

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

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 8, 2024

*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, and that we may seek it with wisdom, and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

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

Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 211—The Drivers and Vehicles  
Amendment Act  
(Manitoba Parks Licence Plates)**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** I move that—seconded by the MLA for Swan River, that Bill 211, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Manitoba Parks Licence Plates), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Manitobans love their provincial parks, and we think there's no better way to show it than introducing legislation to amend the drivers and vehicles registration act to allow for a specialty plate that will show the whole country how much Manitobans love their parks by displaying these plates on the back of their vehicles.

The proceeds from the sale of these plates will go to the park endowment funds that now sit in The Winnipeg Foundation.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Committee reports?

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I wish to table the following annual reports: the 2023 Annual Review of the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the 2022 Annual Report of The Manitoba Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Adjudication Panel.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

*(Continued)*

**Bill 211—The Drivers and Vehicles  
Amendment Act  
(Manitoba Parks Licence Plates)**

*(Continued)*

**The Speaker:** If we could just back up for a moment to the first reading of the bill introduced by the member for Riding Mountain.

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

Any other reports?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

## Mentoring Artists for Women's Art

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** Honourable Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise here today to recognize an outstanding organization that stands as a shining star of the arts and cultural scene in Manitoba.

Mentoring Artists for Women's Art, or MAWA, is a community organization that is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year and is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Ms. Smith).

MAWA is a—unique in our province in providing a space for women and non-binary artists of all career levels with the opportunity to learn from their peers, while building an intergenerational arts community.

MAWA also presents a variety of programming in our community, such as their Over the Top Art Auction and Cupcake Party, which took place this past Sunday. This event helps fund MAWA's activities and, in addition to hosting over 200 pieces of art for sale, featured over 1,000 cupcakes.

Unfortunately, a fire at the Edge Gallery next door to MAWA put this event in jeopardy. However, led by the incredible Dana Kletke and Shawna Dempsey, MAWA persevered and hosted the event at a new location.

I was pleased to be able to support this fundraiser with a small grant from our government, to help continue this work, and was pleased to attend the event alongside the members for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko), Union Station (MLA Asagwara) and St. John's (MLA Fontaine).

I want to thank Shawna and Dana, as well as for reaching out to me early in my tenure as minister for a meeting, and for their wise counsel and advice as a newcomer to the broader arts scene. I am truly honoured to have them here today.

**MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Honourable Speaker, today I rise to bring recognition to a notable organization within the downtown community of Winnipeg: the Mentoring Artists for Women's Art, or MAWA.

This year is a very special year for the MAWA, because it's their 40th anniversary. The centre was founded in 1984, with the mandate to encourage, support the intellectual and creative development of women in the visual arts by providing an ongoing forum for education and critical dialogue.

The centre is mentorship-driven, with the mentors ranging from two to 12 months in duration, where the artists can focus on specific media or a theme and even have an exhibition to showcase their work afterwards.

The MAWA also profoundly offers more than 20 core programs, all of which are low-cost or free to participants, and provide opportunities for women, non-binary, transgender and two-spirited individuals of all career levels to research, create and connect with others internationally through the MAWA's live-work apartment.

But even outside of the live-work apartment setting, there's opportunity for women and people of all genders through the MAWA. There's—there are workshops for traditional global and Indigenous artistic practices; talks given by local and national, international artists; studio visits with established curators; lectures and discussion groups; and so much more.

The programs offered by MAWA really allow artists to learn and really refine their skills to the level of professionalism. It's really no wonder, then, that the

MAWA was awarded community art and—the community art and education award by the national Canadian Society of Education through Art in 2018.

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

\* (13:40)

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Before I move on to members' statements, I'd like to draw members' attention to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today the Ambassador of the Philippines in Canada, her 'excellency'—Her Excellency Maria Andrelita Austria, and Mr. Ronaldo Opina, the honorary consul of the Philippines in Winnipeg. The delegation is being hosted by the Manitoba Protocol Office.

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

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### World Health Day

**MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson):** Honourable Speaker, yesterday, April 7, was World Health Day. This year's theme My Health, My Right is one to note. There are many to thank for defending this right.

Today's world has been rampaged with disease, disaster and distress. This is largely due to the increasing threat of war, the climate crisis and the lottery of basic human needs, such as quality housing, safe drinking water, clean air, good nutrition and decent work.

According to the World Health Organization, at least 140 countries recognize health as a constitutional human right, yet many delay the passing and practise of laws that ensure their populations have the access to health services that they are entitled to.

Here in Canada, we are not exempt. We have come further along than many but we have so much further yet to go.

Thankfully, in Manitoba, we finally have a government who understands that better health outcomes start in the community. Though, when help is needed most, it's those on the front lines of our health systems who are there for you.

In northeast Winnipeg, we are indebted to over 1,200 health-care workers who make up the Concordia organization, including Concordia Hospital and Concordia Place.

In its humbling beginnings, Concordia was composed of mere four hospital beds for expectant mothers.

It now houses many programs and services, and specialties, including its urgent care, family medicine, orthopedics, pharmacy, primary care and outpatient cancer care.

After years of drastic change and austerity, I am proud to say that Manitoba finally has a government who understands that this work deserves respect and solutions, that this work is sacred, that this work takes a toll on those who do it.

Hospital communities, like Concordia, are one site of many where our rights to health are fulfilled. And that's why this World Health Day, I invite the House to stand with me in recognition of Concordia staff and volunteers, many of whom are watching us virtually today.

### Hazel Skuce

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** Honourable Speaker, I rise today to share a remarkable tale of resilience, wisdom and joy. I recently had the privilege to celebrate with my constituent, Ms. Hazel Skuce, a 'supercenturian' from Brandon West, who has etched her name in history and is joining us virtually today.

Mrs. Skuce, born February 7, 1912, embodies the spirit of endurance. At the age of 110, she achieved the rare distinction of a 'supercenturian' status, and today, at 112 and 61 days old, she continues to defy time—a testament to her remarkable longevity.

Over the decades, Mrs. Skuce was—has borne witness to profound changes. She embarked on life's journey alongside her first husband, Dick Patmore, and after his passing, she found love again, marrying John Skuce in 1999. Although she did not have children of her own, she dedicated her lengthy career to shaping young minds as a devoted teacher.

Despite the challenges posed by wheelchairs and having—and hearing loss, Mrs. Skuce's eyes still twinkled during my visit, and she shared smiles and a few laughs, and her wisdom shone through. When previously asked about the secrets to a long life, she said there really is not one. What happens, happens and you must stay happy. And happy she is.

Today, Mrs. Skuce resides at the Hillcrest personal-care home, where the staff affectionately describe her as a lovely, sweet lady, and a cherished presence in the building. Her resilience knows no bounds. She gets her hair done weekly, finds solace in bird-watching and remarkably, even bowls. Yes, you heard that right; she can still throw the bowling ball from her wheelchair.

I invite all members of this esteemed House to join me and extend our warmest wishes to Mrs. Hazel Skuce, who is watching us live from Brandon West. She holds the distinguished honour of being the oldest living person in Manitoba and the third oldest in Canada. Let's raise our voices in applause.

### Singh Welfare

**MLA Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** Today, I rise to recognize Singh Welfare. Singh Welfare is a non-profit organization founded in 2014 with the primary purpose of helping those in need and galvanizing local members to promote community involvement.

This group consists of over 150 members who regularly donate canned baby food to food banks such as Winnipeg Harvest, Salvation Army, in addition to participating in the street cleaning to maintain the cleanness of Winnipeg. For the past decade, the organization has profoundly set up a free food stall at the Sikh parade, Nagar Kirtan, providing meals and goodwill to attendees from all walks of life.

In line with their commitment to community, Singh Welfare has conducted more than 20 blood donation drives since they begin. They have already hosted two this year and have another one scheduled on April the 13th.

The dedicated volunteers of Singh Welfare are deeply committed to upholding and expanding upon these essential services in the years to come, guided by their unwavering belief in the power of compassion and community.

I'm urging members in the Chamber to thank all the members of Singh Welfare for their selfless work to do for every Manitoban.

Thank you, members.

### The Power of the Purse

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** Honourable Speaker, members of the Assembly: today I rise in recognition of an organization of women in my constituency that are making a difference in one purse at a time. In a world where women are increasingly leading change and making a difference, the power of purse campaign stands out as a shining example of how women of all generations are coming together to make a positive impact through philanthropy.

This past Saturday was the ninth annual Power of the Purse brunch in Morden. This event is put on and run by the Morden Area Foundation. Imagine a room filled with over 100 passionate, driven women, all

coming together over brunch to discuss, network and, ultimately, make a change in their community. Each \$100 ticket for the brunch goes directly to the charity of your choice.

This act of giving not only raises over \$10,000 each year, but also allows attendees to have a direct impact on causes that are important to them.

What makes Power of the Purse brunch even more special is the support it receives from local businesses and individuals. These sponsors play a crucial role making the event a success by covering all the costs of the brunch, ensuring all the money raised can go directly towards the local charities.

The Power of the Purse brunch is about making a real difference in the lives of those in need. The three grant recipients this year are the Morden Family Resource Centre, Morden Youth for Christ and a student bursary program designed for students that will seek employment at Boundary Trails Health Centre.

These local charities have a lasting impact, providing much needed support and resources to organizations. I'm very proud to represent such a giving community.

Thank you.

#### **Joanne Douglas and Jon Vezeny**

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources):** Honourable Speaker, today I rise to extend my heartfelt recognition for two remarkable individuals, income tax volunteers, Joanne Douglas and Jon Vezeny, for their tireless efforts in assisting the residents of St. Vital.

The community volunteer income tax program has run out of the St. Vital constituency office dating back to the days of the incredible former MLA Nancy Allan. The program is designed to support folks on fixed and modest incomes navigate through the complexities of tax returns by having a trained, experienced volunteer help them file their taxes.

\* (13:50)

This program is particularly popular with seniors, students and newcomers.

Together, Joanne and Jon are beacons of support for the community. By the end of tax season, they will have assisted well over a hundred community members, making a big difference in the lives of the residents of St. Vital.

After an extensive career, then re-training to become a tax preparer, Jon now uses his extra time to help others in the community with their taxes. His clients have spoken glowingly of his warmth, patience and genuine care throughout his tax-filing process.

Joanne's long-standing dedication to volunteering exemplifies the spirit in service ingrained in her. After a long career at CRA, even in retirement she continues to offer her invaluable experience and guidance to clients and other volunteers as well.

Honourable Speaker, the kindness and generosity exhibited by Joanne and Jon show the spirit that many Manitobans embody: a willingness to lend a helping hand.

I am delighted to acknowledge Jon's presence here today with us in the gallery.

Please join me in extending our sincerest gratitude to Joanne and Jon for their outstanding contribution to the people of St. Vital.

Thank you.

### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

#### **Provincial Carbon Tax Request for Government Plan**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Honourable Speaker, Canadians are fed up with the carbon tax. During this current cost-of-living crisis, no one can afford the direct costs or indirect economic impacts of the carbon tax.

That's why there are protestors calling themselves the nationwide protest against carbon tax, actively calling for the federal government to get rid of the carbon tax once and for all. Protests are being held all around the country. It could be a matter of time before they arrive here in Manitoba.

Without pointing fingers or casting blame, can the Premier explain his current position on the carbon tax?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** The rising cost of living is something that Manitobans from all walks of life have had to bear the impact of. I've been making a very clear case to the federal government that we don't need the federal backstop here in Manitoba.

But at the same time, we're not just going to do what the PCs did, which is pick fights and not take any action to help you. In fact, one of our first acts upon forming government was to remove the provincial gas

tax. That saves Manitobans 14 cents a litre every single time you visit the pump.

Again, there are more impacts on the cost of living having to do with the lagging impacts of high interest rates. We're going to continue to be there for you and your family through this difficult time.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** Every time I get up to ask this question, the Premier stands up and talks about his temporary tax relief to Manitobans. Every time I bring up the carbon tax also up in this House, the Premier takes his eyes off the road, looks in the rear-view mirror and continues to continue on with his line of answering his questions.

The Prime Minister says there must be a Manitoba carbon tax. It's the only way out of the federal backstop. The Premier can create a carbon tax higher than the federal carbon tax; he can institute a cap-and-trade tax like Quebec or institute a carbon tax plus output base pricing like his friends in British Columbia.

I've asked this question before but have yet to get an answer, so I'm asking it again: When will the Premier drop the theatrics and be honest with Manitobans about his carbon tax plan?

**Mr. Kinew:** I've been honest with Manitobans every day of my political career, which is why our team was invested with the honour to form government. The PCs cannot say the same; that's why they're sitting on the opposition benches now.

Now we know that the cost of living is a major impact on the people of Manitoba, so we cut the 14-cents-a-litre provincial fuel tax. That saves you money, 14 cents a litre, every time you gas up. It has also given Manitoba the lowest inflation rate in the country for two consecutive months.

The reason why I keep mentioning this is because there is hypocrisy in the position of the members opposite. They complain about a 14-cents-a-litre federal fuel tax, even though they charged a 14-cents-a-litre provincial fuel tax. That's what the levels were when they were in office.

They were happy to tax Manitobans. We're taking a difference approach and it's saving you money.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** So, Honourable Speaker, let's set the record straight. First of all, the Premier obviously doesn't do his homework, because he's talking off of old NDP math talking points. Only members on the government side of the House have supported a rising carbon tax.

In 2016, the federal government said all provinces would have to bring in carbon tax or face the federal backstop. The previous PC government attempted to block the carbon tax backstop, first with a flat rate and later through the courts.

Trudeau instituted the backstop anyways. The tax has only risen since then, including a dramatic increase last week, and this Leader of the NDP failed to stand up for Manitobans.

Can the Leader of the NDP share with Manitobans how high his carbon tax or fee or whatever he's willing to call it, is going to go up shortly, Honourable Speaker?

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, I just want to say that even though the members opposite are trying to rewrite history—and we all know what happened under their time in office—they tried to bring in a carbon tax on Manitobans twice.

Our team was very, very consistent. During the election, we told Manitobans we're going to work hard to save you money. We're not going to pick fights with people at other levels of government to try and distract from our areas of responsibility. In fact, we're going to lean in to the areas we're responsible for.

What's been the upshot? Well, we cut the 14-cents-a-litre provincial fuel tax, and not only does that save you money each and every day, but it's lowered inflation in this province.

This important work is not done; there's more work to do, but the things that our team has done so far are starting to produce results. We can't afford to go back to the dark days of the PCs.

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

### **Health-Care Staffing Number of New Workers**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Honourable Speaker, there's a solar eclipse today. The moon's silhouette will overtake the sun, casting a shadow on the earth. This is much like how the Premier eclipses his ministers through his insistence on dominating media conferences, here in the Chamber,

speaking for them in QP and I'm sure, and they're nodding their heads, even in behind closed doors.

While he was speaking on behalf of the Health Minister last week, he claimed front-line health-care workers needn't worry since help is arriving every day. It could be an example of the Premier just saying things in question period; as he admits, he sometimes does.

Without any overheated partisan rhetoric or finger pointing, can the Premier share with the House and with Manitobans how many net new health-care workers have been added since October?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** There's been a total eclipse of the facts on the other side of the House. I'm just glad the members opposite will remain in opposition.

I was surprised to hear the member opposite raise a question about health care. He's been in his seat for quite some time and he has, until now, neglected to address the No. 1 issue for the people of Manitoba.

But I was disappointed when he stood up to not apologize. What I think he meant to say was, I'm sorry to you, the people of Manitoba, for closing the Victoria emergency room, that he's sorry for closing the Concordia emergency room, that he's sorry for closing the Seven Oaks emergency room, that he's sorry for cutting hundreds and hundreds of nurses across the province.

While he continues to dodge responsibility for the failures of the Stefanson government, we're going to be there working with front-line health-care workers to repair the damage. We're investing in new staff each and every day, but that work is not done.

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

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

### Recruitment Reporting

**Mr. Ewasko:** Honourable Speaker, I gave the Premier a chance to provide a simple answer with that question, and it's a shame he didn't take it. Simply Selinger 2.0 over there.

To be clear, claiming health-care workers are arriving every day is giving false hope that he can't back up. I'll quote from a letter to the MNU shared online earlier today about false hope from the NDP. This letter from a veteran nurse says, and I quote, I have waited and watched and have seen no change. This government promised to listen to the front line,

but we don't feel heard at all. In fact, we feel more devalued. End quote.

\* (14:00)

It seems as though the NDP used fixing health care as a campaign talking point and issue to get elected but had no plan for recruitment and failing to retain.

So I ask again on behalf of the veteran nurse: Where's the change that was promised and will the government start reporting publicly and proactively on health-care recruitment?

**Mr. Kinew:** The quote being read by the member opposite implies that health care under his tenure was an absolute disaster. We know that that is the fact.

They closed some of the biggest emergency rooms in Winnipeg, the biggest emergency rooms in the province. That led to hundreds of beds being cut. They saw that during their time in office, the damage over seven years just seemed to snowball day after day after day.

A new day is here. We are investing in front-line health-care services. We are repairing the relationship with those on the front lines.

What they need to understand is that fixing the damage they caused in seven and a half years will not be accomplished overnight. But whereas they cut hundreds and hundreds of beds in our system, I'm happy to report today that we've already added 27 back at the Health Sciences Centre alone.

The work is not done, but it's under way. We can't afford to slide back to the PC days of cuts and closures.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** A new day, Honourable Speaker, but nothing new with you-know-who from over across the aisle.

The Premier's response echoes his budget: no substance, Honourable Speaker. There is no tree for the Premier to go out and shake that will give him 100 doctors, 210 nurses, 90 paramedics and 600 health-care aides over the next year. And as stated multiple times by our health-care critic, there is absolutely no plan.

Seven years in opposition, and they didn't do any work because they were never a government in waiting, Honourable Speaker. If the Leader of the NDP is serious



about these targets and serious about providing hope, we begin reporting publicly on health-care recruitment numbers today.

**The Speaker:** Before I recognize the First Minister, I must caution the member about continuing to say you-know-who. If you're referring to another member, please refer to them by their constituency or their ministerial title.

**Mr. Kinew:** I want to say to the important people who work on the front lines of our health-care system that we know that you're frustrated. I can only imagine what it was like having to endure a government that closed some of the biggest emergency rooms in our province. I can only imagine what it was like to have Health minister after failed PC Health minister under the Stefanson government that questioned your motivation.

Again, we know it is going to take years to fix the damage that they caused over their two terms, but that work has already begun. I was happy to report, alongside the Minister of Health, earlier today that we've already added back 27 of the beds which were cut under the PCs. Again, it is not going to be accomplished overnight.

I do need to pause for a second to explain something to the members opposite. When we talk about opening a bed, we're talking about the staffing resource necessary for that bed to be open; 27 beds back, hundreds more to repair the damage they've caused.

But the good news is, for those on the front lines, help—

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

### **Health-Care Staffing Request for Number of New Workers**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** Beds don't staff themselves, and Budget 2024 delivered nothing close to a tangible staffing plan for health care. Instead, the NDP gave targets, with no real commitments, no timelines and no commitment that these health-care staff will be net new to the province. This is something that, while in opposition, the NDP demanded.

Will the minister tell Manitobans today exactly how many of those 1,000 health-care workers they've promised are net new positions?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Honourable Speaker, I thank the member opposite for that really important question about an area of health care that is the top priority of

Manitobans, and that's making sure that, when you show up at any part of our health-care system, you have the care by the bedside that you deserve.

I do find it interesting that that member would stand up, given the health-care workers that she's talking about were cut, were fired, were forced out of the health-care system under that side of the House leadership.

I also find it shameful that that member would stand up in this House and not offer an apology to those very same health-care workers they disrespected for seven and a half years.

We're doing the work of investing—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Asagwara:** —of investing and making health-care stronger and treating health-care workers with the respect they never received from the former government.

**Mrs. Cook:** Without a staffing plan, hiring targets are just numbers pulled out of the ether. And maybe the minister can take a lesson from their own previous comments.

In the Free Press last year the now minister was quoted in regards to net new numbers, saying, quote, the public needs to know where there is a net gain or loss in allied health-care professionals, nurses and doctors. Unquote.

And, quote, I think the fact that they are refusing to answer a very straightforward and important question is, in and of itself, the answer. Unquote. Yet now they are refusing to commit to releasing that very information.

So what's made the minister change their mind?

**MLA Asagwara:** Honourable Speaker, health care is Manitobans' No. 1 priority. I've heard very clearly and plainly from front-line health-care workers across the province, especially during the listening tour the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and I have been on with members of our team that it is so important that they finally feel treated with respect, that their voices are being heard on the front lines.

Honourable Speaker, I've also heard from those very health-care workers that for over seven and half years their colleagues were driven out of the profession due to the mistreatment of the government previous.

Now, we've stated this before; I'll say it again. We didn't get to where we are in health care overnight; we're not going to fix it overnight. But every single day, including today at Health Sciences Centre, our government is working with health-care workers to move us in a better direction, including adding dozens of beds to HSC.

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

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

**Mrs. Cook:** In a recent post online that I'll table here today, a nurse in The Pas shared that they're dealing with a 56 per cent vacancy rate and working with nurses who aren't trained to work in the ER.

The NDP can point fingers all they want, but this was the situation in a Manitoba hospital this weekend under an NDP government.

The NDP needs to stop campaigning, start acting like a government. They are accountable for what is happening in the health-care system today under their watch.

How many of the 1,000 new health-care positions are net new to the system?

**MLA Asagwara:** Honourable Speaker, I can tell the member opposite what we're not going to do, and that is take lessons from any member of that side of the House, who spent seven and a half years berating and disrespecting health-care workers across the province. They spent seven and half years accusing nurses of taking bribes, accusing doctors of causing chaos, accusing health-care workers of everything they could to avoid doing their jobs.

Honourable Speaker, if they had bothered to pay attention this morning, they would have realized that 27 beds to acute medicine at HSC that will serve the whole province and the nine psych beds were open before today, and they're already staffed.

#### **Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program Priority for Expiring Work Permit Applicants**

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** Last week, I asked this minister of Immigration and Labour to respect the requests of Manitoban MPNP nominees that had joined us in the gallery.

I asked the minister to fast track and prioritize the applications of Manitobans who are at risk of having their work permits expire. The response we got from this government: Fast track what? I table Hansard to show this disgusting disregard.

Will the Minister of Labour and Immigration fast track and prioritize these applicants today?

**Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Thank you to the member opposite for your very important question.

There's something that we could probably agree on on both sides of this House is that the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program is currently a shell of its former self, the way that it was in the 2000s.

We inherited a PC mess for this Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. At this point when we got into government in October, that PC government was unable to process 2,000 spots that we would have normally gotten from the federal government.

Under that PC government, they destabilized our Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program so badly and mismanaged—

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

The honourable member for Agassiz, on a supplementary question.

\* (14:10)

**Ms. Byram:** This government needs to get its act together. They blame the federal government for cancelling a pandemic extension program, but it is those ministers that are in charge of the Provincial Nominee Program.

Other jurisdictions are listening to concerned residents; why is this government ignoring them?

**MLA Marcelino:** Thank you, member, for your question.

Last night, I was reading a book with my sons, and one of the quotes were: I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust my sails to always reach my destination. That was from Dog Man, but originally by Jimmy Dean.

So we have these problems set upon us by members opposite. We have these problems set upon us by a federal government. But we are adjusting our sails to properly respond to the situation that we're currently in.

If members opposite really cared about these nominations, they would support Budget 2024, which includes a—\$1 million extra for processing our applications—

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

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

**Ms. Byram:** This minister is playing games with people's lives and livelihoods. The decisions of the Minister of Labour and Immigration will ripple. This will impact the applicants, their families, the businesses where they work, the communities that they have formed. All will pay the price for this government's disregard.

This minister would not face the Manitobans in the gallery and promise these changes last week.

I ask the Minister of Labour to reconsider; will she today?

**MLA Marcelino:** Thank you, member, for your question.

The PC record is clear. We had the highest outmigration rates that we've ever seen. We were unable to process a federal allocation. That's never been done in our history for the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. That was under their watch.

And right now, we are taking course to make sure that we're going to be taking the right course and getting federal government participation to make sure that these folks can stay in the country.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

#### **Drugs Given to Children in CFS Care Families Minister's Comments**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, a month ago, the Minister of Families condemned a foster home and removed children from the facility, because it was utilizing drugs as harm reduction.

She was quoted saying, quote: I refuse to believe and accept that that's the best that we can do, that we are going to offer drugs as a means of keeping children placated and managed. This is unacceptable.

I table this article to refresh her memory.

Does she stand by her words that offering drugs as a means of keeping children managed is not acceptable?

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I thank the member for, I guess, that question.

Of course I stand by that. When any agency gives unauthorized drugs to children in care, that's not a good thing.

I don't think that any single member opposite would want anybody giving their children unauthorized,

unprescribed drugs, so I don't know why it's good for children that are in care.

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

#### **Youth Mental Health Services Safe Consumption Site—Government Position**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** This is something that the Minister of Families and I agree on, that drugs are bad.

However, last week, when the minister was asked about her cuts to the department for a youth mental health strategy and mental health resources, the Minister of Families responded about the government's commitment to create a drug consumption site.

Can the Minister of Families clarify her words: Does she think a drug consumption site is a solution to mental health struggles?

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** We have long argued for a safe drug consumption site to protect the lives of Manitobans that are struggling with addictions.

We have an addictions crisis here in Manitoba and, certainly, across the country. And where that failed government, for over seven and a half years, wanted to put—close their eyes and put their blinders on that there were no drug issues going on or addictions crisis in our province, this side of the House was advocating and fighting for Manitobans to be able to get the supports and the resources that they need to just live.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** Honourable Speaker, there are inconsistencies with the minister's position. A month ago, drugs for kids was unacceptable. Last weeks, drugs for youth and mental health struggles is an option.

So I'll ask the Minister of Families a very simple yes or no question: Does the minister agree with providing drugs to vulnerable youth?

**MLA Fontaine:** It's such a disappointing question to be posing in this Chamber when we have Manitobans that are dying of overdoses. Of course, as the daughter of a mother who died of a heroin overdose, of course I support Manitoba citizens getting the supports and the resources that they need to live, one thousand per cent, every single day.

Get on board.

### **Chief Medical Examiner's Office Staff Funding Concerns in Budget 2024**

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** Honourable Speaker, this Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness has spoken often in this House about the need for the office of the chief and—medical examiner to relay timely data.

Does this minister support this budget cutting staffing from that office?

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** On this side of the House, we actually support and actually invest in harm reduction. We are actually listening to experts, unlike members opposite who put on blinders, who actually tried to—weren't transparent with data at all.

We will not take that approach. We will listen to the experts and we will work with front-line organizations and support the work that they're doing.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a supplementary question.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** This is a clear, in black and white, staffing cut to the medical examiner's office.

I table the relevant page from the Estimates book.

Can the minister explain how she supports giving this important office less funding for staff when they need it most?

**Ms. Smith:** Our department is actually working at improving data. On that side of the House, it took up to 18 months to actually release data. On this side of the House, we are going to be transparent and actually allow the experts to do their job, something the members opposite didn't believe, and we on this side of the House believe in actually saving lives and working with those front-line organizations, something members opposite didn't.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a final supplementary question.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** I've met with constituents that have been impacted by the wait times under this government. Families are waiting far too long already for the release of loved ones after tragic accidents, and this government plans to cut staff.

So I ask again: How can the minister think that increasing wait times and denying families closure is in the best interest of Manitobans?

**Ms. Smith:** Well, on that side of the House, they didn't listen to families, they didn't listen to experts,

they didn't even work with folks that were struggling with substance abuse issues. They actually walked outside of this House every day and seen it on the streets.

On this side of the House, we're taking a different approach. We're actually supporting the folks that are working on the front lines and we're going to actually get a safe consumption site opened up in this province so we can help those that are struggling and get them supported with the resources that they need.

Unlike members opposite, who failed to get that done, we will get it done.

### **Child and Family Services Authorities Funding Concerns in Budget 2024**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** We continue to hear horrific stories of children in care falling through the cracks. After the Minister of Families shut down my request for an emergency debate, we expected to see real, tangible action for CFS.

While the budget makes some big claims about child-welfare investments, we're not seeing any of it in the budget expenditures.

Can the minister answer how much of the funds provided to CFS authorities in 2024 to 2025 is specifically new money?

\* (14:20)

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** Miigwech to the member for Tyndall Park for that important question.

Let me just be absolutely clear: we are not taking any funding out of the CFS system. In fact, we are investing over \$420 million to CFS authorities and to their agencies.

We are continuing to evaluate and adjust funding allocations to be able to support Indigenous jurisdiction, to be able to support the movement of cases as we move through jurisdiction and certainly, the adherence to national standards.

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

**MLA Lamoureux:** The mass consensus among Indigenous communities, child-welfare professionals, social workers and advocacy groups is that the child-welfare system is in crisis. That's why it's very shocking to see funding to Winnipeg and rural, northern CFS completely cut and grant and financial assistance to CFS authorities completely frozen.

Honourable Speaker, this financial assistance, in part, goes directly towards caregivers, and I table these numbers now.

Can the minister explain why funding to authorities was frozen and why CFS was completely cut?

**MLA Fontaine:** Again, miigwech to the member for Tyndall Park for that question.

Let me just be clear, and I want to reiterate this again for the member and for everybody in the Chamber: we are not taking funding out of the CFS system. We are evaluating and adjusting funding allocations to be able to support Indigenous jurisdiction; the movement of cases.

And we're also looking at supporting—making sure that there are supports for customary and kinship care so that children in care can be cared for by their families, by their communities and in their communities. That's the work that we're doing in our decolonizing—

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

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

#### **Child and Family Services—Child Protection Funding Concerns in Budget 2024**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** We all know how important child protection is. In fact, unsafe placements were at the forefront of many media reports these last few months. But this is not new information. This is one of the Auditor General's crucial recommendations made in 2019, strengthening safety standards in foster homes.

This government and its years in opposition had plenty of time to prioritize a plan of action to address the safety in placements. But last week, child protection was completely cut in this government's very first budget.

If the protection of our most vulnerable children is a priority for this minister, can she explain why she cut the funds for child protection?

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** Unfortunately, again, the minister—or the member opposite has rose in this House three times to not put facts on the record. She is simply wrong.

Again, let me reiterate: we are not taking any dollars out of the CFS system. In fact, we're putting more dollars—that we are putting \$420 million towards CFS authorities and agencies; \$250 million goes

towards the care costs of children, youth and families, including supports for customary and kinship care.

It is families and communities that we are looking to support. We have grandmothers right now, for many years under that failed government, that—

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

#### **Arts, Culture and Sport Sector Funding in Budget 2024**

**MLA Billie Cross (Seine River):** Honourable Speaker, the former PC government consistently failed the sports, culture, heritage and tourism sectors in our province. They cut funding to Sport Manitoba, Manitoba Film and Music and the Manitoba Arts Council, just to name a few. They even refused to fund our athletes participating in the North American Indigenous Games.

These failures are just some of the reasons—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Cross:** —why Manitobans rejected the PC government last fall. Thankfully, our government's taking a new approach.

Can the minister share with the House the good news in the budget to help our vibrant sport—

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

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** Last week, our budget tabled more money for the Manitoba Arts Council, more money for le CCFM, more money for Sport Manitoba, more money for Manitoba Film and Music. And to quote the Manitobans for the Arts, a historic investment.

And I want to quote Shawna Dempsey, co-executive director of MAWA: It really feels that we've elected our, the people's, government this time.

Well, Honourable Speaker, we're proud to be representing the people of Manitoba and we're just getting started.

#### **Taché Community Centre Funding Inquiry**

**MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Budget 2024 provides no concrete commitment to the people of Taché. Despite campaigning on it, the NDP made no mention of the additional \$5 million promised to them. It's not surprising they forgot it as they can't

even seem to remember the facility is named the Taché community complex, not the Lorette arena.

The NDP are accountable to all the residents of Dawson Trail and all the residents of Manitoba for their over \$3 billion in campaign promises.

When will the NDP do their job and fulfill the promises they made to the residents of Taché?

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** Thank you for that question, member opposite.

I'll just have to say this: We listened to the people of Manitoba. The people of Manitoba elected this government to listen to them, and that's why we are investing in rec centres like in Lorette, like in Brandon. And—

Au monde de Lorette, Sainte-Anne, La Broquerie : nous allons continuer à supporter vos initiatives.

**Translation**

*To the residents of Lorette, Ste. Anne, La Broquerie, we say: we will continue to support your initiatives.*

**English**

We sit down and we listen to all ideas. We sit down and we take information from people and make decisions based on a future for Manitoba. They are still talking about their past—

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

The honourable member for Dawson Trail, on a supplementary question.

**MLA Lagassé:** I will table a letter I sent to the Premier (Mr. Kinew) in October regarding the Taché community complex. Unfortunately, they never bothered to respond. Budget 2024 has made the NDP's intentions clear: overblown promises in the campaign with no intention of following up on them.

The NDP had 17 years to fund upgrades in Lorette and did nothing. Looks like the NDP government is taking their notes from Selinger again.

When will the NDP do the right thing and cough up the additional funding?

**Mr. Simard:** I'll just come up again and say it again:

Au monde de Lorette : on vous entend, on va investir dans votre communauté.

**Translation**

*To the residents of Lorette, we say: we hear you, we will invest in your community.*

**English**

Also, I'm proud to work with the team. I'm proud to work with the minister of municipal relations to invest in communities. Again, we stopped the freeze; they put it on. We're thawing out years—years—of neglect. We are sitting down with Manitoba Arts Council. We're sitting down with Sport Manitoba. We're investing in film and music. We're investing in small communities.

We love Manitoba. Get on board.

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

**MLA Lagassé:** I know the NDP is fond of announcing PC initiatives, but the existing—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

**MLA Lagassé:** —funding being provided is not the new funding they campaigned on. This budget cuts the arts, culture, sport in community fund and the Building Sustainable Communities fund. It doesn't deliver on promised community funding that they themselves campaigned on.

The NDP are picking winners and losers when it comes to the community funding in Manitoba and—that they rely on. That's just not right.

When will the NDP do the right thing and cut the cheques they promised communities across the province?

**Mr. Simard:** You know, having grown up in a small community, I know what it means to grow up and pick the garbage. I know what it means to show up to an event and help out; everybody pitches in. That's why we're doing our part on this side of the park—of the park—of the House to make sure that communities are taken care of, like in Brandon where a park community centre will be built, daycare spaces and a cultural space.

\* (14:30)

And, again, generational historic investments. Those aren't my words; that's the art community. So who are they talking to?

### Manitoba Apprenticeship Program Change to Apprenticeship Ratios

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** Honourable Speaker, cutting the number of apprentices in half will directly reduce the number of skilled worker in our trades.

Why does this minister think firing skilled workers is a positive path forward?

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources):** Honourable Speaker, I'm really happy to have the opportunity to take a few minutes to uplift the skilled workers right across Manitoba, who're doing the good job of building up this province for a great and bright future for tomorrow.

Our government is committed to investing in high-quality and safe training, so that those workers can feel 'comfort' that they can go to work safely and 'return' home safely. That's this type of investment that we will make. And we've already improved that—increased that 'investment' in Budget 2024 with an additional \$1.5 million invested in apprenticeship training.

We'll do that each and every day, Honourable Speaker, to make sure that Manitobans can go to work safe and return home safely, each and every day.

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

**Mr. Perchotte:** It is clear the minister has no idea how the apprenticeship program works. The safety of Manitoba's workforce is legislated into law, and the apprenticeship program ensures that safety and the skills of the worker are standardized and measureable. The apprenticeship program only increases the safety levels of workers.

Why does this minister want to put employee safety at risk?

**Mr. Moses:** Honourable Speaker, let's just let—be very clear with Manitobans that under the PC government—the former PC government—their record was cutting staff at Apprenticeship Manitoba, which meant that they had less time to ensure high-quality training and safe training for the workers of tomorrow.

Our government is making the clear choice to invest in high-quality training, safe training for workers here, with an additional \$1.5 million in the Budget 2024.

That's what we're doing to make sure we keep and invest in high-quality workers, safe workers in Manitoba, and we'll do that each and every day right here for the people of Manitoba.

**The Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

Orders of the day—petitions, I'm sorry.

### PETITIONS

#### Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them much-needed relief.

This petition is signed by Gabriel Cutmore, Ashley Gordon, Darren Hoeck and many, many other fine Manitobans.

**The Speaker:** Further petitions? Further petitions? Seeing none.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Would you call for a resumption of debate on the budget.

### BUDGET DEBATE (Fifth Day of Debate)

**The Speaker:** It has been announced that we will resume debate on the budget and amendments thereto, standing in the name of the honourable member from—Interlake Gimli, who has nine minutes remaining.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** I was going through the list of community programs that are going to be cut by this NDP government: Building Sustainable Communities and ACSC granting, that our former minister on this side of the bench did such a great job in rolling out. And it's important that there's equity across the province, as well, which we always ensured.

I'm just going to go through, because my time is limited, I can't talk about each one of these projects, but I do want to mention all the hard work that has been done in my constituency by different organizations, and then I want to get on to a few points about this budget that these community organizations are not proud of on this new budget.

So, Alf Cuthbert School and their parent advisory council, they actually built a greenhouse, including solar panels and a water source for—on school grounds, for education.

Arborg-Bifrost Parks and rec commission, they were upgrading their arena and replacing the condenser to ensure that the kids can have somewhere to skate in that community, and the important work that they do.

And I talked about Arborg and District Multicultural Heritage Village, but they were—so many fronts and different things that they were repairing in

that little heritage village, this is just another one, with washrooms and flooring; repairs to it. There's a little campground there, as well, so if anybody that's listening here today wants to go and spend a little bit of time.

*Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

You can actually spend the night there in the heritage village and tour it, and all the old schools and churches, and old barns with some of the original tools from way back in the day for—they used to use horses for cutting the ice on the river and then they would haul it up for the icehouses to keep stuff cool all summer long.

Chatfield community club, for new shingles and an upgrade to their septic system.

I had—have had—for a small community, I've had so many calls and the importance of this grant. And this grant, and ones like it, are all going to be cut under the NDP government.

Coalition of Manitoba Motorcycle Groups, as well, they have a picnic shelter.

Eriksdale Curling Club—I think we're all a fan of curling. Manitoba is probably one of the best curlers in the—around the world, not just in the country, but around the world. I—somebody told me that Manitoba, at one point, had more curling clubs than the rest of the world combined. More curling clubs in Manitoba than the rest of the world combined.

\* (14:40)

I think, if you get outside the Perimeter—some of my colleagues across the aisle have a challenge with that—you go through all these communities, and you can see the old curling rinks that are there. They're not all active anymore, but at one point, more curling clubs in Manitoba than the rest of the world combined.

So, Gimli seniors' resource centre as well, you know, they purchased equipment for the Seniors Resource Council, which I think we all value our seniors and our pioneers of our community here. Gimli Glider, I talked about them, as well, but yet another grant that they were awarded.

Now, the Kiwanis Club of Gimli & District area, this is a—they are such a good community organization. They give back so much to the community. And this was to purchase a food trailer and renovate their other one. So, they do fish fries around the community, and that's how they raise the money that they do to give back to different parts of the community.



And again, under the NDP government, this Kiwanis club funding will be cut, not just to Gimli, but to the rest of the Kiwanis clubs around Manitoba.

Lundar agriculture society, and I see the Agriculture Minister is nodding and knowing that this is such a good community organization. And we helped with—in the form of a Building Sustainable Communities grant of rehabbing the agriculture barn. This is where, just on the weekend, they held the bull sale for the local area, right in this very barn that we helped renovate and another thing that's going to be cut under the NDP government.

Lundar co-op and golf country club, Matlock rec centre, Moosehorn Community Club, and that's for a sports grounds revitalization. Moosehorn Tumblers, these are young kids that are doing gymnastics, and they successfully got a grant. Municipality of Bifrost-Riverton, they needed some help working on their zoning bylaws and making sure they're all up to date and match what the Province puts forward through municipal relations. Poplarfield Community Centre, and that was for improvements in the dining and the kitchen area.

All these things are so important to small, rural communities and all going to be cut under the NDP government.

Riverton & District Friendship Centre, this is—they have a pool table well—where elders in the community gather and they—well, we call it the information centre, maybe, because you can get caught up on all of the local gossip, I guess, for lack of a better term, very, very quickly. Riverton & District Handi-Van, to help them purchase a small handi-van. These go on and on and on, Honourable Speaker.

I do want to talk a little bit about some other cuts under this government. Members opposite well know, especially those that sit on Treasury Board, that there were three personal-care homes that were put through Treasury Board and Cabinet. And they put those all on hold, and now they're going to only do one this year: Lac du Bonnet personal-care home. And potentially, possibly, at some point in the future, move forward on four of the other remaining ones.

They're committed to doing Lac du Bonnet this year, but now it says, followed by two in Winnipeg and one in Arborg. So which one fell off the list? Stonewall. Stonewall fell off the list. Under this NDP government, they're getting rid of that. Cut. Out the door.

So, three of the six were in last year's budget through ISA, and this year, they have one in Lac du Bonnet under '24-25 with some beds there. But in a different year, not stated when, where or how, there will be two in Winnipeg and one in Arborg. Gone, gone, gone.

To deliver—I'm just going to quote something here: To deliver the best care for Manitobans, we need state-of-the-art facilities that provide comfort to patients and their families to employ the best technology to direct—to detect illness early and treat patients.

Well, how does cutting personal-care homes make that statement out of the budget accurate? Not caring for our elders, our seniors in their time of need. They're 1,000 beds short.

We moved forward on a lot of them. They put them on hold and cut the others. Lac du Bonnet, moved forward. With just the delay, the short-term delay that they had of six months, nearly six months, increased the estimate to finish that project by \$6 million.

So the question is: How much is the delay in all of these other ones going to cost long-term?

I think we can all respect our seniors. Interlake-Gimli seniors are very happy to put their voice forward to this government and their displeasure of all the cuts that are happening for the people who pioneered our community.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker—Honourable Deputy Speaker, sorry.

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** C'est toujours un grand honneur pour moi aujourd'hui de m'adresser à la Chambre pour parler de notre budget 2024.

Premièrement, je crois qu'il est important de noter l'importance de ce budget qui envoie un message clair et net que notre gouvernement est là pour appuyer nos familles, nos aînés, nos communautés, en tant que vrai partenaire respectueux aux besoins et des attentes des Manitobains et des Manitobaines.

J'aimerais féliciter l'excellent travail de notre ministre des Finances (DAL Sala), mes collègues et l'équipe entière qui a travaillé sur cet excellent budget.

Pendant les sept dernières années, Monsieur l'honorable Député Président, quand les Manitobains avaient besoin d'appui, de certitude, les gouvernements Pallister et Stefanson ont répondu avec indifférence et ont manqué à leurs devoirs en tant que gouvernement.

Grâce à notre budget 2024, notre gouvernement envoie le message clair que vous pouvez compter sur nous et que nous allons bâtir un avenir ensemble en tant qu'un Manitoba.

Le budget de 2024 donne suite à notre engagement de rebâtir le système de soins de santé et de réduire les coûts pour les familles. Notre budget est donc axé sur les 5 priorités suivantes.

Premièrement, rebâtir le système de soins de santé. Le budget de 2024 prévoit, Monsieur l'honorable Député Président, des investissements judicieux et ciblés dans le système de soins de santé avec un plan d'embauche de mille travailleurs de la santé et les prochaines étapes pour l'ouverture des services d'urgence de l'hôpital Victoria et de celui d'Ericksdale.

Deuxièmement, réduire les coûts pour la famille. Nous allons véritablement soulager le fardeau des familles en prolongeant le congé de la taxe sur les carburants et en proposant aux Manitobains et aux Manitobaines 21 nouvelles façons d'économiser. Entre autres, nous allons élargir l'admissibilité au service de garde à 10 \$ par jour et nous proposons plus d'allègements fiscaux pour la classe moyenne.

Troisièmement, des familles encore plus en santé dans une communauté plus en santé. Dans le budget de 2024, nous investissons encore plus de façon à appuyer les enfants et les nouvelles mères, ainsi que les programmes récréatifs et culturels, les mesures de sécurité publique et le soutien des personnes les plus vulnérables.

Quatrièmement, faire croître notre économie. Le budget de 2024 comprend des investissements dans l'emploi et la formation professionnelle avec un plan visant la croissance de notre économie et la création d'un nombre accru de bons emplois pour la population manitobaine.

Dernièrement, un gouvernement qui travail pour vous. L'honorable Député Président, les Manitobains travaillent très fort pour subvenir aux besoins de leur famille et aussi pour redonner à leur collectivité. Il va de soi que les Manitobains et les Manitobaines méritent un gouvernement qui travaillent tout aussi fort qu'eux.

\* (14:50)

Je crois qu'il est très important de noter aussi que les Manitobains—ou que le Manitoba a été fondé sur certains principes fondamentaux comme le bilinguisme, le multiculturalisme et le respect des

peuples autochtones. J'aimerais d'ailleurs féliciter notre honorable Premier ministre qui s'est adressé dernièrement en Chambre uniquement en Anishinaabemowin en guise de reconnaissance des langues autochtones du Canada.

Notre gouvernement a un respect profond pour les langues autochtones ainsi que les deux langues officielles du Manitoba et du Canada, soit l'anglais et le français. C'est pourquoi notre budget de 2024 investi aussi dans de nouveaux fonds auprès de la francophonie manitobaine.

Alors on le sait, le financement de l'expansion du Bureau de l'éducation française en une division autonome a été remis dans le budget, et le pouce-le poste de sous-ministre-adjoint au BÉF, qui a été supprimé en 2018-2019, a été rétabli.

Nous allons aussi investir 100 000\$ pour l'apprentissage à distance des élèves francophones secondaires de la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, et nous allons aussi travailler à une augmentation des fonds de fonctionnement du Centre culturel franco-manitobain pour aider à soutenir les organismes francophones qui offrent des programmes et des services culturels.

En prévision aussi de la nouvelle entente Canada-Manitoba sur les services en français avec le gouvernement fédéral, notre gouvernement augmentera de près de 500 000\$ son investissement dans les activités du Secrétariat aux affaires francophones.

Nous allons aussi voir une augmentation de 100 000\$ du financement accordé à l'Association des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba pour les services de traduction destinés aux municipalités désignées bilingues de la province — la plus importante augmentation de financement de ces services en plus de 20 ans.

Nous allons aussi travailler de plus près avec les intervenants municipaux — y inclus l'Association des municipalités du Manitoba, l'AMBM et la Ville de Winnipeg — à élaborer un modèle de financement pluriannuel, fiable et souple qui fonctionne pour tous les Manitobains et les Manitobaines.

Nous sommes impatients de travailler avec le gouvernement pour améliorer la prestation des services en français au Manitoba et pour adopter des mesures qui contribuent à l'épanouissement de nos communautés.

Évidemment, Monsieur l'honorable président, nous allons aussi travailler à reconstruire les soins de

santé – la priorité majeure de notre gouvernement. Et pour les gens de Saint-Boniface, nous le savons, l'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface est au cœur de notre communauté.

En fait, j'aimerais mentionner que Saint-Boniface a une longue historique de compassion, et que l'Hôpital de Saint-Boniface va bientôt célébrer ses 175 ans – qui est d'ailleurs une occasion majeure de se rappeler qu'ici au Manitoba, on prend soin de nos familles, on prend soin de nos aînés et on prend soin de nos communautés.

Pendant sept ans, Monsieur l'honorable Président–l'honorable Député Président, excusez–le précédent gouvernement PC a réduit les soins de santé, fermé les urgences et licencié des infirmières. Les Manitobains et les Manitobaines ont dû attendre plus longtemps que jamais pour voir un médecin, un spécialiste ou subir une intervention chirurgicale. Les Manitobains ont élu un nouveau gouvernement néo-démocrate pour réparer les soins de santé, et le budget 2024 présente un plan de reconstruction des soins de santé.

Notre gouvernement néo-démocrate investi un montant record de 8,2 milliards de dollars dans le secteur de la santé, des aînés et – je suis fier de le dire – des soins de longue durée

Nous allons commencer à reconstruire le système de santé avec l'embauche de 1 000 nouveaux travailleurs de la santé cette année, Monsieur l'honorable Député Président – soit 100 médecins, deux-cent-dix mille infirmiers, 90 travailleurs paramédicaux et 600 aides-soignants.

Le budget 2024 prévoit des investissements intelligents et ciblés pour réparer les dégâts, Monsieur l'honorable Député Président, causés par les coupures budgétaires des sept dernières années. Aussi, nous allons investir 635 millions de dollars en 2024 pour l'investissement en capital dans le secteur de la santé.

Le gouvernement précédent a laissé tomber les Manitobains et les Manitobaines en fermant les salles d'urgence dans tout le Manitoba. Nous savons que les Manitobains ont besoin de services d'urgence près de chez-eux, Monsieur l'honorable Député Président. C'est pourquoi le budget 2024 prévoit la réouverture des urgences de l'hôpital Victoria et du Mature Women's Centre.

Nous soutenons également les communautés rurales et nous allons rouvrir, Monsieur l'honorable Député Président, les services d'urgence à Ericksdale.

Le budget 2024 garantit aussi que nous disposons du personnel nécessaire pour fournir les soins de santé dont les Manitobains ont besoin. Nous savons que la réouverture de ces urgences et la reconstruction des soins de santé nécessiteront d'avantage de travailleurs.

Nous investissons donc 309,5 millions de dollars pour retenir, recruter et former davantage de travailleurs de la santé. Ceci comprend 66 millions de dollars pour augmenter le nombre de lits dotés de personnel et réduire les temps d'argent–les temps d'attente d'urgence, 25 millions de dollars pour augmenter de façon permanente la capacité des soins intensifs, 47 millions de dollars pour permettre un plus grand nombre de Manitobains d'avoir un médecin de famille.

Notre gouvernement néo-démocrate augmente le nombre de places de formation pour les travailleurs de la santé et facilite l'utilisation des compétences des nouveaux arrivants afin qu'ils puissent participer à la reconstruction des soins de santé ici au Manitoba. Ces augmentations de personnel permettront d'offrir de meilleurs soins à tous les niveaux, qu'il s'agisse de soins primaires, des soins préventifs, des soins aigus, ou des soins de moins d'acuité.

Ensuite, 17 millions de dollars pour offrir deux nouvelles cliniques pour blessures et maladies mineures – une à Winnipeg et une à Brandon – et établir la première de 5 cliniques de soins primaires, afin que les familles puissent avoir accès à des soins de santé en dehors des salles d'urgences.

Tout près de 7 millions de dollars en fonctionnement pour de meilleurs soins contre le cancer, pour l'accès à des médicaments anticancéreux de pointe, de meilleurs tests, et 112 000\$ pour des travaux de préconception d'un nouveau siège pour CancerCare.

Le budget 2024 fait des progrès en investissant dans les travailleurs de la santé de première ligne et en offrant de meilleurs résultats en matière de santé pour les Manitobains et les Manitobaines. Ces nouveaux travailleurs de la santé travailleront dans les hôpitaux, les cliniques communautaires et les soins à domicile pour les personnes âgées afin qu'ils puissent vieillir avec dignité.

Aussi, 22 millions de dollars serviront à augmenter le nombre d'heures directement consacrées aux soins des personnes âgées dans les foyers de soins personnels. Cette somme comprend également le financement d'un nouveau défenseur indépendant des personnes âgées que les Manitobains réclament depuis des années sous le gouvernement précédent.

Nous ouvrirons également quatre nouveaux foyers de soins personnels en commençant par un nouveau foyer à Lac du Bonnet.

\* (15:00)

Les Manitobains ont élu un gouvernement néo-démocrate pour reconstruire les soins de santé et réparer les dommages causés par les Conservateurs. Le budget 2024 passe à l'action et jette les bases pour offrir de meilleurs soins—de soins de santé aux familles.

Merci, Monsieur l'honorable Député Président.

### **Translation**

*It is always a great honour for me to address the House, today on our 2024 budget.*

*First, I think it is important to note the importance of this budget, which sends a clear message that our government is here to support our families, our seniors, our communities, as a true partner that respects the needs and expectations of Manitobans.*

*I would like to congratulate our Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), my colleagues and the entire team who worked on this excellent budget.*

*For the past 7 years, when Manitobans needed support, needed certainty, the Pallister and Stefanson governments responded with indifference and failed in their duty as a government.*

*With our 2024 budget, our government is sending a clear message that you can count on us and that we will build a future together as one Manitoba.*

*Budget 2024 delivers on our commitment to rebuild the health care system and reduce costs for families. Our budget therefore focuses on the following 5 priorities.*

*First, rebuilding the health-care system. Budget 2024 includes smart, targeted investments in health care, with a plan to hire a thousand health care workers and next steps to open the emergency departments at Victoria Hospital and Ericksdale Hospital.*

*Secondly, reducing costs for families. We will truly ease the burden on families by extending the fuel tax holiday and offering Manitobans 21 new ways to save. Among other things, we will extend eligibility for the \$10-a-day child-care program, and we are proposing more tax relief for the middle class.*

*Third, healthier families in healthier communities. In Budget 2024, we are investing even more to support children and new mothers, as well as recreational and*

*cultural programs and public safety measures, and we provide more support for the most vulnerable.*

*Fourth, growing our economy. Budget 2024 includes investments in jobs and skills training with a plan to grow our economy and create more good jobs for Manitobans.*

*Finally, a government that works for you. Honourable Deputy Speaker, Manitobans work hard to provide for their families and give back to their communities. It goes without saying that Manitobans deserve a government that works just as hard as they do.*

*I think it is also very important to note that Manitoba was founded on certain fundamental principles such as bilingualism, multiculturalism, and respect for Indigenous people. In fact, I would like to congratulate our honourable Premier, who recently addressed the House solely in Anishinaabemowin in recognition of Canada's Indigenous Languages Day.*

*Our government has a deep respect for Indigenous languages and for the two official languages of Manitoba and Canada, English and French. This is why our 2024 budget also invests in new funding for Manitoba's Francophone community.*

*As you know, funding for the expansion of the Bureau de l'éducation française into a stand-alone division has been reinstated in the budget, and the position of assistant deputy minister at the BÉF, which was eliminated in 2018-2019, has been reinstated.*

*We will also invest \$100,000 in distance learning for Francophone high school students in the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, and we will also work to increase operating funding for the Centre culturel franco-manitobain to help support Francophone organizations that offer cultural programs and services.*

*In anticipation of the new Canada-Manitoba agreement on French language services with the federal government, our government will increase its investment in the activities of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat by nearly \$500,000.*

*We will also see a \$100,000 increase in funding to the Association des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba for translation services in the province's designated bilingual municipalities—the largest increase in funding for these services in more than 20 years.*

*We will also work more closely with municipal stakeholders, including the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the AMBM and the City of Winnipeg,*

*to develop a multi-year, reliable and flexible funding model that works for all Manitobans.*

*We look forward to working with the government to improve the delivery of French language services in Manitoba and to adopt measures that contribute to the vitality of our communities.*

*Of course, Honourable Speaker, we will also be working to rebuild health care - our government's top priority. And as residents of Saint Boniface, we know that the St. Boniface Hospital is at the heart of our community.*

*In fact, I would like to mention that St. Boniface has a long history of compassion, and that the St. Boniface Hospital will soon be celebrating its 175th anniversary, which is a great opportunity to remember that here in Manitoba, we take care of our families, we take care of our seniors, and we take care of our communities.*

*For seven years, the previous PC government made cuts in health care, closed emergency rooms and laid off nurses. Manitobans had to wait longer than ever to see a doctor or specialist or to have surgery. Manitobans elected a new NDP government to fix health care, and Budget 2024 sets out a plan to rebuild health care.*

*Our NDP government is investing a record \$8.2 billion in health, seniors and, I am proud to say, long-term care.*

*We will begin rebuilding the health care system by hiring 1,000 new health care workers this year: 100 doctors, two hundred ten thousand nurses, 90 paramedics and 600 health-care aides.*

*Budget 2024 provides for smart, targeted investments to repair the damage caused by the last seven years of budget cuts. In 2024, we will also provide \$635 million for capital investment in the health sector.*

*The previous government failed Manitobans by closing emergency rooms across Manitoba. We know Manitobans need emergency services close to home. That is why Budget 2024 will reopen the emergency rooms at Victoria Hospital and the Mature Women's Centre.*

*We are also supporting rural communities, and we will be reopening emergency services in Ericksdale.*

*Budget 2024 also ensures that we have the necessary staff in place to provide the health care Manitobans need. We know that reopening these emergency*

*departments and rebuilding health care will require more workers.*

*Thus, we are investing \$309.5 million to retain, recruit and train more health care workers. This includes \$66 million to increase the number of staffed beds and to reduce wait times, \$25 million to permanently increase critical care capacity, and \$47 million to allow more Manitobans to have a family doctor.*

*Our NDP government is increasing the number of training spaces for health-care workers and making it easier for newcomers to use their skills to help rebuild health care here in Manitoba. These staffing increases will help provide better care at all levels, whether it is primary care, preventive care, acute care, or less acute care.*

*In addition, \$17 million will be used to set up two new minor illness and injury clinics—one in Winnipeg and one in Brandon—and to establish the first of 5 primary-care clinics, so that families can access health care outside the emergency room.*

*Nearly \$7 million in operating funding for better cancer care, access to leading-edge cancer drugs and improved testing, and \$112,000 for pre-design work on a new CancerCare headquarters.*

*Budget 2024 makes progress by investing in front-line health-care workers and delivering better health outcomes for Manitobans. These new health-care workers will work in hospitals, community clinics and home care for seniors, so seniors can age with dignity.*

*As well, \$22 million will be used to increase the number of hours spent directly caring for seniors in personal care homes. This also includes funding for a new independent seniors' advocate, which Manitobans have been calling for for years under the previous government.*

*We will also open four new personal care homes, starting with a new one in Lac du Bonnet.*

*Manitobans elected an NDP government to rebuild health care and repair the damage done by the Conservatives. Budget 2024 takes action and lays the foundation for better health care for families.*

*Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.*

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** I'm very honoured to rise once again, this time to put words on the record regarding Budget 2024.

Only a few short months ago, I was elected to represent the people of Selkirk riding. I wake every

day with tremendous pride and a profound understanding of the job I was elected to do. I'm here to represent all of Selkirk and not just the ones who voted for me. I take that responsibility very serious, as I strive to make that my focus every day. I believe that we must remain true to who we are, with the understanding that we here to represent not only our constituents but all of Manitoba.

I wish we could all have the decorum and the respect that one would expect from someone in elected office. I wish we would welcome useful, meaningful discussions and respect different points of views for the issues that face us today. It would be fantastic if we could give the respect that we would hope to get from each other.

I have said many times as I stood up, I cannot believe some of the childish behaviour that goes on within these walls, that I wish Budget 2024 would've provided funds to educate these disrespectful members. The screaming and yelling for no 'reasing,' the pounding on desks for theatrics, and the poor, poor, poor respect that we show to our fellow colleagues, it is pitiful.

I'm not saying that we all behave this way. What I do see is the same people screaming over the top, calling down individuals and not focusing on the remarks or the ideas, but actually personally calling down a person, and I think we are much better than that.

I do also see members who refrain from that childish behaviour. And for those, I'll tell you right now, you have earned my respect, regardless of which side of the House you sit on. For those of you who don't show respect, I do not have any respect for you. But you probably don't care what others think of you. Respect is something you earn, you're not given.

For everybody that is in this House today, as sure as I'm standing here, if you're ever in trouble and need help, reach out and I will be there, regardless of which side you sit on. We fundamentally disagree on philosophies we have, but we are still one people.

When I sat down to look at the budget presented for 2024, I'm looking to see what we are doing for all the people in this province and how that affects the people not just today but for generations to come. Budget 2024 needs to make sure that the people have the ability to thrive and prosper in our province, that the opportunities for our families, our children, our neighbours and our communities are bountiful and

that decisions made today positively affect future generations. Budget 2024 needs to ensure we are raising our children, our families and our communities in a safe and loving environment. The budget presented is full of BS, basic stupidity, and it fails on all fronts.

I will begin my review by just explaining a little bit of myself and my family and how this budget reflects on Manitoba that I know and love. As I mentioned before, I'm very fortunate to have sharing my life my beautiful and incredibly intelligent wife, Janice.

She has been a rock for me and supported me in everything I do. She has picked me up when I've been at my lowest and keeps me grounded when I'm becoming bigger than I am. She lets me know how important I am to our family, to her and to our community. Words can never thank Janice for all she has given me. She is truly one of a kind.

Together, we have two children. Our daughter Hailey just celebrated her 29th birthday yesterday. Hailey, as I've mentioned before, is a tender soul, giving of herself as every opportunity presents. Hailey has always championed for persons with disabilities and continues to work and advocate to better the lives of others.

When she's not running a program for children with disabilities, she's using her two degrees as an educator to substitute teacher, typically in the Lord Selkirk School Division. And, above all that, she provides respite for families that need help.

Hailey has taught me so much about people with disabilities and the challenges that they face. Whether those challenges are physical, emotional, mental, financial or governmental, she has shown me that we need to do much, much more to help these families. It is looking through that lens I give Budget 2024 a big fail.

Our son Harlan will be 27 this summer, and he is truly an amazing individual. He always go out of his way to help others. He is incredibly intelligent and has picked up many, many trades along the way. He has surpassed my skills in several of the trades already.

He currently runs our family business, Kodiak Shelter Systems, located in Selkirk, and he travels all over North America installing our industrial buildings, garages and barns. He has the respect of his co-workers, his community and his friends. And he has earned my respect in ways I could never explain.

Both of our children make us very proud every day, and I look forward to the future and possibly even grandchildren.

But when I look at their future and what Budget 2024 provides, I again give the NDP a failing grade. These are the precious gems of my life and the reasons I hold my standard of respect for so high.

I believe there are two types of people in this world: ones that want to hold you down to make themselves look bigger and those who want to lift you up so we can all rise together. I hope as legislators we would have a duty to help others rise up to meet their potential. We have the duty to ensure that we can do so in a safe and supportive manner. Based on how Budget 2024 fails to provide basic requirements, I shake my head.

When I looked at the budget to see what was there regarding the safety of the members of my community, it is in-lacking in too many ways. When I look at the safety, we need a tremendous amount more than a \$300 rebate on a security system.

Now, let me explain how this works in the real world, based on my experience. I was at home on a Sunday evening with my family. We were enjoying a late spring weekend, and we were looking forward to the warmer days of summer ahead when my phone rang. The call turned out to be an old friend. My friend reached out to me to ask if I knew of a locksmith who could come out on an emergency call.

After several questions, I discovered that a good friend of my friend had been a victim of domestic violence—violence so severe that this poor soul had to spend three nights in the Selkirk general hospital. It could have been much worse. During her attack, she managed to free herself and was able to barricade herself in a room of the house. At that point, she was able to call for help. After what seemed an eternity, the RCMP arrived for her, and her common-law partner was arrested and placed in jail.

What I see in Budget 2024 would not help this person. She was rushed to the hospital, where she spent the next three days and nights. Luckily for her, she would heal from her physical injuries, but the emotional and mental injuries were certain to last a lifetime.

After getting home from the hospital, she received a call and was told that her attacker would be released in a short period of time, and the best the government could do, and the police could do, was to let her know that was—harm was heading her way and for her to

prepare. Nothing in Budget 2024 would help this situation.

I quickly contacted our local hardware-store owners at home and asked them to meet me at their store and explained that this was an emergency; I needed to pick up some materials to help this person out.

\*(15:10)

I raced to the store, scooped up the items that were needed and headed to the distraught victim's home. I spent the next two and a half hours changing locks, securing windows and doors with makeshift bars to help provide some sort of safety for this battered lady.

While I was there, she put up a good front, joking the eyeglasses that were smashed off of her face and cut above her eyebrow, she didn't like that style anyway. She joked that running may help her lose a few pounds. She joked she may have to sleep in the woods, and it might be fun to find out how the pioneers lived.

I knew that this was not a joke. She was genuinely fearful for her life, and all she received from our Province was a warning to protect herself. And, again, nothing in Budget 2024 provides protection.

That night, her fears came true as her attacker returned and tried to enter the home. I received a frantic phone call a little after 2 in the morning, screaming that he was outside, trying to smash his way in. I live about 15 minutes away, yet that night, I made it there in about five minutes.

I called several friends along the way to meet me there as I raced. When I arrived, she was found safe. The RCMP arrived about 17 to 20 minutes later, after I did. If I had been a couple of minutes longer, I am certain the attacker would have breached her garden door. Budget 2024 does nothing to help this person.

The attacker got away that night, but my new friend was safe. Thank goodness she was able to call for help before her attacker could do more harm or worse. My friends and I took turns over the next few days, staying there in pairs 24 hours a day, keeping watch to ensure her safety.

A rebate on a security system would do nothing to protect her and prevent harm. It would possibly, however, provide an opportunity to capture the image of a person who murdered her, had the system been installed.

We need to ensure the victims of violence are protected, and individuals who cause violence are incarcerated and the supports needed to prevent any type of violence, domestic or otherwise, is in place. Budget 2024 fails to provide any help for the safety of the people in our communities.

As horrific as that story was, it didn't stop there. The attacker now became the stalker, free to roam wherever he chose, a stalker who followed my friend to and from work, to the grocery store, to her church, to her doctor's office, to her dentist's office and continued to follow her as she went about her daily life.

It got so bad that we decided to come up with a plan. We hid her car in my garage. My wife lent her another vehicle to drive. And that worked for about two and half months, during which time, she was able to sell her condo, get a new job, and she moved into an area that was surrounded with security and other tenants.

Budget 2024 provides nothing, again, to prevent these types of things from happening.

We should not have to leave our homes due to violence. We need to ensure that funding is put in place to protect the citizens of Manitoba and to prevent anyone from becoming a victim.

My friend, choosing not to be a victim or looking over her shoulder, decided to make the Okanagan Valley her home, and she is now living her best life. I truly wish her all the best. It breaks my heart to see how we have failed her. If it wasn't for her own resilience, her refusing to remain a victim, the pain would never end.

This—why is it so difficult for this government to do the right thing?

Friends asked what I thought of the budget, and I say it's total BS, basic stupidity. We fail to protect the people in our society that have entrusted us—

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

I'm cautioning the member against using language that he knows can be taken as inflammatory. Whilst what you said wasn't unparliamentary, it does have other connotations. So, I'd ask you to give consideration to the language you're using.

**Mr. Perchotte:** I know that people use all types of different acronyms to describe certain things in my line of work. Certain acronyms mean one thing and then mean another. Over in this House, I am still at a loss to figure out what half the acronyms are, so I'm

not trying to mislead everybody, but the basic stupidity has gone on. I thank you for pointing that out.

There is more basic stupidity in this budget. When it comes to education and the organizations that provide it, I do not favour one over another. I'll provide something extremely important to Manitobans. Yet this government, when faced with a mandate from the federal government, has chosen to prioritize one sector over another.

I find it incredibly ignorant that we would force our independently funded institutions to bear the international student reduction on their backs alone.

The NDP government has decided publicly funded institutions are the winners, and the losers are the independently funded institutions. Just so we all understand in this House, the publicly funded schools will see no reduction in the intake of international students, yet the federal government has restricted the provincial intake by approximately 1,000 students.

Instead of having all institutions reduce their intake of international students by 10 per cent, what did they do? They're forcing the independently funded schools to lose up to 100 per cent of their international student base. In some cases, that's a 30 per cent reduction in their student population and up to 40 per cent of the revenue.

It's doesn't take a genius to figure out 30 to 40 per cent reduction in revenue will hurt these institutions and the bottom line. People will lose their jobs because of this government.

All across the province, we have a shortage of skilled labour, and all of our schools play an extremely important role in providing training and skills that are desperately needed. Instead of advocating to the federal government on behalf of employers and international students, the NDP government has chosen to give the problem to somebody else.

I'll try to make it easy to understand: we all know that if we are forced into a situation by the federal government, we—and we don't stand up and scream no, we don't expect it. We didn't go to the media and say, this is going to be a problem down the road. We're not going to have enough skilled tradespeople moving forward. We didn't turn to the schools and say, we need to collaborately get together and see if we can find a resolution to this problem.

What did we do? We said you, as independent-funded schools, take burden all the responsibility, and we'll take care of the publicly funded schools.



Budget 2024 fails again and again and again. I could go on for several days up here talking about this, and I apologize if people thought my reference to BS was anything else other than basic stupidity. But I certainly will make sure I don't make that mistake again. I appreciate being instructed on that, and I just want to thank everybody for listening, who actually spent the time. And I'm in favour of our amended version of the budget.

Thank you.

**MLA Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** You know, I'm very pleased to get up to speak to—on this budget debate, and I have to admit that this is a very well-crafted budget. There is some things in here that I did not actually expect to see, and I see them in there and I'm quite, quite happy about it.

And I do want to come to the aid of the member for Selkirk (Mr. Perchotte), who just spoke, is a little bit unclear and confused about our idea of the \$300 tax credit for cameras and lighting.

\* (15:20)

That particular idea has been around a while. It's been used in Washington, DC, in Chicago. And, in Chicago, where it's been around for a few years now, it started—it's \$1,000 US, and each homeowner gets—and, actually, it started with churches there, but churches and businesses and homeowners. They have two cameras outside, they have two lights and they have two GPSs to put in their vehicles. And that's where that program started, and this expanded to various cities across North America.

And I first become aware of it back in the civic election two years ago. We were running into house after house in the Elmwood area that had—their catalytic converters had been stolen, and there were other, sort of, types of break-ins. So, we kind of started from there and then brought it into a petition, which I introduced here, like, forever, it seems, right?

And then, I was quite surprised, but the Premier (Mr. Kinew) adopted this idea during—going into the election last year, last summer, and here we see it in—coming to fruition. And the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) is, I think, involved in making certain that it does see the light of day.

Now, why is it a good idea? Actually, it's such a good idea that in Swan River, I think, I got a response from I think it was the mayor and council of Swan River, who said they were having break-ins. There was a small group of people that were responsible for,

you know, 80 per cent of the break-ins in the businesses in Swan River, and he wanted this, suggested we have a program to reimburse the expense of doing this.

And so, if he wants to argue about it and say that it's not a good idea, I invite him to get even more vocal about it, because he's going to get a reaction, because I can tell you that the small business organizations are a hundred per cent in favour of this. And, well, he's kind of new here, so he's got to get a little more experience, I think.

But each program, you know, is different. Each program has a purpose. And, you know—he doesn't like the program, well, just vote against the budget, which, of course, I think he's going to plan—he's planning to do, anyway.

Now, I also want to, you know, while I'm at it, just kind of reference the debt, because, you know, Conservatives love to talk about the debt. And I know that we've had the Mulroney government years ago, talked about how the Trudeau government had taken the country into huge debt and running continuous deficits, and then I saw him, like, do the same thing. The numbers just went up and up and up.

So, Conservatives actually don't have a very good history of reducing any debt. They're very good at just adding to it, right? And, actually, federally, it took Paul Martin, a Liberal, to actually cut the deficit down in size.

Now, you know, they weren't too concerned about the debt and the deficits for the eight years they were there in government, but all of a sudden, now, they're interested in talking about the debt.

Now, let's look at some of the facts about the debt. We're talking about a debt-to-GDP in Manitoba in maybe 36, 38 per cent. Does anybody know what debt-to-GDP was in Greece when the country started to fall apart? Well, I'll tell the members: 170 per cent.

So, I would be concerned, too, if the government got up into the 170 per cent. You have—you know, happened in Argentina, happened in Greece and that's not where you want to be. But we're talking about 38 per cent.

Now, the fact of the matter is that the Conservatives pretend that somehow that money is all gone. That money was spent. But they never take a look at what did we get for that money. Okay. If they had their way, there wouldn't be a new airport that was built by the Gary Doer government. Right? Should we have done

that? Oh no, maybe we should have just kept the old airport going. Right?

What about the hydro projects? If you go back through history and look at the hydro projects in Manitoba, the Conservatives did, you know, one or two. Duff Roblin, I think, built a hydro dam, and that was it for them. The—from 1969 on, almost every hydro project was done by an NDP government. They would have—if it had been up to them, we would be, like, living in the bush still. We wouldn't have any hydro.

And I remember how they used to talk in the last eight years about how we were losing money on hydro in the spot market, not even kind of pretending to understand what they're even talking about. We have hydro contracts signed in the United States, where we make lots of money on all of these contracts. And we have extra money that we make on what we call the spot market, and the spot market is just basically excess power that is, water is going over the dam, and if you don't sell it for something you're going to get nothing out of it. And that's sold, you know, for a fraction of what we get under contracted power.

But I don't know why they would know anything about it anyway, because they don't build any dams anyway. You know, any time Conservatives get in power, any type of—I remember in '77, right across from my office in Elmwood, there was a building that was being built by the Schreyer government, a seniors' building, and they dug the hole, right? They dug the basement. And guess what? The whole time Sterling Lyon was the premier, the whole four years, the hole sat there. They didn't do it, they just left it. Right? And it took Howard Pawley to come back into power, and we finished the building.

So the Conservatives have to kind of recognize that we actually get something for the money we spend. Though we don't go and build a hospital, we don't build a road. We don't—we want to talk about a bridge, well, let's talk about a bridge.

We have a bridge that the government built in 1880 called the Louise Bridge, and they've probably spent \$20,000 or \$100,000 on it then. Using their kind of thinking, you wouldn't build that. You wouldn't build it. You have to—bridge was built and it's still there. We're still using it a hundred years later. Okay?

So I think you should really take a look at what that debt has been used to buy, and I don't think that any responsible government is going to spend a whole lot of money on something that doesn't work at all.

But—and the fact of the matter is that sometimes the government has to spend some money to get the economy moving.

Now let's take a look at some of the developments in the plug-in hybrid issue. The Volkswagen, you know, is getting a \$12-billion subsidy, and there's some people on both sides of that issue, right? Some people think that that should not be—that the taxpayers shouldn't be subsidizing to that level. Right?

And—but the problem we face is that, you know and I'm not a big fan of corporate welfare, but you just can't get it with—matter of fact, Harry Enns is the guy, the MLA who told me years and years ago how much he hated corporate welfare. But he said you can't, you cannot operate without it, because if you don't give the company some money to build here, they will go to Saskatchewan. They'll go across the border. And, unfortunately, we're stuck with this.

So we ended up putting all this money, this federal money, provincial money in Ontario, into the battery plant for Volkswagen. If we don't do it, it's going to go somewhere else. There were probably a big lineup of an—American cities that wanted that plant.

\* (15:30)

Now, let's look at what's happening, as we speak, in Europe regarding the hydrogen issue. We have the Toyota motor company—is getting a huge amount of subsidy. They're building hydrogen stations every 200 miles—or, 200 kilometres in Europe, as we speak, okay, because the European Union has come out and they have—

**An Honourable Member:** How does this relate to Manitoba?

**MLA Maloway:** —and they have got—well, the member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) wants to know how it relates to Manitoba. Very simply, that the president of Toyota a number of months ago made an announcement that, in his view, gas-powered cars would always have about a third of the market, the plug-in electric vehicles would have roughly a third and hydrogen-powered vehicles would have about a third.

And Toyota actually has built a hydrogen-powered car sold—for the member's information—in British Columbia and Quebec for half a dozen years now. Hydrogen-powered cars are sold in Japan; they're produced by Toyota—a company, by the way, who knows how to make cars. Like, if you've ridden a cab in Winnipeg, you'll know that the Prius—*[interjection]*—the—right—the Prius is a car—my—

Toyota that is battery-operated. And I went the other day to a body shop that actually fixes the Prius, and they have been fixing it now for 20 years—for 20 years. And the battery in the Prius lasts about 400,000 kilometres, and then, the guy told me that you have to put a second battery in and go another 400,000—well, then you're up to 800,000 in a Winnipeg cab, and that's about the equivalent of 500,000 miles. Well, you tell me any domestic gas product that lasts a half a million miles, right?

And the—so, the point here is that you have different—you—different competing technologies that are going to be competing for your dollar, right, and overall, we are going to get long-range success, okay. Because you have to look back to when cars first were built.

In early 1900s, when those first products were on the roads, there weren't any roads, there weren't any gas stations and there were not very many cars, right. It took a number of years—it took a number of years for the products to develop, for improvements to be made. And then the roads had to be built, and then the repair garages had to be built. And that is what is going to happen, is happening right now, with the plug-in electric vehicles, and Toyota just has a different idea. They want the hydrogen solution here.

And by the way, you know, speaking of hydrogen, Ballard Power of Vancouver has been making hydrogen fuel cells in Vancouver since the 1970s, that long. And a matter of fact, some of you remember Jim Rondeau, who was an MLA here, and he was on CTV 10 years ago and he was demonstrating a hydrogen-powered bus built here in Winnipeg, that was supposed to be running from the airport to downtown. And he was seen on TV drinking the water that comes out of the tailpipe of the bus.

Now I wondered, too, whatever happened to that bus, because it was great television, right? But my point is here that, you know, you—it—sometimes the technology takes a while to work out the bugs, and—but you don't give up. You keep working on multiple technologies.

And, you know, the members can make fun and laugh all they want. The reality is that there's going to be—these fuel cells are—if they move to Vancouver, they can buy a Toyota fuel cell right now and be driving it tomorrow. They can go to Quebec and do the same thing.

If we just hide, like the conservatives do—you want to hide and put your head in the ground—the

reality is we won't get anywhere. We're a province of a million people, and that's why the government had to move incrementally to offer an incentive for some plug-in hybrids, get a few of those on the road, okay, get some acceptance. And, eventually, we're going to have the fuel cell. Right?

And, by the way, for those of you who are, you know, concerned—or maybe you aren't, but I know a number of you go to the midwest legislators' conference—we are in an election cycle right now in the United States, where both parties are our enemy, who are—support Buy America provisions. And we've got a bus plant right here in Manitoba, building hydrogen buses and regular buses.

And, you know, that company has a plant outside of Minneapolis, okay? Well, guess what? They bought another plant in Atlanta, Georgia, last year. They didn't set up a secondary plant in Manitoba, no. They went right to Georgia. Why did they do that? That's our company doing this. We just gave them some money to develop a—more programs here. They bought a plant in Georgia so they can get around the Buy America provisions.

And we are going to be in big, big trouble here if things don't work out in the fall election in the United States, and we're going to be making our little trips down to the States, there, to be talking to these senators again to try to get exemptions under the Buy America program, right?

And, I just hope that the—whoever is elected president is willing to listen to either one of our potential prime ministers here. But things could be looking very, very bad for us, you know, if things don't work out too well in that thing. So, that is a challenge that we are all going to have to face.

And the—and conservatives, at some level, understand that too, because they know that, in the farming business and so on, that the Americans are traders, but they're also very tough to deal with on certain issues, right?

So, I know I have—you know, I could speak for a little while longer here. I know we're trying to cut down the time a little bit to give more people a chance. So, with that in mind, I am actually going to honour that and let another person take some time, Honourable Speaker.

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak—[interjection] Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this 2024 provincial budget.

As the member representing La Vérendrye, which is one of the fastest growing regions in Manitoba, I would like to put a few words on the record for items of this budget that greatly affect my constituency.

Along with this responsibility, I've been serving as the opposition critic for infrastructure and Liquor & Lotteries, which are two very important departments of this government that have unfortunately been ignored in this budget.

Infrastructure is something that is very important to my constituency, but also the rest of the province of Manitoba. What I saw in this year's budget was extremely concerning when we saw a \$163-million cut in the infrastructure capital budget.

This means that there will be less money for water projects, sewage spills, less money for new road construction projects and also a 10 per cent reduction in the highways budget right in the middle of pothole season.

\* (15:40)

The importance of that investment in infrastructure has, for our province, extends far further than just maintaining the condition of our roads. Highway infrastructure is a major contributing factor to the stable growth of our economy. When industry is able to transport goods without interruption throughout our province, they're most—more likely to invest and more likely to see growth within their businesses and, in turn, the industry as a whole.

We, right now, are in the middle of highway weight restriction season. This is the time of year where weight limitations are placed on roads that aren't built to the RTAC standards. These are roads that don't have a base or finish adequate to handle heavy loads during a spring thaw.

During this time, Manitoba Infrastructure limits the percentage of axle load that a truck can carry on that particular roadway: some are 65 per cent while others may be 90.

To put this into perspective, an empty highway tractor would be overloaded on a 65 per cent highway. This means that farmers, industry and delivery services throughout the province are restricted to driving on many of our provincial roads across the entire province.

When our infrastructure was developed across this province and the entire country, goods were delivered with small transport trucks and products were traded within a small geographic area. Times have changed

but the infrastructure investment hasn't kept up. We now have large trucks delivering to small town stores, to towns across the entire province, which are using larger trucks with more space being more efficient and burning less fuel, being better to the environment with less of an impact.

Our PC government realized that the patchwork model for infrastructure maintenance, seen for decades of NDP mismanagement in the past, wasn't working and it was discouraging growth in communities across our province that were showing tremendous opportunity.

Commitment was made to RTAC more roads than ever seen before and develop a transportation network that would support the growth that our province was able to deliver.

When I see a reduction of 10 per cent in the highways budget, I am greatly concerned on what that will mean for future investment of our province.

Manitobans are undertaking—are understanding that not every infrastructure investment project can be done in one year but there is a strong understanding across all of rural Manitoba that a strengthened infrastructure system translates into a strengthened economy that will, in turn, mean more revenue for more infrastructure projects.

The other side to ground infrastructure is water projects. These are investments in the provincial drainage ways, clean water supply and wastewater treatment.

Provincial drainage ways are something that are nearly as important as highway infrastructure for the agriculture community of our province. The provincial drainage infrastructure is something that can't be taken for granted and ignored until it is broken.

Where a crop is impacted due to the efficiency of drainage in an area has an immediate effect on that farmer growing the crop, and that has a trickle-down effect which compounds as it travels through our economy. That crop will be insured through the Manitoba Crop Insurance program. There will be claims made to mitigate the loss for the farmer, at the cost of all Manitobans. From there, we'll see less investment in our local economy and that translates into less tax revenue for our entire province.

These drains are often along highways and, therefore, their neglect affects the condition of the structure of that roadway as well.

The cuts to infrastructure have unfortunately continued into water and wastewater treatment spending.

Specifically, we see water-related infrastructure spending is down \$104 million. This is concerning for me and many other Manitobans, as we are only going to be increasingly more dependent on clean water supply to all Manitobans as a result of climate change.

Along with the supply of clean water in Manitoba, we are going to only have a stronger demand on wastewater treatment within this province. As our province grows, the technologies advance it—advance. It is nothing more than irresponsible of this government to think that expansions to town and city lagoons are a viable option for the growth of our communities. These options are no longer viable economically or environmentally.

What we need to promote and take pride in are projects like the Red-Seine-Rat—RSR—Wastewater Cooperative. This is a collaboration of—that includes three rapidly growing rural municipalities that are seeing significant growth within urban settlements and also the fastest growing town in Manitoba. This partnership includes the RMs of Hanover, Taché, Ritchot and the rapidly growing town of Niverville.

These are communities that have identified the importance of investment within waste-water management to grow their communities and, in turn, the entire province of Manitoba.

This project is going to allow over 90 kilometers of waste-water pipeline to connect communities across the southeast to a state-of-the-art treatment facility, eliminating the impact that the earth lagoons have on the environment, not to mention the development constraints that come along with needing to expand these antiquated lagoons as the population of the communities grow.

This specific project wouldn't have been possible today without the valuable partnership from all levels of government, including the Province. This project has been made possible in 2022 with the initial investment by both the PC provincial government and the federal government.

The PC government committed to more than \$18 million. Right now, this project is months away from the start date, close to funding targets, but still short. And I'm wondering where the support for future projects like this will come from with an over \$100-million cut to the Infrastructure budget that will fund projects exactly like this.

This project includes communities that I represent, and I'm proud to showcase it to the rest of the province. Investments like this are what we need to be

doing across the entire province if we're going to continue seeing growth. If we fall short on investment in these projects the development will stop with it.

As we are in a time of a housing crisis, infrastructure investment is what we need to see from this province so that private investors and Manitobans will expand housing and our economy. Infrastructure investment by a province opens many doors for growth and prosperity in any province.

We have often talked about the analogy of the economic horse needing to pull that social cart, and that is one thing that the Premier (Mr. Kinew) couldn't be more right about. We can relate to this—we can relate this to other common analogies of what comes first: the horse or the cart.

I know that this Premier understands the importance of industry in carrying out the tasks of supporting the social services, but I think what this government has backwards is what comes first. This budget seems to signify that the cart comes before the horse, and although both the cart and the horse are important to the progress—to a progressive province—we must keep that horse healthy. The horse must always come before the cart in order for there to be growth without government influence.

#### *The Speaker in the Chair*

The government doesn't need to force tax everybody to contribute to social responsibility. This actually achieves the exactly opposite. Individuals become resentful that their hard-earned money is being taken and given to programs that they might not necessarily support.

I guess this is the fundamental difference between a conservative and a socialist. This government needs to realize that if you give Manitobans the framework to achieve the goals we need as a province, and don't dip your hands into the pockets, the social responsibility naturally follows. A Manitoban with too much excess income naturally contributes to the social system of their choice without the force and without additional taxation.

I grew up and still live in a region of Manitoba where people help each other. They all have that same fundamental belief: no one should go without food and no child should ever go to school hungry, without the proper shoes on their feet.

\* (15:50)

In a community like mine, where people are mindful of their neighbours and their needs, you don't

see this type of neglect for your fellow Manitoban. It naturally happens without telling everyone that they need to contribute a certain amount to fund a meal program in their local school. Some donate hundreds of thousands of dollars to their community while others are the recipients of the donations, but no one goes unnoticed. This budget shows me that the NDP government has either forgotten that Manitobans are entrepreneurial, generous and responsible or they believe that they are able to manage my finances better than I can myself.

In order for me to have hope that this NDP government actually understands their own analogy of the economic horse and social cart, I would've needed to see more tax incentives rather than greater imposed taxes. Instead we're seeing greater forced contributions instead of incentivized contributions. This type of taxation structure is exactly what we have seen with property taxation throughout this budget, putting the responsibility of school taxation back onto school boards and the municipalities.

As a municipal representative for 12 years, I can first-hand tell you the struggle municipalities have collecting taxes for providing municipal services while also collecting and explaining the taxes for the school division. We as the previous PC government had made significant progress in correcting this flawed system. It was unfair taxation based on property assessment that was most unfair to the agriculture properties, seeming—seeing farmers carrying an unproportionate burden of the taxes on vacant farmland.

With Liquor & Lotteries being the other responsibility of my critic portfolio, I looked closely to see if there has been a shift in ideology from this government. Not surprised, but slightly disappointed, I haven't seen any. In the past, this government has ignored private liquor retail, except in communities where it is the only way to remain profitable while distributing the products.

What may surprise many Manitobans is that while we think liquor is sold through government-run stores, only half is sold that way. Fifty per cent of liquor revenue in the province is generated by private sale, although the private business owners carry the risk—are not being compensated. In most communities outside of our cities, liquor store—is sold through private liquor stores that are regulated and controlled by the Crown corporation. Private liquor vendors are regulated to a profit margin of 11 and three quarter per cent for the last 13 years even though the cost of

inflation on all operating expenses have been exponentially increasing over the past four years.

We've heard from this government that union-negotiated wages have needed to increase for public store employees, the minimum wage has needed to increase for everyone, and the cost of operation, in general, has significantly increased. Even though MBL has a profit margin of 150 per cent on liquor products and 50 per cent of that revenue is generated by independent private businesses across our province and beer vendors within the city, they have neglected to provide any consideration for those private retailers who have been carrying the burden of providing high-priced real estate and favourable benefits packages for employees in their public stores.

To put this into perspective for Manitobans, a private liquor store needs to sell over \$1 million of liquor each year just to generate the income to pay the salary and benefits package for one MLCC government store management employee. That is more than 55,000 bottles of wine.

Unfortunately, this is another example of starving that economic horse that is pulling our social cart. If there isn't more consideration given to private liquor stores across our province, we're going to see more irresponsible sales and less professional delivery of the product, which is exactly what this government has expressed concern about when expanding the private model into the city of Winnipeg. If it is a right for unionized government employees to make a comfortable living, it should also be that same right for entrepreneurs who assume all the risk to provide that same service.

Agriculture, as I've said in this House before, is something that I'm naturally passionate about as a farmer myself, growing up on our family farm. I was listening closely to the budget when being presented and disappointed in the lack of representation agriculture has in this year's budget.

I realize and respect that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) has run a farm for the majority of his life and feel that even he is disappointed in the lack of consideration this government has shown for agriculture. Each time a question about the budget or agriculture in this House has been risen, we hear the same response each time. I'm glad to have this opportunity to speak about this budget.

The Agriculture Minister continues to say that their government accomplishment in agriculture since taking office has been the reduction in Crown land

lease rates. I want to share with this House and the rest of Manitoba how insignificant that is to Manitoba agriculture. We're talking about property land leases that haven't been updated in decades, with quarter-section rental rates being as little as a couple hundred dollars when comparing to private neighbouring properties of a few thousand dollars. There is no denying that inexpensive rent for pasture land is beneficial to some producers in the area where land exists and is very limited. This land is primarily in the Parkland region of the Dauphin constituency, which just so happens to be the constituency of the Agriculture Minister.

This benefit, having inexpensive Crown land rental, is beneficial to primarily only one segment of the agriculture industry, and that is beef. Although the cattle farming is very important to our province and so are the cattle producers of that Parkland region, there is so much more to agriculture in our province. In fact, the freeze on agriculture Crown land leases does not significantly impact agriculture in my constituency or any other constituency across all of southern Manitoba.

As time is expiring, I would—*[interjection]*—but there is so much more needing to be said. I would like to reiterate my concern with the lack of consideration I have seen for industry, business, agriculture and the entire southern portion of Manitoba in this budget. I know that this is the NDP's first budget, and I am hopeful that input and feedback like ours will allow future consideration.

Thank you.

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** Honourable Speaker, Happy Sikh Heritage Month. I'm so proud to stand up today here in this Chamber and thank everybody listening that the members in this Chamber who represent all Manitobans have unanimously supported not just Sikh Heritage Month, but also The Turban Day Act.

And we would be celebrating that achievement, that pride, here in this Chamber very soon. Every year, we start the month of April with Sikh prayer. We call it Ardās. And this year, we would be celebrating the second official Turban Day. That's a unique example in this country because we are the only Legislature in the country having officially recognized April 13 as Turban Day.

\* (16:00)

Looking forward to see everybody on April 12 in this building, which is people's building, 1 to 3 p.m. Friday.

And I'm so proud when I share with all Manitobans that we, all the 57 MLAs, proudly brought forward Black History Month. Everybody supported Black History Month Act. Not only that, we have passed a bill called Somali Heritage Week. Similarly, Ukrainian Heritage Month Act. Similarly, Filipino Heritage Month Act.

And I want to say this to all ethnic communities, that your contribution to the economic development of this province, to the social diversity and cultural diversity, matters a lot. We are so proud of you all.

And one thing that we need to understand and feel and appreciate is that whenever we talk about diversity here in this Chamber, looking at the examples that I just mentioned, it brought us together. We didn't fight over whether The Turban Day Act should be passed or not. Everybody said yes. That's one Manitoba. That's one future. Right?

So that's why I like the title of our budget: one future, one people, one Manitoba. And I'm so proud to represent the diverse people of Burrows. I represent so many ethnic communities, so many religious communities, people of faith and people of all colours. And people from various parts of the world, who decided to call Manitoba their home. I want to appreciate their contribution and the hard work they do to build our province.

And we tried our best to respond back with the same vibes. When I saw we, all Manitobans, all electoral representatives, all public servants who are working in this building and other departments to serve Manitobans. And I want to remind myself and all my friends in this Chamber that we are servants, not the bosses. And I keep reminding myself and my friends in this Chamber, keep reminding each other that we are actually the servants of Manitoba and the people of Manitoba.

Staying humble is important. So when we talk about this budget, we talk about the commitments we made to Manitobans, and we talk about and understand what we signed up for. Staying humble, exercising humility, is not easy. I think the humility needs to travel from our speaking notes to our hearts. That doesn't happen often. Let's try to do that. I'm not preaching anything, but just, as a member of this sacred Chamber, just reminding myself.

And I was so happy to see these bills passed, and I'm so happy that one of my colleagues, member for Assiniboia (MLA Kennedy), brought forward Islamic Heritage Month Act. We are working together on that, hope to see that bill passed very soon.

I also want to thank the leadership for providing funds to pave Mollard Road, which leads to Sikh Society of Manitoba gurdwara. That was mentioned in the budget. Thank you to the leadership, and thank you to the people of Manitoba and Sikh community for your patience.

Burrows is made of—made up of hard-working, small-business owners, City employees and hard-working people who work in the field of transportation, in industry and various other departments.

So whenever I attend events in Burrows it feels so good to attend a Filipino event with a barong. Whenever I go to a Filipino event, I wear my barong and I wear a matching turban, and I talk to my community members: Have you seen somebody wearing a turban with a barong? And 99.9999 per cent of those say no, for the first time today. And that brings smile on everyone's faces.

This is how we respect each other. This is how we work together.

There are so many things that I want to talk about in this budget. We have tried to address so many things, and we have prioritized. And we have been appreciated by many Manitobans and we also have been criticized—that's part of the game—for not prioritizing this and that and that and that.

I want to say in response that top five priorities can't be six. Top five priorities can't be seven. So when we talk about top five priorities, we talk about something that is very, very important. That does not mean that if we did not list anything top five, is not important. Everything is important, but we have to prioritize. We do prioritize in our daily life and in our lives.

Starting with ag: we have good news for the producers. We are investing to improve Agri business risk management programs. The producers were not happy with the previous government, and that's the fact. We have raised that point here many times in this Chamber and everybody knows that some choices that the previous government made were not welcomed by the producers, especially Crown lands.

There have been good things in the past. We make good choices; we make bad choices, as human beings. But we have to pay for that.

So, the way the ag file was handled was not great. I appreciate so many members in this Chamber, members opposite especially, who are still connected to agriculture, who still farm and who know a lot about agriculture. But something that I note that members opposite—not everybody—a few of them, not intentionally, maybe—but I have heard them saying that my team here, not many of us know about agriculture.

I want to say this: that I have walked more soybean and canola fields in Manitoba than many of the members opposite. I've been scouting fields. So we need to recognize that, too. There are so many members in this Chamber, this side of the House, who have studied agriculture, who have worked in agriculture and who have decades-long farming experience. So we need to appreciate that.

Another thing that NDP did previously, was long back, to bring in a great program that was called IEAP, Internationally Educated Agrologists program at University of Manitoba. That was a successful program and it worked fine to connect the gap between the new Canadians who had ag education from outside Canada and the job market in Canada. A great percentage of those grads were absorbed in ag industry, but unfortunately, for past few years, that program was cut.

\* (16:10)

We need to work together to make life better for farmers. For that, we need trained professionals. And we need to strengthen our post-secondary institutions to address that need. Very soon, very soon we would be needing so many ag professionals to fill the potential gaps in the labour market.

I have seen so many members speak about the budget. Good things. Criticism—good, that's fine. But I want to say that we have good plans. There are so many issues in Manitoba; for example, poverty. We have to address poverty. And we—when I say we, we all, the 57 elected representatives—we need to work together, sit together and build strategies and policies to address poverty in Manitoba.

There are so many issues that are interconnected. We need to work together. We need to work with different departments, and that's what we are doing. We are on our path to progress. We are making sure that different deputy ministers, different MLAs and committees—they are working together to address these issues.



And we also want to engage Manitobans; that's what we are doing. We do not believe in top-down planning approaches. We want to involve Indigenous organizations, community organizations, regular Manitobans, to send us feedback and suggest to us how we can make things better, how we can address poverty.

And there are so many things listed in the budget. How many millions for what project, I won't repeat that because that has been repeated many times in this Chamber. I want to just discuss and emphasize the direction we are heading to. The direction we are headed to is the way to progress, way to prosperity. And we want to make sure that we respect health-care workers, we respect teachers, we respect early childhood educators, we respect MPI workers, we respect union workers and those who are working in private businesses.

Under the watch of previous government, we have seen people on the picket line. We tried our best after assuming office to address the issues, and everybody knows that we were successful because of good leadership. We have such a diverse team. We have our Education Minister having spent decades in education. So the best leader we could have, we have that. We have Ag Minister having spent whole his life in farming and rural leadership. We have our Health Minister knowing a lot about health care and having spent their early life in health-care sector. So we are trying our best, and we have built a good team to address the issues we are facing.

But previously, we have seen disrespect for these wonderful professionals in various departments from the leadership we used to have, and I think that was reflected. The people being not happy, being unwelcoming to that disrespect is clearly reflected in the results of the election.

Chronic homelessness—that's a big problem in Manitoba, and we're making sure to invest enough in this department and repair Manitoba Housing and build new social housing and maybe offer some incentives for the builders to build homes for Manitobans. And the work has already started, and this budget focuses on that as well. Anybody can flip the pages; go to the link and see announcements we did, the commitments we did, and I think that we would get there soon.

Real \$10-per-day child care. Real, bold and underlined. Real. So that's the change that we have made.

When we talk about kids going to school hungry, we have discussed that issue many times. And, unfortunately, some members in this Chamber, they have said that it's the duty of the parents to feed their kids.

Well, it's not that simple. And kids go to school hungry not just because parents do not have money to feed them. It's family situation; it's their work shift; it's their mental health. So many factors that lead to that situation.

So we, as Manitobans, need to get together and make sure that every kid gets food to eat on time. That's why we are investing a universally accessible nutrition program, and I want to thank our Education Minister for that leadership.

What happened in the field of education under the previous government is, if I just say two words, bill 64. That explains it all. I do not need to spend 22 minutes to share what happened under bill 64 and what happened to the bill. So I would request everybody to google bill 64. You would know a lot about how education was—education file was handled under the PCs' watch. Many school divisions had to cut programs.

Health care: that is our top priority, and we are investing \$8.2 billion in health care.

School tax measures: new homeowners affordability tax credit is coming up. That is helping so many Manitobans, and we are getting compliments.

And I also want to say that our Minister for Labour and Immigration is doing great on her file. And the people, skilled workers in Manitoba, we have met them many times, and this Friday—last Friday, I got a bouquet from them. The leaders came to my office and offered a bouquet. For what? For listening to them, for working together with them, and that yellow bouquet is still in my office.

So I would just stop here. Thank you so much, Mr. Honourable Speaker.

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** All right. Honourable Speaker, first I just want to add, before I start my speech, just how privileged I feel to be able to stand up and discuss the things that are important to me and to my constituents and to my province, and I'm very honoured to be able to stand up and just share what I believe in and what I think is important. So thank you.

Manitoba is positioned in the heart of North America, making it the key part of the mid-central—main continental trade corridor, connecting Canada to

the central North American market of 100 million people. We are the heart of North America.

Manitoba is the connector between east and west, north and south. With 650,000 square kilometres, Manitoba covers a vast area. One sixth of the province's surface is covered by more than 100,000 lakes, including Lake Winnipeg, the fifth-largest freshwater lake in Canada.

\* (16:20)

That's 650,000 kilometres—square kilometres. That's a lot of highways, provincial parks, lakes, small towns, and medium to large cities. Farmland and natural resources, thriving industry, large and small businesses, schools, hospitals and homes. It's a large responsibility to care for such a vast and incredible province.

The 2024 NDP budget falls short of what Manitobans should expect from the government. I'm disappointed in the provincial budget in many ways, as are lots of Manitobans. How does the current government expect to be able to continue to be responsible and care for the province when they make cuts to essential infrastructure and services?

Funding cuts to services such as mental health and addictions, cuts to investments in infrastructure and housing, just to name a few of my—the many disappointments.

For example, we are the key—we are a key part of the mid-continental trade corridor. That means our highways need constant maintenance to keep up with truck traffic and transfer of goods. Many rural Manitobans travelled to Winnipeg two to three times a week to receive health care. They spend two to four or more hours a day driving the provincial roads. We need safe, durable roads. We need to continue to support and grow our infrastructure.

We need continued maintenance of our water systems so we can grow industry, support our growing communities, all the while protecting our waterways and lakes to keep them clean and thriving for many generations to come.

Infrastructure needs to be continually built and maintained if we want to stay current and competitive in the future. But nothing but cuts for infrastructure in the budget.

I'm also concerned that the benefits of services offered in rural communities are being overlooked in this 2024 NDP government budget. Let's start with the

desperately needed help with addictions, homelessness and mental health. A disappointing part of the budget was the cuts to the Brandon Sobering Centre. This centre would not only help those with addictions in Brandon, but ultimately help folks from all over the province. The NDP government cut the one—cut \$1.25 million in funding for Brandon Sobering Centre.

In Tuesday's budget, the current NDP government committed only \$250,000 to the Sobering Centre for operating funds for the—for a current fiscal year. That is \$1.25 million short of what they need and have budgeted for operating costs per year.

In 2021 our previous PC government provided \$2 million towards the creation of a sobering centre and followed up with a commitment of \$1.5 million annual operating funding. The facility will be part of a transitional housing project in Brandon.

As Budget 2024 shows, the NDP doesn't take addictions recovery seriously and rural Manitoba seriously. The NDP cut funding to the Brandon Sobering Centre and failed to deliver a plan that protects Manitobans and provides supports they need to recover and rebuild their lives.

Now that the budget has dropped for all Manitobans to see, it's clear that, in fact, the NDP has cut a large portion of this commitment.

When things like this happen, we all lose. We on this side of the Chamber would have kept that commitment. The PC government is committed to addiction and mental health recovery and supports.

If you ask any mother, family member, or friend if they want their loved one to recover from their addiction, they will always say one hundred per cent of the time, yes. They would tell you they want them to recover and have a life and a future, not be hanging out at a consumption site. Consumption sites continue to use—consumption sites encourage continued use and keep loved ones from seeking treatment. Not to mention the residual effects this has on their families and in the community around the location, such as elevated crime, increased homelessness, dirty needles, just to name a few.

We need to work together with all possible safeguards to protect our loved ones from harm. Harm reduction is a part of treatment but can't be the only focus. It needs to be recovery-focused supports.

We need to focus on both mental health and addiction together, making prevention and recovery a

priority. This all works together and has a ripple effect, impacting those struggling with homelessness.

Recovery, with built-in strategies such as a goal to achieve rewarding employment, a home to live in with those who you love around you, as you—as well as continued mental health supports are a big part of successful recovery.

Take care of a loved one—to take care of a loved one's mental health, and you will see a drop in drug use and homelessness. You can't treat one without the other, also—with the others also being treated. They all go hand in hand.

Many are turning to drugs and alcohol because of their own mental health struggles. This is why we need to include mental health and drug addiction treatments together as wraparound services, such as the Brandon sobering centre, which also includes transitional housing.

We, the PC government, committed to having a licensing standard for addiction and mental health services in the province to ensure that treatments and supports are done—being done properly and to protect front-line workers and those who are using the addiction services. But the NDP voted against this. Why?

This, to me, is shameful. Are those struggling with mental health and addiction not worth the effort of ensuring that they are properly treated and cared for? Instead, anyone can do what they want, however they want, in regard to treatment. I can't imagine a hospital being run that way but yet no standard licensing and protocols for addiction services in Manitoba.

Again, no funding for that in the budget. Not a word of regulating who can provide harm reduction and recovery to ensure consistency of services even—and even cuts were made to the centralized staff that ensure we have a whole-of-government and whole-of-province approach. But they have \$2 million to spend on talking about where they put—they hope to eventually place a drug consumption site.

Nothing for new RAAM clinics, nothing for expanded RAAM beds. In fact, in 129 pages of the budget, RAAM clinics aren't even mentioned once. Nothing for RAAM access. Nothing for Random Access to Addictions Medicine in the budget.

Homelessness is also linked to addictions and poor mental health. There is not enough being done in the budget for housing and homelessness. Both inside

Winnipeg and in rural Manitoba, I am disappointed that Manitobans—and Manitobans are disappointed.

Let's talk about social and transitional housing. We are a huge province and important, desperately needed projects in rural areas as well as Winnipeg are being turned down. There's so much need across our province, and yet I come from a community that's struggling to find places for people to live.

Southern Manitoba is the economic hub of the province who generate a large part of the economy here in Manitoba. We need to continue to grow our infrastructure and housing in order to support the continued growth.

There's homelessness everywhere. There's open and hidden homelessness in southern—in rural Manitoba and across the province, including Brandon, Portage la Prairie and Dauphin. There are 90 social housing units in our community with over 200 people on a waiting list for just one of those houses in Winkler. There are over 1,500 people on a waiting list at the local community centre for housing. Those are just the ones that have put their name on the list. It's estimated that there are over 3,000 people looking for housing in the city of Winkler.

There are many people, including new immigrants, that are new to Canada but are living in hotels. There are houses with eight to 10 adults living together; homes with two to three families sharing two- to three-bedroom apartments because there is no place for them to live.

And we hear from the current government—and this is what they got in a phone call from the current government: I'm sorry, you guys just don't need it bad enough. Again, that's not—it's just not in the budget.

\* (16:30)

I'm talking to those on housing initiatives and organizations in Manitoba who say they will do all the work but just can't do it all on their own; they need help. There's just no funding and no support. I'm talking to shelters both in Winnipeg and outside in rural Manitoba.

Dauphin has a fully functioning social housing and community centre. They are no longer able to manage the housing units and are looking for help from this current government, and still no word from the minister. I want to know why she has not replied to their email.

If they have closed 85 housing units where those—where will those families go? What is this Housing

Minister doing? Teen Challenge has a large brick building in downtown Winnipeg and have planned to build large recovery and transitional housing centre, but yet no support in this budget.

The Genesis House women's shelter, specifically, is in need of desperate transitional housing. They have a transitional housing project ready to go, and they have done all the work, have an amazing support network in the community. It's shovel-ready, but nothing for them in the budget.

Women's shelters across Manitoba are full every night and turning women and their children away because there's no room for them. Many women from across Manitoba that come to the shelter, women that— from every corner and walk of life, including Indigenous women.

Having the new transitional housing opens up those rooms in the crisis shelter. It changes things for women who need to get out of an abusive relationship and a home filled with domestic violence.

For example, the tragedy that happened in Carman that took the life of a mother and her three children and her 17-year-old niece. I attended the vigil in Carman at the site of the family home, and it broke my heart. We don't know the tragic events that unfolded, but as I stood there, I thought, if only she would've gotten out.

We need to do more. Having the ability of the— having the availability of these shelters and homes could be the difference between life or death. If she would've packed up her family and gone to a shelter and there was room for her, would they still be here today? These are all questions that we ask. Why will this minister not start looking at the big picture?

I am dedicated to continuing to advocate for shelters, transitional and social housing. We need to make sure this never happens again. Let's put women and children in the budget. Let's provide transitional housing so the shelter and beds—have beds open for women and their children and no one has to get turned away.

There are housing organizations that are willing to put the work in what—that are willing to take charge to manage them. This is nothing but a win-win situation for the Province.

Can this current NDP government please start looking past their own friends and start engaging those around them that have solutions to difficult problems Manitobans are facing?

If you have a refugee family coming to rural Manitoba community, they can't find housing or supports that they need. They will go to Winnipeg, which puts a strain on the housing in Winnipeg. Winnipeg's also struggling—is also struggling to find affordable housing for those who need it. We need to do more.

There needs to be more done to house and—our homeless in Winnipeg. We need to start thinking differently with our housing situation. We need to try to get supports for women who need transitional housing. We need to start thinking differently in both urban and rural Manitoba.

But this prime—this Premier (Mr. Kinew) doesn't think about that, about—that it's important to support rural Manitobans so that we can keep growing, to bring in and house people so the communities can fill industry and manufacturing jobs, contributing to the provincial economy, continuing to support all of the incredible industries and businesses that have started here.

We need to start making sure that they are able to continue to grow and thrive. That also means that social services need to grow with the communities.

Another disappointment in the budget is lack of mental health dollars. We need more mental health workers and supports. Many rural areas have to drive to Winnipeg for mental health services, whether it's for counselling for children or youth, emergency psychiatric care or addiction supports.

Currently, there is a six- to eight-month wait in rural Manitoba communities for any kind of mental health supports. This is not acceptable; we need to do better. When there is a patient released from a mental health facility, they have no place to go, as there is no affordable transitional social housing; it's full. They then stay in the facility as long as possible, costing high health-care dollars and taking up valuable treatment beds.

They were eventually out on their own, on street—on the streets without supportive environment around them. This is setting them up for failure and relapse.

All mental health and illnesses are treatable, but we need more supports to continue on a trajectory of success. Why don't we have more—we need to do more with the supports in rural areas as well as Winnipeg.

I'm disappointed with the 2024 NDP budget and will be keeping the government accountable for the decisions they make. I will continue to advocate for Manitobans and for rural Manitobans. I want to see

some tangible investments in social and transitional housing in rural communities. I want to see investments in mental health and addictions supports in Winnipeg and rural communities. I want to see more aggressive investments in housing for our homeless.

We all need our government to focus on Manitobans no matter where they live. You should not be penalized for living in a small town or large city.

Thank you.

**MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond):** Honourable Speaker, I'm excited to rise today to talk about all of the incredible steps that our government has taken to ensure that this new budget works for all of the people of Manitoba. This budget has been put together in order to support Manitobans from all walks of life.

First of all, I want to give credit to the entire Treasury Board team, including Treasury Board secretary, directors and policy analysts. I also want to thank the Premier's policy team for their diligent work throughout this budget process. I am honoured to have been appointed by the Premier as a member of Treasury Board, and I'm grateful for working with these incredible people through this new budget.

Due to the short timeline to get everything together since taking office, under the leadership of Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), our team at the Treasury Board has been working tirelessly to put forth the best budget we could for Manitobans.

When House was adjourned, the Treasury Board immediately got together to dedicate countless hours, meeting every day with each department, reporting organizations and Crown corporations.

When our new NDP team at the Treasury Board began our roles in this fall, we had a lot of work to do to clean up the mess that was left by the previous government. The staff at the Treasury Board do an amazing job helping us navigate the ins and outs of provincial finances, and I'm truly grateful for all of their hard work, steady guidance and attentiveness.

One of the most pressing issues we faced has been the vast amount of problems with health care. The cuts to health care, firing of staff and closing of necessary emergency rooms like the Victoria hospital in Fort Richmond have left Manitobans to deal with longer wait times to see a doctor, a specialist or even to see a surgeon.

This—the constituents of Fort Richmond are very passionate about the state of the—our health-care system. People in Fort Richmond, especially many

seniors residing in my community, have been in contact with my office regarding the state of health care. They want positive changes, not just for their—for themselves, but for their entire community.

My role as their MLA was always included advocating for the community, and I want to ensure that everyone in south Winnipeg has accessible and timely health care.

Our Manitoba NDP team has been working hard to make that happen, and we are committed to fixing health care in this province.

An important first step has been the investment of \$633 million into Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care in our collaboration with the federal government. I was extremely honoured to stand alongside my NDP colleagues, federal MPs, Health Minister, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and the Prime Minister to announce these two agreements.

We are going to start rebuilding by hiring 1,000 new health-care workers this year. This investment will allow the Province to hire 100 more doctors, 210 more nurses, 90 paramedics and 600 health-care aides.

On the topic of health-care aides, I am personally acquainted with many of them. Many health-care aides are visible minorities who tirelessly do critical front-line work and are often left out of discussions about the importance of health-care work.

\* (16:40)

I want to acknowledge all of the hard work that health-care aides and all support staff do in the medical system and thank them for their steadfast dedication.

I acknowledge the dietary aides, home-care attendants, housekeepers, unit clerks, porters, tradespeople, and all the others who are so important as the pillars of our health-care system.

Just like in the school system, scores of hard workers are critical to keep schools running every day. In health-care system, hospitals cannot run without health-care aides and support workers.

This includes the new institutional safety officers who, as noted in our budget documents, begin their training to help keep our health-care system safe for all staff, patients, and visitors.

I recently hosted a listening tour with the Premier, the Minister of Health, and a member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz) at the Victoria hospital. Health-care workers spoke up about the importance of reopening

the Victoria ER for south Winnipeg because of the rapid increase in population in the area and the value of every second it takes to get to emergency services.

These front-line workers care deeply about the community they serve and expressed their hopes that residents in south Winnipeg will get a new emergency room.

Honourable Speaker, our government is providing funding to open a new emergency room at the Victoria hospital, as well as the Mature Women's Centre. We are bringing back life-saving health services to the south end.

I am proud that our Premier and the Health Minister have been so attentive to the needs of our community, and I know residents in south Winnipeg recognize that leadership.

After seven years of budget cuts and funding freezes, south Winnipeg's community and businesses have, unfortunately, been seeing an increase in crime and break-ins. Local businesses and the strip malls along south Pembina Highway have been experiencing multiple break-ins.

Coffee Culture, which is located in Fort Richmond Plaza, has been broken into a few times, leaving the business and community feeling afraid of their—about the state of their safety. Furthermore, residents in Fort Richmond have been reporting record amounts of car break-ins.

Tim Hortons down south Pembina is concerned about safety issues related to the mental health and addictions crisis in the community and want to see action.

At the start of the year, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and I met directly with the business owners at Coffee Culture following yet another break-in, and assured them that help is on the way.

I want to acknowledge the Premier once again for being the kind of leader who hears a problem in a community and makes the time to meet one on one with people who are looking for support. We are offering \$300 in rebates for security systems for families and small businesses, like Coffee Culture on Pembina, and so many more, to help deter theft and vandalism and allow Manitobans to have some peace of mind and to know that we are safe and secure in our own homes and businesses.

According to City of Winnipeg statistics, South Pembina and old Fort Richmond, in particular, is designated to be a high-poverty neighbourhood. These

are also concentrated areas of poverty along Pembina from Chevrier to the Perimeter.

Our community has many, many renters, including students and seniors, and these folks are struggling to make ends meet.

Our NDP government will be increasing financial support for low-income renters in Manitoba to ease the burden of rent and allow them to save up and grow their finances.

Our government is offering a \$1,500 homeowners affordability tax credit and an increased \$575 renters tax credit and up to \$328 seniors top-up.

Our government has also committed to putting \$116 million towards funding to build and maintain social and affordable housing. I am hearing from my constituents every day about their support for affordable housing, and I am happy to announce that our government is listening to their demands and providing more funding for social programs to help all of the people who live in Manitoba.

The people of Fort Richmond love their neighbours. Our streets and schools are diverse, not only in ethnic diversity, but also economic diversity. Residents in Fort Richmond live in large homes, small bungalows, apartments, Manitoba Housing. Our community looks out for one another, and the neighbours want to ensure that everyone is granted equal access to affordable housing under our new budget.

Homelessness is a huge issue in our city, and my south Winnipeg community is very passionate about affordable housing and are working to help end the homelessness crisis. Like all communities in Manitoba, we don't want to see anyone left behind.

The people of Fort Richmond are passionate about protecting the beautiful planet that they reside on and ensuring that the amazing city of Winnipeg that they love is more environmentally friendly.

I've heard from several constituents who have felt more incentivized to switch to electric vehicles because of the rebate program that our government is offering to electric vehicle owners. The \$4,000 rebate on new electric vehicles and \$2,500 rebate for used ones will make more Manitobans feel confident with their decisions to switch to electric.

We all also take the education of our children seriously. The Fort Richmond community houses an incredible amount of families with young children, and I've often heard from constituents their worries about child care and the rising costs associated with

extracurricular education and child-care costs. As a former school trustee and a parent with two children attending the Pembina Trails School Division, quality education is close to my heart.

A large part of my work has been around supporting students, families and educators. Our children are our future, and that's why we're keeping our commitment to create the first universal school nutrition program in Canada, so there's food in every school for every kid who needs it starting this fall.

As I mentioned earlier, our communities in the south end experience a wide range of economic diversity, and our parents will be pleased to know that their child or their children's friends will be getting the support they need in class.

On the note of education, the Fort Richmond community also has a high density of post-secondary students who attend the University of Manitoba, which is situated in Fort Richmond.

Our government is increasing financial aid for post-secondary students so that they may focus on their degrees and education instead of constantly worrying about how they will be able to afford their tuition.

Honourable Speaker, our budget is a good one that focuses on the needs of all Manitobans. As an appointee to the Treasury Board, it is of the utmost importance to me that our communities feel and see that their tax money is going back into helping them and providing them with the necessary public services that they can count on.

Honourable Speaker, I'm known to be the type of person who believes strongly in accountability and fiscal prudence, and I know Manitobans expect that of their elected officials from all parties. Manitobans work hard to provide for their families and give back to their communities. They deserve a government that works just as hard to deliver the programming and services we all rely on.

We have put this budget together to ensure that Manitobans start to actually see more positive results after the last seven years of disappointment, rising costs and cuts to the services they rely on.

Though our 2024 budget has just been presented, all of us at the Treasury Board will continue to meet throughout the year to make sure that our priorities as

a government are met and to ensure that we continue to work diligently to serve the people of Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** Thank you to my colleagues for the warm welcome with my speech here against the 2024 budget. It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today, Honourable Speaker, to debate the budget and talk about things that are going on in my constituency that we're concerned about that this budget really won't be helping; and of course in my critic role for Municipal and Northern Relations.

\* (16:50)

So, I know Manitobans are quite concerned about the rising cost of living with the crisis that we're seeing now, and we're not going to see a lot of relief in Tuesday's budget, with the debt servicing now consuming 10 cents on every dollar, can only imagine the high cost it's going to be to servicing that debt. Very concerning to myself and, of course, many Manitobans.

In my community in Lakeside, we got many small businesses and large farms there. We've got the communities of Stonewall, Elie, Teulon, Woodlands, Warren, and we've got numerous small businesses that employ a lot of the local residents, and I see no benefit that has come out of this budget plan for '24-25 for these small businesses. They can't afford not to have the tax breaks that they depend on to remain sustainable, so it's a huge concern for small businesses which are a backbone to our economy here in our great province.

Another concern about mine in the budget is the town of Stonewall. Some highly anticipating construction of a new personal-care home that the PCs had announced, and it appears that it's been cut from the budget also, as there is no mention of it.

Now, this personal-care home, Honourable Speaker, is something that's been in the works for a long time with a number of our communities in Lakeside—a number of municipalities have gotten together and been fundraising for this care home for our seniors.

There's the municipality of Woodlands, the municipality of Rockwood, the municipality—the town of Stonewall. St. Laurent is involved in it. All these municipalities got together regionally to work hard to get a personal-care home for their community, and all

of a sudden there it was. We see it's been cut by the NDP government.

Another concern of mine here is not saying anything about in the budget is Highway 227, and it's something I brought up to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (MLA Naylor) the other day, but she was just a little busy on her phone, I guess. She couldn't give me an answer, and we still haven't received an answer on what's happening with 227—whether it's still in the budget.

I'm quite concerned and afraid that it's been cut. Maybe when the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure's quite so busy on her phone during question period, which—I think it's pretty important that we pay attention to some of these important questions that are going on in our communities, that—maybe the minister should pay a little more attention and answer them.

But 227 is a main artery that connects Highway 16 all the way over to Highway 67—takes in the constituencies of Portage and Lakeside, so my colleague from Portage la Prairie is quite familiar with this as well and something our residents have been very excited about—all Manitobans have been excited about because of the route—the corridor that it would create from all the way to Highway 16 all the way to Beausejour and beyond in eastern Manitoba.

But I don't know if it's been forgotten. Sure hope we get to hear something about it and that it hasn't been cut, but with the amount of dollars, the 164 million that have been cut, I am really scared that it's not going to happen. But a major route that we should—would bolster the economy here in our province from west to east and east to west.

Another concern of mine in my community of Lakeside is the Woodlands Childcare expansion project was announced recently in the last year. It was budgeted for, we thought. This is a daycare in Woodlands that was attached—is attached to our school in Woodlands, and it takes infants and preschool-age children, and they've been raising money to do an expansion, and it's going to Warren school and have an extra daycare space there.

We're sitting at 200 people waiting for—200 children waiting for daycare in this community and certainly something that's important to have, and we don't want to see that cut from the budget, which we're quite concerned that it is. Imagine 200 people on our waiting list in Woodlands and Warren. Such an important thing that we need there so our moms and dads

can go to work and raise their families as it gets harder to survive in this world, to raise our families.

Municipalities, well, 2 per cent increase to the funding for municipalities. While municipalities are happy to see something, 2 per cent is well below—is well below the rate of inflation.

And school divisions got 3 and a half per cent. So I guess my question is, why schools get 3 and a half per cent, municipalities only get 2 per cent? Maybe we could have done a little better for the municipalities.

I think what we're going to see happen here is—well, we already seen it. The school boards have—were raising their taxes anywhere from 6 per cent to 17 per cent. And when our tax bills come out we're going to see quite an increase on our property taxes, too.

So I think our \$1,500 tax credit here is going to get eaten up pretty quick. It's going to get—

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

**Mr. King:** Yes. The members opposite giving a clap to all their smoke and mirrors of a tax credit here. But it will get eaten up pretty quick come tax bill time and will not benefit the middle class whatsoever when we see that we're going to be paying more taxes.

So, why aren't municipalities getting the same as the school divisions, I guess, is my question. I know our PC Party committed a long-term escalating funding to them, and NDP are saying that they will work with them on it, and we're definitely going to hold you to it.

For an example, Portage, the City of Portage. It's only extra \$40,000 for their operating line. Not enough when you're looking at inflationary—this day and age.

The BSC, Building Sustainable Communities, where'd that funding go? Nobody's telling us anything, if it's in the budget as a new name or what. But the BSC and the arts, culture and sport in community were very important programs in the last year, something that the PC team had doubled from \$12 and a half million to \$25 million.

In my community we—there's a number of—much like my counterpart in Interlake-Gimli—had a number of community clubs that got some funding from these programs and the great things that they were able to do in their communities.



So—one being the Grosse Isle Heritage Site where the Prairie Dog runs out to every year; they got a little bit of money out of that program and did some great things there. Our Grosse Isle recreation club, they're going to be building a new building there for a warm-up shack for the people that skate there in the rink.

The Argyle Settlers, Rails & Trails, their museum received some money from these programs, done some great things there. And in Stonewall, the save-the-kiln team there, million dollars, doing some great

things there to save a—the heritage and the history they have in the town of Stonewall.

Just out there this morning, actually, talking with Kelly Kimball, our rec director there and—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 8, 2024

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