



Second 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
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	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, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike	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, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	Ind.
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 26, 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 only desire that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and 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, 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 208—The Manitoba Small Business Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)**

**MLA Billie Cross (Seine River):** I move, seconded by the MLA for Elmwood, that Bill 208, the small—The Manitoba Small Business Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**MLA Cross:** Today, I rise to introduce Bill 208, The Manitoba Small Business Month Act.

Small businesses are the backbone of the Manitoba economy, representing 95 per cent of all businesses in our province. Small-business owners and entrepreneurs not only contribute to our local economy, but they are also community and cultural leaders. Small businesses face many challenges, and during difficult economic times, they experience hardships. Despite

these challenges, they overcome and thrive through their hard work and resilience.

To celebrate and uplift Manitoba entrepreneurs, Bill 208 will designate every May to be small—Manitoba small-business month. As a small-business owner, I'm incredibly proud to bring this legislation forward.

Thank you.

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

The motion is accordingly adopted.

Committee reports?

Tabling of reports?

Ministerial statements?

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### **Bruce Paton**

**Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** Game on. If you've ever been to Southdale Community Centre, you know Bruce Paton. He's the friendly face in the skate shop, a pillar of our community who ensures everyone has skates sharpened and ready for their ice time.

Whether it's your first time out and you're wearing your big sister's hand-me-downs or you're getting ready for the AAA final, he always has a way of making you feel like your skates are the most important blades to be sharpened.

Southdale Skate Sharpening has been a fixture at the Southdale Community Centre for over 27 years. Initially run by Bruce's uncle, Doug Carter, Bruce bought the shop next to his former high school four years ago as a retirement investment. But by all accounts, it has been an investment in our community.

Bruce's contributions extend beyond his technical skills of repairing and sharpening. He volunteers at many local events and offers free skate-sharpening clinics. His shop also partners with Churchill High School Hockey Academy, AAA Hockey U18 and U17 Bruins, sponsoring players to offset their costs of playing hockey.

His commitment to fostering a love for skating and supporting all levels of hockey contribute greatly to our sense of community in Southdale.

So today, let us thank Bruce for investing so much into the community he grew up in. We are grateful for his contagious passion for skating, and how he treats everyone with respect and kindness. Southdale is stronger for having him in it.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**David Edward Fletcher**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** A dedicated family man, a passionate canoeist and outdoorsman, a lover of tennis, a renowned electrical engineer, a man of immense character—David Edward Fletcher led a remarkable life.

I was honoured to join with many others yesterday at The Leaf at Assiniboine Park to celebrate the life of this great Manitoban, a life that he shared for 56 years with his beloved wife Joanne and that was enriched by his children Steven, Gordon, Julia and their cherished grandchildren.

Born in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, David would take his degree in electrical engineering earned at the University of Canterbury and apply it to working on hydroelectric projects in northern Manitoba.

He worked for 40 years for Teshmont and contributed to projects around the world, including in Brazil, on which was then the largest hydroelectric project in history.

Most of all, David was a dedicated husband and father. This was evident when his son Steven was paralysed in a tragic accident. Following his accident, Steven saw almost no path forward that had any promise. But David began to create that path, working—sometimes battling—with insurance companies and support agencies, and ensuring that Steven found hope.

It was because of David that Steven ultimately became a Member of Parliament, a federal Cabinet minister and a member of this Assembly, achievements that would have seemed impossible following his accident.

To me, it was among the most incredible acts a father could do for their son. David Fletcher has departed this world, but his legacy will live on.

On behalf of all members of this Assembly and all Manitobans, I extend our deepest condolences to Joanne, to Steven, to Gordon, to Julia and the entire Fletcher family.

May David's memory rest fondly on your hearts forever.

**Royal Canadian Legion Branch 2**

**Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** It is my honour to rise and reflect on the work of the Manitoba Royal Canadian Legion Branch 2. This Legion on Logan Avenue is the second oldest Legion in Canada and has been a community gathering place for Weston and Brooklands residents for years.

The Legion is a place for—where we come together to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, honour the departed with celebrations of life and pool our resources together for fundraisers. The Legion hosts league and drop-in shuffleboard, darts and crib tournaments, games nights and karaoke. Every year, members organize a Remembrance Day ceremony and poppy fundraiser.

\* (13:40)

This year, Legion 2 raised \$8,700, and these poppy funds will be donated to cadets for bursaries as well as to veterans' mobility devices.

In recent years, Legion 2 has encountered numerous obstacles, including their building's closure, a flooded office, high renovation costs, break-ins and declining memberships.

Legion 2 has taken what could be a desperate situation and rallied together to continue to provide community services. When their branch needed renovations, they completed the work at cost by working on the renovations themselves. Their resilience cannot be understated.

The efforts of branch president, Steve Killeen, and his family cannot be understated. The steady presence of Honourary President Sergeant Philip Hayes, who has been a legion member since 1967, is highly valued.

The resilience of Legion 2 members is inspiring. This coming Valentine's Day weekend, the legion is hosting a Hawaiian Valentine's Day dance at the Weston Memorial Community Centre. Roast pig, senior hula dancers and Hawaiian shirts will abound. It's time for the community to give back to the legion, and I'm happy to report that local restaurants will be donating food and community members will be coming out to support this fundraiser.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to Legion 2 members for all their efforts to keep their space welcoming for veterans, their family members and the wider community that are looking for connection. Whether it's a bingo partner, a karaoke buddy

or a listening ear, legion members are there for those who have served our country. The commitment of this small group of volunteers is unending.

**The Speaker:** Is there leave for the honourable member to finished her statement? *[Agreed]*

**MLA Marcelino:** I invite all honourable members to rise to welcome Legion 2 members: President Steve Killeen, Vice-President Corinne Marceniuk, Treasurer Gale Kell, Secretary Karin Peterson, Entertainment Chair Lucy Yestrau *[phonetic]*, and Membership Chair Darcie Luzny and Barb Ferreira, who is Philip Hayes' daughter.

Thanks for coming out today.

### **Morgan and Conor Geekie**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Honourable Speaker, to have a player from a small Manitoba town drafted into the National Hockey League is rare, but to have two players who are also brothers competing in the No. 1 professional hockey league in the world is remarkable.

Brothers Morgan and Conor, the sons of Craig and Tobi Geekie, grew up in an athletic family in the community of Strathclair. Craig played junior hockey in the Western Hockey League while Tobi was an accomplished ringette and fastball player. The middle brother, Noah, also excelled in hockey but decided to pursue a career in baseball.

Both boys got their start in competitive hockey with Yellowhead Chiefs of the Manitoba U18 AAA Hockey League.

Morgan, who at 24 is the oldest of the Geekie brothers, is in his second season with the Boston Bruins. The six-foot-three-inch forward was selected by the Carolina Hurricanes in the third round of the 2017 NHL Draft after four seasons of junior with the Tri-City Americans.

Conor, the youngest of the Geekie boys, but the tallest at six foot four, cracked the lineup of the Tampa Bay Lightning at the age of 20 after a junior career with the Winnipeg Ice, Wenatchee Wild and finally the Swift Current Broncos this spring. He was drafted in the first round, 11th overall, by the Arizona Coyotes in 2022. His rights were transferred to the Utah Hockey Club after the 2023-24 season, and he was traded to the Lightning this June.

Morgan had a career best 17 goals and 39 points and reached the 100 career-point mark in his first season with Boston.

Conor scored his first career NHL goal against the Washington Capitals on October 26.

Honourable Speaker, the residents of the Riding Mountain constituency are extremely proud of the Geekie brothers. I want to wish them continued success and hope that one day they will bring the Stanley Cup home to Strathclair.

### **Recognizing Waverley Businesses**

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** Last week's Speech from the Throne laid out a vision for Manitoba—a vision of hope, opportunity and the belief that when our communities thrive, our whole province thrives.

Today, I'd like to focus in on Waverley and some wonderful local businesses. In Full Bloom is a fantastic florist on Pembina. If you've been there, you know it's about more than flowers; it's also about the incredible people behind them. And speaking from experience, a well-chosen bouquet can go a long way at home. It's a small gesture that brightens our spaces and brings us closer together.

At Hong Du Kkae in Waverley Heights, it's about more than some of the best noodles in the city. It's the way a perfectly crafted dish brings people together—families, friends, even strangers finding common ground over a meal. It's community-building in action.

Then there's Bright Scholars Montessori in Bridgwater, where small moments of discovery spark big futures. They're nurturing confidence, curiosity and the sense that anything is possible. And finally, Chai Mehfil, a space where traditions, tea and samosas are shared, conversations flow and bonds are built. It's another reminder that connection is the foundation of every thriving community.

These local businesses remind us that although progress includes big projects and exciting announcements, it's just as much about the everyday actions, the entrepreneurial spirits and the relationships that tie us together.

The Speech from the Throne spoke to that spirit; a commitment to build a Manitoba where every contribution matters and everyone has a place in shaping our future. Because whether you're a new business owner chasing a dream, a young family sharing stories over a meal out or someone with a lifetime of wisdom bringing that special someone an anniversary bouquet, we're all part of building something bigger, we're all part of a vision for one Manitoba.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Before moving on to oral questions, there's some guests I'd like to introduce.

I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today Bruce Paton, Shelly Paton, Jamie Bettens, Alan Borger, who are guests of the honourable member for Southdale (MLA Cable).

And we welcome you all here today.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Supervised Consumption Site Plan Public Consultations for Point Douglas

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** It gives me great pleasure today to stand and wish a special someone a happy birthday today: our main Clerk of the Assembly, Honourable Speaker.

So happy birthday to our wonderful Clerk.

So, Honourable Speaker, a walk down East Hastings Street in Vancouver is a glimpse into the future of Point Douglas under this Premier and their MLA.

The future is only 'reinfused' by the Kinew government's decision to exclude, and I quote, the larger community in limiting consultation about such a sensitive issue that is potentially disruptive to our neighbourhood is neither transparent nor democratic. And I table the document, the letter to them today.

Will the Premier commit to an open consultation process for all residents of the Point Douglas community today, Honourable Speaker?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I'd like to wish the Clerk, Rick, a happy birthday. I know we're not supposed to sing here in the Chamber, which probably rules out singing happy birthday, but I wonder if he'd make an exception if it were a Beatles song that we would sing for him on this auspicious occasion?

Community consultations are ongoing about the next steps towards tackling the addictions crisis. We know that there's four pillars that a response to addictions in the community requires. You've got to have prevention, you've got to have a pathway to treatment and recovery, you've got to have harm reduction and you've got to have enforcement. This is the four pillars that we are resting the addictions strategy on.

Under the PCs, you didn't have any of that. There was no prevention, there was no harm reduction, there

was no path to treatment and definitely no enforcement.

We are cleaning up after years of the PCs ignoring this. We're working for you. We are going to work with you to tackle the addictions crisis—

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

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** Well, it's unfortunate, Honourable Speaker, that this Premier and the MLA doesn't really want to listen to their constituents, and I quote: The entire community has to be—has the right to be heard and a right to see the full results of that consultation. End quote.

One item the residents of Point Douglas are going to be soon to become all too familiar is the exponential increase in discarded syringes. Those half a million used needles that their friends in Swan River are having to experience, of the MLA for Point Douglas—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —and her crack team of commando are going to go and clean this all up. But never fear; the Kinew government has brought forward \$30,000 per RHA.

Math has never been the NDP's strong suit, Honourable Speaker. For Winnipeg, the announcement will fund cleaning up of only 11 per cent of those syringes, local parks and playgrounds.

Who is paying for the other 89 per cent, Honourable Speaker?

\* (13:50)

**Mr. Kinew:** We know that tackling the crisis of toxic drugs is a top priority. It's a top priority for you, the people of Manitoba. We've heard it loud and clear from people who live in the city, people who live in small towns, people who live on reserves.

And that's why we've taken action with that four-pillared strategy. That includes preventing young people from going down a negative path; that includes a harm-reduction approach so that we can keep people alive long enough so that they can reach that third pillar, which is recovery.

Importantly, we're also working on enforcement, bringing the hammer down on drug traffickers. The PCs never did that—not once during their time in office. All they did was freeze funding for police

agencies and freeze funding for municipalities that operate policing services across this great province.

Those days are over, thankfully. A real solution that is going to provide hope and prosperity to the next generation is here.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** We've heard this bringing the hammer down multiple times from this Premier. Unfortunately, Honourable Speaker, it's all talk, and there really has been little action in the safety of our communities within this province. Matter of fact, the Premier compared the community injection sites to Buckley's cough syrup.

Premier is absolutely delusional, yet again, Honourable Speaker. We're not talking about dry cough or congestion; we're talking about potentially hundreds, if not thousands, of Manitobans heading to Point Douglas for their next fix.

Residents want more information about its location than a vaguely sounding, I quote, the downtown Point Douglas area. Residents want Manitobans' safety, due diligence, democracy and transparency.

Will—so—this Premier impose a location on the residents, or is he prepared to move it should they have an objection, Honourable Speaker?

**Mr. Kinew:** We've got a real strategy that comes from listening to the experts. It comes from listening to you, the people of Manitoba.

Did the PCs listen? The VIRGO report recommended a supervised consumption site. They deleted the recommendation. Independent experts brought in recommendations to tackle the addictions crisis. I was sitting right there when Brian Pallister threw the report on the ground.

There was never a serious approach to addictions here in Manitoba. And because the PCs ignored it during their two terms in office, that's why we see some of the challenges that we see in the community today.

However, we are turning that ship around. We are listening to you, the people of Manitoba. We are listening to the experts, and we are listening to law enforcement. We are going to hold those accountable who would bring toxic drugs into our community while providing a pathway to recovery for those ready to turn their lives around.

The only thing that I regret to say today: The PCs appear incontent to turn their behaviour—

**The Speaker:** Time has expired.

### **Bed Capacity Levels at HSC Impact of Cancelled Surgeries**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** There is a surgical crisis happening right now at HSC, and the NDP doesn't want Manitobans to know.

This morning, we were alerted to the sudden cancellation of a number of surgeries at HSC. At least 20 Manitobans had their surgeries cancelled, if not more. We heard that this happened last week and is expected to continue for the remainder of this week. HSC is currently down 20 surgical beds.

There are patients in the HSC ER right now waiting for a bed that doesn't exist. There are patients recovering from surgery that are still waiting in the OR because there's nowhere for them to go.

Why were these surgeries suddenly cancelled? How many patients were impacted, and what is the NDP going to do about it?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Manitobans deserve to have quick access to health care when you need it. We're talking about health care during your time of need, and that's what our wonderful Health Minister is delivering.

How are we going to do that? Well, we're going to repair the damage of the cuts that the PCs made during their two terms in office—probably the two most damaging terms in health-care terms in the history of Manitoba.

So how are we going to prevent that from happening again? Well, we're going to try to defeat the member opposite and all of her colleagues so that we never have a provincial government that closes emergency rooms and fires nurses in Manitoba again.

So if the member opposite is serious about making progress on health care, come join the team that's pro health care and abandon the team that cuts it.

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

**Mrs. Cook:** Some of these patients have been waiting years to finally get their surgery today. Patients put their entire lives on hold to accommodate for surgery. They take time off work. They bring in family members to assist with recovery and drop everything to prepare.

But because of the NDP's short-sighted decision to fire the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force, to cancel out-of-province surgical options and to cancel DSRTF projects that would have expanded surgical capacity right here in Manitoba, patients are forced to wait longer—again, thanks to the NDP.

Why is the NDP cancelling their surgeries without offering them any alternatives?

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, our approach is led by listening to those on the front lines of the health-care system, something that never happened for two terms under the PCs. Our approach is also guided by compassion for the patient, the patient who needs surgery, the patient who plans to have that freedom to be able to chase the grandkids around when they get that necessary procedure.

But if the member opposite wants to stake her questions today on compassion, where was the compassion for the people of Manitoba when surgeries were cut, when emergency rooms were closed, when nurses were fired?

Again, it seems transparently political that the PCs are now trying to capitalize on the very chaos that they themselves caused when they cut health care in Manitoba.

But I have news for the members opposite: In spite of their politicking and in spite of their cuts, a real government that is going to fix health care is here, and we will not be stopped. We're going to repair health care for all Manitobans.

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

**Mrs. Cook:** The same Premier that claims to be listening to front-line health-care workers is the same Premier that cancelled projects designed by front-line doctors under the DSRTF—cancelled them for purely ideological reasons.

I'll table an email from a source on the ground whose identity I once again have to keep anonymous for their protection. The email, titled HSC—no beds available, reads as follows: We have no bed base capacity and we are more than negative 20 patients. We are cancelling slates. We need to optimize surgical discharges and flow through our surgical beds. Please also look at your slates for the remainder of the week to switch as many inpatient for outpatient surgeries.

Every surgery cancelled today is another surgery cancelled tomorrow, is another surgery cancelled next week.

Will the NDP admit that the surgeries cancelled today are—

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Manitobans deserve to have high-quality health care close to home.

That's why nobody supported the PC plan to close emergency rooms near you and that's why Manitobans asked us to come here and to repair the damages that were caused.

Again, there is a lot of flaws with what the member opposite is saying. We're still working with the leaders of the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force, but the thing is, we're working with them within a public system.

I would put the question to the member opposite: What would happen if the Minister of Health had not begun to add beds? Again, what would happen, not only if we could've had the new beds added by the Health Minister, what would be happening today if we hadn't lost all the beds that were cut and closed by the PCs?

The answer is we wouldn't be digging out of such a deep PC blue-coloured hole.

But the reality is this: We're dealing with the hand that we are dealt. We're adding beds. We're adding nurses. We're adding surgeries.

And more good news on health care is coming.

#### **Intimate Partner Violence Legislation Proclamation Timeline for Clare's Law**

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** Yesterday, the Minister of Families didn't know the difference between Clare's Law and Kiera's Law.

For her reference, one was a bill unanimously passed by this House that she wouldn't proclaim, and the other legislation she bullied the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) into withdrawing.

Why did the minister wait until she was pressured to announce proclamation?

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** Miiigwech for the question. It does allow me to get up and continue to answer some of the questions that were posed yesterday.

I do want to go back and just talk about Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag that we launched officially on Friday. It's important to note that Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag is actually only the second bona fide strategy



specifically in respect of Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse folks anywhere across Canada—the first, of course, being the Yukon.

\* (14:00)

What we see across the country is actually just little ad hocs—you've got a position here or you've got a little advisory committee. Our government is the second jurisdiction across Canada that's established—

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

The honourable member for Agassiz, on a supplementary question.

**Ms. Byram:** The Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) said the bill would be proclaimed sometime in the new year. The Minister of Families put out a press release just saying she would do it. We saw with her legislative agenda that scheduling and timelines are not her strengths.

So will she give Manitobans a specific date today?

**MLA Fontaine:** Again, to Mino'Ayaawag Ikwewag, one of the things that our government did, and with the support of our Premier (Mr. Kinew)—that I'd like to actually just officially put on the record here that I say miigwech for that support—our government is actually one of the first governments across the country that actually allocated dollars—\$20 million—to a strategy to uplift and empower Indigenous women, girls, two-spirit and gender-diverse folks.

Of course, one of the first things that we did was we established the endowment fund with \$15 million, and right now we're doing—we're going to be looking forward to some—rolling out some amazing announcements in the next couple of weeks.

In respect of the remainder of that \$20 million—

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

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

**Ms. Byram:** Just to remind the minister again that this is about Clare's Law. This is needed legislation that will ensure access to needed information. The legislation was supposed to be proclaimed within 18 months, yet this minister is on track to over a year late.

Why has the minister refused to make this a priority, and failed Manitobans?

**MLA Fontaine:** I would suggest to members opposite to actually read the public safety report that the

Minister of Justice has led and actioned on behalf of our government. Members opposite will see that it is going to be proclaimed, and that is it. I just want folks to know that Clare's Law will be proclaimed as the Minister of Justice has already noted.

I do want to share, as well, in respect of some of the dollars that we've supported in respect of ending gender-based violence. There—I want to talk about our \$13.7 million in rent supports for GBV survivors to be able to access somewhere to live immediately.

Often we know that folks are confined to their house because they've got no resources, no financial resources—

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

### **Education Requirements for Teachers Request to Reverse Policy Changes**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** It's AMM season again, one of my favourite times of the year, and my personal shout-out on behalf of our municipal relations critic to the AMM delegates who do such great work on behalf of our municipalities.

Was chatting with them last night and, my goodness, do they ever think it is a silly idea to remove teacher education requirements for all teachers graduating from education programs and going to teach in our rural schools.

So did the Minister for Education chat with any of them over the last 24 to 48 hours, and will she reverse this disastrous education policy today?

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Acting Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** Well, let me tell that member, not only are we talking with them at AMM, we are actually consulting with them, we are working with them, something members opposite never did.

For seven and a half years, they froze their funding, they cut services for them. They were so happy with the work that we're doing, they're coming to the table, working collaboratively. We've been meeting with them non-stop, day after day, and we will continue to work with them—something the members opposite didn't do. And we'll continue to collaborate and work with them, something that members continue to be divisive about. They continue to bring that divisiveness in the House here.

We want to work collaboratively for Manitobans. Manitobans sent us here to work for them, and—

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

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Jackson:** Well, it's quite clear from that response that didn't mention teacher training standards at all that the member for Point Douglas didn't show up yesterday to talk to any AMM delegates, didn't discuss education policy with them.

I'm not sure where she's coming from in terms of consulting with them, because we got a clear message yesterday: No. 1, their announcement fell flat in terms of financing announcements from municipal leaders, which is resulting in less than a \$7,000 increase for some municipalities in rural Manitoba, and they've got no solutions for their failed education policy.

So will a different minister, or perhaps the Premier (Mr. Kinew), get up and commit today that he's going to—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Jackson:** —reverse his government's disastrous education policy for teacher-training standards?

**Ms. Smith:** Well, I was busy meeting with folks yesterday. I don't know where that member was, but I was meeting with folks all day yesterday. I was meeting with the cities, I was presenting to them. And let me tell you, we've announced \$62 million to municipalities yesterday. We have a 2 per cent escalator funding for them, something that the former government didn't do.

But let me tell you what we are doing. We also are doing a financial literacy for grade 9s, and let me tell you what one grade 9 student said: I got my own car recently and I sat there with my mom and I had no idea what they were talking about. Learning about what kind of stuff—about what this kind of stuff would be helpful, Adam Donaghy said.

And here's what another teacher said. Willi Penner said—

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

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a final supplementary question.

**Mr. Jackson:** Honourable Speaker, do you know who started that grade 9 literacy and numeracy project? The member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) when he was minister of Education. So thanks very much to this NDP government for making permanent another great Progressive Conservative issue. Well done, and you can keep taking credit for our initiatives and we'll keep telling the truth to Manitobans.

Here's what we won't take credit for: a failed policy of introducing and deleting all teacher-training requirements for those who want to get into the classroom.

Will this minister get up and delete this previous minister's initiative and reverse that decision today?

**Ms. Smith:** Well, let me tell you what members opposite did try to bring forward, which was bill 64, and teachers came forward and said, no way.

But here's what teachers have said about financial literacy. They've said—a math teacher, Miles MacFarlane, is quoted as saying: Being financially 'literate'—literate means having the knowledge and confidence to enter a bank, get a loan and figure out a budget. The more students know, the more means their financial decisions making will mean.

You know what we've done? We've added 630 new teachers to the schools. We've invested \$30 million to the nutrition program so kids can actually learn in school. Did members opposite want that? No, they actually didn't want to feed kids in school.

In fact, Brian Pallister said—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired. *[interjection]*

Order, please. Order, please.

I would ask the honourable minister, if she was quoting from a private document, that she should table that.

**Ms. Smith:** It's public knowledge, Winnipeg Free Press, CBC.

**The Speaker:** I thank the minister for that.

### **Student Safety on Campus Request for Government Support**

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** Honourable Speaker, we have been asking this Minister of Advanced Education for specific actions she has taken to enhance student safety on campus and to ensure that every student feels safe.

Student leaders at the U of M have said they've advocated directly to the minister.

What has the minister done to action the concerns of these students?

**Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** I thank the member for the question.

He knows, and everybody in this Chamber knows, that student safety is our No. 1 priority, and I think it's

telling in his question that he noted that I've already spoken with the student leadership. I've spoken to institutions. I'm working with faculties, faculty associations, student leaders, student groups because our government takes a collaborative approach to solving problems, and, frankly, we know that the issues that are coming about with concerns around public safety require everybody to be rowing in the same direction and all hands on deck.

And unlike the members opposite, we can collaborate with other folks, we can co-operate, and that's exactly what we're doing.

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

**Mr. Perchotte:** In the minister's own words, I can stand here all day, but instead of being silent, I will continue to hold her to account on behalf of Manitoba students.

\* (14:10)

How is it she says she is doing everything in her power to support institutions, yet cannot name a single specific action or support?

Can the minister commit to which of the four priorities from students she plans to action?

**MLA Cable:** Honourable Speaker, the member asks questions that are not founded in a deep understanding of how institutional autonomy works. And while I'd prefer not to stand up here and educate the member, I will point out that the former government did not respect institutional autonomy.

They clashed with faculty associations and they interfered with bargaining. It cost Manitobans over \$19 million because they didn't understand how it works.

We are working with partners in public safety, institutional leaders, student leaders and members across Manitoba to ensure that public safety is a top priority for everyone.

I've mentioned before, this is not only a professional investment for me. It's—I take this personally. I have a student in the system. Nobody cares more about this—

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

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

**Mr. Perchotte:** I table the students' post for the minister's awareness. Their asks are reasonable and this

government should act today to ensure students feel safe.

We have that responsibility as legislators. I'm not asking the minister about administration on other years. I'm asking about student safety today.

What specific actions has she undertaken as the minister responsible?

**MLA Cable:** Honourable Speaker, I've spoken to not only administration at Brandon University but at University of Manitoba. We've spoken with every institution about what they currently have in place for safety programming.

But I want remind the member about the year-over-year-over-year cuts that came under their administration. And there is—institutions have been looking for a partner that will invest in the work that they're doing, that will ensure that students are safe, that will ensure that there's quality education and will ensure that Manitobans get the best possible outcomes at institutions.

While I appreciate that the member doesn't want to talk about what the previous administration did, it absolutely is relevant today because we are still working with the mess that they left for us.

### **One Manitoba Growth Revenue Fund Municipal Funding Concerns**

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** Honourable Speaker, in the spring, this government cut 12 and a half million dollars from Building Sustainable Communities and \$4.1 million from The Green Team, which coincidentally is exactly the same amount that this government claims to be giving back to municipalities with their announcement yesterday at AMM.

Can the minister tell us why you cut \$16.6 million from municipalities, only to turn around six months later and try to trick them into thinking it's new money?

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I'd just remind the member when he's talking to please direct his comments, questions through the Chair and not directly to another member.

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** You know, one of the things we know from the last couple days at AMM is the magic of working together with municipalities to do good things.

And one of the things we've been hearing is just how incredible it is for those members that we've been

meeting to have a provincial government that's finally listening to them and engaging them in a collaborative and real manner to understand their challenges so we can work together to tackle them.

One of things we're so excited about is that just yesterday, our Premier (Mr. Kinew) announced at AMM: \$62 million over five years in a one Manitoba growth fund. That's going to help make sure municipalities can continue to keep doing that important work of delivering services, new programs for their constituents.

And we're going to work in partnership with them to get that work done.

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

**Mr. King:** Honourable Speaker, there may be a new minister in the office but it's the same old story in municipal relations: cut, cut, cut; then return a fraction of the cuts and dress it up as new money. Time will tell if this minister is smooth enough to convince reeves, councillors and mayors otherwise.

Will the minister start off his role with transparency and candour and by admitting his new program is really just a shell game meant to confuse municipalities?

**MLA Sala:** Again, in these conversations we've been able to have over the last two days, and of course over the last year in government, what we've heard is that members are—municipalities are appreciative of a new approach from a provincial government.

And you know, we saw that, according to the AMM, our approach is working. At the last AMM AGM in Brandon, they published a report card that shows our government passing with flying colours, green check marks across the board.

And I table this report for the members opposite to show them what happens when a government treats municipalities with respect.

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

**Mr. King:** Honourable Speaker, much like many of those present at AMM yesterday, I'm a little confused.

This minister calls his new fund a growth revenue fund, but he has neglected to include anything resembling growth or revenue in it. The value is fixed over five years, so no growth there. They haven't given municipalities the tools to raise additional revenue. So again, nothing new.

Can the minister explain how a fixed-dollar amount will magically grow over five years?

**MLA Sala:** The member stands in the House today complaining about funding, but he's part of a group of MLAs that gave zeroes to municipalities for four years in a row. Zeroes. That's what they offered. They froze funding.

What are we doing? We brought in a 2 per cent increase to those operating grants. That's an escalator; they're going to see that increase year over year. That's in addition to \$52 million more in block funding, the \$62 million we announced yesterday, also \$500 million in capital funding to fix Manitoba roads.

Honourable Speaker, we're doing the work; we're working in partnership with municipalities because we know for many years they were left behind. We're going to keep working in partnership with them to get the work done.

### **Manitoba Arts Council Funding Announcement**

**Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière):** Honourable Speaker, earlier this month, our government announced new funding for the Manitoba Arts Council to support artists, cultural professionals, Indigenous knowledge keepers and cultural organizations across Manitoba.

On this side of the House, we know that the arts community plays an invaluable role in the provincial economy and in shaping who we are as one Manitoba.

Can the minister please share how this funding will support Manitoba's arts community after seven and a half years of frozen funding under the former Heather Stefanson government?

**Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** Thank you to my colleague for that very important question.

The arts and cultural sector of Manitoba is the heartbeat of our province. That's why our government was proud to announce we are providing \$13.7 million in funding to the Manitoba Arts Council this year. That's an increase of 8 per cent.

The Manitoba Arts Council supports historic institutions like the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, Manitoba Opera and over 550 individuals and organizations.

The former PC government froze funding to the Manitoba Arts Council year after year for their entire time in government. But our government is taking a different approach. We're investing more than ever

before to boost our local economy and ensure Manitoba's arts and culture—

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

### **Manitoba's Trade with the US Agriculture Industry Tariff Concerns**

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Honourable Speaker, international trade has been a pressing concern for agriculture for many years. Chinese tariffs and US country-of-origin labelling have been a primary concern until recently.

With agriculture accounting for 43.6 of Manitoba's total exports and the vast majority of that going to the US, any change in our trade relationship is of critical concern.

What is the minister doing to protect Manitoba agriculture from punitive foreign tariffs?

**Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture):** Thank you so much for the question and always entertain a subject when agriculture, because it's near and dear to my heart.

Let me just start off by saying thank you to the agriculture producers of what they've brought into their bins, brought into the feedlots and brought into the operation of driving to the economy of the province of Manitoba.

I do want to 'resignate' to the question brought forward by the member opposite. We've been down the tri-national accord. We had serious conversations with the US agriculture department. We've had numerous conversations with the pork industry, the beef industry in Canada. And we are working together to develop a unified voice—

\* (14:20)

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

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

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Speaker, the hog industry contributes \$2.3 billion to Manitoba's GDP. That's about 3.3 per cent of our GDP.

With over 50 per cent of the Manitoba hogs heading to the US, any change in that trade scenario will be devastating. A 25 per cent tariff on Manitoba hogs would kill the industry.

Can the minister tell Manitobans today: Is he willing to accept a \$1.15-billion decline in our Manitoba GDP, yes or no?

**Mr. Kostyshyn:** To assure the member opposite, we're always in conversation with Manitoba Pork, the national pork, we're always in conversation with the federal agriculture minister. And we talk about a number of important commodities that's part of Manitoba's economy driving.

The 9 per cent of GDP is driven by agriculture products that we have in this province, and we will continue to grow that economy, because we have a great working relationship with the US, our neighbours to the south.

And we will continue to make life better and continue to build on added value of opportunities in our province of Manitoba on behalf of everybody that lives in the province and for our producers that make our life affordable—

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

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

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Speaker, if agriculture is so important, it got next to nothing in this Throne Speech.

Manitoba's agriculture trade with the US amounts to 4 and a half billion dollars annually.

This government didn't send its Agriculture Minister on the trade mission to Washington, and then made no mention of agriculture exports and trade in the Throne Speech. Manitoba should be concerned the agriculture doesn't matter to this government.

Honourable Speaker: Will this minister work for Manitoba producers today and guarantee they will be protected from the 25 per cent US tariffs, yes or no?

**Mr. Kostyshyn:** We talk about percentage here. He—the member opposite talks about 25 per cent, which is quite 'depremental' when we talk about trade and opportunities.

But what is really important—and I have to bring this up again, Honourable Speaker—a 300 per cent increase in Crown land leases was not really an appropriate means of conversation for those individuals.

But I would question the member opposite, if you did the math, there was—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kostyshyn:** —a considerable amount of difference of 300 per cent versus 25 per cent increase.

And I'm wishing the member opposite would really put some serious thought and accept apology by their government—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired. *[interjection]*

Member's time has expired. *[interjection]*

Order.

Just a—*[interjection]* As a reminder to the minister, when the Speaker stands up and says your time is expired, your microphone gets shut off, so there's no point carrying on.

### Justice System Reform AMM Recommendations

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** The Premier stands in his place and talks about justice, but Manitobans know the system has absolutely no teeth. Where there's a political will, there's a way, and under this Premier, there's no plan and just no way.

While the Premier pats his minister on the back, municipal leaders are gathering right now and sounding the alarm.

This Premier has met with AMM, so I ask him: Does he support their calls for stronger reform within the justice system and does he admit he has failed this so far?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** The reality is, Honourable Speaker, that for years Manitobans suffered some of the highest crime rates in the country, and specifically when it comes to rural crime.

We know, for instance, in Swan River, where there was—they had three and a half times the crime severity index compared to the rest of the province, and it rose, crime rose, 50 per cent between 2017 and 2022 under the previous government.

That's why we partnered with municipalities, we went out to Swan River, we're developing a first-of-its-kind RCMP general investigation section. This will be additional officers that will be able to complement the work of the RCMP. And it's really about partnering with municipalities, finding solutions that will make a difference in that area.

Again, members opposite—

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

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

**Mr. Balcaen:** The resolution, which I table for the Premier is clear that no progress has been made over the past year. Violent crime is skyrocketing under this Premier. Ask any Manitoban if they feel safer today than they did a year ago and you'll be hard pressed to find anybody that agrees with that.

Why does he still resist substantive changes, and why does he put ideology over Manitobans' safety, Honourable Speaker?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well we are listening to Manitobans, Honourable Speaker. That's why Mayor Jacobson, who we met with earlier today, said, quote: Our region has been plagued by numerous types of crime in the past few years. Residents and business community have been calling for action during this time.

Swan River had a crime severity index six times the national average, and Mayor Jacobson said any action from the Province, that is, the previous government, was slow going. And he saw a need for collaboration between governments.

We know that we're—we've heard from local business owners like Linda Bird, who said: The last few years have been a real struggle. A lot of businesses in our town are small mom-and-pop stores like mine.

Yet the member for Brandon West called a 2 per cent escalator in public safety funding a pittance—

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

**Mr. Balcaen:** Swan River is to receive three people, but Manitoba is short 30 per cent of officers across the board. This minister pats himself on the back to increase this staffing shortage.

So this Premier has also met again with AMM.

So I ask, does he support their calls for stronger reform within the justice system, or does he admit that he has failed them so far?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** We're cleaning up the mess of years of PC cuts. The member opposite knows it. He had a front-row seat being handed cuts year after year after year. We're taking steps to keep you safe.

The good thing is, you have a strong government in place. The members opposite are weak. The Trump administration does not respect that. Where are these tariffs coming from? They couldn't even name the source of them. This unnamed foreign source of 25 per cent tariffs is not a serious approach.

We, on the other hand, are talking about staffing up the RCMP so that we can show our American allies we are strong when it comes to the border. We're strong when it comes to cracking down on drug traffickers. But most of all, we are going to prove this in a way that works for your Manitoba values.

We come to work every single day to work for you.

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

Petitions? No petitions. *[interjection]*

Order.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Just before I recognize the member for a petition, I'd like to introduce some members that are leaving shortly that just came into the gallery.

We have 15 seniors from A & O: Support Services under the direction of Mary Bana, and we welcome you to the Chamber here today.

## 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.

\* (14:30)

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 oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated that 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 Susan Trubiak, Miles Eakins, Richard Vouriot and many, many, many more fine Manitobans, Honourable Speaker.

### MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from an added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and a computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of organs, tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on

stretcher service and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for the MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. The aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait time for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine closer—machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This is signed by Clark Guinn, Stuart Brown, Blake Krackee and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

### **Provincial Trunk Highway 34**

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

The Provincial Trunk Highway 34, PTH 34, is a two-lane provincial primary highway that runs from the US border where it meets with ND 20 to PTH 16 at the town of Gladstone.

(2) PTH 34 runs north-south in the south-central region of the province. It is the main highway for the towns of Crystal City, Pilot Mound and Holland, serving as a main corridor for semi-trailers, farm equipment, daily drivers and local school bus routes.

(3) A new bridge is currently being constructed over the Assiniboine River at PTH 34, north of Holland, in the RM of Victoria. The bridge serves as an important north-south link over the Assiniboine River between the Trans-Canada Highway and PTH 2.

(4) The deterioration of PTH 34 has raised major concerns due to its narrow shoulders and numerous deep potholes that pose serious safety risks, considering farmers often need to use the highway to transport heavy equipment.

Construction of a new bridge in accordance—current design codes and the RTAC standard, located on PTH 34 crossing the Assiniboine River, will support trade and commerce and improve public safety in the area and also accommodate flood events on the Assiniboine River.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to address the conditions of Provincial Trunk Highway 34, making the necessary upgrades to RTAC standard and to resurface the road once the new bridge has been completed.

This has been signed by Brent Gurke, Karter Gurke, Josh Gurke and many, many, many other Manitobans.

### **Teaching Certification**

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Ensuring that teachers have a robust background in the subjects they teach is essential for maintaining high-quality education and fostering well—sorry—fostering well-rounded learning experiences for all Manitoba students.

(2) The recent amendments by the Province of Manitoba to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation under The Education Administration Act have significantly lowered the standards for subject-area expertise required for student—for teacher certification.

\* (14:40)

(3) These amendments eliminated all subject-area requirements for teacher certification, including major



and minor teachable subjects and subject-specific requirements for early-to-middle years streams.

(4) Specifically, the amendments removed the following: senior years credit requirements in an approved teachable major or minor; early-to-middle years credit requirements in an approved teachable major or minor; and early-to-middle years credit requirements for specific subjects, including: math; physical or biological science; English or French; and history and/or geography.

(5) Key stakeholders, such as parents, post-secondary educators outside of the facilities of education and business partners were not consulted about the changes.

(6) The removal of subject-specific requirements undermines the educational quality in Manitoba schools by permitting teachers to enter the classroom without significant training in core academic areas, thereby compromising the education that Manitoba students receive.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to reverse recent amendments to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation that weaken subject-area requirements for teacher certification and to reinstate teachable majors and minors and early-to-middle years requirements, which are essential for ensuring teachers have strong knowledge in core subject areas.

(2) We urge the provincial government to address teacher shortages through alternative measures that uphold rigorous subject standards, which are critical for providing quality education to all Manitoba students.

This petition has been—sorry, this petition has been signed by many Manitobans, including Adam Koop, Adam Melia and Katharina Abt and many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

### **Provincial Trunk Highway 2**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Trunk Highway 2, PTH 2, is a 315-kilometre, 196-mile highway that runs from the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border to Winnipeg's Perimeter Highway.

(2) A significant portion of PTH 2 runs through the constituency of Spruce Woods, from the border of the rural municipality of Pipestone and the rural municipality of Sifton to the border of the rural municipality of Victoria and the rural municipality of Norfolk-Treherne.

(3) This route is historically significant, as it follows the original path taken in 1874 by the North West Mounted Police in their march west from Fort Dufferin to Fort Whoop-Up.

(4) PTH 2 is a significant commuting route for Westman families and is also utilized by those in the trade, commerce, tourism, agriculture and agri-food industries.

*MLA Robert Loiselle, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

(5) The condition of PTH 2, from the east side of the town of Souris straight through to the hamlet of Deleau, is in an unacceptable state of disrepair.

(6) The newly appointed Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure has confirmed the department has no plan to refurbish this stretch of road until the 2028 or 2029 construction season.

(7) The minister outlined that the current 2028-2029 construction plan does not include the stretch of PTH 2 that runs through the town of Souris, but instead starts on the west side of town.

(8) The communities in the area have been clear that any reconstruction of Provincial Trunk Highway 2 must include the stretch that runs through the town of Souris.

(9) The minister and the Premier have a duty to respond to infrastructure needs identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier and Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to immediately prioritize the reconstruction of Provincial Trunk Highway 2 in the upcoming construction season; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to include the stretch of Provincial Trunk Highway 2 that runs through the town of Souris in its reconstruction plans.

This petition has been signed by John Fraser, Raelene Thompson, Dale Schappent [*phonetic*] and many other fine Manitobans.

### Breast Screening

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

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, or the CCS, is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast screening to 40.

(2) Based off 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save the Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age, or announced their intention to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

\* (14:50)

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

(7) Lowering the breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because cancers that are caught early are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer

screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening age to 40.

This petition has been signed by Stephanie Northrup, Ann Bautista and many, many, many other Manitobans.

**MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

Due to the evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, CCS, is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast screening to 40.

Based off 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save the Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

Every other province and territory in Canada has lowered the breast cancer screening age or announced their intention to do so. Other provinces in Canada already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into the public health-care system.

Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

Lowering the breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because cancers that are caught earlier are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase the breast cancer

screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening age to 40.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

### **Green Valley School Expansion**

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The residents of La Vérendrye and other areas around Manitoba are extremely frustrated and concerned by the provincial government's decision to cancel the school expansion project for Green Valley School in Grunthal.

(2) In 2021, the PC provincial government committed funding to expand Green Valley School for a new gymnasium and classrooms.

(3) The school is so crowded that three mobile classrooms were added to alleviate overcrowding in classrooms.

(4) In order for construction to begin, the school removed all three portable classrooms, leaving Green Valley in a further critical state of overcrowding.

(5) As a result of overcrowding, parents are choosing to home-school their students due to safety concerns and the challenges associated with overcrowding.

(6) The current Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning have said they are committed to investing in education.

(7) The concerns of residents of La Vérendrye and the surrounding area are being ignored by the provincial government.

(8) The lack of space in the school is affecting the quality of education and extracurricular activities for students.

(9) The minister and Premier have a duty to respond to the educational needs of children and youth identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to immediately bring back the three portable classrooms to help alleviate the stress and overcrowding classrooms.

(2) To urge the provincial government to reinstate the expansion project for Green Valley School.

This petition has been signed by Linda Penner, Clarence Penner, Melvin Smith and many, many other Manitobans.

### **Breast Screening**

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** Honourable Deputy Chair, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, this background of the petition is as follows:

(1) Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, CCS, is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast cancer screening to age 40.

(2) Based off 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer, starting at the age of 40, will save the Canadian health-care system over \$460 million annually.

\* (15:00)

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancers among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes for—in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who do not receiving screens

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screenings programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) The—Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

(7) Lowering the breast cancer screening to age 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the

health-care system because cancers that are caught earlier are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increase breast cancer screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening to age 40.

This has been signed by Gloria Owens, Sara Martens and Robin Talbot and many other fine Manitobans.

### Louise Bridge

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Over 25,000 vehicles per day cross the Louise Bridge, which has served as a vital link for vehicular traffic between northeast Winnipeg and the downtown for the last 113 years.

The current structure will undoubtedly be declared unsafe in a few years as it's deteriorated extensively, is now functionally obsolete and therefore more subject to more frequent unplanned repairs and cannot be widened to accommodate future traffic capacity.

(3) As far back as 2008, the City of Winnipeg has studied where the new replacement bridge should be situated.

(4) After including the bridge replacement in the City's five-year capital budget forecast in 2009, the new bridge became a short-term construction priority in the City's transportation master plan of 2011.

(5) City capital and budget plans identified replacement of the Louise Bridge on a site just east of the bridge and expropriated homes that were on the south side of Nairn Avenue in anticipation of a 2015 start.

(6) In 2014, the new City administration did not make use of the available funds—sorry, of available federal infrastructure funds.

(7) The new Louise Bridge Committee began its campaign to demand a new bridge and its surveys confirmed residents wanted a new bridge beside the current bridge, with the old bridge kept open for local traffic.

(8) The City tethered the Louise Bridge replacement issue to its new transportation master plan and eastern corridor project. Its recommendations have now identified the location for the new bridge to be placed just to the west of the current bridge, not to the east as originally proposed.

The City's expropriation process has begun, and the \$6.35-million street upgrade for Nairn Avenue from Watt Street to the 113-year-old bridge is complete.

The new City administration has delayed the decision on the Louise Bridge for a minimum of one year, and possibly up to 10 years, unless the Province steps in on behalf of northeast Winnipeg residents and completes this overdue link.

(11) The Premier has a duty to direct the provincial government to provide financial assistance to the City so it can complete this long overdue vital link to the northwest Winnipeg and Transcona.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

(3) To urge the provincial government to consider the feasibility of keeping the old bridge open for active transportation in the future.

This petition has been signed by Cindy Alexander, Jeff Alexander, Germiah *[phonetic]* Waldner and many, many other fine Manitobans.

### Breast Screening

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker—I'm missing one in there somewhere—but I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, or CCS, is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast screening to 40.

\* (15:10)

(2) Based off of 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save the Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

(7) Lowering the breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because the cancers that are caught early are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increased breast cancer screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening age to 40.

This petition is signed by Sheena Owoski [*phonetic*], Jackie Buchanan, Krissy Voll and many, many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker.

### **Provincial Road 275**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Road 275, PR 275, known as Ditch Road, intersects with PR 588, serving rural areas west of the town of Swan River, and is a heavily used travel corridor linking Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The highway curves on entry into the town of Swan River and terminates at PTH 10A, the town's north bypass.

(2) The Swan River Valley is a highly productive agriculture area, and PR 275 is used by farmers to move heavy machinery and equipment as well as transport seed, grain and fertilizer to many farmers located within reach of the highway.

(3) It is also frequented by families, people shopping at businesses along the route and school buses to transport rural students into the town of Swan River for school.

(4) Due to only having patchwork and minor repairs, the highway has deteriorated and is covered with large potholes, posing a significant threat to vehicles and passengers.

(5) The roadway and shoulders on PR 275 are extremely narrow, leaving large ditches that have not been properly cared for, which has caused poor drainage. The town of Swan River and the municipality of Swan Valley West have inquired with MTI for a drainage solution over the past several years. This ditch is not graded properly and is full of bulrush, willows and cattails.

(6) The solution brought forward is to decrease maximum speed limits on the road and to undertake a full rehabilitation of the highway and to reroute the stream through what is now existing farmland, under CN rail line, and the PTH 10A bypass, as well as through several hundred metres of an existing slough into the Swan River.

(7) Numerous meetings held with Swan Valley West and town of Swan River with the provincial government have not moved forward. It was agreed in 2022 that MTI was to complete a hydraulic investigation of the capacity of the PR 275/2nd Avenue ditch. The municipalities have not seen the results of this investigation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to address the much-needed rehabilitation of Provincial Road 275 to ensure public safety.

(2) To urge the provincial government to provide the results of the MTI investigation to the town and

municipality, and provide immediate funding for the repairs to PR 275.

(3) To urge the provincial government to address drainage issues on PR 275 and create permanent solutions so that flooding can be avoided, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker.

This petition has been signed by Shane Dayson, Jeff Hay, Dale Hay and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

### Teaching Certification

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** Honourable Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Ensuring that teachers have a robust background in the subjects they teach is essential for maintaining high-quality education and fostering well-rounded learning experiences for all Manitoba students.

(2) The recent amendments by the Province of Manitoba to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation under The Education Administration Act have significantly lowered the standards for subject-area expertise required for teacher certification.

\* (15:20)

(3) These amendments eliminated all subject-area requirements for teacher certification, including major and minor teachable subjects and subject-specific requirements for early/middle years streams.

(4) Specifically, the amendments removed: senior years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor; early/middle years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor; and early/middle years credit requirements for specific subjects, including: math; physical or biological science; English or French; and history and/or geography.

(5) Key stakeholders, such as parents, post-secondary educators outside the faculties of education and business partners were not consulted about the changes.

(6) The removal of subject-specific requirements undermines the educational quality in Manitoba schools by permitting teachers to enter the classroom without significant training in core academic areas, thereby

compromising the education that Manitoba students receive.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to reserve—to reverse recent amendments to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation that weaken subject-area requirements for teacher certification and to reinstate teachable majors and minors and early/middle years requirements which are essential for ensuring teachers have strong knowledge in core subject areas.

(2) To urge the provincial government to address teacher shortages through alternative measures that uphold rigorous subject-area standards, which are critical for providing quality education to all Manitoba students.

This petition has been signed by many, many fine Manitobans.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member for Springfield-Ritchot.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** I don't have a petition right now present.

### Breast Screening

**Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Due to evolving scientific evidence, the Canadian Cancer Society, or CCS, is now urging all provinces and territories to lower the starting age for breast screening to age 40.

Based off 2023 treatment standards, it is estimated that screening women annually for breast cancer starting at age 40 will save Canadian health-care system \$460 million annually.

(3) After non-melanoma skin cancers, breast cancer is the most common form of cancer among Canadian women. One in eight Canadian women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime, and one in 36 will die from it. This is 30,500 diagnoses and 5,500 deaths every year, and 84 diagnoses and 15 deaths every day.

(4) Early detection of breast cancer will lead to better outcomes in patients, with better odds of survival and less severe cases. Women in their 40s who have access to mammograms have a 44 per cent

lower mortality rate from breast cancer than those who don't receive screening.

(5) Every other province and territory in Canada has already lowered the breast cancer screening age or announced their intentions to do so. Other provinces in Canada have already commenced the work of expanding screening programs and hiring additional technologists into their public health-care system.

(6) Manitoba is currently behind the rest of the country and has no formal plan to increase its screening capacity or lower the breast cancer screening age.

(7) Lowering the breast cancer screening age to 40 in Manitoba will reduce long-term costs to the health-care system because cancers that are caught early are typically less complicated to treat.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately put forward a plan to increased breast cancer screening capacity and lower the breast cancer screening age to 40.

This petition is signed by Genevieve Gagnon, Cali Stewart, Dawn Fillion and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

### Medical Assistance in Dying

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Beginning March 17, 2024, persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk

normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure the adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

\* (15:30)

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) 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.

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

This is signed by Réal Ouellet, Thérèse [phonetic] Chaput, Jacqueline Sarrara [phonetic] and many, many other Manitobans.

### Provincial Road 275

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Road 275, known as Ditch Road, intersects with PR 588, serving rural areas west of the town of Swan River, and is a heavily used travel corridor linking Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The highway curves on entry into the town of Swan River and terminates at PTH 10A, the town's north bypass.

(2) The Swan River Valley is a highly productive agricultural area, and PR 275 is used by farmers to move heavy machinery and equipment, as well as transport seed, grain and fertilizer to many farmers located within reach of the highway.

(3) It is also frequented by families, people shopping at businesses along the route and school buses to transport rural students into the town of Swan River for school.

(4) Due to only having patchwork and minor repairs, the highway has deteriorated and is covered with large potholes, posing a significant threat to vehicles and passengers.

(5) The roadway and shoulders of PR 275 are extremely narrow, leaving large ditches that have not been properly cared for, which has caused poor drainage. The Town of Swan River and the Municipality of Swan Valley West have inquired with MTI for a drainage solution over the past several years. The ditch is not graded properly and is full of bulrush, willows and cattails.

(6) The solution brought forward is to decrease maximum speed limits on the road and to undertake a full rehabilitation of the highway and to reroute the stream through what is now existing farmland under CN rail line and PTH 10A bypass as well as through several hundred meters of an existing slough into the Swan River.

Numerous meetings held with Swan Valley West and town of Swan River with the provincial government have not moved forward. It was agreed in 2022 that MTI was to complete a hydraulic investigation of the capacity of the PR 275/2nd Avenue ditch. The municipalities have not seen the results of the investigation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to address the much-needed rehabilitation of Provincial Road 275 to ensure public safety.

(2) To urge the provincial government to provide the results of the MTI investigation to the town and municipality, and provide immediate funding for repairs to PR 275.

(3) To urge the provincial government to address drainage issues on PR 275 and create permanent solutions so that flooding can be avoided.

This petition has been signed by Duane L. Whyte, Rhonda Rusk, Dylan Liske and many, many other Manitobans.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Seeing no more petitions, orders of the day.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

### House Business

**MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader):** Pursuant to rule 34(7), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton). The title of the resolution is Supporting the Provincial Government on 800 New Hip and Knee Surgeries.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Tuxedo. The title of the resolution is Supporting the Provincial Government on 800 New Hip and Knee Surgeries.

### THRONE SPEECH (Fifth Day of Debate)

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** We will now resume debate on the motion moved by the honourable member for Tuxedo for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne and the amendment there-et-o. The floor—thereto.

The floor is open for debate.

**Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière):** I don't know how I'm going to follow up those enthusiastic readings of petitions, but I'm going to do my absolute best.

It's my pleasure to get up and speak to our NDP government's Throne Speech. Manitobans elected our government just over a year ago because we committed to meeting our collective needs when it comes to accessible health care, affordability, safety and opportunity.

I'm reminded daily what a sacred responsibility it is to be in the roles that we all find ourselves in the Chamber. Very few Manitobans have been given the opportunity to represent their community in this Chamber, to shape law and have such an outsized impact on Manitobans. I hope the consequences of the decisions made in this Chamber are never taken lightly and considered with the greatest level of care and thoughtfulness.

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, I want to thank my constituents in Lagimodière for the trust they've placed in me. Our community is a wonderful blend of young families, seniors, newcomers,



health-care workers, entrepreneurs, educators, students and the list goes on.

What we all have in common is a want to contribute to the best of our ability, to experience stability and safety in our lives and have opportunities for success, for ourselves and those around us. This Throne Speech offers paths to those opportunities.

One project I believe encapsulates those goals is the Place of Pride. I'm so happy to have our government supporting this important project. Many from our NDP caucus have had the opportunity to tour the project just down Broadway, headed up by the folks at the Rainbow Resource Centre.

\* (15:40)

It is a campus that involves housing for low-income seniors from the queer community and community spaces that includes a library, programming rooms, a café and renovated office space for Rainbow Resource Centre and the many, many programs and supports they offer. When we're talking about safety, stability and opportunity to contribute, this groundbreaking campus is an example, and I'm glad to see our government investing in communities.

Community spaces are so important, and that includes schools. I come from the world of education, and anyone who's spent any meaningful time in a school recently knows what a community hub they are. Our government's commitment to strengthening the educational experience of learners, families and staff is robust. There are 630 new educators that have been hired since we took office. What that means for learners is more individualized attention, more support, more relationship building. All of these things lead to better long-term outcomes for young people.

Contrary to what men—members opposite have said about feeding kids in schools, the universal nutrition program ripples out across the community in so many positive ways. Kids can focus on learning and not be distracted by hunger. It gives young people one more good reason to attend school, and we're hearing from educators that accessible food is positively impacting absenteeism.

Addressing food insecurity improves health, educational attainment and can lead to less interactions with the justice and child-welfare systems. Along with the cellphone ban, we are ensuring young people have the necessities in place for meaningful educational opportunities.

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, folks in my community want accessible health care closer to home. I'm proud to be part of a government that has added 870 new health care—net new health-care workers in the province, added beds and improved access to gender-affirming care. We're proud to be respecting health-care workers, to negotiate fair deals and to listen to front-line workers. This might seem like a low bar to meet, but these foundational necessities were lacking under the previous administration.

When I speak with constituents, two initiatives that are universally seen as common sense are, No. 1, seven-days-a-week discharge. The idea that before our current Health Minister took their role, discharges weren't happening from hospitals on the weekend, and this was shocking to my constituents. The idea that someone could be ready to leave a hospital on a Friday evening and have to wait until Monday morning, taking up a bed that entire time, was truly jaw dropping.

Equally obvious to my constituents is the need to have internationally educated health-care workers re-enter their professional fields and contribute to our health-care system. It's a real mismatch of skills when nurses and doctors are working in transportation or the service industry. I'm happy to see our government make it a point to make it easier for folks to re-enter their chosen professions. Building new ERs at the Vic and in Eriksdale, 800 new hip and knee surgeries in Selkirk and fresh, durable health cards: our plans are ambitious and Manitobans are—rightfully don't want to settle for less. Manitobans deserve all of this.

Honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, Manitobans' lived experiences don't neatly fit into one department's mandate. Health-care initiatives also inform—impact affordability. I'm so happy to see our government making free birth control and PrEP available to all Manitobans that need it. These are smart investments our government is making in the health of Manitobans.

On the issue of affordability, we've heard about the cost of grocery prices, and we're doing something about it. We are going to stop anti-competitive contracts and make groceries more affordable—will not only hold space for defying gravity, but this will create space for more competition, meaning full local grocers will have an opportunity to enter the market, bringing down prices.

We're super excited about our initiatives around New Flyer Industries, allowing them to open an all-Canadian-build facility for electric buses. Both great

jobs in our province, but also meeting some of our environmental targets.

And I mentioned this earlier during my private member's resolution, but the partnership potential with the Métis-Manitoba Métis Federation around wind energy; we're looking to buy 600 megawatts from their wind energy organization, and what an opportunity it is for good, clean green jobs in Manitoba, meeting the economic needs of Manitobans, furthering economic reconciliation and really maintaining our public services.

We are so privileged to be in these roles, and sometimes I wonder what I'm bringing to this role—and maybe members opposite do too. What I often land on is how I try and approach new interactions with curiosity. When I'm meeting with constituents, I know I'll never be the authority in their experience, showing up to that interaction to better understand what brings them to this conversation. I know I bring some skills, some expertise, some resources, but if, by the end of that exchange, we are—we can better understand what we're bringing—what we're each bringing to the table, we can find a better path forward.

And I don't want to speak too much for my colleagues on this side of the House, but I think it's a trait we all share: the idea that collectively we can find a better path forward.

We have a caucus and staff team that represents such a breadth of experiences. We have an opportunity to work together across the province, across communities, across experiences, across generations in a way that is most impossible—that is most possible in this moment.

We can create possibilities that we couldn't conceive of 10, 15 or 20 years ago or even two years ago, under the PCs. We're co-creating with Manitobans where our provincial government can partner with Indigenous governments on energy projects, where health care is available closer to home, where Indigenous nations have jurisdiction over children from their communities, where searching the landfill is happening. Every day we measure our success by how much Manitobans are free to build a good life.

This Throne Speech sets a vision for our province, one where we take on big challenges together, where we are all a part of a positive future, where we all have opportunities for success, opportunities to contribute and a good life is possible.

Thank you, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** It gives me great privilege to rise today and talk to—the second time—Throne Speech within this House.

And as my colleague across the aisle mentioned, it is not ever lost on me the privilege that each and every one of us have to serve Manitobans and to serve our constituents in this great province. Being one of only 900 or less people that have had this privilege in this House resonates with me every time I walk into this building and look at the beauty and the grandeur that is afforded to each and every one of us.

As in my previous address, I would certainly like to give some thanks to start out, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker, if you will indulge me the opportunity, specifically to family, to my wife Sharlene, who has stood by me for all of my decisions as I move forward in my career. Making sure that that family support is there is critically important for each and every one of us as we do our journeys through not only here but any other places that we may find ourselves, either in work or in life. And also to my children, grandchildren and extended family, it is very significant to have their support as we move forward.

I would particularly like to point out one person that was very supportive to me, and that is my mother-in-law, Mary Patricia Warner, née Pringle. And I say that as yesterday, she passed away during our session here in this Chamber. So I wanted to make sure I had the chance to make sure her name was in Hansard as we move into the future. *[interjection]*

Thank you for that.

\* (15:50)

So, what I can say is that my mother-in-law was a front-line service provider. She was a nurse for over 30 years and certainly respected our health-care system. But besides that, she was also a survivor of breast cancer, not once but twice. And her first bout with breast cancer was when she was 44 years old.

And that is why legislation that the member for Roblin (Mrs. Cook) has brought forward is extremely important to me and to our family to address issues of survivability and safety for those who go through breast cancer. And I'm certainly looking forward to continuing that advocacy because I saw first-hand that early intervention assists individuals in their journey.

So, thank you, honourable Speaker, indulging me on that first address.

Now I would like to talk to the Throne Speech and the pros and cons that I saw within this Throne Speech.

So the pros certainly are reflective of this being a Throne Speech that really looks at the three Rs of waste management, that is to reduce, reuse and recycle.

So this Throne Speech is an example of how this government has reduced budgets, reduced education requirements for teachers, reduced the number of schools that we will see within our province, reduced the number of daycare spaces, reduced the number of infrastructure projects, reduced the apprenticeship ratio which will affect our construction industry. It reduced diagnostic services for our province. It reduced Green Teams, and it reduced sports and culture grants, just to skim the surface and name a few.

They went further in the waste management three Rs with the reuse, and this is the part that—this is why I say this is a pro, is that it is reusing PC initiatives. Continuously from day one that I have seen the announcements come forward and any future programming, they have all been reuses of the PC policies and legislations.

The announcements and the initiatives and the ideas brought forward by our PC team while in government are again being reused by this government time and time again, so we take great pleasure and we will take the credit for that, as we helped form the initiatives in this budget process, this Throne Speech, and moved it forward in Manitoba.

And last, honourable Deputy Speaker, the recycle aspect. Except for the glossy front page of the Throne Speech, it is all recyclable material which we will be happy to put through the shredder, recycle and use for our 2026-2027 PC Throne Speech.

So now, specifically, I would like to talk about some of the areas under my portfolio and that is justice. Manitobans were extremely underwhelmed by this NDP's government's recent Throne Speech and the lack of accountability when it comes to safety for all Manitobans.

In the last year, we have seen increasing rates of violence, thefts and crime within our communities, and this NDP government has failed to bring forward any meaningful new initiatives to address these serious public safety concerns. The only initiatives that are being brought forward are recycled ideas and reused PC initiatives to move this NDP agenda forward.

New headlines have been dominated by repeated stories of violent assaults, rampant crime and an

exponential explosion of serious crime within our communities.

I would like to note a few of the headlines that have come forward in the last week or two that show that this government's tough-on-crime agenda lacks any teeth and has no bite. Headlines, and these are all publicly available, honourable Deputy Speaker, from local newspapers: sleeping U of M student attacked in her dorm; four charged with kidnapping, assault after woman forced into West Broadway suite and beaten; man assaulted with machete, bear spray during unprovoked attack in a Winnipeg park; more than a dozen vehicles damaged overnight, St. Boniface smashing spree, in St. Boniface, honourable Deputy Speaker; man bear sprayed, run over by vehicle during carjacking at Winnipeg intersection; woman carjacked after leaving church in Winnipeg on Sunday; woman carjacked, run over in downtown Winnipeg; man seriously hurt in machete attack in Flin Flon; like the Wild West out there, Winnipeg Transit union raises concerns after gun pointed at bus driver; man pushed to the ground, kicked outside convenience store on Thursday; and lastly, from just what I could quickly scan in the newspapers, robbery victim escapes Winnipeg home after assault, attackers flee in stolen car.

So I ask you, honourable Deputy Speaker, and I ask the citizens of Manitoba and the members opposite: Does this sound like a safety plan for Manitobans? Does this sound like we are listening to Manitobans and taking their issues seriously when we move forward?

I can say that there has been some recent surveys done by Leger survey that includes 66 per cent of Manitobans that are worried about crime and public safety, according to this survey. Nearly 60 per cent of women feel unsafe walking downtown during the daytime, and 43 per cent of men feel unsafe walking downtown during the daytime. More than half of Winnipeg residents say more resources are needed for police. Individuals that live in Winnipeg are nearly three times as likely to be robbed or twice as likely to be killed in a homicide in—than in other major Canadian cities.

And these are examples, honourable Deputy Speaker, that really highlight the fact that there is no plan and there is no agenda when it comes to crime and the issues that everyday Manitobans are facing.

University students are feeling incredibly unsafe on their campuses and in their dorm rooms. And this has been pointed out by recent headlines and highlights that

we've seen, including the shutting down of a university campus because of a knife-wielding individual; a—individual being attacked in my home city of Brandon while in the university area and assaulted badly enough to be brought to hospital.

\* (16:00)

So these, honourable Deputy Speaker, are very difficult situations for individuals to see. Individuals attending church have been the victim of carjackings. There have been nearly 60 carjackings to date here in Winnipeg alone, and this number is growing. These are serious violent crimes that individuals in Winnipeg are facing despite the Throne Speech saying specifically: We will end violent crime.

I don't see an end, so I would like to know how this is going to happen. That's a bold statement: We will end violent crime. Yet, every day, you just need to open up the newspaper, listen to the radio or watch live television and get the fact that these crimes are happening continuously in our community, and they have increased exponentially over the past year of this NDP government's time in office.

And how does the NDP government address all of these issues? By delivering half of the former PC government's commitment. Our former PC team committed to invest \$10 million in downtown Winnipeg's safety measures to enhance public safety, which would have offered 24 new officers for the downtown. This Throne Speech and this Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) is only offering 12. So I'm wondering where the other half of that went to help move forward Winnipeg Police Service's need for 76 new officers just to help out on their issues.

We've recently learned that the RCMP is shy 30 per cent of vacancies—or sorry—has 30 per cent vacancies within their staffing module, 30 per cent that are sitting unfilled or vacancies that have no bodies in them right now that may have the position there but nobody able to do the work.

Manitobans certainly don't need another glossy-page document with pictures and snap ads. They need real investments and commitment for their public safety.

Again, they've—the NDP and the Justice Minister has made the bold claim that they're going to stop violent crime. So my question is how? With what new investments? With what new initiatives? Government is not committing to investing in policing but rather give more control to municipalities and First Nations.

Governments should enhance, not interfere, with policing. Police forces are autonomous for a reason. They don't report to government. They do not have to serve at government's beck and call. What they do is make sure that a plan is set for safety of all Manitobans.

*Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

This brings me back to the imbalanced approach this government has taken. They continue to pick winners and losers, and this budget—or, sorry, this Throne Speech has prime examples.

Committees and communities outside of Winnipeg have once again been neglected. Crime, violence and theft are not unique to just Winnipeg, honourable assistant Deputy Speaker. Communities around the province have and are struggling with a variety of public safety challenges. I try to highlight those every day during question period, and my colleagues also bring those forward in their many questions and issues regarding safety and public security here in Manitoba.

While this government is investing in one community here in Winnipeg with a new dedicated police—or, sorry, a new dedicated force, they're taking away police force in another jurisdiction.

So again, when I look at their investments here in Winnipeg, a lot of the investments to Winnipeg Police Service, but not the same investments to police services across Manitoba that also face these same issues. So there is disparity there, honourable Deputy Speaker.

And as I mentioned earlier today, an investment in Swan River of a new GIU, general investigations unit, when there's 30 per cent vacancy in the RCMP right away, that is just removing and causing more vacancies within the RCMP. And I'm wondering if maybe that—three positions are being funded by unilaterally cancelling a police service that dedicated 125 years of service to their community with the Rivers Police Service being arbitrarily disbanded, the funding removed, so that another community can benefit from this while the RCMP still remains 30 per cent shy in those affected areas.

So this Speech from the Throne includes platitudes and nice words, but there was no timelines and there was no investments or initiatives to address the needs of Manitoba.

I ask, honourable Deputy assistant Speaker, where is the accountability? This government ran on accountability to the public. And within the new plan that has been put forward by this Minister of Justice, there is a lot of

fluffy words, there's a lot of re-engage PC initiatives, but there's no timelines, there's no outcomes and there's no measurables. So how does one hold a government to account without any of these areas?

And, in closing, honourable Deputy Speaker, I will note that not once did this NDP Throne Speech mention the words: bail reform. Not once. So my question is, have they abandoned their commitment to Manitobans when it comes to bail reform? Because at first this Premier (Mr. Kinew) said that he could do it alone, he didn't need the federal government. And now he's saying that he is going to be contacting the federal government and holding them to account. So their failed efforts and actions have just allowed more criminals to remain on the street.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

**MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond):** It is with immense pride and gratitude that I rise today as the Member of the Legislative Assembly for Fort Richmond to give my response to the 2024 Speech from the Throne.

This role, which I hold so dearly, has been a profound honour and a responsibility that I carry every day with a deep sense of duty. To represent the wonderful, diverse community of Fort Richmond is a privilege, and I am deeply thankful to the residents for placing their trust in me. Together, we have worked to strengthen the values that make Manitoba a great place to live: inclusivity, respect and the commitment to building a stronger, more vibrant future.

Honourable Speaker, the past year has been a remarkable journey for me. I have had the opportunity to connect with many in our community and to witness first-hand the incredible strengths, resilience and the generosity that define the people of Fort Richmond. Whether it's through organizing local events, working on initiatives that provide tangible benefits or simply having the privilege to listen to the concerns and ideas of my constituents, I am proud to be a part of this thriving community.

It is also important for me to reflect on my personal journey, because the story of Fort Richmond is, in many ways, my own story. I came to Winnipeg as an international student, eager to pursue my higher education and build a new life. I worked hard to adapt to a new culture and find my place in a new environment. The experience was not easy but it was transformative.

Honourable Speaker, as someone with a strong academic background in kinesiology and direct

experience in the hospital setting, I understand the importance of having a health system that is robust, responsive and accessible.

\* (16:10)

I hold two master of science degrees in kinesiology, one of which specializes in exercise physiology with a focus on preventative measures and rehabilitation.

Early in my career, I had the privilege of working as an intern in the rehabilitation in-patient department of a major hospital in China. This experience gave me invaluable first-hand insight into the critical importance of having health care closer to home and the immense challenges faced by both patients and providers.

Our government is rebuilding and investing in health-care infrastructure, training more staff and ensuring that services are brought back to our communities.

For many residents of Fort Richmond, and especially for those of us in the south Winnipeg area, the Victoria Hospital emergency room closure in 2017 was particularly impactful. This was a hospital that served our community well, and its closure only made it harder for residents to get timely care.

We are moving ahead with the design of the new Victoria Hospital emergency room. For Fort Richmond residents, this means faster, more reliable access to emergency services close to home.

Honourable Speaker, our government is committed to addressing mental health and addiction issues through initiatives like the Anne Oake family recovery centre at the Victoria Hospital, where I attended the groundbreaking ceremony with the Premier. This women's addiction recovery centre will offer 15 to 17 beds for those in need, to heal and review their lives.

I had the pleasure to tour Bruce Oake Recovery Centre, helping men with mental health and addiction issues, and also attended the graduation ceremony and listened to their life-changing stories. Anne Oake family recovery centre will deliver similar addictions care for women, while offered wraparound supports like child care to reduce barriers to entry.

It makes sense to pair this centre with the Victoria Hospital, a hospital that has been dedicated to women's health care for decades.

Honourable Speaker, I had the privilege of serving as an elected school trustee on the Winnipeg School Division board, where I fought to ensure that students'

and educators' voices were heard and their needs addressed, such as working with the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers, MAFTI, to establish the Filipino bilingual program in the Winnipeg School Division, collaborating with Newcomer Employment and Education Development Services needs to strengthen the Newcomer Education Coalition and establishing the first-ever Newcomer Education Committee to include the voices of both parents and educators in shaping educational policies.

I know first-hand how important it is to ensure that no student is left behind because of their economic-social status, language barrier or any other factor. That's why I'm so proud that our government has expanded access to education and invested in our schools to ensure that all students can reach their full potential.

Education is the key to opportunity, and my time on the school board cemented my belief that investing in our students is one of the most powerful ways we can shape the future of our province.

I want to thank Fort Richmond Collegiate for their excellence in education and their band for representing our province across the country. The Fort Richmond Collegiate band program has a history of striving for excellence in concert band and the jazz ensemble for almost five decades and have won numerous awards and championships. Through this band program, students will not only learn music but also be-experience a personal growth.

Honourable Speaker, I also want to mention the hard work of school support workers, many of whom I'm personally acquainted with. Many of them, tirelessly, do critical front-line work and are often left out of discussions about the importance of school support work.

School support staff are critical to keep schools running every day. I want to thank them for their steadfast dedication. I acknowledge educational assistants, library technicians, secretaries, custodians, trades-people, school bus drivers and more.

Honourable Speaker, we recognized the week of September 29 to October 4 this year as School Support Staff Recognition Week. We should recognize their work every day, not just a particular week.

Alongside health care, advanced education is a fundamental pillar of a prosperous society. I've always believed that providing children and young people with the right tools and support can change the course of their lives. Education is where it all begins, and

I have always been committed to ensuring that every student in Manitoba, regardless of their background, has the opportunities to succeed.

As the only MLA in this Chamber who came to Winnipeg as an international student, I have a unique understanding of the challenges that students face, particularly those who come from diverse backgrounds. I faced those challenges myself: navigating a new education system, adjusting to the demands of academic life in a new country and finding a sense of belonging on campus and in broader community.

Many students in Fort Richmond attend the University of Manitoba, and it's crucial that we continue to support them, especially when it comes to housing and financial security.

That's why we've worked to ensure that student aid shelter allowances reflect the ultra—the extra costs of housing in Manitoba. This initiative will ease the financial burden on students and help them concentrate on their studies without the added stress of unaffordable housing.

Honourable Speaker, another aspect of our government's work that I am particularly passionate about is building strong, inclusive communities.

Fort Richmond is a diverse community, and I've had the privilege of interacting with many different cultural, religious and community groups, like Manitoba Chinese Family Centre, Vietnamese Women Association in Winnipeg, Trefoil Guild of Girl Guides, Nepali Cultural Society, Guru Nanak Mission Centre and Volunteer Guild of Victoria Hospital, just to name a few.

All these organizations are the heartbeat of our community. They provide critical services, support networks and resources for community members in Fort Richmond. It has been one of the greatest honours of my first year as MLA to recognize and support these organizations. They offer mentorship, support for newcomers, cultural education and social services that create a sense of belonging for people of all backgrounds. They are the true foundation of a united, resilient Manitoba, and they remind us of the power of community in times of challenge and celebration alike.

In November, a new board of South Winnipeg Community Centre was elected. I want to personally congratulate them and the new manager and wishing them success as they take on new responsibilities.

Also, I want to mention that the Richmond Kings community centre is upgrading their ice arena with provincial funding, and I look forward to see the long-standing hockey program in action.

In conclusion to my Throne Speech response, I am incredibly proud of the progress we've made in the past year, but we also know that the work is far from over. There is still much more to be done to ensure that every Manitoban can live a healthy, fulfilling life with access to quality health care, education and the opportunities they need to succeed.

As your representative, I am committed to continuing this work. I will keep fighting for better health care, more affordable housing and a stronger, more inclusive community for all of us. Together, we will make Manitoba a province that works for everyone.

I look forward to the work ahead. Thank you for your trust, and thank you for the honour of serving you.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech. Xiè xiè.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** I appreciate the opportunity to get up and put some words on the record for the Throne Speech.

Before I get to picking the Throne Speech apart, so to speak, as to what's in there, or more so what's not in there, I just want to take the time to share a few words and recognize our municipal councillors, our mayors, reeves and CAOs that are in Winnipeg this week at their 26th annual Association of Manitoba Municipalities convention. I appreciate all the work that those people do for their communities.

I especially want to recognize outgoing president, Kam Blight, for all the work that he's done over the years for the AMM. Kam's going to be greatly missed by that association for the advocacy that he's done on their behalf, both to the provincial and the federal government. So, Kam, we wish you well in your new journey in life.

It's always great that when the AMM is in Winnipeg because it gives the opportunity for all members to take part in their celebrations and their resolutions and their debates, and the ministerial forum, of course, is always a great thing, so it was a great opportunity for all of us to be part of it. Go back to the days when I spent eight years on that Association of Manitoba Municipalities board, and some of my—the exciting times were coming to the conventions or coming to the Leg. to meet with the MLAs to advocate

for municipal funds, infrastructure projects and whatnot. So, again, I just really, truly want to recognize those people that are the grassroots of our province that serve their communities, and we welcome them to Winnipeg this week and look forward to celebrating with them tonight.

What I'm really looking forward to tonight is the honorarium of Eileen Clarke that will be recognized for her lifetime membership with the AMM. I had the opportunity to serve on the board of Association of Manitoba Municipalities with Eileen for a number of years and became a very dear friend, and then she went on to be, of course, a member of the Legislative Assembly. So, now, tonight the board of directors will be recognizing her as an honorary membership.

So getting back to the Throne Speech, I want to talk about some of the things that go, you know, in my constituency that my constituents are concerned about. You know, a lot of those municipalities I want to recognize too, that are in my constituency of Lakeside, the RMs of Woodlands, Rockwood, town of Stonewall, the RM of Cartier, the RM of St. François, the town of Teulon and the rural municipality of Rosser.

And the rural municipality of Rosser we have—I take in a great part of CentrePort and the rail park there, so. All of those municipalities have done some great work attracting a lot of economic activity to the constituency of Lakeside, so hats off to all those municipal people that have welcomed that type of activity to make our communities a better place to live.

So a number of points that I've written down here before I get into maybe my own critic portfolio of Municipal and Northern Relations, is maybe just pointing out some of the things that my constituents are concerned about that is or is not in the Throne Speech—more so not, but maybe wishing that it would've been.

A big concern I got last night is I've got two manufacturers in my constituency, fairly new, that have created a lot of jobs; we're talking over 200 jobs. And, you know, I've met with a number of the members there yesterday and today and got some of the concerns. But this particular one in my RM—in my own home RM of Woodlands, it's a real concern to Arrowquip and Yakta about this tariff, 25 per cent tariff. There was nothing in the Throne Speech as far as a plan to building those relationships with the US and how we can avoid these type of things.

So this is a huge concern for people setting up manufacturing and whatnot in our province, and I think we need to take this real serious. And I hope that, you know, going forward, our government can come up with a plan in connection with all of our country of Canada here to make that a better relationship where we don't have to face these type of things going forward.

I talked about CentrePort. I was just last week at two grand openings for—one for Fastfrate, a huge trucking outfit that just built a 123,000-square-foot cross-docking building. So there was them, and then the week before that was a fast-4Tracks, sorry, 4Tracks. And they're both in RM of Rosser, both in my constituency, and employ a number of people. The 4Tracks, actually, was an outfit that started with two gentlemen that came to Manitoba and started out with a used freightliner truck and have grown this business to be hundreds and hundreds of trucks.

So, you know, all these ones that are setting up here in our province, which is great—we love—that's what we need—but we need those relationships with our partners to the south without any barriers being set up to make it unsuccessful for them.

The Throne Speech—I didn't hear or see much about ag in it. Agriculture is the backbone of our economy here in Manitoba, and coming from the farm, I can truly understand the importance of it. And you know, times are changing in the agriculture industry, with technology and sustainability and efficiency. And I didn't hear anything in there about, you know, sustainability grants for farms that want to do things more efficient.

I know there was the sustainability grant from the Progressive Conservatives years ago that was put into place, and then I did actually have a farm in my constituency that applied for this grant last year but were turned down on a piece of equipment that was going to be a one-pass piece of equipment that would do the seeding, would do the harvest, would do the spraying, which, to me, is less track on the ground, less pass, less fuel—makes so much sense. It sounds sustainable to me. But no, the NDP government turned them down on that. So that's just another thing that—in my constituency.

I heard a lot over the last couple of days from my members, you know, and it's—we've got a lot of new buildings in the health-care system going up, which is fantastic. But their concern is putting doctors and nurses in these buildings. And the beds that are being announced would need the doctors and the nurses.

That's their concerns. First off, get the doctors and the nurses there, then we can build the buildings and fill them.

I had a nurse practitioner come to my office in Stonewall last week, and she wants to set up in Stonewall and practise her nursing as a nurse practitioner. But the health authority won't allow her to do that. Now, we're thin on doctors; we're struggling to find doctors to come to the town of Stonewall and stay there, and here's someone who grew up in our community, wants to practise in our community, but yet, they're not allowed the funding to do so, or they're not being welcomed to do such a thing in our community.

So I struggle with that from—when we're looking for health-care professionals in our communities that—why a nurse practitioner would be turned down to move to her hometown to practise by the health authority.

\* (16:30)

I'll get into the funding for the municipalities here too, in the Throne Speech, which there wasn't much said about, but of course, we had the announcement yesterday. You know, when I talked to a number of the members—municipality—member municipalities—on their thoughts yesterday of the announcement of the \$62 million over five years, and, you know, they're hopeful, they're slightly hopeful, so, you know, it's a start.

But it's not what they're asking for. They're asking for that escalating funding over five years and we see a \$12.4 million a year going to municipalities per capita, so a municipality like mine—Woodlands—I think we're looking at maybe \$20,000 a year, which doesn't go very far. City of Winnipeg, I think we might be looking at shy of \$8 million on a per capita basis; that is a—that's a far cry from the \$190 million that it's going to cost for the water treatment—or the sewer—the water treatment plant for the city of Winnipeg.

So the funding I've been hearing is not enough, but yet they're hopeful that there's something there, which is good, and they're just still looking for that funding model—that growth funding model that they can share from the growth of our province, whether it be the city or our own small towns; they're all growing, they're all—but we need that infrastructure for them to grow; those are the growth tools. But the funding is just not there for them to allow them—if they could share in those—that growth funding; they're still looking for that model.

Road maintenance: yes, pretty disappointing, too, on our—in the Throne Speech, no mention of



infrastructure on the roads and ditches in our province. In fact, 227 we're—we've been made aware of—PR 227, a major artery that runs through my constituency—and, of course, the member of Portage la Prairie, runs through his as well—was announced a few years ago that it would be paved and connected to the Yellowhead—

**An Honourable Member:** Seventy million dollars.

**Mr. King:** —seventy million dollars, so they made the RM of Portage aware just a few weeks ago that that's not going to happen now.

Very unfortunate, very disappointing. That was a project that all of—both the member from Portage and myself, and that artery ran all the way across to the member of Lac du Bonnet. But I'm seeing a bit of a—seeing a bit of a pattern there, I guess; they're all Progressive Conservative constituencies that connect to one another, so there again we're picking winners and losers as to who's going to get work done.

I had the town of Teulon—I had a constituent there that came to me all summer long about the ditches and the provincial road—No. 7 going by Teulon, how they were never mowed, he couldn't get them to mow it, and we sent letters, he sent letters; ended up that the Town of Teulon did it just to appease him, but he still wasn't happy that somebody in the department for the Province—and, I mean I—we don't want to take it out on the guys that are working, I think when our elected officials are approached on something like that, maybe it should be taken to the department and taken seriously. So yes, he's quite upset about this.

Boy, 20 minutes just isn't enough time to talk about what I want to talk about, but gas tax holiday. So we're—everybody's quite concerned here—what's going to happen January 1. Are we going to be looking at a 14-cent tax back on, or 15 set—tent; or are we going to be up to 20 or 21 like the carbon tax is going to affect us again next spring? So there's a lot of uncertainty there and maybe, you know, I'm thinking maybe this government should make Manitobans feel a little more comfortable what's going to happen.

This gas-tax holiday has not stopped the rising costs of groceries and everything that we need to buy to survive. Although I think a lot of people may appreciate a little bit of a break, it's not helping the people that it needs to help. There's people that are struggling every day that don't own a car; they can't afford to put gas in a car if they had one. So, you know, the story about the \$15 Happy Meal, it just isn't getting to me. I'm sorry. And if you can get—if you—father and son can go, I want to know what McDonald's that is that you can have—eat for \$15.

It's—the gas tax holiday is just not cutting it to make it more affordable for all Manitobans. It's a select few again. So there we are, picking winners and losers. The ones that can afford to drive a car are winning here by, you know, saving a few bucks every time they fill up.

So, yes, it's a little disappointing that, you know, the affordability measures that these—this government is taking is not helping everyone. It's not.

You know, we've always found ways to get our kids to the hockey game, to the hockey rink, but there's people that can't even afford to put their kids into hockey. And they're the ones that are suffering, that we need to help.

So the outlet channel for Lake Manitoba. We get—we're getting confusing, conflicting answers. We get the minister telling us not to happen, and then in the Throne Speech, all the sudden maybe we're going to see it. So huge, important project for the people in the Interlake.

I remember the flood of 2011 so well, as I was on municipal council, and what the people went through that lived along the lakes—the farmers, the cottage owners, the resident owners. We're going to—we'll hit a wet cycle again. We will. That's the way Mother Nature works. We've gone through a dry cycle, I've seen it in all my years of being in agriculture and the years that my father and grandfather wrote at the story. Things that have happened before can happen again.

So we need to urge the provincial government to carry on with that project.

Never heard anything in the Throne Speech of how they're going to maybe make things better for the driver training in this province. Everyone I talk to in my constituency, including myself, have—with a 15-year-old kid that—a 15-and-a-half-year-old kid that qualified two months ago for driver's ed that we still haven't got him registered. It's just no desire from the government to hire more people or make it better for those young people to get trained, to make it safer on our highways in Manitoba.

What's going to happen with a number of these kids is they're going to end up challenging their driver's licence when they turn 16 with no training. That makes no sense. That does—putting kids on the road with no training is not safe.

So this government has to step up and make those programs work. It's very frustrating for parents that

want to get their kids to drive and so they can get themselves to hockey or wherever they need to go. So I hope the government takes that serious.

You know, I—to go back to the municipalities and how they work and work together, in my constituency, I've got all—I've got five municipalities that are collaborating to fight for a personal-care home that was announced a few years ago that hasn't happened yet. And we're all crossing our fingers out there that at some point maybe in the budget it will come out, but there was no mention of that in the Throne Speech, which was very disappointing to the people in my community as well.

So a number of things from—just from my constituents that I could bring up, and I haven't even got to my portfolio a whole lot here. The announcement yesterday, so that 12 and a half million dollars was taken away from the BSC last year, \$4.1 million from The Green Team funding.

Guess what? That adds up to the 16—well, actually, it's a couple hundred thousand dollars shy of the \$16 million that they took away from municipalities last year. And now, they announce yesterday they're giving it back, which is really nice of them.

So just in conclusion, honourable Deputy Speaker, this Throne Speech is a missed opportunity, a document that reflects a government out of touch with the needs of Manitobans. Broken promises and funding cuts to ethical lapses and misplaced priorities, the NDP has failed to provide the leadership our province so desperately needs.

This PC team on our side will continue to stand up for Manitobans, advocating for policies that will build stronger communities and drive economic growth.

Thank you, honourable Deputy Speaker.

\* (16:40)

**MLA Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I see have—have an attentive audience here on both sides, it seems.

Well, you know, I think the government should be pretty happy, because it's had a pretty successful year. And while, you know, the members are—think that's funny, but the reality is that the government's still as popular as it was the day it got elected. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) is the most popular premier in the country.

And I know that historically, that won't last forever. I mean, we know that. The opposition members are just going to have to work a little harder, I guess,

rather than just giving the same speech over and over again here.

And, you know, the reality is that the government has come in with certain measures; I don't think the opposition expected it. But come in with certain measures that cut the inflation rate in Manitoba.

And the biggest one, the biggest irritant, I think, to them, is the elimination of the gas tax, the 14 cents. That really gets them, you know, because in all these years, no government of any stripe has ever reduced the gas tax. And I mean, they could see it coming in a way, because there's other provinces who've actually done the same thing. But I guess they didn't expect it from us.

And it got results. And now we're talking about following up the gas tax reduction, because it's for a limited time, with a hydro freeze, which the public is going to like as well, you know. And we will have other ideas too that are going to make life more affordable to Manitobans.

But, you know, the member previously reflected on this, that while we've been busy working away here, trying to make a better Manitoba on all sorts of fronts, there have been developments south of us that have got to make us very concerned.

And it's not like we didn't know about this. I mean, we've been told that there would—there were going to be tariffs—there were tariffs on China six years ago by the previous president. And when the new president, Biden, came in, he didn't eliminate those tariffs. He kept them.

And now we're into another round of tariffs. And during the campaign we thought, well, we're going to be looking at maybe 10 per cent tariffs. Well, now, as of yesterday, we are looking at 25 per cent tariffs on everything produced in this province that goes to United States. Well, you know, we deal with the States a lot, and we know that we're our—each other's best customers in many cases; that we buy a huge amount from them, and we sell a huge amount of goods to them.

Now the worst thing we could do is turn around and put our own tariffs up, because if you look back to the Depression of the 1920s, you see that that's the main reason why we had this 10 years of depression, was largely to do with tariffs, where one country puts up a tariff and then the other country responds. And the next thing you know, there's very little trade going on. And you've got an unemployment rate of a million people across the country.

So we just have to hope that it's more of a threat than a reality, and I really think it is. It's more of a threat, and we're going to have to pay a lot of attention to this and try to deal with the issue. And the—I mean, the tariffs are being suggested that they're going to be on Mexican products as well and Canadian products as well, and the whole goal here is that they are trying to promote their buy America strategy of having people, companies, develop their businesses in the United States and employ American workers.

Nothing new about any of this, except that in the past, the parties talked a good line about protectionism and bringing jobs back from China, and then as soon as the election was over, they forgot about it, right? And actually, the Democrats were even more protectionist than the Republicans in reality, historically. But now, it's kind of the opposite way around, and now the Democrats are equally protectionist.

So this puts us in a very bad situation, and we have to work our way through it. And I know the government—the Premier (Mr. Kinew) spoke about it today, and he has got an appreciation of how serious this is, and the Prime Minister and the premiers are going to be dealing with it, and this is the only way we can—this could be a—you know, could derail a lot of our best efforts—that's my point—right across the country.

So we have to keep doing what we have—that we were planning to do to fix the medical—the hospitals and develop the economy. We have to do all of that, but we have got immediate emergencies in front of us here that we have to deal with to try to make certain that we get an exemption on the buy America and that we don't get ourselves into a worse situation than we are right now vis-à-vis the free trade deals.

Now, there's some other opportunities that we should be looking at here, and we have been over the years. I can tell you that a national power grid is certainly in the interest of Manitoba, and as far back as, like, 15 years ago, Steven Fletcher was a minister in Ottawa, and he was dealing with infrastructure for western Canada, and he was very interested—being an engineer background himself, he was interested in developing a—you know, powerlines to Alberta, and he was interested in developing powerlines to the Ring of Fire around Atikokan and Thunder Bay.

And we—you know, it's been spoken of here that we have a lot of critical minerals here in Manitoba that we want to develop, but there are similar critical minerals in the Ring of Fire area, and we are in a

competition there, right? We have to compete with Ontario.

So, you know, the reality is that the inflation—you know, contrary to what the Conservatives thought would happen, the inflation rate has actually moderated and dropped. Our unemployment rate has dropped over the last year because of the measures that the government has taken.

And, historically, a number of years ago, we had a huge car theft problem in Manitoba, and it was the Gary Doer government that brought in the theft provisions that—discounts for their—people's Autopac if you developed a theft suppression system—if you installed one in your car. And guess what? We had a dramatic reduction. It was the most successful car theft reduction program in—certainly in the country and worked better than a number of the other suggestions that were being advocated by others at the time, including the bait cars and other proposals.

So, you know, the point is that if you try different approaches, you will find that certain things are going to work better than others. The point is that you have to work to do that.

Another article or item that's mentioned in the Throne Speech is the whole business of having the new hospital cards. That whole idea was proposed by the Selinger government in the couple years before it was defeated. And we were ready to go at that time with those cards, and for the eight years—eight years went by with the Conservatives in power, and we never heard another word about these health-care cards. But now it's been announced now, and we're going to have them available in the next month.

And there was a study done back in 1990, after Bob Rae was elected in Ontario. And they were trying to—Ontario was—Bob Rae government was trying to figure out how many Americans were getting Canadian health-care cards.

\* (16:50)

So they did a study in Windsor, and the second study was in Fort Frances and International Falls, right? And they were determining that—and I just forget the exact figures right now—but I think it was like a million more health cards were out there than actual people in the province. And so they—was—there were people like in the border areas that were picking up cards and coming over to Windsor, I guess, to get procedures done—in the clinics and so on—on the border.

And it was a big issue with the Bob Rae government at the time. I don't think there was the same exposure here, because there's a pretty big distance between the—you know, the border communities and here, so I don't know there was a big issue here, but nevertheless these cards are a good idea, the health records have been—it was a long time coming in Manitoba.

I remember the Filmon government spent like \$50 million developing—in the day—developing SmartHealth, and it really wasn't too smart, but anyways, certainly spent a lot of money developing it; we criticized it at the time. But the fundamental point about all this was to have a health-care record, which is really very important if you want to have all your information available when, you know, an accident happens.

And—so you can see there's an obvious—I mean, looking back people say, well, why wouldn't you want to have all that information on there, but, you know, the argument at the time was well, you know, there's privacy issues and people could find out whether you had, you know, vaccination or not or whatever other, like, health-care information that you didn't want out there. It was going to be easy that you—they put it all on a card and you could read it wherever you went.

Well, guess what, it was the United States that really developed that health care—the health records, and they did it primarily because of all the litigation in the States, because a doctor in the States can get sued really easy for making a medical mistake and, you know, it's less of a problem up here I suppose. But here, even now when you go into doctors' offices in Winnipeg here, you see those files are—well, there's some files still there; some of them still have files.

But, you know what I mean? They're tied up now, they're put on a computer, and it's a much more efficient system than it was in the old days where they had to go back and look at your records and try to read writing, then—you know, it's—we've come a long way, we really have.

And the fact of the matter is that sometimes we've been on the wrong side of an issue and we found out, you know, five or six years later that, you know, maybe we weren't right when we did it, but we had to make a call at the time, and we did, and it proved that we really weren't where we should have been. But you know, where—that's the system we've got. We've got an opposition that has to oppose everything, and we've got a government's got to support, you know, its view of things.

And I do remember when I first got here, we had a member—Marty Dolin—he was quite a member, and Marty Dolin was reading Hansard, and he's reading Hansard from Ontario and he's getting the same questions. You know, we were the government and the Conservatives were asking questions about bridges and roads and all this kind of stuff, and Marty Dolin would look at these guys in Ontario, they're the same questions. It was Ontario opposition asking the government, right? So, you know, you do have to have a sense of humour about this place, but there is a role—we have roles to play: the government has its role and the opposition have their role too, right?

And, of course, you want to do it in a respectful manner and not, you know, have some of the practices that we've employed here over the last, you know, number of—hundred years with paper fights and all kinds of other things, right? So, you know, there's a lot of good things here in the Throne Speech indicating where the government wants to go, and it's had some successes.

And we're—there's another area here that we were looking at—and we are looking at right now—is to stop anti-competitive contracts that make groceries more expensive. Now that's a really interesting idea, and I don't know what the legal ramifications are here, but I know that back in the '90s, we were fighting the gas prices of the day, and there's like 500 studies done on gas pricing, and it's all federal. It's federal jurisdiction, and it's—you know, combines questions and so on.

And you know, people know gas—the gas stations all change the prices at the same time, right? They go up, they go down in unison. And how can you possibly argue that that isn't price-fixing? You would say that's what it's got to be. But the reality is these studies, some of them say, no, that's not true, that it's not really price-fixing, you know, they just kind of like—it happens. Right?

And what we found, you know, in Ottawa, was that we have to change the legislation, that the legislation was not tough enough so that you couldn't get—you could never get the ruling to say that these gas companies are—yes, the gas station companies are price-fixing because of the legislation. You have to change the legislative act to get the result that you want, right?

And so I'm going to say that I know that with anti-competitive contracts, to the extent that they would be—that it would be under provincial jurisdiction, we should try that. We should actually do this. Any little thing that will help us along the way to have more competition and better pricing and saving our voters

and Manitoba residents money is something we should be looking at.

And the opposition should be—I haven't heard one opposition speaker talk about this. Matter of fact, they think it's a—it's not a very good idea, that you can't somehow tell the grocery stores what to do and what not to do. And in general, that's probably true. But we're talking about anti-competitive contracts. What's wrong with making a move and to prevent that from happening? And if we can do it, if it's not against the jurisdiction or having jurisdictional issues, then why wouldn't we do that?

So—

**An Honourable Member:** Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) isn't dealing with the retail theft, so.

**MLA Maloway:** Well, you know, the member is talking about retail thefts and the Minister of Justice, and the fact of the matter—I just pointed out before that it was NDP government that took care of the car theft problem in Manitoba back in the 1990s and cut it overnight. Like, literally cut it down to nothing overnight.

And you know something, the car companies could have solved the entire problem for, guess what, a hundred bucks per new car, putting in anti-theft devices. They started doing that around, what, the year 2000, and it was a \$100 option. Yet we put all the expense on the car owners to go with aftermarket products which don't always work, they don't always

work with the car, and spend all this money to deal with the auto theft problem.

So you know, I know, like I could keep going here for not only hours but days. It's been a long time since I did my 3 million words or whatever it was in Ottawa. But you know, I do want to let—*[interjection]* Oh, I'm sorry. I was going to let a Conservative member and opposition member have some time here to make a speech. Somebody moved that clock ahead, I think.

Well, thank you very much.

**MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Good afternoon. Tough act—I'd say any time you got to follow the member from Elmwood, it's going to be a tough act to follow. Over the years, I've watched him in this Chamber and I've grown to actually respect him quite a bit. He's not—you know, I—especially when he took the Louise Bridge task on in a few of the elections, and then gets—he's definitely taken the road of understanding his constituency and what their needs are.

As the member for Dawson Trail, I also represent an area—

**The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott):** Order, please.

\* (17:00)

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Dawson Trail will have 19 minutes remaining.

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

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Tuesday, November 26, 2024

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