. Legislative changes alone will not address these challenges. They must be accompanied by adequate funding, planning and sustained support. In that regard Bill 48 can be seen as one piece of a larger puzzle. It may help remove certain procedural barriers but it does not replace the need for comprehensive infrastructure strategies or long-term investment. As we consider this legislation we should keep in mind that broader—keep in mind the broader picture and ensure that it complements rather than substitutes for meaningful action.

To conclude, Honourable Speaker, Bill 48 is an administrative bill with practical implications. It should seek to—seek to clarify existing legislation, provide flexibility for municipalities and facilitate infrastructure development. These are reasonable objectives, and there are elements of the bill that warrant cautious support. At the same time, the legislation raises important questions about the use and protection of public reserve lands. It highlights the need for clear guidelines, transparency and accountability. It also underscores the importance of balancing efficiency with community interests, environmental stewardship and long-term planning.

As this bill moves forward, I encourage the government to engage openly with municipalities, stakeholders and all Manitobans. By doing so we can ensure that the legislation achieves its intended goals while safeguarding the public assets that communities rely on and preserving trust in the decisions that affect them.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Seeing no other speakers, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: So the question before the House is second reading of Bill 48, The Real Property Amendment and Planning Amendment Act (Land Conveyed for Public Purposes).

* (16:30)

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.?

The Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 13, 2026

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