



Third Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
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	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike, 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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

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

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

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 223—The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment Act

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I move, seconded by the MLA for Lac du Bonnet, that Bill 223, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Stone: I rise today for the first reading of The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act. This bill seeks to correct a past oversight, where some property owners have been taxed by local school divisions but not provided any vote or say on who is elected to make the decisions on how those taxes are spent. This amounts to taxation without representation and is undemocratic.

This bill amends the act to enable non-resident property owners to vote in school board elections. Voting will be limited to two non-resident owners per

property. This will ensure all owners of the property are represented, but prevents any candidate from attempting to inflate support by adding owners to a specific property. The voters must be registered property owners for at least six months prior to the election they will be voting in.

This will align our school board elections with our municipal elections and ensure fairness to all parties. I look forward to the support of the House for this bill.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 224—The Residency Requirements for Elections Act (Various Acts Amended)

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), that Bill 224, the residency—'residency' requirements for elections act, be now read a first time.

The Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Brandon West, seconded by the honourable member for Borderland, that Bill 224, The Residency Requirements for Elections Act (Various Acts Amended), be now read a first time.

Mr. Balcaen: Bill 224, The Residency Requirements for Elections Act, sets a fair stage for all Manitobans wishing to participate in their democratic process. This bill changes the residential requirements from six months to three months to be eligible to participate in elections.

Allowing those who choose Manitoba to be their province to live, work and play in will also empower them to participate in choosing their candidate of choice after three months of residency.

I look forward to all parties' support for Bill 224 to allow new Manitobans to have their voices heard in our democratic process.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

No further bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity): Today, November 25, is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. We honour survivors, mourn those we've lost and demand an end to every system that excuses, minimizes or enables violence against women, girls and gender-diverse peoples.

Today also demands we look directly at what so many still refuse to name: we are living through a relentless, global epidemic of male violence.

We've witnessed a year of systemic rape of women, girls and even babies as weapons of war. Literal babies. That is the level of male violence we are being asked to tolerate: mass abductions and mass killings of women and children.

In 2025, men still require laws to stop them from marrying children. And still, men protest those laws and get them successfully overturned so that they can marry literal children.

We've seen online networks of men, including husbands, partners and fathers, secretly uploading intimate photos and videos of women in their lives without consent. These men literally hate the women in their lives.

We also continue to watch the survivors of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein fight for truth, while powerful men remain shielded and protected.

In Canada, we watched the televised sexual assault trial involving five male national hockey players. The trial is a reminder that prestige, money and male loyalty still outweighs women's safety.

On November 4, Mexico's first female president, Claudia Sheinbaum, was sexually groped in public; a stark reminder that no level of power protects women from male violence.

Here in Manitoba, both my office and the office of the Minister for Housing, Addictions and Homelessness were firebombed, and because of our ministerial positions, we were expected to stay quiet, to minimize what happened and to act as if this level of violence is acceptable.

* (13:40)

The profound grief caused by serial predators continues in Manitoba. Between March and May of

2022, four Indigenous women—Rebecca Contois, Morgan Harris, Mercedes Myran and Ashlee Shingoose—were murdered by a serial killer.

The Manitoba PCs campaigned on these murders, putting up billboards and releasing videos profoundly declaring that they would not search the landfill. It remains one of the most shameful political moments in our province's history.

And just recently, we were dealt yet another blow when serial killer Shawn Lamb was released after serving only two thirds of his sentence. He murdered three Indigenous women: Carolyn Sinclair, pregnant; Lorna Blacksmith; and Tanya Nepinak. He served the equivalent of four years for each of those Indigenous women's lives.

On this day, my message to Shawn Lamb is to walk yourself to the nearest police station and finally tell the truth about what happened to Tanya Nepinak and get yourself back to jail immediately.

Naming male violence is not divisive. Male violence is what is divisive. Male violence is what destroys families, cultures and communities.

And despite the relentlessness of male violence, women and girls keep going. We keep fighting. We keep standing up for one another. We keep building communities and movements that save lives. No matter how heavy the world becomes, our strength never wavers and it never will.

I dedicate my ministerial statement to the women and girls of Sudan.

Miigwech.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Today marks the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. It is important that we take this time to shine a light on gender-based violence.

Women have often been shamed and silenced for speaking out against injustice and abuse. This is a tragedy and it cannot go on. We need to be able to speak about gender-based violence, to have uncomfortable conversations. Gender-based violence is a reality. It is a reality we need to face, and one that we need to fix.

Violence against women remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations in the world. In 2024, 50,000 women and girls were killed by intimate partners or family members; that's one every 10 minutes.

Manitoba has the second highest rates of intimate partner and family violence among Canadian provinces.

Rural Manitoba has the highest rate of intimate partner violence in Canada, where the domestic-related homicide rate is 10 times higher than urban areas.

These alarming statistics highlight the ongoing issue of gender-based violence and the need for urgent action to address the root causes. Together, we must combat the hurtful stereotypes and the oppressive structures that perpetuate violence and promote them.

Fighting gender-based requires societal change. Too often, perpetrators of gender-based violence go unpunished. We need more accountability.

It is crucial that we support survivors on their road to healing. Overcoming deeply affecting trauma requires strength. This trauma impacts many women on their day-to-day lives, and overcoming the fear associated with trauma can be frustrating, aggravating and deeply saddening.

So to those who have suffered from gender-based violence: we see you; you are strong.

In our digital age, violence against women takes on new forms. Private images of women are posted without their consent. Abusers are weaponizing AI to create sexually explicit images and videos of women. Anonymous online predators stay hidden behind screens.

This toxic online culture of hate and misogyny must be brought to an end. We need to protect our women and girls to ensure that they are safe, comfortable in the ever-increasing digital landscape.

For anyone who has felt the impact of gender-based violence, I encourage you to seek out help. You're not alone, and Manitoba is home to several organizations that provide support and resources for victims. These resource centres are critical in providing a safe and comfortable place for victims of gender-based violence to feel safe and listened to.

As a woman, as a mother, as a daughter, a sister, an aunt, this issue is deeply personal to my heart. Women and girls are not powerless. We are not voiceless. We are strong, powerful and resilient. Discrimination based on race, 'ethnicity,' religion, sexuality or gender has no place in this world. We all deserve the opportunity to live without fear of harm and without fear of violence.

The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women provides an opportunity for individuals, communities, organizations, to raise awareness, advocate for change and push for solutions that promote equality, safety and justice for all women.

Thank you.

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

The Speaker: Does the honourable member for Tyndall Park have leave? *[Agreed]*

MLA Lamoureux: Over 32 years ago, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, and since 1999, November 25 has been designated as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

In Canada, 44 per cent of women, starting at age 15, who have ever been in an intimate partner relationship reported experiencing some form of physical, sexual or psychological violence. This is both a major public health problem and a violation of a woman's rights.

In Ontario, advocates are calling to formally declare intimate partner violence an epidemic to add urgency and emergency funding to the acute problem.

We should do the same in Manitoba. We need to recognize that violence against women is rooted in unequal power relationships. Women are nearly three times more likely to have experienced partner violence than men.

And, significantly, immigrant and Indigenous women are further marginalized due to ongoing racism, which contributes to violence and is internalized by marginalized people, impeding their social and personal power.

Factors including poverty, isolation from family and friends, language difficulties and homelessness also contribute to the victimization of the most vulnerable women in society.

Honourable Speaker, today begins the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, and this year's theme is UNiTE to End Digital Violence against All Women and Girls.

This is one of the fastest growing forms of abuse, and we see evidence of this all around the city on billboards informing the public of what we can be doing to combat it. This year's campaign is also a reminder that digital safety is central to gender equality.

In closing, Honourable Speaker, I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward today's statement, and we must all act to stop and end digital abuse and all violence against women and girls.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to member's statements, there are some guests in the gallery that will be leaving right away, so I want to take the opportunity to introduce them.

* (13:50)

We have, seated in the public gallery, from École Rivière Rouge, 40 grade 4 students under the direction of Nicole Trottier, and the group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Schott).

We welcome you here today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Niakwa Park 70th Anniversary

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Today I rise to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Niakwa Park, one of the most beautiful, unique and cherished neighbourhoods in Winnipeg.

The story of Niakwa Park is one of creativity and connections. Designed in the 1950s by architect Nikola Zunic, the community was built to embrace the beauty of its natural surroundings. In fact, the name Niakwa means winding river and honours the Seine River that flows right through the park.

Nikola also envisioned a neighbourhood where no two homes would feel the same, and as you wander through the community, you'll notice that each house was created with its own character and charm, all derived from 10 blueprints that he provided. And that thoughtful design has stood the test of time.

Characterized by stunning mid-century modern homes nestled among mature trees, the cluster of bays feels like a secret escape from the bustle on nearby Fermor. It's common to catch a glimpse of wildlife like deer, foxes, coyotes and birds of prey—and sometimes even the odd golf ball from the neighbouring golf course.

However, what makes Niakwa Park truly extraordinary is its people. From book swaps to plant trades and movies in the park, these folks thrive on connection.

To mark the occasion of the 70th anniversary, the community celebrated in style with a party in the park on September 13. The park was buzzing with energy as neighbours showed up dressed in styles from their favourite decade. Food trucks served up some local favourites, classic cars were on display, a deejay spun

hits from the past 70 years. There was a fun run, bingo games and even a s'mores roast in the evening. It was a celebration truly worthy of seven decades of memories.

I ask all of my colleagues to please join me in congratulating the residents of Niakwa Park on an incredible 70 years. Thank you for continuing to preserve the warmth, beauty and sense of community that make this neighbourhood so special.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Ovarian Cancer Walk of Hope

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I rise today to honour a group of women who are doing incredible work to fight ovarian cancer. Joining us in the gallery today are Christa Slatnik, Cindy Sanchez and Jackie Maxted.

I've spoken previously in this Chamber about my friend Jackie, who was diagnosed earlier this year with ovarian cancer. Jackie was incredibly lucky because her cancer was detected in its early stages, but each year in Canada, over 3,000 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and sadly, more than half will not survive beyond five years.

Recognizing her own good fortune, Jackie got involved with Ovarian Cancer Canada. Together with her family, she organized a team for the ovarian cancer walk of hope, an annual event that is co-chaired by the amazing team of twin sisters Christa and Cindy, who lost their mother to ovarian cancer at the age of 53.

Christa and Cindy have been tireless advocates for ovarian cancer research and access to genetic testing. This year's walk, held at Kildonan Park in September, raised over \$80,000 for ovarian cancer research, advocacy and improving support.

Jackie served as this year's spokesperson. Her team, Maximum Ovary-Drive, raised over \$17,000 and was one of the top 10 fundraising teams in all of Canada.

The symptoms of ovarian cancer can be vague, and there is no screening test. Survival statistics have not changed in the last 50 years. But there is incredible work happening right here in Manitoba.

Recently, I had the privilege of touring Dr. Mark Nachtigal's lab at the University of Manitoba, where he and his team are working every day to better understand ovarian cancer, detect it earlier and develop potential treatments.

Their work, alongside that of dedicated advocates like Christa, Cindy and Jackie, gives us reason for hope that we can and we will change the trajectory of ovarian cancer for women in our province.

Please join me in thanking Christa Slatnik, Cindy Sanchez, Jackie Maxted and Ovarian Cancer Canada for all of their incredible efforts.

Keystone Rainbow Curling League

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I rise today to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Keystone Rainbow Curling League.

Founded by Trevor Harris in 2005 with just 18 teams, Keystone was created as an inclusive league where everyone is welcome. Teams include members of every gender from the 2SLGBTQ+ community and allies, with a simple but powerful goal: to create a safe space to enjoy a sport with deep roots in Manitoba.

Today, the league has grown to 45 teams and more than 225 curlers. That growth shows how people value spaces where they can be themselves and fully participate in the sports they love. Free learn-to-curl events continue to spark new interest.

Keystone Rainbow Curling League isn't just about curling. It's also about drag bingo, potlucks and late-night laughs. It's about building an inclusive Manitoba where people show up for each other on and off the ice.

Queer sports leagues like Keystone offer safety, joy and belonging. They help young people see a future where they can thrive, they keep senior 2SLGBTQ+ people connected and they offer allies a place to participate and support.

Earlier this season, I was honoured to attend the league's opening. Standing among so many passionate curlers was a powerful reminder of the community and the belonging this league represents.

The Granite Curling Club in Wolseley has been a remarkable partner. Pride flags hang in the rink, the rings on sheet 4 are painted in rainbow colours and a pride decal greets everyone at the door, sending a clear message that every curler is safe and valued.

Please join me in welcoming board members Ryan Miller and Brett Nickol and congratulating the founders, organizers, volunteers and every curler who has shaped this league over 20 years.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Portage Cup

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to recognize two individuals from Portage la Prairie, Kelly Funk and Shane Moffat, the driving forces behind one of the most successful

hockey tournament series in western Canada: the Portage Cup.

Since launching the Portage Cup in 2008, Kelly and Shane have built a 16-week tournament series that continues to grow year after year. This season alone, they are welcoming 405 teams—boys, girls, co-ed teams—with more than 5,200 participants taking to the ice.

Honourable Speaker, their impact extends far beyond the rink. During the typically slow winter months of January and February, Portage la Prairie is anything but quiet. Hotels are full, restaurants are packed, local businesses are booming and our multiplex, Stride Place, is a hub of activity. The Portage Cup has become a major economic driver for our entire region. In fact, one of the restaurants is saying January is now the busiest month they have.

And these tournaments don't just draw Manitoban teams. Players and families travel from Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nunavut and the United States to be part of this incredible event. Every weekend, new visitors experience Portage hospitality, creating lasting memories and strengthening our reputation as a premier hockey destination.

The Portage Cup is not just a tournament. It's a celebration of community, sport and local economic growth, and it exists because of the passion and the leadership of Shane and Kelly.

I ask all members of this House to join me in honouring Kelly Funk and Shane Moffat for their tremendous benefit they bring to Portage la Prairie and to the province of Manitoba.

Thank you.

* (14:00)

Wanipigow High School Band

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures): I rise today to uplift five young Indigenous women musicians who make up the Wanipigow high school band, located on the Hollow Water First Nation: Elizabeth Bushie, Presley Cowley, Briella Hall, Alicia Hardisty and Tori Redhead, who join us here today.

With family ties not only in Hollow Water, but also Sagkeeng, Bloodvein, Shamattawa and Wabowden, these young women are truly an inspiration for the talent that exists in our communities. To watch and listen to them play is an absolute treat, as these young women have been playing for their entire school career.

They have performed for audiences that number in the thousands, including a performance right here in the Rotunda.

But fear not, if you have not had the opportunity to hear them perform, they will be performing the Canadian national anthem at the Winnipeg Jets game versus the Detroit Red Wings on January 24, 2026, at the annual WASAC game right here at the Canada Life Centre, performing the instrumental as well as the lyrics in Ojibwe.

I also want to give a shout-out to True North and the Winnipeg Jets for making this event a reality.

Honourable Speaker, I am in awe of these young Indigenous women as they take up seats, rooms and spaces all across our great province. As I look up and see these young women, who join us in the gallery, I ask them to imagine: imagine 50 years ago, your grandparents sitting around watching Hockey Night in Canada on one of only two channels that most of our communities got. And as they watched the national anthem being performed, not knowing that one day their very own granddaughter would be on that stage, on that ice, on that television performing the Canadian national anthem, let alone in our first language of Ojibwe.

You make them all so proud. You make us all so proud. Congratulations.

Honourable Speaker, I ask all my colleagues to please rise and show our support and appreciation for these extremely talented young Indigenous women.

Miigwech.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to oral questions, there are some other guests that I would like to introduce.

I would draw the attention of all honourable members to the loge to my right, where we have with us today Douglas Fraser Martindale, former MLA for the Burrows.

We welcome you here today.

And further, in the loge to my left, we have former member for Springfield, Gilles Roch.

And we welcome you here today.

And I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today Dr. Matthew Bzura, who is a guest of the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler).

And we welcome you here today as well.

And I see we have another guest with us in the loge to my left. Draw attention of all honourable members there, where Steven Fletcher, former member for Assiniboia, has joined us.

We welcome you here today as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Individual with Spinal Muscular Atrophy Request to Cover Mr. Bray's Medication

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Yesterday, I, like everyone else in this province, was shocked to hear that the Premier and the NDP Health Minister denied Jeremy Bray the life-saving medication he needed.

The Health Minister called Jeremy's family and asked them to drive three hours to come meet with them. The meeting created a sense of hope in a young man, and his family, that is dying from spinal muscular atrophy. I spoke to the family about the joy they felt on their drive into Winnipeg, hoping that the medication would be approved.

But in the blink of an eye, the family's hopes were crushed when the minister said no. No, we will not cover the cost of the medication, a callous, heartless and calculated decision that was made by this NDP Health Minister and Premier.

The Premier now has sentenced Jeremy to death by denying him the life-saving medication he needs. Will the Premier reverse that decision and approve the life-saving medication for Jeremy today?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I want to speak to Mr. Bray, and to just say that, Jeremy, I was very moved by the media reports overnight, and we have some positive news to share with you and your family here today.

We have been in touch with Roche, the drug company that had been providing this medication, and I gather that there's some progress being made and so I'm happy to share with the House and with all Manitobans that you are going to get the coverage of this, probably for another year, as we push to make sure that the federal drug regulator does their job in gathering the evidence of this next step.

This would not have happened were it not for the Health Minister's efforts on this file.

In your public commentary, Jeremy, you said that you love Manitoba, and I want to take this opportunity on behalf of the Province to say Manitoba loves you.

And so long as we're around, you are going to get the health care that you need.

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

Mr. Khan: That is good news to hear, but why all the games? Why all the games from the Premier and the Health Minister?

Why make the family—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —drive out three hours at the end of day and have them drive back to just announce 12 hours later that magically this drug is approved?

This Premier is playing games. He's playing games with people's lives and that's proof of it today. Magically within 12 hours, this Premier says it's probably going to be approved for a year.

So will the Premier commit today that he is going to guarantee that Jeremy Bray's medication will be covered for one year from today, or will he just keep playing games with people's lives?

Mr. Kinew: You know, Jeremy is showing remarkable tenacity and perseverance in fighting not only this terrible ailment, but also in advocating eloquently and forcefully in public.

Of course, these sorts of situations require a lot of work on the administrative side. These things typically occur behind the scenes. I'll table for the member opposite some of the advocacy work that our Minister of Health has made on Mr. Bray's behalf.

But, again, the point is this: Manitoba is stepping up to ensure that you get the pharmaceutical coverage that you need. We would love it if this pharmaceutical company would be donating this medication prior to its approval here in Canada, but in the interim, we're willing to work with them in finding a path forward.

And so, I want to take this opportunity to thank our Health Minister for continuing to work on this file to ensure that even if the opposition members give up—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Again, Manitobans will see the Premier is playing games.

I asked him a plain and simple question: Will he commit today to guaranteed funding for one year for Jeremy. He won't answer it. He says that he's reached out to the pharmaceutical company for a donation.

He won't commit the funds. He won't guarantee that this coverage will be guaranteed for a year for Jeremy.

It's not the first time the Premier has done this. Earlier this month, a family in Steinbach, after months and months of reaching out to this Health Minister with no response, then finally with advocacy from the member from Steinbach and thousands of Manitobans, this Health Minister finally woke up and said, oh, yes, okay, we'll cover that life-saving medication for a five-year-old boy. After months of games.

And again, here with Jeremy, more games.

So will the Premier commit today to one hundred per cent guaranteeing that he will cover the cost of the medication for Jeremy for one year?

Mr. Kinew: I'll take this opportunity to continue saying nice things about Mr. Bray, who has done a remarkable job of advocating for himself.

I was very moved, as a parent, to see his parents' efforts on his behalf. And I would say that we're stepping up. Your Health Minister is stepping up and doing the right thing here.

Yes, when I say something, it happens: one year of drug coverage. Just like I said we'd cut the gas tax and we did; just like I said we'd search the landfill and we did; just like I said we'd staff up health care and we did, today I'm saying your Health Minister is going to get you the medical coverage that you need.

Member opposite might want to explain why they didn't provide this coverage when they were in government.

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

Extortion Ring Operating in Manitoba Call for Task Force to Address

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, let's talk about all the broken promises by this NDP government and Premier.

Health care is worse, crime is higher than it's ever been, affordability is not affordable for Manitobans anymore. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: Our economy is dead last.

The Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) might want to heckle me all she wants but the facts are the facts: Manitoba is worse off under this NDP government.

* (14:10)

Today, I met with concerned Manitobans who have been targeted by an organized extortion ring. They aren't the first to raise this concern. Criminals are clearly ramping up their attacks and demands. This family was being extorted now for \$500,000 and threats of violence and murder on their family.

These Manitobans are standing up to this intimidation. But this NDP government has done nothing.

What is the Premier doing to make sure that families are safe and these extortion rings will be put out?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): When there's an allegation of criminal behaviour, that needs to be referred to law enforcement immediately. In this case, that's what the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) has done.

On the broader issue of extortion and other threats that are made in the community, there's no place for that in Manitoba. And I was very proud to be there with the members for Burrows (Mr. Brar) and McPhillips (MLA Devgan) and Maples (MLA Sandhu) when we met face-to-face at the Pipeline Gurdwara and committed that we are going to work on this issue with people from the Sikh faith community.

We know that this is a live issue that demands action, not rhetoric and empty promises. That's why we're tackling it. When you go to the opposition, you get hot air. When you come to us, promises kept, action, promises delivered.

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

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, the RCMP was notified. The police was notified. Families and businesses of this acquaintance have all been notified. They've done everything they can do.

But who has failed them? This Premier and this Minister of Justice. The family walked down the hallway here in the Legislature to go see the Minister of Justice, and they said, he's too busy to meet. They should send him an email.

Honourable Speaker, they've sent him—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —an email. We'll see if the Minister of Justice will actually do his job and reach out.

In September, a specialized BC extortion task force was launched to strengthen investigations into extortion threats and violence. That's in BC.

What has Manitoba done? Nothing, nothing under this Premier and this failed Minister of Justice.

How many more Manitobans, how many more families' businesses need to be targeted before the Premier calls for a Manitoba task force to deal with this important issue?

Mr. Kinew: We do have a task force. It's tackling meth; it's tackling drugs, the terrible scourge that is tearing apart our communities.

What are the Conservatives doing—what did they do during their time in office? Nothing. They watched it get worse. Came in here every single day, 100 grand a year, doing absolutely nothing on cracking down on drugs. What an absolute disgrace.

Comes to threats being issued in the community, for sure we'll add that to the many, many items that our Minister of Justice is showing leadership on.

But I have to call out the members opposite. The PCs used to be the party of law and order; they forfeited that. They used to be the party of fiscal conservatism; they forfeited that. You look at them today. The member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler), their leader, the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), they campaign on fringe issues, targeting trans children in our community.

If they ever want a shot at government, leave the trans kids alone. Focus on the criminals. Focus on the cost of living. Focus on health care. That's what we're doing because we work for you.

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

Mr. Khan: I think the Premier needs to focus a little harder because health care is worse, crime is up, and it's not affordable to live in this province anymore, and our economy is dead last. So instead of hot air coming from that side, maybe the Premier could actually start delivering results for Manitobans.

We're not talking about meth; we're talking about extortion here. It's convenient that the Premier left that out of the Minister of Justice's job because he's not doing anything to help Manitobans that are facing extortion.

BC, Alberta and Ontario are working together to share resources and information. But who's left out of there? Manitoba. This failed Minister of Justice isn't doing anything. He won't even meet with families that are being extorted right now.

Can the Premier explain—*[interjection]* If the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) wants to heckle me while we're talking about violence and threats, after her ministerial statement, that's rich coming from her, Honourable Speaker. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: Will the Premier do something to help these families and protect—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Government bench needs to come to order.

Mr. Khan: Shameful for the Minister of Families to ask that way when we talk about violence and threats.

Will the Premier do something today to assure this family—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Kinew: You know, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) has offered this family a meeting, but I really, really have to call out the member opposite for diminishing us taking action on drugs. What—how far have they fallen from grace? They're soft on crime. They're soft in QP, of course, but soft on crime? That is an outrage for anybody with right-leaning political tendencies.

This is disgraceful. I think every rational person out there knows that we need to bring the hammer down on drug trafficking. We're not going to take the soft-on-crime approach of the member opposite. We're going to take the approach that you voted for in the last election. Leave the fringe issues to the PCs. We're focused on the bread and better—the bread and butter—topics of cost of living, of cracking down on crime and on fixing health care.

By the way, he wants to raise: what are we doing in terms of gender equity in the province? Happy to report 110,000 Manitobans have gotten free birth control since we introduced the program. That's—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Education Property Taxes Request to Remove

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, under this NDP government, Manitobans continue to face historic unprecedented education property tax hikes.

When the NDP irresponsibly removed the rebate and 2 per cent cap on school divisions, over 55 per cent of Winnipeg property owners are now worse off and

the NDP hiked school taxes to historic levels across the province. Families are stretched, seniors are struggling, yet this NDP is adding more taxes with no relief.

Will the NDP reverse tax and remove education taxes from properties altogether?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, when it comes to education property tax relief, what did the members opposite do? They provided it to billionaires on Bay Street. Cheques for billionaires.

What are we doing on this side? Cheques for Main Street. Cheques for Manitobans; \$1,500 off your education property taxes. And of course, Honourable Speaker, we didn't stop there; that's going up to \$1,600 this tax season.

And that's in addition to a huge range of affordability things that we're doing to support Manitobans. Hydro rate freeze. We, of course, cut the gas tax; we brought in a permanent gas tax cut. And beyond those education property tax reductions, we're also, of course, have brought in a middle-class tax cut to support Manitobans across the province.

They made life more expensive for Manitobans year after year. They didn't take action—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Midland, on a supplementary question.

Education Property Taxes—RM of Victoria Beach School Board Vote for Cottage Owners

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, that \$1,600 provides little comfort to those who have joined us in the gallery who are not only paying higher property taxes in Winnipeg, but are also paying a 27 per cent NDP tax hike on their generational properties in the RM of Victoria Beach.

When this NDP cancelled the 50 per cent to education property tax rebate, he left out cottage owners and small businesses. They are collecting \$350 million on the backs of Manitobans, which is equivalent to the 1 per cent PST increase from Greg Selinger's days.

Despite being unsustainably taxed, these property owners do not even have a say in who they vote for in school divisions. This is taxation without representation.

Will this minister support democratic reforms to school board elections to ensure accountability for those out of—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, the members opposite, again, made life more expensive year over year for Manitobans. And one of the ways they did that was doing a runaround in the Public Utilities Board when they decided to ram through hydro rate increases without respecting the due process that's there to ensure that our hydro rates are as low as possible.

That's their record: a record where they lacked accountability, where they took measures that were focused on making life more expensive, with trying to do it in ways that Manitobans wouldn't notice.

We're making life more affordable. We've done that since day one. We came in and we focused on reducing costs. We're doing that in a way that's transparent, and beyond it, of course, making life more affordable. We're creating a lot of great opportunities for Manitobans. We're excited to have seen 25,000 new jobs since we took government here in this province.

We're building the province, we're creating opportunity, we're making it more—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, a 27 per cent increase is not affordable and it's not sustainable long term.

* (14:20)

The Finance Minister heard from these cottage owners that have joined us today about the stark increases in school and education property taxes in the Lord Selkirk School Division. The RM of Victoria Beach only has a handful of students, yet property owners are paying almost \$300,000 per student. Yet they cannot vote and they cannot hold the division accountable, the very definition of taxation without representation. Yes, this Finance Minister does not seem to care.

Will the minister fix this problem and support the bill that our PC team brought forward today to allow property owners the right to vote for their school trustees, yes or no?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, I was proud to attend a community meeting with Victoria Beach residents to talk to them about the work that we're doing to make life more affordable; to talk about our hydro rate freeze; to talk about our middle-class tax cut; to talk

about our gas tax cut; to talk about the many things that we've done to make life more affordable.

Again, for years, the members opposite went ahead and made life more expensive in a number of ways. The member opposite lives in a community where almost 90 per cent of residents in her community are better off as a result of the change we brought in. Nine out of 10 people, when she goes to the grocery store, are saving more money. That's the result of our government's work.

We're going to keep doing that work of making life more affordable. Manitobans can count on it.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourary speak—no, Honourable Speaker, ratepayers in the RM of Victoria Beach are currently subject to a 27 per cent increase on their '25 year school tax bills from the NDP and the Lord Selkirk School Division. Many of those people are here today, yet many of these owners do not get to vote in school board elections. Families are getting less of a rebate on primary residence, and this minister is erasing his tax credit with sneaky NDP school tax hikes.

But cottage owners are getting no rebate, no tax credit and sky-high school taxes, being denied even a vote on these tax increases by this NDP.

Will the minister commit today to giving all ratepayers, including cottage—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

MLA Sala: What Manitobans can count on is that we're going to keep making life more affordable. And what I want to point out for the MLA for Portage la Prairie is that in his own community, 95 per cent of residents are better off under our approach.

Honourable Speaker, when the member's in the grocery store, when he's at the hockey rink, when he's out and about in his community, more than nine out of 10 of the people surrounding him are better off as a result of our government's policy.

So I ask him: Does he support our work, knowing that we're making life more affordable for the members of his own constituency, yes or no?

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

MLA Bereza: I'd like that minister to come to my house and listen to those people he's talking about. Nine out of 10? No way. This issue—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Bereza: —stretches far beyond Victoria Beach, where homeowners, families, seniors and farmers are all paying more.

In Portage la Prairie, small businesses have had their school tax rebate erased by this Finance Minister. In one RM where there are only a handful of students, the property owners are paying as much as \$300,000 per student, yet most of them have no vote. The minister can fix this by supporting our PC bill to give all rate-payers a vote.

Will the minister reverse course, support our bill and stop taxing—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, no comment on the dinner invite.

But I will say, I do have commentary about the impact of our policies. So, as I said, 97 per cent of those living in Midland are better off; 95 per cent of those in Portage la Prairie; 90 per cent of those in Selkirk are better off; 90 per cent of those in Morden-Winkler are better off. This policy is putting more money in the pockets of Manitobans.

And, again, Honourable Speaker, we are so proud that that is in addition to the benefits that we're bringing to Manitobans through our permanent fuel tax cut, through our hydro rate freeze, through our broad middle-class tax cut, in addition to about 20 other ways to save. We are focused on making sure that we make life more affordable for Manitobans because we know, after many years under their leadership—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

MLA Bereza: Sorry to the people from the RM of Victoria Beach; you're not getting an answer today.

Anyone with a home above the provincial average is paying more in NDP school taxes and getting less of a rebate this year. Seniors, fixed incomes and cottage owners can't afford these increases. They're thinking they may have to sell their family homes that they can no longer afford.

Why has this minister created such a terrible tax scheme, so harmful to Manitoban homeowners, and why won't he give the cottage owners of Victoria Beach a vote on his school tax hikes?

MLA Sala: We're going back to the well, Honourable Speaker.

What is he talking about? Ninety-five per cent of residents in his community are better off as a result of this policy, along with almost everybody on that side of the House. They're seeing huge savings as a result of our policy. Again, that's in addition to 25 ways to save that we brought in in budget.

We know that for years the members opposite made life more expensive. We've talked already today about hydro rates: they use new and novel ways to go around the PUB, do a runaround. That was, of course, after they tried to kneecap them with their bill 36. Taxes on renters, those in Manitoba that need some of the most—highest level of support, what did they do? They raised taxes on renters, in addition to raising costs for farmers on Crown lands. They took no action on energy costs for years. Charged sky-high fuel taxes every day they're in government.

We're doing the work, we're going to make life more affordable. Manitobans can count on it.

Extortion Ring Operating in Manitoba Local Family Targeted

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Earlier today, we heard from Manitobans who were being targeted by an organized extortion ring. We are seeing this criminality move in from BC who actually has a plan on extortion; this government needs to act now.

The NDP made it clear they do not support our calls for changes to the Criminal Code to enshrine the right to defend oneself and their family. So this is clearly on the minister and his entire caucus. This isn't the first incident, and the criminals are only getting bolder.

So why has the minister been silent on such an important issue?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Of course, we are doing work when it comes to organized crime in this province. In fact, one of the first bills that we brought forward to this House was on organized crime, and it was on the unexplained wealth act. That is something that Manitobans support because they know if we can disrupt organized crime in our communities, we can make a difference.

When it comes to arson and extortion plots in the city of Winnipeg, we're working very closely with the mayor, with WPS and, of course, the Manitoba Criminal Intelligence Centre, which is helping to

disseminate this information and really target those who are perpetrating this.

We're going to continue to work with community and with law enforcement to make our community safer.

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

Mr. Balcaen: A lot of hot air coming from this minister and no action. As we heard earlier today from our leader, these Manitobans tried to talk to this minister, but he was too busy and brushed them off today. They got a call last night demanding \$500,000 or their family and businesses would be targeted, but the minister was just too busy to meet them.

They had a simple question for him, so I will ask it on their behalf: If this government won't confirm their right to defend themselves, what are they supposed to do when criminals so brazenly target them?

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Finance (MLA Sala).

An Honourable Member: Well, Honourable Speaker, as the Premier indicated earlier, we have offered meetings with the individuals who came into my office. What I will say is that this is a very serious matter, and we've referred this to—

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice, apparently your mic wasn't on.

Mr. Wiebe: As I was saying, very serious allegations and very serious situation. That's why we've referred this to major crimes with the WPS. We're ready to work with the families who came to the Legislature.

Obviously, there—you know, I wasn't in the building when they came to meet, but I'm very, very eager to listen to their concerns.

But I want to just stress: this is a very serious issue, and so it is important that they refer this directly to WPS, that they continue to work with us and with law enforcement to ensure that their personal safety is paramount at this time.

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

Mr. Balcaen: A very serious allegation, indeed, Honourable Speaker, and it needs action, not silence from this minister.

The WPS is investigating but were left with no choice but to advise the family to look into hiring private security, and that, Honourable Speaker, is justice in Manitoba under this NDP where police are stretched

beyond their limits and families are only guaranteed safety if they can pay.

* (14:30)

When the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) was threatened, the public picked up the tab for additional security. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) gets a full-time armed security detail.

But when hard-working Manitobans are left on their own, when the families are specifically targeted, when will this minister take action and protect all Manitobans?

Mr. Wiebe: I want to caution the member opposite for his suggestion to the public that they should be taking justice into their own hands. It's about safety and it's about ensuring that nobody is seriously injured. That's why we work with law enforcement. That's why we partner with law enforcement. That's why we trust the work of law enforcement.

Now, there are constructive ways that we can work with community and we can ensure safety. You know, when it comes to arsons in this city, our security rebate program that was for homeowners now has been extended to businesses. They're telling us this is going to be an important tool to improve lighting and security and more surveillance.

These are the kinds of ways that we, as government, can support the community, but references to vigilante or taking the law into your own hands, I think that's—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Front-Line Health-Care Workers Workplace Safety Concerns

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Let's recap what the last year has been like for front-line health-care workers in Manitoba.

On March 26, the nurse was violently assaulted in the emergency room at Grace Hospital. On July 2, three staff members were sexually assaulted on and around the Health Sciences Centre campus. On October 19, a health-care aide was choked in the emergency room at Health Sciences Centre. On November 2, a doctor was assaulted at HSC. On November 8, a nurse was sexually assaulted in the parkade at St. Boniface Hospital.

How many more front-line health-care workers will be assaulted at work before this minister takes action?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): All health-care workers should know that they can go to their jobs and go home safe at the end of the day to their families and communities. Any violence, harassment, harm against health-care workers is wrong, full stop. There is no place for that in our health-care system or anywhere in our province, quite frankly.

As a government, we take our role and responsibility in creating safer and more secure health-care spaces very seriously. We've been working with experts across the province to take steps in the right direction, and we've been working with the Department of Justice, Winnipeg Police Service and others in order to make sure we're taking steps that were not taken for seven and a half years by the previous government.

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

Mrs. Cook: If the minister had taken action on these items, then we wouldn't currently have two hospitals greylisted as we speak.

On April 28, the nurse was choked and nearly stabbed with a needle in the emergency room at Brandon Regional Health Centre. On September 30, a stabbing occurred in Thompson General Hospital. On December 24, 2024, a man fired his gun in the chapel at Thompson General Hospital. In fact, in 2024, RCMP were called to the Thompson hospital 557 times. And just yesterday, a knife-wielding man was arrested at Swan Valley Health Centre.

Manitoba Nurses Union president told media earlier this month: There is not a corner of this province where there isn't violence and abuse happening to front-line workers daily on every shift, every day, and it is absolutely not acceptable, and nurses are not—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, as a nurse myself and as someone who has, unfortunately, experienced violence in the workplace as a nurse, I understand on a personal level how devastating and traumatic those moments can be. I take this with the highest level of seriousness.

I had the opportunity to have a good conversation with the president of the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, Linda Silas, and making sure that we're learning what's happening across the country. This is a national challenge, but what we can do in Manitoba, learn from best practices.

We have 130 institutional safety officers working at sites across the province right now. We've got weapons detectors technology. We've got more staff on the front lines than ever before. And there's more work to be done.

Seven and a half years of no—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mrs. Cook: Lucky for this minister, they don't have to look very far to find the answers; the Manitoba Nurses Union has spelled them out. They are making some very reasonable requests: things like limiting public 'accex'—access points with robust screening, installing panic alarms, implementing security in parking lots and mandatory emergency protocol education. These are entirely reasonable requests that will help to improve safety and security not just for front-line workers, but also for patients.

Two Manitoba hospitals are greylisted for the first time in Manitoba history—one for more than three months.

When will the Minister of Health be implementing these changes?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I'll remind the member opposite that back in 2020, there were reports that were created around safety and security to take steps to make sites safer across Manitoba.

That was five years ago. Who was in charge of health care five years ago, who could have taken action to improve safety and security year over year over year? It was members on that side of the House, Honourable Speaker.

We're doing the work on this side of the House of making health care safer and more secure, and we're going to keep doing that work. There's no finish line for our government. We're going to keep doing this work with the experts, making our communities and health-care spaces safer for Manitobans and, of course, for the health-care providers who we count on each and every day.

Reopening of Seven Oaks Hospital ER Federal-Provincial Funding Partnership

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, the federal government committed \$5 billion into health-care infrastructure over the next three years.

This commitment immediately made me think about the promise the Premier (Mr. Kinew) made during the election when he committed to the people of north Winnipeg that he would bring back emergency services to the Seven Oaks hospital.

We are more than halfway through this provincial government's mandate and we have heard nothing, not even a plan.

Now that there's an opportunity for matching funds, will the Premier commit today to use these funds towards the reopening of Seven Oaks ER?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I want to thank the member for Tyndall Park for reminding all of us of the magnitude of the damage that was done by the previous government, who closed three of our largest and most significant emergency rooms here in Winnipeg and fired the health-care workers, including nurses who staff them.

On this side of the House, we have made a commitment to Manitobans to staff up the front lines first and foremost, and that would allow us to take the steps of reopening emergency rooms. Over 3,500 net-new health-care workers and growing means that we can successfully reopen Eriksdale and, of course, the Victoria emergency department. That work is well under way, Honourable Speaker.

And, of course, we're going to keep moving in a direction that allows us to reopen the Seven Oaks ER. It's important that we do everything we can to build capacity across the health-care system and make sure no matter where you live—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, during the last election, the Premier campaigned on reopening the ER at Seven Oaks hospital.

We now have the federal government, who has committed \$5 billion toward health-care infrastructure.

Will this provincial NDP government commit to Manitobans that they will provide the matching funds for any health-care facility in Manitoba or are we going to miss out?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I thank the member for that question.

We're still, you know, working on getting a bit more clarity from Canada in terms of the details of that

commitment. I—we had a really great—but very brief—FPT with the—federal Health Minister Michel, last week to talk about that and other items that they brought forward. And we're going to keep working with our partners at the federal level to make sure that here in Manitoba, we're making investments that strengthen health care.

I would ask and encourage that member to talk to her federal Liberal member colleagues and ask them to advocate for Manitoba to get our fair share. Happy to work together with her on that.

And I—again, I would just remind her and members of this House that members on that side of the House were the folks who made devastating cuts to health care. On this side of the House, we're fixing it.

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

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, in the last provincial election, the Premier of Manitoba campaigned on a promise that he will reopen the ER at Seven Oaks hospital.

Another Throne Speech has come and gone—a list of priorities that this government is committing to make over the next year—and there was not one mention of Seven Oaks hospital ER, Honourable Speaker.

The North End continues to be neglected under this NDP government.

With the new federal investments—\$5 billion being provided for health-care infrastructure—will the Premier commit today to the reopening of the ER before the next election?

* (14:40)

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I certainly appreciate the member's energy around advocating for that part of the city and the province. We've worked very hard as a government to build more capacity. I, very early on in becoming the minister, sat down with folks at Seven Oaks and heard their concerns. We made increased investments so they had more physician capacity at that site. We've made sure they can hire more doctors to practice at that site.

We've also been looking at ways that we can enhance primary care services. More to share on that with the member in the coming weeks and months.

I want to reassure her that we're doing everything we can to build back the capacity that was cut and closed by the previous PC administration.

We care about the health outcomes of Manitobans. On that side of the House, they only care about chaos and closures—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Lactation Consultants Funding Announcement

Mrs. Rachelle Schott (Kildonan-River East): Honourable Speaker, the PC government cut funding for lactation consultants at HSC as part of their assault on women's health in Manitoba. They abandoned new mothers at the very first stage of motherhood.

But today, our amazing Minister of Health announced another step in our efforts to undo the damage done by the failed PCs.

Can the best Minister of Health in Canada please tell us more about today's announcement?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Thank my good friend and colleague for that wonderful and important question.

The PC approach to women's health care was called an unprecedented assault by experts. But today, we announced that lactation consultant positions that were cut by the PCs have been restored, and those positions are now permanent, Honourable Speaker.

We're reopening the Mature Women's Centre that they closed. We're lowering the age of self-referral for breast cancer screening to 40, while the PCs, when they were in government, cut the mobile breast cancer screening van. We made birth control free. We've doubled the fertility tax credit and we're protecting abortion care across Manitoba.

This is what a government who cares about women's health care and understands the value of strengthening it looks like.

Manitoba's GDP, Investment and Trade Concern for Manitoba's Economy

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I've recently shared that our GDP growth is only 1.1 per cent. That means Manitoba is now dead last in the country for economic growth and warning signs are piling up.

When you combine the slowest GDP growth in Canada, shrinking investment and declining trade, it paints a picture of a province sliding towards economic collapse.

And this isn't just numbers on a page. In my own constituency, companies are telling me they're preparing

to leave Manitoba after being ignored or outright ghosted by this government.

My question is: does the minister understand how serious this is and what is this government doing to—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, members opposite record on economic development was atrocious. That's why they failed as a former government. They had Manitobans fleeing the province, leaving to other jurisdictions, companies leaving as well. That's their record, on top of the fact they had skyrocketing inflation and stagnant job growth.

Turn the page. NDP government in charge of growing and stimulating the economy. What's our track record? Honourable Speaker, 25,000 new jobs over the last two years. That's 3,400 new construction jobs, third highest rate in the country; twenty-seven—twenty—seven hundred new wholesale trade jobs, second highest in the country; 1,600 new agriculture jobs, second highest rate of growth in the country.

That's a record we can stand on. That's what we mean when we talk—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

And the time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Education Property Taxes

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government's decision to cancel the Education Property Tax Credit and the property tax offset grant has enabled and encouraged school divisions to introduce massive tax increases.

(2) These massive increases have been felt by all Manitobans and compounded by the arbitrary and punitive changes to the education property tax rebate, and those changes have made many Manitobans ineligible to receive the \$1,500 rebate.

(3) Secondary property owners are subject to taxation without representation as they are ineligible to vote for trustees who set the rates; yet, second property owners are still required to pay full education taxes to their division.

(4) Additionally, families can only claim the reduced Education Property Tax Credit on their primary residence.

(5) These increases and the revocation of rebates were done with no consultation, punishing Manitobans who maintain family cabins by tying education taxation to assessed property values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove education funding and taxation from property taxes and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

This is signed by Richard Strempler, Janice Strempler, Diane Eyford and many, many more Manitobans.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government's decision to cancel the Education Property Tax Credit and the property tax offset grant has enabled and encouraged school divisions to introduce massive tax increases.

(2) These massive increases have been felt by all Manitobans and compounded by arbitrary and punitive charges—changes to the education property tax rebate, and those changes have made many Manitobans ineligible to receive the \$1,500 rebate.

(3) Secondary property owners are subject to taxation without representation as they are ineligible to vote for trustees who set the rates; yet, second property owners are still required to pay the full education tax in their division.

(4) Additionally, families can only claim the reduced Education Property Tax Credit on their primary residence.

(5) These increases and the revocation of rebates were done with no consultation, punishing Manitobans who maintain family cabins by trying—by tying education taxation to assessed property values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove education funding and taxation from property taxes and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

This petition was signed by Mike Gyles, Donna Miller and Jane Oakley and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial—(1) The provincial government's decision to cancel the Education Property Tax Credit and the property tax offset grant has enabled and encouraged school divisions to introduce massive tax increases.

(2) These massive increases have been felt by all Manitobans and compounded by arbitrary and punitive changes to the education property tax rebate, and those changes have made many Manitobans ineligible to receive the \$1,500 rebate.

(3) Secondary property owners are subject to taxation without representation as they are ineligible to vote for trustees who set the rates; yet, second property owners are still required to pay full education taxes in their division.

(4) Additionally, families can only claim the reduced Education Property Tax Credit on their primary residence.

* (14:50)

(5) These increases and the revocation of rebates were done with no consultation, punishing Manitobans who maintain family cabins by tying education taxation to assessed property values.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove education funding and taxation from property taxes and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Jessica Anseeuw, Brian Glowacki and Bernice Glowacki and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: No further petitions?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Honourable Speaker, pursuant to rule 34(7), I am announcing the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Thompson (MLA Redhead). The title of the resolution is Advancing Manitoba's Economic Future through Provincial-Federal Collaboration in Churchill.

The Speaker: It has been announced that the next resolution—it has been announced that—pursuant to rule 34(7), that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Thompson. The title of the resolution is Advancing Manitoba's Economic Future through Provincial-Federal Collaboration in Churchill.

THRONE SPEECH (Fifth Day of Debate)

The Speaker: And now, the House will resume debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and amendment thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member for Agassiz, who has three minutes remaining.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): As we get back into this, there was no surprises in the NDP Throne Speech; it was just the same old rhetoric that we hear from the NDP government, talking about initiatives, how they're going to make life more affordable. But there's no plan in anything that they've got in that Throne Speech; there's no plan for economic growth, there's no plan for small business, there's no plan to support those in health care. Lots of ideas, but no plan to support any of it.

And it seems that they aren't worried about the health outcomes for Manitobans here in our province. They're more concerned about their optics and the photo ops and the TikToks.

And what should have been a comprehensive outline of solutions for the pressing issues here in Manitoba and for the concerns Manitobans are facing—it turned out to be a vague report of aspirations without concrete plans, Honourable Speaker. Very typical of this NDP government.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Manitobans deserve much better than this, and what this Throne Speech delivered was nothing but garbage, actually.

So with that, I'm just going to close with that and thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): Honourable Deputy Speaker, I'm proud to represent the people of my community and all Manitobans. Today I rise to speak about the priorities that will shape our province and strengthen the lives of families, workers and communities across Manitoba.

Health care: putting Manitobans first. Our NDP government knows that health care is the foundation of a strong and prosperous Manitoba. We listened to families, seniors, northern and rural communities, Indigenous partners, front-line staff and patients, and we heard the same message: people want timely, high-quality care close to home, delivered by respected workers who have the support and tools they need.

That's why health care sits at the heart of our plan to build one Manitoba, alongside affordability and public safety. A strategic physician-led plan is now on the way to cut ER wait times, improve patient flow and make sure people are seen by the right provider at the right time. This means fewer hours waiting hallways, faster care for urgent cases and a system that works when families need it most.

Manitobans asked us to cut red tape and modernize. Digital health cards are coming to make access easier and reduce administrative headaches for families and staff. Alongside this, a new secure patient portal will give people convenient access to lab results and immunization records, helping them manage care plans and avoid duplicate tests.

After years of cuts that hollowed out our health system, we are rebuilding the workforce so Manitobans can count on care when they need it. In the past year alone, we have hired 3,500 net-new health-care staff, including many for the Victoria Hospital: providing more nurses at the bedside, more doctors in clinics and more allied professional supporting cast teams so wait times come down and patients are seen faster.

Most importantly, our government knows that timely care close to home matters. That's why we opened four new extended-hours primary-care clinics at Grace, Concordia, St. Boniface and Victoria hospitals. These clinics are already helping families get appointments sooner, manage chronic conditions before they become emergencies and avoid unnecessary trips to the ER.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, at the Victoria Hospital, the extended hours for the primary-care clinic now run until 11:30 p.m. and weekends, making care more accessible for families in south Winnipeg, and we're going further.

Construction on the brand new emergency department at Victoria Hospital begins this January. I was proud to stand alongside Premier Wab Kinew at the press conference, announcing this historic investment. The new ER will include a high observation unit, expanding diagnostic capacity and more inpatient beds, bringing emergency care back to south Winnipeg after years of neglect.

This is what keeping promises looks like and it's a major step forward, reducing wait times and strengthening care for every family in Fort Richmond.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, in Fort Richmond, we know that seniors are the heart of our community. They built the foundations of our province and continue to give so much through wisdom, volunteerism and care. I've seen this first-hand at places like Trinity United Church and Pembina Active Living 55+, where older adults lead food drives, tend community gardens and create spaces of welcome for everyone.

Our NDP government shares this deep respect. That's why we established Manitoba's first Seniors' Advocate, the independent voice to ensure older adults have the support they need in health care, housing and transportation. Seniors deserve to live with dignity and security, and we will keep listening and action—sorry, and we will keep listening and acting so they can continue contributing to the province they helped build.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I want to take a moment to recognize a remarkable long-time Fort Richmond constituent, Suni Matthews, who received the 2025 Manitoba Healthy Aging Award—Healthy and Active Living Ambassador Award. Suni has inspired countless older adults to stay active and connected through fitness programs, social gatherings and wellness initiatives that make life healthier and happier for seniors.

* (15:00)

Her work reflects the very best of Fort Richmond, a community where people care for one another and where aging is celebrated as a time of strength and vitality.

Congratulations, Suni. I'm so grateful for you.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, our government is expanding lactation support as a core part of women's health. Lactation consultants are now available to help new patients start strong and prevent complications during a pivotal time for infant and maternal health. We are training and hiring more midwives—including in the Interlake—for the first time, improving prenatal, birthing and postpartum care, especially in communities that have waited too long for locally available services. We are also restoring birthing services to Norway House Cree Nation so that families can welcome new life in their own community and reduce costly, disruptive medical travel.

Everything we are doing begins with listening. We met with nurses, physicians, paramedics, midwives, health-care aides, pharmacists and allied professionals. We sat down with patients, caregivers and advocates. We travelled through—to rural, northern and remote communities, and we engaged Indigenous leaders to design solutions that reflect local realities.

Manitobans asked for timely care, safe workplaces, modern tools and respect for those who serve. And that is exactly what we are delivering.

When care is accessible and safe, when workers are respected and when families can get help without breaking the bank, we are stronger together. This is how we build one Manitoba.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, we delivered meaningful savings at the pumps by making the cut to the provincial gas tax permanent. This change continues to put money directly back into the pockets of Manitobans—helping workers get to their jobs, helping parents drive their kids to school and activities and supporting small businesses that rely on transportation—because in Manitoba everyone deserves a safe, stable and affordable place to call home, and our government is standing up to make sure the rules are fair and the system works for the people who need it most.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, Fort Richmond is truly a hub for business in our province, a community where innovation meets opportunity and where local entrepreneurs drive growth every day. I had the privilege of taking part in the opening ceremony for the new Home Hardware right here in Fort Richmond constituency. This store is owned and operated by the EPLS Group, a family-owned Inuit business that has been thriving for more than 50 years. From its beginnings in Nunavut to its expansion into Manitoba, EPLS has shown what vision, determination and deep commitment to community can achieve.

This new addition to our community is more than a store; it is a strong vote of confidence in Manitoba's economy and in Canadian brands. Home Hardware is proudly Canadian, and many of the products offered here will be sourced from across the country. That means strengthening local supply chains, supporting Canadian manufacturers and suppliers and reinforcing the importance of buy Canadian, something that matters now more than ever in the global marketplace.

I want to congratulate the owners of this Home Hardware for their leadership and for choosing Fort Richmond as the home for their next chapter. Their opening reflects the direction outlined in Manitoba's economic development strategy introduced earlier this fall; a strategy focused on building a resilient, inclusive and diversified economy.

Indigenous-led economic development is a cornerstone of that plan, and the expansion of the EPLS Group here in Winnipeg is a powerful example of how Indigenous entrepreneurs are driving growth, innovation and prosperity across our province. As the MLA for Fort Richmond, I'm proud that this store is opening in our constituency.

Over the past year, I've also had the pleasure of visiting many incredible shops, restaurants and services that make our community vibrant and welcoming. Small businesses like this Home Hardware are the backbone of Manitoba's economy. Nearly 98 per cent of all businesses in Manitoba are small businesses, and they employ more than two thirds of our workforce. This new location alone will employ approximately 25 people; another meaningful contribution to local job creation and economic activity.

When businesses choose Manitoba, they are choosing our people, our communities and our shared prosperity. That's why our government is making sure businesses have the tools they need to succeed. We introduced a business security rebate program, offering up to \$2,500 for security upgrades. We do this because we know keeping small businesses safe means keeping our communities safe.

And we recently announced a cut to the payroll tax in our Throne Speech. This cut will help businesses like those in Fort Richmond reinvest in growth and jobs. Lower payroll taxes mean more resources for hiring, training and expanding so local businesses can thrive and families can benefit.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, our government's approach is focused on growing our economy with reconciliation at its core, supporting entrepreneurs and

ensuring that Manitoba remains a place where businesses want to invest. From Indigenous-led ventures to family-owned shops; from cutting taxes to strengthening security, we are building an economy that works for everyone, and Fort Richmond is leading the way.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, our NDP government knows that every child, from early learning through to post-secondary education, matters. For the first time ever, the Throne Speech will be published in Anishinaabemowin. We have increased school funding to ensure students have the tools they need to succeed, and we introduced a universal nutrition program so no child learns on an empty stomach.

As a former school trustee and as a mother of children who attend schools in the Pembina Trails School Division, I know how much these invests matter. Strong schools mean strong communities, and our government will keep working to ensure every student has access to quality education close to home.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, education is also about opportunity beyond the school day. Right here in Fort Richmond, programs like CanU are helping middle- and high-school students discover leadership, teamwork and confidence. CanU brings young people together to learn, grow and dream big, and it reflects the values we share as a community: co-operation, inclusion and hope for the future. Our NDP government is proud to support initiatives like this because they prepare the next generation of leaders who will shape Manitoba for years to come.

* (15:10)

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I want to celebrate the people and the organizations in Fort Richmond who make our community stronger every day. Trinity United Church, marking its 60th anniversary, continues to be a beacon of compassion and inclusion, supporting families, seniors and newcomers with programs that build belonging.

Scott Henderson, a long-time Fort Richmond resident, has spent 30 years lighting up stages across Canada, earning a Winnipeg Theatre Award for lifetime achievement and a place on the Rainbow Stage Wall of Fame. His artistry and mentorship inspire us all.

And the German-Canadian Congress, celebrating 40 years, reminds us of the richness of Manitoba's multicultural heritage and the power of community to bring people together.

These stories of courage, creativity and care reflect the very best of Manitoba. They remind us that progress is not only measured in policies and projects but in the lives we honour and the communities we strengthen.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, everything I have spoken about today—health care, affordability, public safety, education and economic growth—is for the people of Fort Richmond. As your MLA, I want you to know that my commitment begins and ends with you. Every decision I make, every conversation I have at the table, is guided by your priorities and your voices. I have listened to you in your homes, at community events, in schools and places of worship, and I will keep listening.

You have told me what matters: timely health care close to home, safe communities, strong schools and opportunities for your children to build their future right here in Manitoba. You have told me you want a government that is fiscally responsible, environmentally cautious and focused on creating good jobs. That is exactly what we are delivering.

Fort Richmond is a community of innovators, educators and families who care deeply about each other. My promise to you is simple: I will keep putting your priorities first, and I will make sure your voice is heard at the decision-making table. Together, we are building one Manitoba, a province where every family can thrive, every child can dream big and every person feels proud to call this place home.

Thank you for trusting me to represent you. I will never take that trust for granted.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): It is a profound honour to rise in this Chamber for my first debate on the Speech from the Throne, not only as an MLA for Spruce Woods but as someone whose journey here has been shaped by family, by community and by work on the front lines of health care and by the deep belief that public service should reflect real people and real experiences. It should be guided by everyday lives of the Manitobans who wake up each morning and quietly hold this province together.

I stand here today because of small-town roots, because of the values that come from growing up in rural Manitoba and because of experiences that taught me that leadership does not begin with the title; it begins with responsibility: responsibility to neighbours, responsibilities to step forward rather than sit back and

responsibilities to build something that lasts longer than we do.

I was born in Deloraine, a community that in many ways reflects the soul of rural Manitoba: hard-working, modest, anchored by the belief that people should look out for each other. You learn quickly in a small town that you cannot walk past a problem and assume someone else will handle it. You learn that community is not something you belong to; it is something you contribute to.

Those early years shaped me more than deeply than I realized at the time. And looking back, I can see clearly how those lessons followed me through life—throughout my life: through my years raising a family, through my career in health care, through building businesses in the Souris area, through years of volunteer service and, finally, through the path that led me to politics.

Souris has long been my home, and anyone who lived in a town like ours knows that rural life is equal parts beauty and responsibility. We celebrate together. We grieve together. We face challenges together, whether floods, droughts, economic shifts that hit rural communities harder than most realize. Being rooted in a place like Souris teaches you that change does not come from waiting; it comes from people when people take action.

That belief guided my career as a nurse. Nurse is not simply a profession. I know there are several members in this Chamber who will share this sentiment: it is an intimate human calling. You meet at the most vulnerable, their most frightened, and sometimes at the beginning of life and sometimes at the end of it. You see families struggling to navigate a system that can freely—overwhelming. You see staff doing everything they can with resources they have, often running on little more than commitment and exhaustion.

Health care taught me compassion, but it also taught me urgency. When a patient needs help, they need help now—not six months from now, not once the paperwork catches up. The sense of urgency has stayed with me and it continues to shape what I believe government should be: responsive, human and grounded in real-world consequences.

But like so many Manitobans, my path was not just one profession. I built a business because rural communities depend on small businesses to provide both services and employment. Business ownership forces you to think differently about budgeting, about risk, about jobs, about the difference between spending

money and investing money. It teaches resilience, problem solving and the unavoidable truth that success is earned, not granted. It's also shown me how policies crafted in faraway boardrooms or government offices can land with real force on the people trying to keep their doors open.

Being involved in the communities through business naturally led me into broader service, including times as president of the Souris Chamber of Commerce. That experience opened my eyes to the quiet heroes of rural Manitobans: the entrepreneurs who sponsor youth sports, who employ local families, who make sure seniors have places to gather, who create life and activity on main streets that could otherwise fade.

Too often, governments measure success through headlines and major capital projects, but anyone from a rural community knows that real measure of success is whether the small businesses can thrive, whether communities can retain families and whether young people can see a future close to home.

My work on boards like Manitoba Crime Stoppers and To the Stan and Back deepened that drive to serve. Supporting veterans, first responders and those living with PTSD is not simply a charitable endeavour to me; it's an obligation and a duty to support and give back to those brave men and women who so selflessly serve us.

These are people who have served us, who have faced trauma most of us cannot begin to imagine, who deserve support that is meaningful, not symbolic. Their stories remind us that service comes from sacrifice, and that sacrifice deserves more than words.

Each chapter of my life—professional, personal, volunteer—led me closer to the public service, but the final push into elected life came from something simple: Manitobans asked me to step forward.

* (15:20)

And during my years of volunteering, I had countless conversations with people who felt unheard; people who believe strongly in their communities but felt government did not understand rural needs; people who wanted common sense, not political theatre; people who simply wanted leadership but felt that it was rooted in the same soil they stood on.

I'm a wife, a mother of three and a nana to eight grandchildren. They are the reason I seek to make things better. Every policy, every decision, every late night here at the Legislature ultimately comes back to one question: What kind of province are we building for the next generation? Are we building a Manitoba

where families can stay close to home; where seniors can age with dignity; where farmers, nurses and tradespeople feel respected; where crime is confronted honestly; where opportunity is not defined by the postal code?

If we're not working toward that vision, then we are merely keeping the lights on and—on, not building a future.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, I came here to build a future and I came here with hope. Hope is not naive. Hope is what fuels action. Hope is what keeps nurses on the front line. Hope is what keeps farmers planting in the dry years. Hope is what keeps small-town volunteers running fundraisers and rink boards and fire halls. Hope is why people run for office.

Manitoba deserves governments that recognize that hope and channels it into results that matter.

The people of Spruce Woods did not send me here just to occupy a seat; they sent me here to be their voice. They sent me here because they believe their rural communities deserve attention, not as an afterthought, not as a line in the 'srone'—Throne Speech, but as a core priority. They sent me here to advocate for strong health care close to home, reliable highways and infrastructure, support for agriculture and small business, safer communities and a provincial government that listens rather than dictates.

And while today I speak with optimism and gratitude, I also speak with the weight of responsibility. The first Speech of the Throne that I am privileged to respond to sets the tone for what this government plans for the year ahead. Manitobans look to these commitments to understand not only what will be done, but how and for whom.

Rural communities listen for signs that their needs will be overlooked—not be overlooked. Families look for reasons to be confident in their future. Seniors look for dignity. Workers look for opportunity. Business looks for stability. And those struggling, whether with housing, addictions and mental health or cost-of-living pressures, look for solutions grounded in compassion and 'practability.'

As I reflect on the words in the Throne Speech, I find myself thinking about every Manitoban I met at the doorstep, in a clinic, in a small business, in a coffee shop, at an agriculture fair and in local halls. They deserve the results; not headlines, not empty rhetoric, not recycled promises. They deserve action that reflects the real concerns they carry every day and that is why we must turn our attention next.

Because while today I've spoken about my journey, my community, the values that bring me to public service, the work of this Chamber is not simply to share personal stories; it is to evaluate the direction set before us and ask whether it is—truly serves the people of Manitoba.

In the spirit of respect, collaboration and hope, it is necessary to look closely at what was promised in this Throne Speech and what was left unsaid, and what Manitobans urgently need but have to yet see addressed. Our responsibility is not only to honour the aspirations of Manitobans but to ensure the government meets them. And that conversation deserves careful through–thorough examination.

I spoke earlier of what brought me here: the values shaped in Deloraine; the years spent raising a family in Souris; my work as a nurse, as a business owner and as a volunteer; and the belief that public service begins with responsibility.

I did so because I wanted Manitobans to understand why I sought to serve them. I did not come to politics seeking titles or recognition. I came because I believe deeply in the community, in collective purpose and in the simple truth that leadership means stepping forward when others will be affected by your silence.

And it is from the place of duty of hope, of conviction, that I now turn to the substance of the government's Throne Speech. I do not rise today with anger, nor with dismissal of partisanship, but with genuine disappointment and an increasing fear for the direction of our province.

The Speech from the Throne is supposed to be a vision. It is supposed to offer leadership, clarity and a path forward grounded in the real hopes and anxieties of Manitobans. It could call us to something greater than ourselves. It should unite, not divide. It should reassure, not perplex.

What was differ–delivered fell short of that responsibility. We heard words, yes; many polished, sensitive and well crafted. But what we did not hear were commitments that met the scale of the challenges facing this province. We did not hear a plan that reflects urgency.

I have witnessed first-hand in health care our desperation felt by real families who struggle to access essential services close to home. We did not hear a plan that recognizes the economic pressure squeezing small businesses, farmers, tradespeople or seniors. We did not hear meaningful recognition that

crime and addictions are tearing apart communities or that public safeties require more than slogans and symbolic gestures.

The real disappointment is not simply the absence of the policy; it is the absence of the direction. Manitobans are not asking for perfection; they are asking for a plan. And, honourable Deputy Speaker, what keeps me awake at night is not just what was omitted; it is growing fear that this government either does not feel the urgencies that ordinary Manitobans live with, or it feels it but does not know how to respond.

This province has never lacked resilience. It has never lacked determination. What we risk lacking if we continue on this path is confidence: confidence that the future will be better than the past, confidence that our children and our grandchildren will stay here rather than leave in search of opportunity, confidence that people doing the work—nurses, farmers, entrepreneurs, teachers, police officers, volunteers—will be supported rather than exhausted.

As somebody who entered public service because I believed Manitoba can be better, it's profoundly disheartening to see the Throne Speech that speaks softly but carries no weight. And that disappointment brings me to something deeply personal.

Earlier, I spoke about the responsibility that comes with choosing to serve. What I did not speak about then but must speak about now is the sacrifice, because entering politics life is not simply a career choice; it is a personal commitment that demands more than most people will ever see. You give up your privacy; you give up your 'anonymy'. You invite scrutiny. You become a symbol: sometimes of hope, sometimes of frustration and sometimes simply of whatever anger someone needs to place, to put on you. You become a target.

People do not always see the human being behind the title. They do not see the late nights away from the family, the emotional toll of reading letters from people suffering, the weight of decisions that affect real lives. They do not see the quiet moments when you ask yourself whether you are doing enough, whether you're not—if you're doing it right or whether your efforts matter at all. And when you 'inevit' fall short, as every elected person does at some point, you do not fall privately. You fall publicly. Every member in this Chamber understands this, regardless of the party.

* (15:30)

What worries me is that politics is becoming less about disagreement and more about dehumanization. Criticism is expected. Accountability is necessary. Debate is fundamental to democracy. But what has grown in recent years is something different: politically motivated harassment, targeted intimidation, personal attacks, a co-ordinated attempt to shame people out of public office. We have seen vandalism of MLA offices, threats at community events and 'rhetic' that treats elected officials not as people doing their best but as enemies deserving punishment.

This trend is dangerous not only for those in office but for democracy itself, because when the cost of serving becomes unbearable, fewer good people will step forward. And if fewer good people step forward, decisions will fall to those motivated by service but by ambitious 'iology' and resentment. We can—and not allow that.

We are people. We are parents, grandparents, neighbours, taxpayers, volunteers. None us a—none of us in this Chamber enter politics pretending to be perfect. We entered because we cared about something larger than ourselves. We may disagree, sometimes fiercely, but disagreement is not hostility. It is not justification for threats or violence. If we want better governments, we need a healthier culture of public service. We need to reject intimidation or replace it with dialogue. We need to restore the idea that politics is a shared endeavour, not a battleground.

And that leads directly to the broader issues threatening not only political safety but our social fabric. Manitoba's a diverse province, and that diversity is a strength when we seek common ground. But, increasingly, public discourse encourages us to define ourselves by smaller and smaller identities.

I'm a parent, and that is something I share with hundreds of thousands of Manitobans. I'm also a grandparent, which is a smaller group. I keep narrowing the categories: nurse, business owner, resident of Souris, volunteer, Conservative.

And with each step, I would shrink the circle of people who feel connected to me. That is not the path I want to walk, because every time we narrow our identity, we exclude someone: we exclude their experiences; we exclude their story; we exclude the possibility of learning from them. When we divide ourselves in smaller and smaller groups, eventually, there's no one left but those who look, think and live exactly as we do, and that is not community; it is isolation.

This is why we must choose common ground. We must choose things that unite rather than things that separate. We must remember that every person in this province—urban or rural, young or old, left or right—wants safety, dignity, opportunity and a future with their children. These shared values must guide us, and it is precisely because I believe in that shared future that the Throne Speech was so disappointing.

Thank you.

MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips): As always, it is a deep, deep privilege to rise and to speak in this Chamber, put some words on the record on behalf of the good, good folks of McPhillips.

And if I can take just a brief moment here to talk about the constituency of McPhillips—I try as often as possible, whenever talking about my neck of the woods and the city and the province, to just highlight how McPhillips is almost like a microcosm of Manitoba.

You can go from the south end of the constituency and see shopping centres and thriving small businesses and a lot of traffic on McPhillips, and you can head all the way up to the north parts and you can see farmland and rural living. And I think that's, to me, encapsulates just how, I mean, diverse in economy and culture our province is, and to get the privilege to represent the people of McPhillips and my constituents is a deep, deep honour for me.

And I used to—before getting into politics I remember, after the nomination, the notion of going door to door, to go door knocking, conceptually it sounds cool, but I, at first I kind of thought, this is weird. You're going up to strangers' homes and you're knocking on their doors in the middle of the day and you're striking up a conversation with them.

And I now have a new sense of appreciation for the door-to-door salespeople, and just the fear that they have, and—but, I've got to tell you, it is one of my favourite things to do now in this job. There's a lot of cool things you get to do in this job, but by far my favourite thing is walking up that driveway, walking up that path to the front door and knocking and ringing the doorbell and just waiting and—waiting to have a conversation with the person at the door. Because as the MLA for the area, as the representative for the area, there is no better way to get a sense of what's happening on the ground and what the people of Manitoba think, than to have direct, one-on-one conversations with the people at the door.

And oftentimes they may tell you, no, everything's good. Nothing's really on, you know, top of my mind. And sometimes you put them on the spot when you ask them, is there anything on your mind that we can do better, and they sort of get taken back. But I think for the most part, when people share things for you, it's a confirmation of the priorities that you set as a government, the priorities that we have set within our government.

And this summer we did a lot of door knocking, and time and time again I heard about health care and the economy. And I think, when talking about the Throne Speech, those two subjects, as well as others that I'll get into, are really highlighted. Of course, we know that our government got elected with a mandate to repair the damage the former government did to our health-care system, specifically, the—in my neck of the woods, Seven Oaks General Hospital.

Just briefly, I had a chance last week to attend the Seven Oaks General Hospital Foundation's gala, and I'm going to say this on the record here, and I have no fear in saying this, it's the best gala in town. Like, it is incredible. Shout-out to the foundation, who does such fantastic work putting this event together. Everything from the energy, the sense of generosity, the spirit in the room to the elaborate decor. Every year it gets more and more elaborate.

But when you're in that room and you're talking to folks, the sincere care and investment people have on an emotional level with Seven Oaks hospital, a hospital that started up, had its genesis as a community-based hospital in the early '80s.

And I might have shared this story before in this Chamber, but I remember when I was door knocking during the campaign, I door knocked on this woman's door a few blocks away from Seven Oaks hospital. She told me that she remembered going on a walk, like a fundraising walk, for Seven Oaks hospital, to get that hospital built. Like, this was a hospital that came to be because of the work of people in the community to bring a hospital to their community. So there's a real sense of attachment people have with Seven Oaks hospital.

But I think when it comes to a hospital, you never really think about your hospital until you need it, and you never really want to need it. But the reality is, life is going to come at you in different directions, and you don't know when you're going to need to depend on the health-care system. But one thing is for sure: every Manitoban wants to know that it's there for them when they need it.

And in my neck of the woods, in the northwest part of the city, in McPhillips, we've seen a huge amount of growth in the last decade. A lot of new developments. A lot of newcomers to the province. A lot—a lot—of young families, and a lot of seniors as well.

And so, naturally, I think you would think that when a community grows in size, that you would want to invest in the infrastructure of that area, anywhere. But contrary to that common sense, the last government actually shut down one of the best ERs in our province, which was Seven Oaks. They shut that ER down. And so, you know, extremely short-sighted, yes, but the signs were there. Like, this community was growing at that time as well.

So, reasonably, you can expect that in the future you're going to have more people from the surrounding area who are going to depend on Seven Oaks hospital and the services there, services including a world-class dialysis program in Seven Oaks hospital. A shout-out to the good folks who are in charge of that program there, and some of the world-class research and expertise that exists right in our backyard.

* (15:40)

Most people don't know what goes on behind the scenes at Seven Oaks hospital, but leading-edge, world-class research on preventative health around cardiac rehabilitation, for example, renal health and so on and so forth—but point being that these are the sorts of things you want to invest in in your community.

And so, yes, now here we are, years down the road. We don't have an ER in Seven Oaks hospital, and when I talk to folks, people are understanding of this. In order to get that ER back, and it's going to happen, but in order to get that ER back, we need people working in the health-care system. We need to hire; we need to staff up the health-care system. You can't have an empty room if you don't have staff in there working to provide the care for people.

And so that has been a work in progress for our government. We continue to staff up the health-care system, like it's over 3,400 people now. And specifically in the Throne Speech, there was a mention of Seven Oaks and the staff we've hired there and the continuation of staffing up at Seven Oaks hospital.

So we're going to get more health-care professionals in Seven Oaks; we're going to get more doctors, nurses and so on in the hospital and the wellness centre so that people can access these services and then, yes, reopening that ER.

But, you know, when you open—we announced recently the reopening or the construction of the Victoria ER, and this is good for the entire health-care system because with the Vic ER you're going to have a lot of the folks who go to, maybe, HSC or St. Boniface can go now to—when the ER—the Vic ER opens, can go there, and that takes pressure off those two systems, which is good for the entire system at large.

So there's different 'preces' in the system that you're moving around in and you're investing in in trying to reduce some of that pressure, but the foundation, the pillar of that is staffing up, getting the people to work into the health-care system.

So that has been a core part of the Throne Speech, and I think most Manitobans trust this government to repair the damages that were done over the last seven and a half years. It's going to take time. It's not going to happen overnight. You know it's easier to break things than it is to put together, so sometimes I find it a little bit funny when the opposition says, why aren't you fixing our damage faster?

I would love that. I would love if this government had a magic wand, but the reality is you work within the confines of government and the tools you have and the resources you have at your disposal, but you lean very much into all the levers you can to try to undo that damage.

The Speaker in the Chair

But, moving aside from health care, the other thing that I heard about, of course, and continue to hear about with some palpable excitement, I'll say, when I'm knocking on the doors, and I was surprised by this, because you sometimes wonder if people are paying close attention to what's going on in the news and whatnot, but the amount of times that I've knocked on the door during the summer and people who have brought up Churchill of their own volition, and the excitement about that really told me that this government is heading in the right direction.

And this is a generational opportunity for our province. And I sometimes hear the skepticism that comes from the opposition and the negativity that comes from the Leader of the Opposition around this project, almost as if—I hate to say it—the Opposition Leader wants the province to fail in this endeavour, which is very sad, right.

And I don't make it a habit to paraphrase George W. Bush, but on this, you're either with us or you're with Donald Trump. And it seems more and more when

I hear the rhetoric come from the opposition about the negativity and the pessimism—[interjection]—now they're heckling because I hurt their feelings, but the pessimism that comes from the opposition around Churchill and the economic investments that this government is pursuing, the conversations that we're having with the federal government, that it is for the betterment of all Manitobans—all Manitobans, whether they live in constituencies on this side of the House or constituencies on the other side of the House. Rural Manitobans, urban Manitobans; it is good for everybody. We should all get behind it.

And I'm bewildered by the degree of negativity that I hear from the opposition on this. And I think the Premier (Mr. Kinew) puts it very well. It's almost with sadness to see how far the Progressive Conservatives have fallen from the party of commerce and the party of, you know, your personal responsibility. It's almost day and day they move out to that—to the tiny little fringes of the political spectrum and some of the pet projects that some of their members have.

But stepping away from where the majority of Manitobans are—and the majority of Manitobans, whether you're in the chambers of commerce, if you're in Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, or you're in the labour movement or you're in—activist on the environmental front, you all want Manitoba to succeed.

We don't get to make these big investments, we don't get to do good for Manitobans, we don't get to address affordability issues in our province if we don't have our economic engine at full power. And this is what this government is pursuing, so I would sincerely hope that the opposition maybe changes their tone, gets behind us.

And it's weird, I would say that Pierre Poilievre's Conservatives have shown more support to Mark Carney than the Progressive Conservatives across the way here have shown to Premier—our Premier in Churchill—in the Churchill project. So I—they're almost out of line with Pierre Poilievre, which is odd.

And, you know, I think Pierre Poilievre probably likes our Premier better than he likes the Leader of the Opposition, but that's a whole different—

An Honourable Member: Nobody likes him.

MLA Devgan: Well, that's a—I hope that was caught on mic. That's not up for argument.

But in any case, the economy; this government is very much focused on growing the economy, strengthening the economy.

My colleague for Fort Richmond mentioned the opening of a Home Hardware in Winnipeg last night. I was able to attend as well and I think this thing is super cool for Manitoba. One, Home Hardware: you don't get a more Canadian company than Home Hardware, and I—not that I'm aware of—but this is a company with its roots in the north of Manitoba—or, Canada. It's opened up its first location, I believe, in Winnipeg.

And what does this mean for Manitobans? More jobs—more jobs. So this speaks to the climate that this government is fostering here in Manitoba: one that is conducive and welcoming to commerce growth and investment by businesses. And I'm sure you'll hear this sentiment from folks in the business community everywhere. But the facts speak for themselves: we have new businesses opening up shop here in Manitoba; you have a lot of interest from businesses in Manitoba.

Our government, of course, is taking important steps: removing PST off manufacturing equipment; pursuing, actively and aggressively, new investments in Manitoba, which is a lot more than I can say for the previous government. So on the economy, we're doing better than the previous government could've ever dreamed of doing.

On keeping our streets safe, this one's really important because I hear about this all the time in my constituency. And I was very, very frustrated with the opposition spending all their time and effort holding up bill 48 and trying to prevent real, concrete action on trying to make our streets safer; taking people who are in meth psychosis off our streets, people who don't know what they're doing in that moment and perpetrating violence on the average person on our streets. And this bill is a very important step in making our streets safer.

And you would think that bill would've been unanimous and that we would've had no issues getting this right through, across the finish line, when we introduced this, but the opposition spent so much time blockading that piece of legislation that I think it is quite revealing of where they actually stand on trying to make our streets safer. I think they want more people high on meth on our streets. They want less safe streets for Manitobans because it helps them politically, and I think that is incredibly cynical.

And so our government is actually taking that action to try to make Manitoba's streets safer, investing

more in police; of course, this 72-hour detox bill, which is incredibly important. And these are real, concrete steps our government's—our government is taking in addition to a whole litany of other steps our government continues to take on safety. And as the Premier (Mr. Kinew) puts it, addressing crime and the roots of crime in our society, hand in hand. And this is incredibly important.

And I know folks in my constituency particularly appreciate this. I had conversations over the last couple of weeks with people, and they love this bill. And they love the fact that we're doing something like this because, I think, at the end of the day, everybody just wants a safe street. Everybody wants safe communities. Everybody wants to be able to, you know, go out for a walk and not have to worry about being attacked in some way.

So this is a very common sense bill, and it's a very common sense move from a very common sense government. And this is feedback that I get from people often in the constituency. It's feedback that I heard even after the Throne Speech in the reception, where I went around asking different people: Give me your honest thoughts. What did you think about the Throne Speech? And the overwhelming consensus was: We're headed in the right direction. This is what Manitoba needs, this is common sense government. It's a listening government.

* (15:50)

It's a government that's actually doing the work, too, and I think that's a contrast to the previous government that did a lot of—particularly on its dying days, a lot of press releases and then a lot of dollar promises to people to try to buy votes, frankly. And I think that was probably precedent-setting for that side of the House.

But I think there is a real appreciation for the way our Premier and our government is approaching issues. Take, for example, Carberry. Listening to the community, hearing what they wanted and taking the right step, and this rings true in every corner of the province.

And I know it triggers the opposition. I know it bothers them deeply when our government gets a W. Because they sort of frantically scramble to try to pivot, and they can't. They—you know, yesterday the Premier alluded to the Leader of the Opposition stepping on rakes, and all I could think of was Sideshow Bob. But nothing encapsulates the leadership of the opposition better right now than that.

So it's entertaining to watch this sometimes, but at the same time we know that we come here to do real work for Manitobans, keep our noses and ears to the ground and just keep working, work hard day in and day out and let the opposition do what they think is opposition.

And, yes, I'm incredibly proud to be speaking to this Throne Speech on behalf of my constituents in McPhillips. Great Throne Speech, lot of work done thus far in this mandate; a lot left to do. We're going to get it done.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): The truth about this NDP government's failures and about this NDP Premier's (Mr. Kinew) failures are becoming more and more clear—is becoming more and more clear to Manitobans every day: the endless crime on our streets; the continuing addictions and homelessness crisis; the rising unemployment levels and jobs migrating west; the struggling economy; shuttered businesses and higher taxes paid by Manitobans. This Throne Speech is the NDP doing a victory lap while you pay the consequences.

Manitobans are smart people. They get it. They see what's happening after just two years of NDP mismanagement. Surgical and diagnostic wait times are getting longer; nurses leaving the profession and leaving the province; more young Manitobans leaving the province because youth unemployment has risen and there are no jobs and no opportunities here at home.

Manitobans deserve better than the smoke and mirrors, the failures and the degrading words of this Premier and this NDP government. They deserve better than the empty promises and failures to act, and the constant excuses of why they are failing on bail reform; failing to fix health care; failing to stop crime; failing to grow the economy or reduce the NDP deficits and debt.

Manitobans deserve better than growing unemployment, higher costs of living and inflation. And our young people, our most vital resource, deserve better than 2,600 youth jobs lost in the past year under the NDP. These are the facts, the facts of NDP failure.

Let's look for a moment at their failure to execute real change for your family. The Premier said he'd fix health care. He ran an entire campaign on that issue. It's been two years now—over two years. ER wait times are not only higher, they are shattering records in Manitoba history. The median wait time for Winnipeg ERs this past fall was over 11 hours. And I just checked

before standing up to speak, and at the moment, the ER wait time at the Grace Hospital is 14 and a quarter hours. That's over 14 hours.

So if you go in right now to the Grace Hospital, you go—you have to go to the ER for whatever it is, you're going to be sitting there for 14 hours, thanks to this NDP government's failures to deliver on health care. St. Boniface, no different; over 11 hours. That's real time. That's 11 hours right now, an 11-hour wait time right now. The Health Sciences Centre, nine and a half hours.

Wait times for surgeries are higher under this NDP government. And wrap your mind around this: some specialist and surgical appointments are taking longer under the NDP than people had to wait during the global pandemic. Annual median MRI waits have gone up to 26 weeks so far in 2025, from 20 weeks in 2023; 28,000 Manitobans are waiting for an MRI. That's 28,000 Manitobans waiting for an MRI out of a population of about 1.3 million people.

To make matters worse, people do not feel safe going to the ER because of the violence. Health Sciences Centre has been greylisted. That means the nurses who work there actually voted to tell new nurses and other health-care professionals not to come work there because it's not safe. That's more than just an NDP failure; that's a scandal. Every Manitoban should be safe and feel safe when they go to work.

The Premier gets up and grins and cheerleads for this Health Minister who, according to the Manitoba Nurses Union, gets a D- rating. Can you imagine that? The Manitoba Nurses Union giving the NDP a D- rating.

And while we're on the subject, where are all those new doctors and nurses this Premier promised? It was pretty incredible to hear the Premier say: we've got them, there is no shortage. This NDP Premier actually went to the media to say—and I'll find the exact quote. And just to be very clear for this House and everyone listening, this is a story by the CBC, entitled, Manitoba's health system not ready for changes promised in Throne Speech: nurses union.

The quote is: "We've got the numbers. That's not in question," this NDP Premier said. He said: "We've got the numbers. That's not in question."

He went on to say: "We've been giving them all the money. We've been giving them all the staffing resources. They have to start showing improvement."

That's a direct quote in this article which was put out—and I'm trying to find the date—a couple of days ago by the CBC, by this NDP Premier's (Mr. Kinew) former employer. I'm sure they got a call.

Isn't that an incredible quote by this NDP Premier? "We've got the numbers. That's not in question. We've been giving them all the money. We've been giving them all the staffing resources. They have to start showing improvement."

I, frankly, think that that is outrageous. That is an NDP Premier passing the buck after two years of failing to deliver on health care; after two years of things getting worse, not better, in Manitoba. And this NDP Premier is shifting the blame and saying, well, we've done what we can; it's not up to us anymore—or outright denying that there is even a problem, saying, we have the numbers. It's absolutely crazy.

Well, the Manitoba Nurses Union president, Darlene Jackson, said her members still aren't noticing a difference when it comes to late shifts, patient loads and vacancies, pointing to a 37 per cent nursing vacancy rate at the obstetrics unit in Thompson. She went on to say in this same article: "I have nurses coming to me and asking"—and this is in response to the Premier's statement that we have the numbers—she says: "I have nurses coming to me and asking, 'Where are they?'"

And that's the question that our Health critic—who has done a very effective job on this Health file—the MLA for Roblin, has been asking for a long time, as well, in this House and getting no good answers from this NDP government.

* (16:00)

Manitobans are asking, where are these nurses that the NDP talk about? Empty promises, empty numbers. In fact, it's so bad that another union, a separate union, had to come out and correct the NDP government. Oh, the minister across the way there will want to hear this because this—we heard from the Manitoba Nurses Union, who talked about the appalling job that the NDP government is doing on health care.

This is a separate union, the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals president, Jason Linklater, who said paramedics were shocked to hear the Province of Manitoba—this NDP government—providing wildly inaccurate—the member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz) will want hear this too. The member for Waverley is going to want to hear this.

Paramedics were shocked to hear the Province of Manitoba, this NDP government, providing wildly inaccurate and misleading information on a matter of life and death for Manitobans. That is a stinging indictment of their entire record the last two years on health care alone.

He goes on to say—again, this is the president of the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals—goes on to say: The fact that the government made an announcement about paramedics without having accurate information at hand underscores the need for a thorough and transparent allied health workforce plan that shows vacancies, turnover rates, future staffing needs and clear steps to address the crisis. Again, a stinging indictment of this NDP government's failures on health care.

And I just think it's incredible for a government to go out there and brag that they hired 231 new paramedics and then have to walk that back after this union president, Jason Linklater, comes out and says, hey, that's actually not accurate.

And so the government, this NDP government, then has to go out and issues a statement and says, you know, our bad. From October 2023 to September 2025, we have added 18 net-new paramedics to our province, and just one this entire last year. Isn't that incredible? They go from bragging about hiring 231—so again, it calls their credibility into question; it highlights their failures with regard to delivering on health care, and it underscores the need for a different approach. But I think that's appalling. Empty promises. Empty promises by this NDP government.

This Premier also said in a hundred days, he'd fix bail. He hasn't done it. And Manitobans saw the video, too, watching the leaders debate last election. It was the first thing he said when he was asked: What's something you would do within a hundred days? What's the—and it was the first thing that he came out with. He said bail reform. He would get that done in a hundred days.

The reality is, violent crime is only getting worse. And you don't need me or anyone else to tell you that; you live here and you see it over and over again. This Premier likes to talk like a tough guy. He does it a lot. But he doesn't back up his words with actions. We need more than tough talk when it comes to crime.

Manitobans need common sense policies that actually keep people safe. And that's why our PC team has been clear: we need to end catch-and-release, same-day bail. If you're a repeat violent offender, you

belong in jail. We've brought forward a common sense resolution on self-defence so you can protect yourself and your family. We called on this government to ask the federal government to change the law so law-abiding Manitobans would no longer risk getting criminally charged for defending themselves and their loved ones when someone breaks into their home. They voted against it. This NDP government voted against it.

Recently, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down mandatory minimum sentences for those who sexually abuse children. We disagree. This PC team disagrees with that Supreme Court ruling. It's outrageous, frankly. Our Constitution offers an avenue to do so; it's called the notwithstanding clause.

On this side of the Chamber, we support using the notwithstanding clause to keep mandatory minimum sentences in place for those criminals and predators that sexually abuse kids. We all agree we need to protect our children on this side of the House. Yet this Premier (Mr. Kinew) said he would never use the notwithstanding clause. He's tabled a bill, bill 50, to make it harder to use the notwithstanding clause to protect Manitobans and protect our province.

We disagree. This NDP Premier is wrong. When it's about protecting our children our PC team believes that we should use every legal tool possible to keep them safe from criminals and predators. It's pretty simple, really.

This Premier wants to wait on the federal government and other provinces and the courts before he does anything. He's dithered for two years, and that's not leadership.

On the economy this Premier promised he'd make life more affordable for Manitobans. One hundred days to bring down grocery prices. You take a look at your grocery bill. Has it happened? No. In fact, if you look at the consumer price index year over year, the price of food rose 4.2 per cent in their first year in office, another 3.4 per cent this past year. Yes. It's interesting: a headline by a paper of record here in the city, the headline reads, Canada's inflation rate eases to 2.2 per cent, but Manitoba hits 3 per cent.

So not only is Manitoba's inflation substantially higher than the national rate of inflation, but the trend line—the trend lines are actually opposite. Canada's inflation rate appears to be dropping, while Manitoba's inflation rate is rising. I think that's a concern, and ordinary working class Manitobans are feeling the pain.

But forget the stats. Just look at the price on grocery store shelves. Food costs more, and more and more Manitobans are going hungry. And what's amazing is, desperate to cover—to find cover for his empty promises, this NDP Premier plans to commission a study to figure out why grocery prices are going up. I think that's incredible.

The Premier is absolutely out of answers. It is pretty incredible that this NDP Premier is so desperate and flailing to cover for his empty promises to bring down food prices that he's now commissioning a study. It's pretty clear, really. Look in the mirror. You can save Manitoba taxpayers the money. You don't have to do this study. You look in the mirror. It's two years of failed NDP economics. It's not working.

Life has only gotten more expensive under the NDP. And now they're raising taxes on Manitobans to pay for more out-of-control spending. This NDP Premier cancelled indexation of the basic personal amount. He cancelled indexation of the tax brackets. He cancelled the education property tax rebate. He cancelled the phase out of education property taxes resulting in \$400 million in new taxes when it comes to the property taxes alone, and over \$80 million in income taxes. All cancelled by this Premier. Maybe that's why prices are higher in Manitoba.

Our former PC government left the NDP a surplus of \$373 million. It was confirmed in 2023 and 2024 in the 2023 and 2024 Public Accounts by the Auditor General, but the NDP and this Premier blew it all. He added billions more in out-of-control spending and then had the audacity to try and blame the previous government for their lack of spending discipline.

They have no plan to get to balance. You can read their budgets. There was barely a paragraph in 2024 on getting to balance and not much else in 2025.

* (16:10)

Now, with this Throne Speech, they actually expect Manitobans to believe that they will suddenly magically achieve a balanced budget by the end of their term. It is laughable. And it would—at least it would be if the stakes weren't so high. After years of accusing the PCs of austerity, now they claim we were reckless with spending.

Something doesn't add up. Both things can't be true. And, in fact, neither are true. The facts are, the PCs increased spending at a sustainable pace for seven years while reducing the deficit each year, delivering the first balanced budget in Manitoba in over a decade.

Under the PCs, our economy grew year after year while we were in government and by far more than the meagre 1 per cent that is projected to grow under the NDP this year. The NDP haven't had a surplus since 2008. They simply do not have the ability to run a fiscally responsible government; they can't do it.

Spending is outgrowing revenues massively under the NDP: 5.3 per cent to 1.1 per cent. That's five point—a 5.3 per cent increase in government spending versus a 1.1 per cent increase in government growth. That's wildly disproportionate, and it's not healthy, and we're heading in the wrong direction.

And it's why they are now introducing new tax increases this year, and they're surely going to add more next year. They've already ended the indexation of tax brackets and the basic personal amount, meaning Manitobans' income will be reduced every year by cost-of-living pressures. In simple terms, they changed the tax rules so they get more of your money and you get less. That is their legacy on affordability. Manitobans cannot afford that.

Honourable Speaker, I see my time is nearly up. I ask for leave to continue my remarks.

The Speaker: Honourable member's time has expired.

The—oh, the honourable member asked for leave to extend his time.

Is there leave for the honourable member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) to—

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no.

MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson): Thank goodness we denied leave from that member to finish his remarks, because, Honourable Speaker, what are they talking about over there? When it comes to fiscal management, only one government in Manitoba has ever balanced the books for 10 years straight, and that's the NDP.

Honourable Speaker, they have no credibility when it comes to the books. They have no credibility when it comes to health care. Frankly, they have no credibility when it comes to morality. It is pretty incredible that this side of the House, our NDP government, is willing to study. Imagine ridiculing a government for studying. If they had studied a little bit more, maybe they wouldn't be sitting on that side of the bench.

Honourable Speaker, I am glad to start my remarks by responding to some of the vitriol that we've heard coming from the opposite side because the mud-slinging that's coming from the other side is not based in anything of fact. Their reality is so skewed that they can't even see through their own mistakes that they're making on the record here.

When they talk about who our bosses are—they ask the question about who our bosses are. We have full clarity on this side of the House who our bosses are in this hallowed Chamber. Our bosses, the only people we answer to, Honourable Speaker, are the great people of Manitoba.

And so the question that I have to ask is, if they can look in the mirror and instead maybe ask themselves who is running the show on that side of the House, who their bosses were when they tried to ram through the Sio Silica project after election day, Honourable Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, today we are here to debate the Throne Speech. We aren't here to put, you know, uncorrect, frankly misleading things on the record. And I am proud to be part of an NDP government led by the First Minister, our Premier (Mr. Kinew), here in Manitoba, who is prioritizing the issues that matter most to Manitobans, like the Manitobans that I am so grateful to represent in Radisson. That is health care, affordability, public safety, education, child care and so much more.

We are happy to champion health care because we know that in working together with Manitobans of every walk of life, but in particular with the experts who have been trying to be heard for years by a government who wouldn't listen, finally Manitoba is on a path and moving in the right direction.

So, Honourable Speaker, I am proud to represent an area that holds a snapshot of the best that Manitoba has to offer. Radisson is home to farmland. It's home to the largest urban bioserve in the province. It's got a commercial entertainment district, it's got homes of front-line nurses, social workers, teachers, innovative small business owners, coding professionals and researchers, and yes, folks who still work at the train yards.

And so, Honourable Speaker, in honour of those many folks, I'd like to paint a little picture as to what our NDP government has been doing and has been doing because of the great people of Radisson that I am so grateful to represent. We have laid down the tracks for one Manitoba, and today in our province,

we are set in motion. We are moving on health care. We are moving on education and child care. We are moving on the cost of living and moving on neighbourhood safety.

One Manitoba has moved its way all the way into Radisson, Honourable Speaker, and that's why I am proud that our Throne Speech includes groundbreaking work in Radisson proper, includes groundbreaking work on Devonshire Drive where a new school will be built. Includes groundbreaking work in the neighbouring constituency of Transcona, where a personal-care home will see 90 new beds.

Again, groundbreaking work for extended hours at the Concordia Hospital walk-in clinic as well as affordable housing coming right to Park City Commons, Honourable Speaker. And when they ask us where the new health-care workers are, the fact of the matter is we can tell them where they are, and we have been telling them where they are. We have 1,653 net-new health-care aides in Manitoba. We have 1,187 net-new nurses; 285 net-new physicians; 422 allied health professionals and five new midwives.

And where it comes to, you know, where they are, maybe if they were actually in their own constituencies they would meet some of them, Honourable Speaker. Because fact of the matter is, once again: Brandon Regional Health Centre, 51 net-new health-care workers; 107 Selkirk Regional Health Centre workers; nine at the Ste. Anne Hospital.

Further, we've got 460 in Southern Health-Santé Sud; we've got 378 in Interlake-Eastern; we've got 342 in Prairie Mountain; 85 in the Northern RHA; 58 at CancerCare Manitoba; and, of course, 1,295 in the WRHA, Honourable Speaker.

And I am grateful—*[interjection]* Yes, that's where they are, if in case they were wondering, if we had to repeat it any more.

And so, Honourable Speaker, that being said, I want to devote a little bit of this time today, again, to the team that is—that has made this all possible. We are strong in Radisson and representing the constituents of this area because of the team that runs our office, and frankly, informs the work that I do; frankly, informs the work that we champion in these very halls; and that is, of course, the folks at the front desk: Brian *[phonetic]*, Kerri, Elisha.

And when it comes to championing issues that Manitobans care about, Honourable Speaker, we know that health care is the foundation of a strong and prosperous Manitoba. The Transcona Trail Trekkers

that meet just at the, you know, the north half of Regent Avenue every—once a week, they know that. The Transcona Community Network that meets also on Regent Avenue knows that. The Jaycees, they know that. The Rotary knows that. Even the good folks of the Legion who stretch across our northeast corner into Transcona know that.

We've listened to families, to seniors, northern and rural communities, Indigenous partners, front-line staff and patients, and we heard the same message: that people want timely, high-quality care close to home, delivered by respected workers who have the support and tools that they need. That's why health care sits at the heart of our plan, and we will always keep it at the heart of our plan unapologetically.

* (16:20)

Honourable Speaker, a strategic physician-led plan is now under way to cut ER wait times, improve patient flow and make sure that people are seen by the right provider at the right time. We have ushered our health-care system into the new age. I am so proud to have been able to shred up my old—already pretty shredded, actually—paper health card, replace it for a plastic health card and I am so excited to be able to introduce, led by the Minister of Health—the best Minister of Health in this great country—a digital platform instead, taking paper to plastic to pixels in under three years. It's hard to believe that this is already our third Throne Speech, and I am so proud of the work that our team has been able to do together.

Honourable Speaker, like you've heard already, we've brought forward a net-new 3,500 health-care staff into this province with so much more to come. *[interjection]* And for the folks heckling on the other side, three new personal-care-home beds—care homes, my apologies, care homes in Lac du Bonnet, Arborg and Transcona. These homes will give seniors the right level of care in their own communities, reduce long travel for families and ease pressure on hospitals by ensuring smoother transitions from acute care to long-term support.

Honourable Speaker, on this side of the House, we understand how beds flow in the health-care system. We understand that bed block is caused by not one, not two, not three too many people in the ER, anything like that. The onus is not on the patient; it is on the system that has been dismantled for seven and a half years. And we are working tooth and nail to bring it back up to a standard where Manitobans can be proud.

In fact, Honourable Speaker, there are many front-line health workers that are already incredibly

proud to—that we are already incredibly proud of. Each and every single day, they show up to work, they've been working on the front lines since the dark days of the PCs, since the dark days of a frozen contract—frankly, no contract—under the previous government amid a global pandemic. They've been working incredibly hard at the most—to serve Manitobans at some of the most vulnerable times of their lives, and we are so, so grateful that they are continuing to put the—put in the good fight alongside our team in this Manitoba NDP government.

Honourable Speaker, that's why, after far too long, our government is finally ending mandatory overtime, beginning with nurses. Speaking from personal experience, as a daughter of a front-line health-care worker, having grown up in the Concordia Hospital, I know how heartbreaking it is to have your mom say she was mandated and couldn't pick you up from school. I know how heartbreaking it is to say—to hear your mom say that she was—oh, wait, no, actually, hear your father say that Mom's not coming home tonight because she got mandated. So that one thing that you thought that you were going to do with her this week isn't going to be happening.

The fact of the matter is that there was a time before mandation in Manitoba, and that worked. Honourable Speaker, all before the PC cuts hollowed our system, mandation was already banned. This was used as a tool and an excuse for folks on the other side of the House to inadequately fund health care. And now that we have brought our system up to a state that actually has reduced mandation rates, we are now finally able to end it.

Honourable Speaker, *[interjection]* I continue to be heckled by members opposite. Even now, as I'm calling them out on heckling, as I share a personal story about how, as a young girl, my mom couldn't come home at the end of a workday. They're heckling me while I explain the effects of mandation. Shame on them.

Honourable Speaker, like I mentioned, we are bringing our health-care system into the new age. The Throne Speech had an incredible amount of things included that demonstrates just that. We're cutting red tape by bringing digital health cards in. We've already spoken about *Medinav.ca* and the—our ability as Manitobans now to get same-day or next-day appointments scheduled right at your fingertips. And not only that, but we have also announced in our Throne Speech that we will be introducing legislation that will no

longer require sick notes for the first seven consecutive calendar days.

This—*[interjection]*—and they continue to heckle, Honourable Speaker. This is a great spot to be in for a 25-year-old, came from the non-profit sector where there was so much love. And all of a sudden, I'm being yelled at by members opposite. Anyways—*[interjection]*—even the women.

We are strengthening emergency response by allowing paramedic services to add emergency medical responders to their teams. These responders will receive in-community training, creating local capacity, faster response times and career pathways for them to serve their communities. We also introduced a direct-entry MRI technologist training program to fast-track skilled professionals into Manitoba's health system.

Honourable Speaker, when it comes to women's health, you heard it here earlier in this Chamber today: we are expanding lactation support as a core part of women's health. Lactation consultants are now available to help new parents start strong and prevent complications during a pivotal time for infant and maternal health.

We are training and hiring more midwives, including in the Interlake for the first time, improving prenatal, birthing and postpartum care, especially in communities that have waited too long for locally available services.

And everything we do, Honourable Speaker, begins with listening. We met with nurses, physicians, paramedics, midwives, health-care aides, pharmacists and allied health professionals. We sat down with patients, caregivers and advocates. We travelled to rural, northern and remote communities, and we engaged Indigenous leaders to design solutions that reflect local realities.

Manitobans asked for timely care, safer workplaces, modern tools and respect for those who serve, and that's exactly what we are delivering, Honourable Speaker. And we're not done listening.

Honourable Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) of this province is finally giving young Manitobans a tangible way to have a seat at the decision-making table long before they're able to vote; long before they can, you know, cast their ballot; long before they're able to run. Our government here in Manitoba, led by our Premier, is finally introducing the youth summit this winter.

This is the first of its kind in our province's history, led by the Manitoba government, and it'll bring young

people from across Manitoba together to, frankly, change the face of many systems that govern us, like the justice system, like the education system—I'm talking too fast for my own good, Honourable Speaker—like the workforce, like innovation and technology.

There are so many different sectors that young people have bright ideas for, and I am so excited that, through the youth summit, they will finally be heard and young people will be able to have an impact in a way that they haven't before.

Honourable Speaker, the PCs had seven and a half years to fix bail. What did they do? Nothing. They didn't do anything. They actually did way worse than nothing. They cut our ankle monitoring program. And when it comes to public safety, our NDP government knows that every Manitoban deserves to feel safe in their homes and their neighbourhoods and in their daily lives. That's why we are taking real, practical action to make that a reality.

We are strengthening safety support for youth in the Child and Family Services system, ensuring that they have the safety, stability and trusted adults that they need during the most vulnerable periods of their lives. And as jurisdiction changes continue to evolve, we are putting in place a clear provincial strategy, one that puts young people first and ensures that no child falls through the cracks.

Honourable Speaker, we have also recommitted ourselves in the Throne Speech to honour our late friend, Nello, ensuring that every child in Manitoba has food in their stomach when it comes to the day that they learn. It is because of our late friend, Nello, that no child in Manitoba will go to school hungry.

* (16:30)

Honourable Speaker, there's so much good work happening in education. Our incredible Education Minister has—of course, you heard earlier—not announced just one school in Devonshire Park, but announced many schools across our great province. There is actually 5,300 child-care spaces that have—are—that have opened under our government or have already begun being built; 5,300 new spaces for young Manitobans and their young families.

Honourable Speaker, our NDP government knows that every child from early learning through to post-secondary education matters. And for the first time ever, the Throne Speech will be published—and has been published—in Anishinaabemowin. We are modernizing board governance in our post-secondary institutions so students receive the high-quality, future-

focused education they deserve, supported by accountable and responsive governance.

Honourable Speaker, we mentioned the new schools earlier and, yes, we're building schools; yes, we're building child-care spots, but we're also doing it in a way that creates good jobs for everyday Manitobans through the Manitoba jobs agreement with Manitoba Building Trades.

These schools will not only serve growing communities, but also strengthen our workforce. Our NDP government has worked tirelessly to ensure children in care are safer. Because those efforts fewer—because of those efforts, fewer children were lost in foster care this year than any year past. Behind that statistic, there are real lives, real families and real progress, Honourable Speaker.

Now, Honourable Speaker, seeing that my time is running out—I can't believe it's already there—and on the theme of ensuring that we commit ourselves to the idea that every child matters and the idea that every child deserves food in their stomach and the idea that every child ought to be set up in a way that allows them to thrive in the future, I'd actually like to highlight one of the events that are happening very shortly in the constituency of Radisson that feeds right into that mission.

December 3, Honourable Speaker, I invite you and my colleagues here in this Chamber to join us at Panet and Molson at 9 p.m. for the C-P-K-S holiday train tour—the only stop in Winnipeg. They'll be raising money and food for local food banks 'incording'—including Harvest Manitoba and local programs. We'll have Jade Eagleson and Teigen Gayse performing—

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

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): It's my honour today to comment on the common sense amendments that have been presented by our leader. Honourable Speaker, I rise today on behalf of the people of Portage la Prairie and Manitobans across this province who feel ignored, dismissed and let down by this NDP government.

After hearing this year's Throne Speech, it became clear that Manitobans were promised progress, affordability, opportunity and safety, but what they received was a speech full of recycled slogans, political spin and vague promises at best. It sounded polished but it did not reflect the live—the reality of Manitobans who are struggling every single day.

This government keeps telling Manitobans that things are improving. They keep repeating talking points over and over about hope, compassion and rebuilding. But Manitobans are not seeing any of those promises materialize in their homes, in their communities, in their hospitals or in their wallets. Life today is harder than it was a year ago. It's more expensive, it's less safe, it's more uncertain and the Throne Speech did absolutely nothing to change that.

When we look at health care, nowhere are the failures more obvious than the communities outside of Winnipeg, especially in my home community of Portage la Prairie. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) celebrates new clinics, new beds and new staff as though he has solved the health-care crisis while ignoring parts of Manitoba that his government refuses to support.

In Portage, we have a brand-new hospital funded, planned and built by the previous Conservative government. And yet the NDP refuses to commit to the one addition that our region and this province desperately needs, and that's an MRI machine. They skipped over it in the Throne Speech. We heard nothing of it. They avoided it in question period. They will not acknowledge it publicly. We have seniors, families, workers and farmers who drive long distances to Winnipeg or Brandon or Dauphin for diagnostic services that should be available right near their homes. Delayed diagnosis means delayed treatment and worse outcomes.

The NDP could've announced that MRI. They chose not to. The refusal to approve an MRI machine for Portage la Prairie, despite \$5 million in privately raised, ready-to-deploy community funding, it's not a question of logistics or cost or need; it is pure ideology. The NDP cannot bring themselves to admit that a good idea is a good idea unless it originates from them. Even when a community steps up, works together, raises the money and demonstrates the clear need, the government's response is to stall, dismiss and deny. Their pride matters more than patient care. Their political comfort matters more than rural Manitobans waiting for diagnostic answers. And their ideology matters more than results. Shame on them.

This is a textbook problem with a government that insists on controlling not a few things, but everything. They cannot tolerate a solution that didn't come from within their own bubble. For the NDP, community-driven success is a threat, not an asset. Rather than celebrating Portage la Prairie for taking the initiative and showing what true civic leadership looks like, they turn up their noses because it contradicts

their world view. They would rather Manitobans remain dependent on centralized government-approved fixes than empower to build solutions themselves. It is the old NDP habit: bureaucracy over common sense, control over collaboration.

We also didn't hear in the Throne Speech, when we heard from the Health Minister that the doctors actually wanted a mammogram machine out in Portage la Prairie. I never heard that, but again, the one thing we didn't hear in the Throne Speech? No talk of a mammogram in Portage la Prairie.

And it goes deeper than just that one project. When governments become convinced that the—that only it can solve the problems, it begins to interfere in every aspect of people's lives. It starts dictating what communities should want, how they should organize and which ideas are acceptable. It creates delays. It creates gatekeeping and arbitrary barriers, all so politicians can maintain the illusion that they alone are the architects of progress.

Portage la Prairie isn't being denied an MRI because it's a bad idea. It's being denied because the government cannot conceive Manitoba's help—Manitobans helping themselves without asking permission first. But Manitobans don't want a government that behaves like a gatekeeper. They want one that works with them, not one that refuses opportunities out of spite. They want a health-care system that is flexible, responsive and collaborative, not one chained to outdated ideological purity tests.

* (16:40)

The NDP's unrestrained patronism has real consequences: longer wait times, fewer services and communities punished for taking initiative. This is affecting communities all over Manitoba. There is currently 31,000 people waiting in Manitoba for an MRI, waiting eight to 12 months. That is people getting sicker by the moment. They know what's—what works. They know what their communities need, and they are more than capable of contributing to the solutions. The only thing standing in the way of government is they cannot see past its own ideology.

Health-care workers tell me that wait times are much longer today than last year. Families sit and wait in emergency rooms for hours, overnight. Staff are overwhelmed and exhausted. Nurses who returned because they believed change was coming are starting to question whether anything, anytime, will ever improve under this NDP government. Nothing in this Throne Speech gives them reason to believe that relief is coming.

And it's important to remember something that the NDP hopes Manitobans forget. They talk loudly about how much they care about rural health, but this is the same party that closed 17 rural emergency rooms the last time they were in government; 17 communities lost vital emergency services because of the decisions made by this NDP government. Families were left without care that they needed. Lives were put at risk.

And today the NDP pretend they're rebuilding health care. The reality tells a very different story. You only have to drive up No. 16 highway to the beautiful new health facility going up in Neepawa, Manitoba. You only have to drive down No. 3 highway to see the beautiful addition that is being put in in the Boundary Trails hospital, not by this NDP government, but by the previous Progressive Conservative government. This government, who has chosen that I cannot even see our new hospital because I am not allowed in the building. That is wrong every day.

When we turn to addiction and mental health, bill 48 remains one of the most troubling of the—troubling actions this government has taken. I want to be very clear because it's important. Everyone in this Chamber wants to save lives. Everyone wants to protect vulnerable people. Everyone wants to show compassion to those battling addictions, mental illness and trauma. Everyone wants to support families who are desperate to help loved ones in crisis. There is no disagreement about that goal. The disagreement is about the way the NDP went about it, and their approach was deeply, deeply flawed.

Bill 48 was pushed through with speed, with secrecy and an alarming disregard for the voices of community members, front-line experts and the very people who will be most affected by protective detention. The government refused to listen to legitimate concerns about oversight, accountability and human rights. They refused to consult properly with communities. They refused to listen to front-line experts who understood the real challenges, and they refused to respect the people of Point Douglas, who woke up one morning to discover that a protective-care centre was being placed in their neighbourhood without any meaningful dialogue, transparency or respect. That is not compassion. That is not partnership. That is how you—that is not how you build trust in communities that has already endured so much.

The NDP insist that bill 48 will save lives, but they have provided no plan for what happens after someone leaves protective care, other than I guess

they will get a pamphlet on the way out the door, on their way to the consumption site and then they can bring the pamphlet right back to the protective-care centre and spend another 72 hours in solitary confinement.

Without those pieces, a 72-hour hold becomes nothing more than a revolving door, or worse, a containment facility dressed up in the language of compassion. A 20-bed unit cannot solve a province-wide crisis. The NDP talks about compassion, but their actions show a government more focused on optics than it is on outcomes.

Bill 48 spoke about more health-care workers and paramedics. Every corner of this province is desperate for more health-care workers. We're hearing paramedics—where are these paramedics coming from? This one paramedic is going to be awfully busy.

The government says bill 48 is part of a broader strategy. If that is true, where is the strategy? The people of Manitoba deserve to know what's going on. Where are the long-term treatment beds? Where is the detox expansion? Where are the rural supports? Where are the plans for after care, again, as we brought forward in the amendments that was brought forward by our leader. Where is the commitment to culturally safe services?

These questions were repeated—raised repeatedly at committee, but many presenters were turned away. People who wanted to share their experiences were prevented from speaking. That is not what we need to do in Manitoba.

Again, that's why it is important that we bring these amendments forward. There is no commitment for protective-care services outside of Winnipeg. Again, there needs to be some sort of commitment.

When I met with the minister, I was told that CSOs could do that work. CSOs are not trained to do that work. They have no way of transporting people. The RCMP in rural Manitoba is short, so does that mean that we are going to make them even more short by having them spend time driving to Winnipeg? Because I don't see any protective-care centres being listed.

The homeless crisis is another area where the government's rhetoric does not match reality in any shape or form. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) talked about ending chronic homelessness, but encampments across Manitoba tell a different story. In Winnipeg, Brandon, Portage, more tents are appearing, not fewer. People are living outdoors in our bitter winters,

including seniors, youth, women fleeing violence and people living with untreated mental illness.

While the government congratulates itself day after day, real people are freezing outside. Intentions alone do not house people. Intentions do not warm people. Intentions do not keep people alive.

In Portage la Prairie, we see this crisis clearly and we see the government is doing nothing meaningful to address it. Manitoba's housing units sit empty while people sleep outside. The most glaring example of that is the Stephens Apartments. Again, Manitoba Housing, where was it mentioned?

These are government-owned units that could be filled with people who desperately need housing, yet they sit unused. The government cannot even manage the housing it already owns, yet it claims that it will build new homes. How can Manitobans trust when the government cannot even fill existing suites? Two-thirds of that building continues to be empty. Residents with mental health issues are being put into homes without any wrap-around services. How, how is that helping Manitoba?

* (16:50)

Affordability was another major disappointment. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) promised Manitobans that he would hold grocery stores accountable and ensure prices stayed in line. He said he would take action to make sure groceries were affordable, but grocery prices continue to rise.

And the Premier has not delivered on a single promise related to affordability. There is no example of grocery chains being held accountable. There is no tangible action. There is only the Premier's empty assurance that there will be, yes, another study about grocery prices.

I can tell you how we can easily look at the study for groceries. Go and stand in line in your local grocery store. Look at people that are looking at anything on the shelf, watch them look at the price and watch them put it back. You don't need a study; the prices are going through the roof.

The NDP's so-called affordability measures fall flat because they never touch the real forces driving inflation in Manitoba. Rebates, temporary credits and photo op cheques don't address the structural pressure. One of Manitoba's most serious long-time challenges is our failing productivity. Output per worker is stagnating or dropping in industries that once drove this province:

agriculture, manufacturing, transportation and natural resources.

Where has Azure gone? Where? But we tend—we continue to spend money on things like a person in the US, in Washington, that according to our Premier is a very good-looking guy. He may not have any contacts, but he's getting a \$400,000-a-year wage plus expenses. What has he brought to this province? I can tell you: absolutely nothing.

This reduced capacity to produce goods and services is a major contributor to inflation. It leaves more money chasing fewer goods, but rather than creating an environment that encourages capital investment, innovation and modernization, they cling to the same outdated belief that the government redistributes prosperity rather than enabling the private sector to create it.

I have much more to go on, Honourable Speaker, and I will ask for leave. Adding to the problem is Manitobans' dangerous over-reliance on real estate as an investment vehicle. The result is an affordability agenda rooted in economic thinking. The NDP believes you can tack—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member's time has expired.

MLA Bereza: Honourable member, I would like to ask for leave to complete my throne. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

Is there leave for the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza) to finish his speech?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: Leave has been denied.

MLA Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Normally, I would like to listen to the member for Portage la Prairie a little more, maybe be a little more optimistic, it would be nice. But I have a conflict of interest here because he'd be cutting into my time that I have.

You know, this was actually a very, very good Throne Speech. I thought there was a lot of content in here that's worth talking about and dealing with. And one of the big areas of the Throne Speech deals with the Port of Churchill, and the Port of Churchill has been with us as an issue now, as long as I've been around here and long before that.

The history of the—of Churchill is this, that the railway was completed back in 1929—that's how long it's been around. In 1942, the United States Air Force used Churchill as a military base during World War II. The Strategic Air Command operated under there; there was the Churchill rocket range. I think some of us here will remember the Black Brant rockets that were sent up through there. There—it became a tourism area. And so there's been activity there for many, many years.

And back in 1986, there was a question about shipping grain out of there. And Premier Pawley at the time went to London, England, to get the reinsurance treaties changed so that shipping companies could ship out of Churchill, because up 'til then, no company would ship out of there unless they had insurance. He got that done, and it's just been a constant issue with us to try to get improvements there.

We've improved the rail lines, we've tried to do shipping. We get blowback from Vancouver because it's huge shipping area there. We get blowback from Thunder Bay. You know, there's more seats in Ontario and federal seats in BC than there is in Manitoba—we only have 14—so we get—we have to fight our way through to—you know, we know we want to—what we want to do. We want to get the right thing done, but we've got competitors on bunch of different areas here. Then we have the whole area of the icebreaking capacity that we have to get.

So, you know, there is always a chance that things will change, circumstances will change. And I think now we possibly have a big break here, given what's been going on with us and the United States in the last little while.

And there's a big move now to develop critical minerals. There are something like 23 critical minerals. China is the—processes practically all of it, and even though worldwide they only have a small percentage of all the critical minerals, the processing is done over there.

So, you know, in United States right now, what they've been lately doing—the battery plants are all now designated military; the critical minerals are designated military; and in Wyoming recently, they opened an open-pit mine for critical minerals. You know, not all of the 23 of them are in all areas, but they're open-pit mining there.

But guess what? They have to ship all the—all that ore to China for processing because there's no processing

facilities in Canada or United States, and are quickly now, once again, under military designation. They are—Americans are designating the refining and the processing of these critical minerals as the No. 1 issue, but they're not there yet and they're developing the plans.

So over a period of a couple years now, I'm sure they're going to develop their plants—processing plants. But in the meantime, all that ore from Wyoming has to be sent to China, and then it will be brought back when it's processed. So whatever process we do here dealing with critical minerals is that we are going to have to develop our own processing.

And when I read what it is we plan to do there, we're going to be having a critical mineral storage facility in Churchill—well, I mean, the fact of the matter is that we should be processing those critical minerals here and we ship them to the final market rather than sending them to China because that's not going to be super competitive in the long term, especially if the Americans are going to be developing their processing part of the equation here, right?

So—but there's been a lot of activity spent over the last few years. I can recall the whole idea of trying to have the hydro—the east-west power grid, that's been an issue since Schreyer days. You know, we were working on that. Why is it that in Canada we have north-south power—hydro development? In BC, it's all north-south; Quebec, it's all north-south; Manitoba's north-south. We don't connect a power grid east-west.

In the Schreyer days, we wanted to start working on that, and we did. And, you know, back a few years ago, Steven Fletcher was here today. He was the minister—federal minister, of—well, I don't know if it was economic development, but certainly western development, anyway. He approached us about building a power line to the Ring of Fire in Ontario. That was, like, 15 years ago now, and we were—

The Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House—
[interjection]

Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 13 minutes—14 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

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