



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS No. 37

THIRD SESSION, FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE

PRAYER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

1:30 O'CLOCK P.M.

Hon. Ms. SMITH tabled:

Supplement to the Estimates of Expenditure 2026-2027 – Departmental Expenditure Estimates – Housing, Addictions and Homelessness.

(Sessional Paper No. 21)

Hon. Mr. KOSTYSHYN tabled:

Supplement to the Estimates of Expenditure 2026-2027 – Departmental Expenditure Estimates – Agriculture.

(Sessional Paper No. 22)

Hon. Min. FONTAINE, the Minister of Families, made a statement regarding April being Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Mrs. HIEBERT commented on the statement.

Pursuant to sub-rule 28(1), MLA CHEN, Mr. KHAN, MLA COMPTON, Mrs. ROBBINS and Hon. Mr. MOSES made Member's statements.

Following Oral Questions, the Speaker made the following ruling:

Following Oral Questions on March 17, 2026, the Honourable Government House Leader rose on a matter of privilege alleging that, during Oral Questions, the Leader of the Official Opposition made disparaging and threatening remarks directed at the Deputy Premier and the First Minister. The Honourable Government House Leader concluded her remarks by moving:

THAT this matter be referred to a Committee of this House.

The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader spoke to the matter before I took it under advisement.

In order for a matter of privilege to be ruled as a *prima facie* case, a Member must demonstrate that the issue has been raised at the earliest opportunity, while also providing sufficient evidence to support the claim that a *prima facie* case of privilege has been established.

On the condition of timeliness: in accordance with our rules, the Honourable Government House Leader raised the matter immediately following Oral Questions on the day the remarks were allegedly spoken. Accordingly, I would rule that the matter was raised at the earliest opportunity.

On the second condition of whether a *prima facie* case was demonstrated: in her submission, the Honourable Government House Leader alleged that, during Oral Questions that day, the Leader of the Official Opposition yelled across the Chamber to the Deputy Premier, “You are a terrible person, whatever you are”. The Honourable Government House Leader further alleged that the Leader of the Official Opposition said to the Premier, “Let’s take it outside”. The Member stated that these two comments amounted to a threat from one Member to two Members of her caucus.

The Honourable Government House Leader’s allegation is in part based on language used in the Chamber, and as I, as many other Manitoba Speakers, have noted in previous comparable rulings, unparliamentary language is governed by a practice of this House.

Joseph Maingot, in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, states on page 14 that allegations of a breach of privilege by a Member which amount to complaints about procedures and practices in the House are by their very nature matters of order. He also states on page 254 of the same edition that language “that impugns the integrity of Members would be unparliamentary and a breach of order contrary to the Standing Orders, but not a breach of privilege”.

The Honourable Government House Leader also alleged that Members of her caucus were threatened by the Leader of the Official Opposition. In the fourth edition of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Janse and LeBlanc state in citation 3.78 that “Attempting to obstruct members’ parliamentary work by threatening or intimidating them is a situation that the Speaker always takes very seriously”.

As the Speaker of this House and as a Manitoba citizen, I am deeply disappointed at the atrocious state of decorum in the House last week. The yelling and hollering during Oral Questions in recent weeks has been embarrassing and shameful. I have tried many times in the past to make you all understand that, with such behaviour, you are leaving a disgraceful legacy for the people of Manitoba, and especially to children and youth who come to watch our proceedings in the public gallery.

I cannot count how many times I have warned Members that, if they did not stop making so much noise, I would not be able to hear what was happening in the House and therefore not able to do my job properly. This incident would be a prime example of that problem. Due to the level of noise in the Chamber during the exchange in Oral Questions, I could not hear either of these alleged comments.

In preparing this ruling, I listened to the audio from our House Broadcast many times trying to hear the comments in question, with no success. As a next step, I requested an isolated audio feed from the interject mics positioned at the Clerks’ Table. These mics are in place to attempt to catch parts of Members’ speech that might be lost due to technical problems or excessive noise during a sitting. In this case, however, they provided a clearer recording of comments being made amongst the many voices heard at the moment.

On this recording, I can clearly hear the Leader of the Official Opposition say, “You are a terrible person, whatever you are”. It is up to me as Speaker to determine if that comment was a threat.

I was shocked and appalled to hear that such a dehumanizing comment had in fact been made in this Chamber. There have been a lot of hurtful, disrespectful things said in this Chamber in my time as Speaker, and I truly wish that those comments, and this comment, had never been heard in this room.

Based on past precedents, and after much consultation with other jurisdictions, I find that, much to my disappointment, that I cannot rule those hateful words as a threat. Therefore, I am ruling on this matter the Honourable Government House Leader did not establish a *prima facie* case of privilege.

Members have heard me explain the importance of privilege of freedom of speech we all have as Members of this Legislature. That privilege is essential for the effective functioning of the House. However, the misuse or abuse of this privilege can and does create significant problems in this House.

In the fourth edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, Janse and LeBlanc shared the following thoughts in citation 3.62:

The privilege of freedom of speech is an extremely powerful immunity and on occasion Speakers have had to caution members about its misuse. The Speaker has noted that, while this right is essential to parliamentary business, the word “free” is not synonymous with “limitless”.

The question that I wrestled with on this ruling is: Do I set a new precedent? What are the ramifications of doing that? What happens to a Member’s right to freedom of speech if I make that ruling? How do I, as the Speaker, limit that freedom? The answer is: I cannot do that, as that is not how this place is meant to function.

While I cannot rule this as a valid matter of privilege, I could rule on such comments as a matter of order in the future. I am advising the House now that I will keep this option in mind as long as I am in the Chair.

We should all be sensitive to the fact that our society’s history is crowded with examples of remarks and actions causing great pain and hardship to many, many people. There is absolutely no need for any further such remarks being shared in this Chamber, and I implore all Members to use language that is more respectful in this House.

As I have stated, this kind of behaviour in the House leaves a very bad legacy for Manitobans, who voted for all of us. Worse still, I believe they also create a disincentive for worthy and capable people to run for office. At times like this, we do not make the Legislature look like an attractive workplace.

In accordance with established policy of the office of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, and with previous rulings, I will provide this audio clip upon request.

I have nothing further to say on this matter, except to say that I will continue to do this job to the best of my abilities, and I strongly believe that Members should be setting a better example for Manitobans in this place.

Immediately following the Speaker's ruling, the Honourable Government House Leader rose on a point of order to request that the Leader of the Official Opposition apologize for the comments referenced in the Speaker's ruling.

And Hon. Min. ASAGWARA and Mr. KHAN having spoken,

And Mr. KHAN having voluntarily apologized.

WHEREUPON the Speaker accepted the apology and the matter was resolved.

During the point of order raised by Hon. Min. FONTAINE, the Speaker interjected and requested that the word "lied", spoken by the Honourable Government House Leader, be withdrawn,

WHEREUPON Hon. Min. FONTAINE withdrew those comments.

In accordance with Rule 34, the Government House Leader announced that the Private Member's resolution titled "National Strategy for Silver Alerts" will be considered on the next Tuesday of Private Members' Business.

The following petitions were presented and read to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

Mr. JOHNSON – To urge the Provincial Government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage Regional Health Facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

MLA BEREZA – To urge the Provincial Government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increasing bail supervision, and opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and to lobby the Federal Government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

Mr. EWASKO – To urge the Provincial Government to remove education funding and taxation from property taxes and find a fair and equitable way to fund education in Manitoba.

Mr. GUENTER – To urge the Provincial Government to lobby the Federal Government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition; and to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery, and medical assistance in living, not death.

Mrs. HIEBERT – To urge the Premier to financially assist the City of Winnipeg on building this three-lane bridge in each direction to maintain this vital link between northeast Winnipeg, Transcona and the downtown; to urge the Provincial Government to recommend that the City of Winnipeg keep the old bridge fully open to traffic while the new bridge is under construction; and to urge the Provincial Government to consider the feasibility of keeping the old bridge open for active transportation in the future.

The House resumed the debate on the proposed motion of Hon. Min. SALA:

THAT this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the Government.

And the proposed amendment by Mr. KHAN as follows:

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after “House” and substituting:

therefore regrets that this budget fails to adequately address the current cost-of-living crisis by:

- (a) failing to take action to mitigate the escalating cost pressures on Manitobans, while simultaneously generating hundreds of millions of dollars in new tax revenues from families already facing financial hardship; and
- (b) cancelling the indexation of the Basic Personal Amount and personal income tax brackets, thereby denying the ability of Manitobans to keep more money from their paycheques and earn more before paying income tax; and
- (c) failing to uphold its commitment not to raise taxes, as evidenced by increases to school taxes, education property taxes, and the termination of income tax indexation; and
- (d) allowing education property taxes to skyrocket to 19.5% since last year without presenting a plan to meet the growing needs of the education system or offer meaningful long-term relief for homeowners; and
- (e) abandoning 4,600 students and 500 staff by refusing to provide the necessary funding to support the transition of learners displaced by the defunding of the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology; and
- (f) failing to support agriculture producers, who are essential to addressing rising food prices and driving economic growth; and
- (g) failing to provide effective stewardship of Manitoba’s public utilities, thereby contributing to annual increases in Hydro rates and MPI premiums; and
- (h) failing to bring forward or execute an economic plan designed to stimulate economic growth and lessen the burdens imposed on Manitoba families and businesses by trade wars and increasing fuel prices; and

- (i) failing to take necessary measures to restore public safety in communities across Manitoba, as this budget contains no plan to address rising property crime or to advance reforms to the bail system aimed at keeping violent offenders and repeat criminals in custody; and
- (j) adopting a tax policy that places additional burdens on physicians and other critical skilled professionals, diminishing Manitoba's competitiveness in recruiting and retaining the expertise necessary for a strong health-care system and economy; and
- (k) failing to enact and enforce necessary measures to address repeat violent offenders and armed drug traffickers who continue to endanger and victimize hardworking Manitobans; and
- (l) refusing to take decisive action in response to grave safety concerns raised by staff and patients at health-care facilities, including multiple sexual assaults, resulting in three hospitals being grey-listed by nurses for the first time in the province's history; and
- (m) failing to take meaningful action to resolve the growing diagnostic and surgical caseloads, thereby forcing Manitoba families to endure unprecedented delays in accessing essential care; and
- (n) neglecting the mental-health needs of Manitobans by failing to expand access to primary mental-health services and failing to establish a single Rapid Access to Addictions Medicine clinic to support those struggling with addictions; and
- (o) failing to present a balanced budget in its first term and failing to present a credible plan to balance the Public Accounts or reduce the Province of Manitoba's deficit and debt; and
- (p) refusing to acknowledge or act on the reality that half of Manitoba families are within \$200 a month of being unable to pay their bills; and
- (q) failing to take meaningful action to address inflation and the escalating costs of groceries, fuel, and housing; and
- (r) implementing the job-killing "Manitoba Jobs Agreement", which arbitrarily selects winners and losers and overrides the choice of the 88% of Manitoba construction workers who have chosen to not be associated with a union, thereby driving up the price of schools, hospitals and other infrastructure.

As a consequence, of these and many other failings, the Provincial Government has thereby lost the trust and confidence of this House and the people of Manitoba.

Tuesday, April 7, 2026

And the debate continuing on the amendment,

And Mr. BALCAEN, Mrs. SCHOTT, Ms. BYRAM, MLAs COMPTON and BEREZA, Mr. OXENHAM and Mrs. ROBBINS having spoken,

And MLA MALOWAY speaking at 5:00 p.m. The debate was allowed to remain in their name.

The House then adjourned at 5:00 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 8, 2026.

Hon. Tom LINDSEY,
Speaker.