

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

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Tom Lindsey  
Speaker*

**Vol. LXXVIII No. 8 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, November 29, 2023**

ISSN 0542-5492

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the Assistant Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and 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 200—The Firefighters Recognition Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)**

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** That—I move, seconded by the member for Seine River (MLA Cross), that Bill 200, The Firefighters Recognition Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**MLA Pankratz:** Today I am happy to introduce the first private member's bill of this session, Bill 200, The Firefighters Recognition Day Act.

This act will designate May 4th as firefighters recognition day, a day to acknowledge the bravery and sacrifice of all firefighters who play such an integral role in Manitoba's fire- and medical-emergency response system and put themselves at risk every day to protect Manitobans, their property and the environment. This day will also honour and remember firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

I look forward to unanimous support for Bill 200.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### **Karen Soares**

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** Today I want to commemorate a champion of the St. James constituency, Karen Soares. A lot of influential work in communities goes on behind the scenes, and I want to thank and acknowledge Karen, who joins us in the gallery with her family, as one of the many behind-the-scenes superheroes from my constituency.

Karen is in her fourth term of serving as the president of the board for the Bord-Aire Community Centre in St. James. It's inspiring to see her dedication to supporting families in the King Edward neighbourhood and her continued willingness to take on the challenge of leading in our community.

She's been influential in her work as president. Most notably she organized the Bord-Aire Community Centre's annual trunk-or-treat event. Initially, it was a response to the pandemic when regular Halloween activities were difficult to do with health restrictions at the time.

Karen suggested that the centre host trunk-or-treat, where families could gather in the centre's parking lot, collecting candy out of the trunks of decorated vehicles and connecting. The community response over the years has been amazing; volunteers provide multiple vehicles, pumpkins and food, proving that community shows up when an inspiring leader creates an opportunity. The event has grown, and this year it

had a record number of high-school volunteers and trunk donations.

Karen initiated trunk-or-treat and many other creative initiatives as president of Bord-Aire Community Centre's board. She oversaw the new mural that was painted this fall by local artist Rachel Lancaster that now wraps around the centre's building, and I can confirm for the House that it's absolutely beautiful. Karen also collaborated with me on providing youth with free art programming with Art City over this last summer.

Constituents like Karen are what hold our communities together. They create spaces for celebration, participation and fun. Karen's work reminds all of us to be active members of our community, that when everyday heroes donate their time and energy, amazing things can happen.

Thank you.

#### **Rollin' into Rivers Event**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** It's my great honour and pleasure to rise today for my first private member's statement in this Chamber. From July 6th to 9th of this year, the community of Rivers in Spruce Woods constituency held their Rollin' into Rivers event to celebrate 110 years of this community in western Manitoba.

The weekend began as an event by the Rivers Train Station Restoration Committee to highlight Rivers as the only community where the Sekine bicycle, a heritage bicycle, was manufactured in the world outside of Japan.

The event gradually grew in scale and went off as a major success, with events stemming from class reunions, paddle poker on Lake Wahtopanah, antique tractor and car shows, a parade, an e-bike demonstration and a pancake breakfast supported by the local Lions Club. For those of us of Scottish heritage in this place, you'll be sad you missed one of Saturday's big events: the Rivers Pipe Band reunion.

I was honoured to attend some of the events, including the emergency services display, as well as the grand opening of the new Rivers Game and Fish wildlife range, including ranges for all sport shooters and a beautiful learning centre to educate the next generation of hunters, anglers and sport shooters.

\* (13:40)

I want to thank the organizers for their invitation, but more importantly, for all their hours of work

making this celebration happen. It is so important to celebrate the beautiful communities we have in western Manitoba.

Thank you.

#### **Diane and Jack Rainka**

**MLA Mike Moyes (Riel):** I am pleased to use my first opportunity to speak in the House to highlight the generosity of Riel constituents, Diane and Jack Rainka.

Initially prompted by the need of our Ukrainian neighbours fleeing the violence, the Rainkas have been busy in their retirement providing new Manitobans with home furnishings and clothes, even after Diane's over 40 years of serving others as a nurse. In the last 11 months alone, they have helped over 24 families from around the world put their roots down here in Winnipeg.

Many refugees move out of a hotel into their new space with nothing but a mattress to rest their head on. The Rainkas first greet families with blankets and a pot to cook in, then determine what is needed to make this new space a home.

They have provided furniture, cooking utensils and clothing, most of which is donated by community members who have recently lost a loved one or are simply donating to let no-longer-needed items fill the needs of others. Diane has selflessly transformed her home office into a free community store, providing families the ability to choose items themselves and empowering people at a time when much has been sacrificed.

Beyond facilitating these needed donations, the Rainkas show families around their new community, clean their new living space and even supported a family as they decided to leave an adverse workplace to find meaningful work elsewhere. The positive impact the Rainkas have had on these families is clearly demonstrated through their ongoing relationships, with many families staying in touch.

As a testament to their generosity, Diane has asked that it be known that she and her husband are but one of many providing this support to new Manitobans. This community effort of welcoming new folks in is possible through the actions of people like the Rainkas.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, I would like to ask everyone to join me in thanking Diane and Jack Rainka, who are seated in the gallery, for their continual dedication to bettering the lives of others,

first through health care and now in aiding new members of our community.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Before we continue with members' statements, I would like to draw members' attention to the public gallery, where we have 53 grade 4 students from Whyte Ridge Elementary, under the direction of teachers Jami Lemon and K. Voth.

### Kenneth "Stew" Clayton

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** I rise today to pay tribute to a constituent that's traveled more miles and impacted more lives with his music than anyone else can guess.

Kenneth "Stew" Clayton, Stew, that everyone called him, lived an incredible 94 years, but to him, home was always between Manitou and Kaleida in my lovely Turtle Mountain constituency. He came from—to be known as the Canadian balladeer through his distinct style and dedication to his craft. He was—an infectious love of music that started at an early age and was stuck with him throughout his entire life.

Who would have thought that in—his career would criss-cross the continent, including standing ovations at the performance during the Canadian country music awards, would start with a mail-order guitar through the Eaton's catalogue.

Between 1964 to 2007, he released 44 musical recordings and wrote over 300 songs. He did this while farming, driving a school bus, coaching youth and remaining a pillar of his community.

Throughout it all, he was a father first and foremost, and those that knew Stew would know that this would be wholly uncomfortable with this recognition. He built up those around him and that was what his priority was.

To the—Stew's family, I want to thank them for sharing him with us for—over the years. If we can take any advice from this gentleman cowboy, I want to think that the description of his own success is just that. He said—he always said, I never want to be a star; I just love doing what I'm doing. And I encourage all of us in this Chamber and all Manitobans to take these words to heart.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, Stew Clayton passed away on October 14th of this year. I ask for a moment of silence in the memory of Stew Clayton.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Is there leave for a moment of silence? [*Agreed*]

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### Acknowledging Health-Care Professionals

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I want to use my time today to speak a bit about one of my constituents, Kim.

Kim worked the majority of her 40-year health-care career as a pediatric nurse here in Manitoba and chose to leave during the pandemic because it all became too much.

Kim was educated here in Manitoba. She was on shift when the Children's Hospital caught fire. And she reflects upon the cardiac deaths, where she vividly remembers the friends and families of the children who suffered greatly.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, Kim is incredibly articulate and has a beautiful heart. I share this because her story is a lived experience to learn by. I want to be clear that this is not to place blame on any government because this has been a progression over the decades.

For Kim, respecting health-care professionals means acknowledging hard work. It means recognizing that health-care professionals have lives outside of work. And it means having realistic expectations.

When I asked Kim what her wish for health care would be, she said that her biggest wish is that health care gets back to what it was when she first started 40 years ago.

This means respect. It means having enough nurses, housekeepers, health-care aides and physicians. And it means much better end-of-life care. People should not have to wait 'til their literal dying days to be cared for with dignity.

For Kim, health care was never about the money. She strongly believes in the knowledge and challenge that comes with the profession, and she sincerely hopes for people to get involved in our health-care system for the right reasons.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, when Kim resigned during the pandemic, there was no real recognition, as people were not able to get together due to restrictions at the time. My hope is that my colleagues will join me here today to show support and to thank her for 40 years of dedication to Manitoba health care.

Thank you.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Prior to oral questions, I would like to draw members' attention to the public gallery, where we have guests for the honourable member for The Maples (MLA Sandhu): Cory Juan, Neme Juan, Andrew Kuchenski, Mary Kuchenski.

On behalf of all honoured members, we welcome you here to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### West Broadway Shooting Community Safety Concerns

**Ms. Heather Stefanson (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I once—I want to start by once again offering our condolences to the families of the victims who were tragically killed after the horrific shooting that took place on the weekend and—on Langside here in Winnipeg.

Following that tragedy, the NDP Premier indicated that he asked the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) to take action with respect to this issue.

My question for the Premier is: What action has his Minister of Justice taken to ensure that such a tragic event never takes place again?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I want to take a moment before answering the member opposite's question to acknowledge, also, the incident that took place involving a member of law enforcement in which another person's life was lost.

\* (13:50)

You know, this is a stark reminder of the important work that police officers do across Manitoba, the Winnipeg Police Service included. These folks put their lives on the line each and every day to keep the rest of us safe. We thank you for your service to our province, country and to our communities. And we are committed to ensuring that you have the resources and support necessary, as well as a willing government partner to be able to do your jobs effectively, and of course, safely.

I wish a good recovery to the officer involved in the incident that I'm making reference to.

Our Attorney General has been busy since the weekend, in the immediate hours following us learning about the shooting that took place in downtown Winnipeg, to ensure that our partners know that they

have the resources and to begin the work of executing on the plan required to make streets safer in Manitoba.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a first—

**Ms. Stefanson:** Manitobans deserve to feel safe in our communities. The Premier had said that he asked his Minister of Justice to take action with respect to this issue.

So I ask the Premier again: What action has he taken and asked his minister to take on behalf of Manitobans so that such a tragedy doesn't happen again in our communities?

**Mr. Kinew:** Our government is tough on crime and we're tough on the causes of crime. When we deal with issues in the community that pertain to addictions, mental health, homelessness, these are the sorts of conversations where we can talk about prevention and being tough on the causes of crime.

But when we see an incident like the one that took place on Langside over the weekend, the response simply is that we have to be tough on crime. The response has to be with law enforcement. The response has to be with the administration of justice. The response has to be about holding people who do bad things out in these streets accountable.

That is what our government is doing. We are ensuring that there are the resources in place for law enforcement to do their important jobs of keeping us safe, and we are repairing the damage that the PCs caused to the justice system, so that when justice is meted out, it is administered swiftly and holding those accountable who deserve to be held accountable.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary question.

**Ms. Stefanson:** Platitudes and posturing won't save lives in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the Premier himself asked his Minister of Justice to take action. We're simply just asking on behalf of those who lost their lives as a result of this tragic incident. These are mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers here in our community, and they want to know.

The Premier has asked the minister to take action. We're simply just asking on their behalf, on the behalf of all Manitobans: What action have they—has the minister taken?

**Mr. Kinew:** This is an important issue, and it's one that our Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) has been working hard on.

There is an active investigation under way. The contours of our response include providing resources to law enforcement, ensuring that those who administer justice in this province have the necessary resources to do so, but also to being a calm and steady presence in the community, to reassure people that it is a new day in Manitoba and public safety is a top priority for our administration.

When it comes to the specific details, we are going to share information with the public when law enforcement leads the way. We are going to respect the information that they've shared publicly, and once additional information comes to light, we will definitely have more initiatives, programs and announcements all towards supporting an increase to public safety in our great province.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member for Brandon West, on a new question.

#### **Provincial Bail Reform Request for Plan to Address**

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, as a former police chief with many decades of service, I know many, many violent crimes are committed by offenders who are out on bail.

Our PC Party lead the country in the call for federal bail reform. The NDP Premier, during the election, claimed he could reform bail provisions at the provincial level.

Why hasn't he, and when will he?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** We have already started to take action. Bail reform at the provincial level is contained within the mandate letter provided to our Attorney General. He has already taken action internally with the department.

The previous government's approach was to try and pick fights with the federal government. Let me be clear: we are going to hold the federal government accountable to delivering on bail reform, but we will not use that as an excuse for inaction at the provincial level.

We are implementing new policies to ensure that bail is administered in a way that keeps the people of Manitoba safe. We are also going to be investing in justice facilities, such as a new facility in Dauphin, to

ensure that the practice of having gangster university—where small-time criminals go in with addictions and come out with gang affiliations—is put to an end here in Manitoba.

Today is a new day. We have a comprehensive approach that is tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, and I encourage Manitobans to work with our government to make everybody in Manitoba safe.

**Mr. Balcaen:** Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, apparently there's no need to wait for other levels of government to take action.

These were the words of the NDP Premier when speaking on bail reform. However, actions speak louder than words.

So when will this NDP government take action to ensure the safety of all Manitobans?

**Mr. Kinew:** We already have. The first actions of our government included—in the Department of Justice—to begin ensuring that we take action to administer that the way bail is delivered and meted out in Manitoba is done with an eye to making communities safer.

At the same time, we also know that Justice facilities are needed—new facilities, such as the one in Dauphin, but also a new approach within existing facilities. The status quo is not working. The previous government presided for two terms over a deteriorating situation with respect to public safety in our province, and every single indicator backs that up.

Manitobans spoke with one voice: they rejected the approach of the past two terms, and they've asked for a new approach. We are tough on crime; we are tough on the causes of crime and we are bringing in safer streets to all of our communities.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member from Brandon, on a final supplementary question.

**Mr. Balcaen:** Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, this past week, four people were murdered in a mass shooting here in Winnipeg, and I send my heartfelt condolences to all those involved.

The Justice Department is to implement stronger conditions on bail within 100 days, according to this NDP Premier. Today is day 57 of this lofty promise. There's a saying in law enforcement that justice delayed is justice denied. With the very recent uptick in violent crime, time is of the essence.

When will this NDP government come good on their promise to protect all Manitobans?

**Mr. Kinew:** We are acting on our plan to make communities safer.

A number of the National Police Federation's recommendations on improving bail conditions in Canada, with an eye towards making communities safer, can be undertaken at the provincial level. This includes better data sharing; this includes ensuring that there's the right technology in place to monitor bail conditions remotely.

I would point out to the new member for Brandon West that the front bench of MLAs that he sits with today completely ignored all of these recommendations from the National Police Federation. That is not acceptable.

\* (14:00)

We are taking action to implement them right now. I would welcome the member for Brandon West to join with us with this new approach to making communities safer and to reject the failures of the past seven years of the PC former government.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member for Fort Whyte, on a new question.

#### **Fuel Tax Amendment Act Exemption for All Fuel Types**

**MLA Obby Khan (Fort Whyte):** Assistant Deputy Speaker, it is clear the minister has not read his own bill. So I will table it today for him in the House, so maybe he can read it for the first time. I'm also going to table the definition of roadways and motor vehicles, so maybe he can read those, as well, and understand what they mean within this bill.

Where in the bill does it allow for tractors, swathers, combines, off-road vehicles, ATVs, boats and much more within the definition of this bill to take advantage of this gas tax cut?

Will the minister finally agree to make amendments to include those in this bill for all Manitobans?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** You know, I'm grateful for the question. It gives me an opportunity to talk about the important things our government is doing to improve affordability for Manitobans.

You know, for many years, many, many years, Manitobans struggled, seven years, with a government that wasn't paying attention to their needs and certainly was not tuned in to the affordability challenges they were facing. And I know every member on this side of the House has heard from concerned community members about the degree and scope of

the challenges they faced under this previous government.

It's a new day, Mr. Deputy Honourable Speaker. It's a new day. We're bringing affordability improvements to Manitobans. The only question is, will the previous government support this bill, yes or no?

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member for Fort Whyte, on a first supplementary question.

**MLA Khan:** So, once again, no answer from the Minister of Finance. I guess he's going to separate Manitobans and leave them out in the cold.

Today is a very embarrassing day for the Minister of Finance and his entire team. It shows a lack of understanding and consultation. The minister clearly has no concept of how gas tax works in this province. If farmers do what the minister suggests and switch to clear fuel, under the proposed NDP tax cut, they will actually pay 11 cents more because those farmers won't get the tax savings on the marked fuel that the federal carbon tax provides.

Now, NDP math: save 3 cents on their tax cut or pay 14 cents with the federal Liberal carbon tax cut.

Can the minister stand up today and apologize to all Manitobans and admit he has no idea what he's talking about?

**MLA Sala:** Again, it gives me great pleasure to be able to talk about this important affordability initiative we're bringing forward.

You know, again, the member opposite would do well to look at the record of his government over the last seven years. They worked at every turn to increase energy prices on Manitobans. Not only did they bring forward a bill, which sole—the sole focus of which was to raise hydro rates as quickly as possible; they also, for the first time in this province's history, legislated a hydro rate increase at Christmastime several years ago. They also raised taxes on renters in this province. That's their record.

Our record is one that we're bringing forward to bring affordability improvements to Manitobans. The question is, will the previous government support our bill to reduce fuel taxes, yes or no?

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable member for Fort Whyte, on a final supplementary question.

**MLA Khan:** So, no answer again, no answer on the marked fuel tax, no answer on who will be included in this bill.



I guess the minister actually can't read. On this side of the House, we want to be very clear. We have always stood, and we will continue to stand, to lower taxes and good legislation for all Manitobans. Tonight there's going to be hearing by Manitobans at committee.

Will the minister commit to amending the bill to remove all gas taxes for all Manitobans? Will he commit to doing that tonight, yes or no?

**MLA Sala:** Look, this bill is a great new story for Manitobans, and not just Manitobans in our urban centres, but it's a great new story for Manitobans living in our rural and northern communities especially, especially for the families of farmers who use a lot of fuel to get to work, to drive to school. This bill will provide significant benefits to the families of farmers and our producers in this province.

What's the record of the members opposite? Making life more expensive with a 300 per cent increase to their Crown lease costs.

They would do well to take a close look at their record. Mr. Deputy Honourable Speaker, we are very proud to be bringing hundreds of dollars of savings for Manitobans with this bill.

Will the members opposite support, yes or no?

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member for Portage la Prairie, on a new question.

#### **Fuel Tax Amendment Act Exemption for All Fuel Types**

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** This NDP government continues to support the unfair federal carbon tax that places a burden on our farmers, and on top of that, the tax holiday bill that provides no substance or clarity for those that are feeding the world.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, when will this government take responsibility for treating our agriculture producers like second-class citizens?

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The Honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood—*[interjection]* Order.

**Hon. Nello Altomare (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** C'est un grand plaisir pour élever le débat ici dans la Chambre.

#### **Translation**

*It is a pleasure to elevate the debate here in the Chamber.*

#### **English**

And I will say this: the entire campaign was one of division that was waged by this PC bench, and they continue today with their line of questioning that is really, really quite offensive.

Manitobans rejected this narrative, and when that member gets up and continues the narrative, it allows them to show their true colours.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable member—*[interjection]* Order.

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

**MLA Bereza:** Our farmers are being punished for growing a bumper crop, according to the federal carbon tax supported by this NDP government, as well as the tax holiday bill.

Clear examples of this: Try to harvest my crop? Sorry, only on vehicles being on the road. Taking off a bumper crop? Sorry, you're going to have to pay a carbon tax on drying that bumper crop. Buying groceries for my family? Sorry, farmers won't have money left to feed his family with these high costs.

Will this minister remove all gas taxes on all types of fuel permanently?

**MLA Altomare:** I just want to remind that member that when he's talking about punishment, that kind of language, as far as when we're using that in the House, that is really quite a powerful piece of language to use.

We can then reflect on their seven years in government where they increased, I believe, jacked up Crown leases by 300 per cent or more on who? Farmers. On farmers.

You know what? It bears repeating that when they get up in the House and continue on this path of division, what they're showing, again, Monsieur le président adjoint *[Mr. Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker]*, their true colours.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a final supplementary question.

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, thank you again for not answering that question.

Tonight, we will be hearing from Manitobans at the committee.

Will this minister commit to what the NDP promised during their campaign or will they break yet another promise in just their first two months?

Will the minister commit to amending the bill to remove all tax on all gas types: gasoline, diesel, propane, natural gas, for all Manitobans, and make it permanent?

\* (14:10)

**MLA Altomare:** I'll say it in English at this point. I'll repeat it in English, as well. It is quite clear that Manitobans heard their message on October 3rd. Their message was one of division, one that this member continues to articulate in this House.

I can tell you farmers are really going to be appreciative, and are appreciative of the efforts that we're going to put forth to tackle the real crisis of affordability. I want to thank the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) for bringing forth a bill that tackles right at the pump, right when you pull up and fill up those jerry cans that go into ATVs, that go into snowmobiles, that go into grain dryers, and that will be benefitting—

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Order. Order. The member's time has expired.

I recognize the member for Midland on a new question.

#### **Fuel Tax Amendment Act Request for Permanent Reduction**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** We have heard a lot today about this hat—tax pause will impact our critical farmers and how they are left out. But this NDP government has also left out many unanswered questions from urban and suburban families as well.

My town is eight kilometres from the city, majority of residents commute into Winnipeg for their jobs. Travel is necessary. Cost of living isn't going down any time soon, so as this is the only affordability commitment this government has made to Manitobans.

Does the Minister of Families sincerely think affordability will not be a concern after June 30th or will she stand up for struggling Manitobans and demand this NDP government remove all gas tax from all gas types for all Manitobans?

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I want to thank the member for an important question on affordability.

I would ask the member, I knew—I know that the member is new to the Chamber, but I would actually encourage the member to look at the front bench; her front bench there that did so much damage when they were in government.

And, actually, when they were in government, increased hydro rates by 20 per cent in the midst of a global pandemic, when more Manitobans were at home. What did the front bench do? They jacked up the rates of Manitoba Hydro.

One of the things that we're doing for affordability is we're going to be freezing Manitoba hydro rates.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member for Midland, on a first supplementary question.

**Mrs. Stone:** Manitobans are struggling right now, and this pause is going to end on June 30th.

So, will the Minister of Families stand up to her colleagues to ensure that the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) write the bill in effect until inflation is not a problem for Manitoba parents and Manitoba families, yes or no?

**MLA Fontaine:** I remember a time in this Chamber when members opposite were in what is really—we can, I'm sure, can all agree—a failed government. They actually had a member of their caucus, the former member for Radisson, who got up when our caucus was fighting to feed children in an affordability crisis, they had that member who got up and said we're not in the job of feeding children as government.

The reality is that the former failed PC government didn't want to do government, and when they tried to do government, they tried to do it on a cheap, which included not feeding children.

On this side of the House, we believe in feeding children, and we're going to do that.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member for Midland on a final supplementary question.

**Mrs. Stone:** I have heard little reassurance that I can take that to my mom groups and other parents. The take-away from this NDP government is that they want Manitobans to trust them but are offering no guarantee that affordability will be taken seriously after June 30th.

If the NDP government is truly concerned about affordability, why not commit to not just a tax holiday, but a tax retirement?

So, will the minister retire the tax permanently and amend the bill to reflect that?

**MLA Fontaine:** Assistant Deputy Speaker, I just want to congratulate you on your appointment here as well, and you are doing a very, very good job today.

I want to just say this: as the Minister of Families, of which I take the responsibility very, very seriously, and I'm very honoured to have this role. I want to give a shout-out to our staff. Our staff are working so hard in ensuring that Manitoba families are assured that their government, their NDP government, are working hard on behalf of them.

We understand that there's an affordability crisis. We understand that mothers are concerned about food—putting food on the table for their children, and we have committed to a universal school nutrition program. And our staff are working very, very hard, alongside all of our team members on this side of the House.

We understand and we're with Manitobans.

Miigwech.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member for Roblin, on a new question.

#### **Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills Request for Manitoba Exemption**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** Manitobans need long-term help they can count on when it comes to affordability. As a parent I know how quickly costs add up to—add up for families. But the cost of heating your home is non-negotiable.

The rest of the country, including the NDP Premier in British Columbia, have fought to remove the carbon tax off of home heating. But this NDP Premier (Mr. Kinew) won't stand up for Manitobans.

Will this NDP government stop collecting Trudeau's carbon tax on home heating today, yes or no?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** I appreciate the important question again about affordability in this province, and as we've already had a chance to talk about here today, our government is intending on taking real action to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

And that's after many, many long years, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, of a government that just didn't take action, and that, frankly, I think most Manitobans recognize, wasn't connecting with their challenges, couldn't understand their challenges and

seemed to be more connected to the interests of millionaires than they were of regular, everyday Manitobans.

Things have changed in this province. We're bringing forward a whole sweep of affordability initiatives, and we're looking forward to making life more affordable for everyone in this province.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable member for Roblin, on a first supplementary question.

**Mrs. Cook:** More than five times in the past few weeks the NDP Premier and his ministers have met with Trudeau's officials, including the Deputy Prime Minister. They haven't once used this opportunity to stand up for Manitobans, leaving Manitobans in the cold on home heating.

Will the Minister of Finance use one of their weekly meetings as part of the NDP-Liberal coalition to get the carbon tax off of Manitobans' home heating bills?

**MLA Sala:** I appreciate the question. We are proud, on this side of the House, to be collaborative instead of fighting against the federal government, and the by-product of that collaboration brought \$500 million of new investment in Hydro in a span of a few short weeks.

And we've also been able to bring in federal dollars to support a geothermal program that will reduce the costs of home heating for Manitobans.

That's real action, making life more affordable for Manitobans. One of my colleagues yesterday said it well. They cut; we build, Mr. Honourable Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable member for Roblin, on a final supplementary question.

**Mrs. Cook:** The carbon tax is going to go up every year under the NDP-Liberal coalition. The NDP could provide permanent, meaningful relief for Manitobans by refusing to collect the carbon tax for their friends in Ottawa.

It's too late for them to be a leader on this issue, but it's not too late for them to finally stand up for Manitobans.

Will the NDP Premier and minister do the right thing at committee tonight and amend their gas tax legislation to include taking the carbon tax off of natural gas home heating, yes or no?

\* (14:20)

**MLA Sala:** Look, something important here the members opposite need to be cognizant of: they were in government for seven years and were unwilling to take this action on the fuel tax, or any other action for that matter.

Things have changed in this province. We're bringing in a whole bunch of actions that will help to reduce the cost of living for Manitobans, including a fuel tax holiday, which is going to come in on January 1st, should the members opposite decide to support; a hydro rate freeze. We're also bringing forward geothermal investments that will reduce the costs of heating.

I know—I think it's really important to point out that our initiatives, for example, the geothermal heat initiative and our commitment to EV rebates will help Manitobans to electrify and thereby avoid carbon taxation.

That's real movements in advance to help improve affordability—

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Order. The honourable Minister of Finance's time has expired.

Member for Tyndall Park, on a new question.

#### **Southern Health Physician Shortage ER Hours of Operation and Obstetric Services**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Yesterday I asked a question to the Health Minister on the inconsistent schedules of rural ERs.

I'm now tabling a media article from yesterday where Southern Health made the announcement that it was further shortening its ER hours and shutting down its obstetric services because of a shortage of doctors.

What is this government doing now to restore emergency services back to normal in the Southern Health region?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I want to thank the member for Tyndall Park for once again raising a question on the No. 1 issue that matters to the people of Manitoba, which is health care. That's opposed to the members opposite, who keep raising questions about our plan to save families money starting on January 1st. I welcome them to keep repeating our message.

When it comes to rural health care, our team is hard at work, led by our Minister of Health to ensure

that more physicians come to rural Manitoba, to ensure that more nurses come to rural Manitoba, to ensure that more lab techs and X-ray techs set up shop in rural Manitoba.

It is going to take years to fix the damage to rural health care that was caused by the failed PC administration, but that work has started, that work is under way and it is a new day in this great province.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The member for Tyndall Park, on a first supplementary question.

**MLA Lamoureux:** One of the biggest obstacles to timely access to health care is ensuring that we are retaining enough health-care professionals to live and practise rurally.

This is why it's very concerning that just yesterday, Southern Health announced that they are going to be shutting down their obstetric services as a result of a shortage of doctors.

Will this government give a clear timeline—is it truly years?—on when the residents of Ste. Anne will regain these services in their communities?

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable minister of—sorry—the honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care.

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, retention is one of the most important aspects of health-care human capacity, not just in Manitoba but certainly across the country.

And, you know, something that we all are very well aware of but in my capacity as being the Health Minister now, when I've seen the data of what happened under the previous government, unfortunately, our province went through seven years of a PC government that did nothing to address retention; they didn't take it seriously at all.

Our government, from day one, has taken steps to retain the expertise we have in rural health care in Manitoba, and we're going to continue to do that very important, critical work.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a final supplementary question.

### **Rural and Northern Physician Shortage Family Medicine Residency Grant**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** We know that one of the most important issues to rural Manitobans is having timely access to emergency and medical care.

A survey from AMM found that more than 90 per cent of its municipalities are reporting doctor shortages.

I'd like to table a page out of the annual report from the Department of Health, which shows that family medicine residency grant for rural and northern physicians was underspent by over \$1 million this past year.

Will this government commit today to restoring and increasing the rural and northern family medicine grant?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I'd like to thank the member for Tyndall Park for reminding this House of the previous government's cuts to health care, the previous government's cuts to physician retention and recruitment. And the impacts of that are being felt and reflected in what that member has brought forward today.

And, unfortunately, years of damage to our health-care system are going to take years of very hard work to fix and address. But our team, our government, is committed to doing that work, and we have already started doing that since being sworn into office.

I also want to say that while members opposite heckle me on this issue, and they try to heckle me when it comes to us going out and listening to front-line health-care workers, Manitobans can trust that our government is serious. We're listening to them and we're going to work with them where the previous government turned their backs on them outright.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** The honourable member for Assiniboia, with a new question for the honourable minister of—just new question. New question, member for Assiniboia.

### **Grace Hospital Emergency Room Acute-Care-Bed Announcement**

**MLA Nellie Kennedy (Assiniboia):** Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, I was so excited to be with the Minister of Health earlier today to announce 31 new acute beds at the Grace Hospital. The progress the minister has made already in just over one month is truly commendable. The Grace Hospital, my neighbourhood hospital, has struggled over the last seven

years as resources were strained and staff were overworked and underappreciated by the PC government.

Can the Minister of Health tell us more about the 31 new beds announced today and how this announcement is going to improve the situation at the Grace Hospital?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I want to thank my colleague for this wonderful question and for being a great MLA for the constituents of Assiniboia. She's doing a great job, a great job.

I was proud to be able to announce our government's commitment to standing of new beds and essentially an entirely new family medicine program at the Grace Hospital, something they've been asking for, for years, but was never actioned by the previous government. And I have to say it was not only fun to join Health leadership and front-line health-care workers to make that announcement, which will improve capacity and take pressure off of their emergency rooms, but there were nursing students at that announcement today.

And when I spoke with them after our announcement was made, they let me know that they're very, very excited to get to work after they—

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Order. The honourable minister's time has expired.

Member for Spruce Woods, on a new question.

### **Carbon Tax, Ministerial Responses and Fuel Tax Government Management Record**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** There's a bit of a confusion on that side, Deputy Speaker. First, we have the carbon tax flip-flop: the Finance Minister said yes; the Premier said no, then he said yes. Now we don't know.

Yesterday the Health Minister tried to answer questions for the Environment Minister. The Environment Minister answered questions for the Infrastructure Minister. The Minister for Education said Oak Lake and Dauphin are close together. The member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) said they were privatizing MPI; then she said they weren't. The day before that she tried to close up shop at 4 p.m. The Finance Minister said he won't amend his fuel tax bill, but he will include farmers even though they aren't included in the bill as it's currently written.

So the only question we have left is: Does anyone on that side of the House have any idea what's actually going on?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I just want to point out that many members opposite, including those who used to work in this building as failed political staff, claim to live in rural Manitoba, but they actually live in the constituencies of myself and the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) in accommodation that is paid for by you, the taxpaying public.

\* (14:30)

But I'll tell you who's really doing the work: it's the member for Brandon East (Mr. Simard) and myself who were meeting with a roomful of rural councillors from the constituency of Turtle Mountain and Spruce Woods. And you know what they told us yesterday? They said, keep making life more affordable by cutting the provincial fuel tax and keep fixing health care.

And I've got a message for southwest Manitoba: We are going to continue delivering each and every day on behalf of you and everyone else in the province of Manitoba.

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

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Order.

The time—*[interjection]* Order. Order. The time for oral questions has expired.

Petitions?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Would you please resume debate on Throne Speech?

### THRONE SPEECH (Fourth Day of Debate)

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** It has been announced that we are continuing debate on the address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration (MLA Marcelino), who has eight minutes remaining.

Is there leave for the debate to stand in the name of the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration?

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Leave has been denied.

The debate will not remain standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration (MLA Marcelino).

The honourable minister for Selkirk—*[interjection]*—the honourable member. My apology. The honourable member for Selkirk.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, as I rise in the House today, I wish to share my excitement to be a part of this institution. To gather the right words to express my thoughts is a challenge, as I fear I might 'nart' articulate the deeper meanings I wish to relay.

The moment this magnificent building comes into my view during my commute, I am reminded of the extremely unique opportunity that I have been bestowed by the people of Selkirk. It's a view of utter beauty and splendor, an engineering and architectural masterpiece, proving as unique as the MLAs who gather within the walls.

As I walk up the steps, I recognize the importance the Manitoba government has for all the people who live here in this beautiful province and for the generations yet to come. As we ascend these steps to perform our duties, may we be reminded of our obligation to allow and encourage others to rise to their full potential and remove the barriers that keep them down.

As I am greeted by security, I am aware of our responsibility for the safety of all citizens of Manitoba and how we must protect them from harm or oppression.

May our first interaction in this building be that of protection and awareness. May we take comfort that the security team protects our democracy and ensures that we can govern without threat or physical harm or violence. May we build on that safety and ensure that all Manitobans never spend a moment in fear or oppression. May we stand up in the face of adversity and deny hate and violence.

As I walk these halls, I am reminded of the MLAs that came before me; leaders who were elected to represent their constituents.

May we never lose sight of the importance of the job that we were given. May we work hard to show the votes were not cast in error. May we walk these halls together with our heads held high, knowing that we are doing the job that Manitobans sent us here to do. May we work hard to represent all the people of our ridings and leave no one out.

As I enter my office, I am steadfast in the pursuit in making this world a better place: a place without violence; a place that celebrates our differences; a place to thrive regardless of who you are or what makes you different; a place that recognises hard work and rewards those who wish to work for a better life; a place to worship whatever god you choose; and a place to love who you wish.

I hope to break down the barriers and help unite all Manitobans to come together as one. As I enter the PC caucus, I am overtaken with a sense of pride and a feeling of family; the assurance of being part of a real team, a team that recognises the importance of every member. There's a tremendous respect between caucus and staff and staff and caucus.

In a world where knowledge is power, I am grateful for our re-elected members and returning staff for all that they provide to our PC team, and I am proud of the newly elected members that have chosen to take this journey alongside me.

I am surrounded with decades of knowledge, experience, expertise and passion from our returning team, and the unbridled excitement and determination that our newly elected team members bring with their unique skill sets.

I have the—I have great respect for our leader, and I thank her for putting her trust in me to be a part of this team, and I truly appreciate the role she has allowed me. The position of Advanced Education and Training critic is an honour of itself.

Words could never express how I feel about this PC team and each member of it. I know our work has just started, but I can't wait to see what we will accomplish.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, as I enter this Legislative Chamber, I am cognizant of its rich history and tradition. It's very surreal to be a part of something of this nature. Having the opportunity to not only be a part of history, but to actually impact the future. We have the fate of the province in these 57 seats.

May we treat each other with respect and dignity, may we keep our differences professional and may we work together to ensure that we respect the House and all that it represents.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, as I sat in this Chamber during the last new MLA training session, I was impressed with the tremendous effort that was

put forward to teach us new MLAs everything we need to succeed.

I want to thank everyone who had a hand in the preparation and delivery of such valuable training session. A special thanks to Rick Yarish for getting this done for us. Above and beyond the fundamentals of the training, I learned many other things. I've seen first hand the passion and the professionalism that all the presenters have for their roles.

I witnessed the enjoyment that they have for being a part of this institution, and I was able to see the dedication these real heroes of the Assembly have for democracy, many of whom have spent many decades ensuring we govern according to the rules set forth.

As equally important was the ability to see our political adversaries as fellow humans, hard-working individuals who set out and worked hard to get elected. For that, you all have my respect and admiration.

I had the ability to meet many of you during these few days of training, and I am very grateful for that opportunity. We have all worked very hard to get here. We have all sacrificed time from our loved ones and from our friends.

It is not an easy road we chose to walk down, and we will all stumble along the way. I only hope you pick yourself up with dignity and grace and perhaps a little humility. Be assured that you deserve to be here, for it is the will of the people that got you elected.

We have a real opportunity to do great things for Manitobans. We can put aside the petty differences and work together to accomplish what we were elected to do. We can stop blaming each other for the past failures and work together on the successes of the future.

In only a few days sitting in this House, I am ashamed with some of the behaviour. Where has basic decency gone? Shouting across the aisles may make for good TV for some, but for most, it comes across what it is: just plain childish.

\* (14:40)

This disgraceful behaviour only makes us look poorly in the eyes of those who truly matter: our voters, our friends, our neighbours, and anyone who has basic respect and understanding for their fellow humans.

I couldn't imagine this is the image we want for ourselves. Why do we find it so difficult to give true and meaningful answers? We should be proud of the

positions we take and encourage suggestions to make those ideas better. I know this is a new concept and we may not want change, but with change comes opportunity, and opportunity brings new ideas forward. Working to satisfy the needs of both sides of the House will ensure the desires of all Manitobans will be met.

I hope that the exuberance I feel never goes away. I hope I never take for granted this tremendous honour that has been bestowed upon me. I hope I always look to each other, at each other, and everyone in this room, with the greatest of respect, knowing you are performing your duties with the utmost of integrity.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, getting here was no easy task, and—as I am certain for everybody in this room can attest. The long hours away from family, friends, work; the daunting tasks that never seem to get completed; the regulations and red tape to work through; the thousands and thousands of doors knocked upon as you try to sell yourself; the heated debates at the doors, over the phones and within the town halls all take their toll on your physical and mental health.

This was a job we signed up for, the job we wished for and the job we were determined to hold. Putting your name forward often included bringing along your family, whether they asked for it or wanted it. It cast your family members into the spotlight, a light they didn't need or want shone upon them. Now they will be defending your party's position on all the hot-button topics. They will forever be known as the MLA's spouse or child. These are the real heroes of the MLAs who sit in this House. Without our families, we would be truly alone.

Most importantly, I wish to thank the voters of Selkirk for allowing me the opportunity to get here.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Minister–Speaker, sorry—I support—the support I receive from my family made every day worth the effort: my wife Janice, for never doubting me and always encouraging me to be myself and show the world what I have to offer; my daughter Hailey, for her support and for her teaching me about the challenges people with disabilities and their families face; my son Harlan, for stepping up and running the family business and always being there when I need him. I'm a truly blessed man with the family that I have.

But those blessings don't stop there. I built a team that outperformed and exceeded on every matrix facing us. We were a ragtag, very small group that did

really big things. My official agent, Marcel Lemire knew absolutely nothing about political campaigns, but what he lacked in knowledge, he excelled in determination and perseverance. At the age of 74, he can work circles around most people I know. Although his title was official agent, he wore many hats and always completed tasks with the utmost of attention to detail. I could never repay the thousands of hours of hard work he gave me.

My campaign manager Robert Austen worked for my family business nearly 20 years ago. Since that time, he had gotten married, moved to BC, started a wonderful family and returned with his family back home to Manitoba.

When I decided to run for politics, I wanted someone whom I respected, someone with integrity and someone who has the same work ethic and the same sense of right and wrong as I have. I was delighted, after deliberation with his family, he accepted the position. Rob's thousands of hours of directing the campaign led me to victory. His time and sacrifice can never be repaid.

Maureen Hill is the epitome of class. She understates her importance this team—in this team and her direct role in getting me elected. Make no question about it; without Maureen's help, I would not be here.

Her excitement and spirit brought me up when I was feeling low. Her smile and kindness pushed me through the darkest of days. Her work ethic and ability to walk and knock for hours a day, day after day after day after day, makes her one of my superheroes. I did not know Maureen prior to the election, but I am honoured that she joined my team and I'm very proud to call her a friend today. I am extremely happy I get to see her every day I walk into our caucus office.

Bill Rivers had the biggest impact in my campaign. Bill's a very close friend and very well respected. He helped me make my decision. I appreciate everything that Bill has done for me. He is truly one of a kind. Whether he's donating funds to the campaign, driving me door to door in the country or being a sounding board for me, every effort he makes is cherished.

Rick Rivers, Bill's brother, is another truly exceptional man that always gives of himself—his time, his wallet—while expecting nothing in return. A true gentleman that anybody would be proud to call a friend.

For Marc Gauvin and Lyle Thompson for raising funds and knocking on the doors, your efforts are truly



appreciated. To Janet Lemire, Louise and Al Thompson for running the office. I am honoured by your support. To Stan Halbesma for knocking on doors with me, you are one class act. I am proud to call you my friend.

To my MP James Bezan for always encouraging me and treating me with dignity and respect. When you are around, I know I am in the presence of greatness.

Honourable Deputy Speaker Assistant, this team was very small, but success would not have been possible without the efforts put forward from these people. The saying, all gave some and some gave all, is definitely true here. I received the greatest gift one can receive, and that's the gift of their time. That is something you can only give once and you can never take back. I am humbled to receive such precious gifts from these individuals.

My journey is a long and winding path that's gotten me here today. I spent most of my childhood in Winnipeg, and have attended several schools along the way. When I was 15 my parents purchased a house in the country near Garson, Manitoba. At the age of 16, I left my parents' home and headed back to Winnipeg. At 16, I travelled back and forth from Winnipeg to Selkirk for school during the day, and I worked at a machine shop from 4 p.m. 'til midnight every day.

During that time, I started my first business, appropriately named Lawn Boy Services. The company provided weed treatment and fertilizer applications to lawns in the Selkirk area. The company taught me so much. It taught me how to work with government regulations, sales, marketing, financing, record-keeping, purchasing, equipment repairs and how to be a good operator. And it instilled a deep work-deep-rooted work ethic.

I excelled in the machine shop, where I learned to—how to operate drill presses, tapping machines, to operating a manual lathe and a mill. I quickly advanced to computer-controlled equipment, where I went from machine operator to machine set-up person and machine programmer. I enjoyed my job and looked forward to making and shaping parts out of steel every day.

After suffering a back injury, I can no longer stand for long periods and I was forced to find another line of work. So back to school I went. I enrolled in Red River College in their commercial-industrial sales and marketing program. I was quickly hired at a local foundry as an inside sales co-ordinator. Within

six months, I was promoted to district sales manager, and at 24 years old, I was the youngest district sales manager in the history of the company.

The job was amazing. I had the opportunity to travel all of North America servicing the needs of the customers. Bringing together my machining skills and my foundry knowledge, I was able to help companies reduce costs and improve product design.

\* (14:50)

My real enjoyment came when I was asked to assist in the design of major agricultural, transportation and construction equipment. Companies would call upon me to help them in the design of the parts before they hit the market. This often required late nights, and I even jumped in to provide machining service for prototyping when time was of the essence.

I left the foundry business to be a sales manager for a local machine shop where, after four months, I became the vice president and general manager. Within four years I was able to grow the sales of the company 2,000 per cent.

Wanting to spend more time with my family, I started Janice Manufacturing Incorporated, where we designed and manufactured specialty products such as helicopter engine stands or automatic gate systems for the railway industry.

In 2001, we launched Kodiak Shelter Systems, a division that designs, manufactures and installs building systems. We have travelled all over North America, including Hawaii, and I have enjoyed every aspect of my career and look forward to the next chapter.

I hope I was able to articulate the true feelings to each and every one here.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Order, please.

I would ask for the members' attention for a brief moment. We are experiencing some static through the Hansard sound system. This is often caused by electronic devices, particularly cellphones, resting on members' desks by the microphones.

Please, could all members be cognizant of this and try to keep mobile devices away from the microphones. This will ensure that we continue to have the highest possible audio quality for members participating in debate.

I thank all members for their co-operation.

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** It is my honour to rise in this Chamber to speak to this government's Throne Speech in my inaugural address as the elected member for Waverley.

The speech, delivered by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor, beautifully encapsulated the essence of our campaign and charted out the difficult yet rewarding work ahead of us.

In talking to Waverley residents, I heard of the same core concerns repeated over and over. Our fractured health-care system, the need for more child-care spots are top of mind for many families in the area.

And, as a first responder, long-time Winnipeg resident and parent myself, I was encouraged by the thoughtful insights on how we might tackle some of these issues.

I know that the Throne Speech's commitments to creating new child-care spaces and reopening the Victoria hospital's emergency room are welcome news to my constituents and gave us all a new-found hope about the future.

There's so many folks who helped me build these relationships and the trust with the residents of Waverley, and I'd like to acknowledge their work, beginning with all those who helped with the campaign.

So, Kieran Rice-Lampert; Chris Mattock; Grace Szucs; Matthew and Rebecca Harder; my mom and dad, Kathy and Vic Pankratz; my brother, Jason Pankratz, and his partner, Alexandra Garrido; Sandy and Gillian Taronno; Geung and Lauren Kroeker-Lee; Conally and Angela MacLean; JP and Lindsay Hoe; Jamie and Tara Taronno; Carolina Stecher; Susannah Huet; Greg Parent; Fahad Riaz; Mike Kelly; Gustavo Garcia; Myron Martens; Ross Brownlee and all the volunteers who came alongside me to door knock and call on my behalf. You folks have taught me so much and are truly the reason why I'm standing here today.

And many of my fellow NDP candidates also came out to help, but I want to recognize quickly the MLA for Fort Garry in particular. The member knocked on thousands of doors, all over Fort Richmond and Waverley. His support was invaluable to our campaign.

Many of those who volunteered alongside me were former bandmates from Winnipeg's music scene. Winnipeg has long been a leader in the arts, home to many prolific poets, authors, musicians, dancers and more.

And as a musician myself, I know the importance of ensuring Manitoba remains a desirable home for

our artists so they can continue enliven our communities and express what it means to be Manitoban. Musicians across the province understood what was at stake in this election, and I couldn't have done this without them.

I also want to thank my colleagues from the Winnipeg fire and paramedic service who helped make this win possible. I was humbled when the International Association of Fire Fighters and United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg agreed to endorse my campaign, and when many of my fellow first responders found time amid their 'baze'-busy day jobs, as well as their busy night jobs, to volunteer alongside me.

Tom Bilous and Derek Balcaen, along with the rest of the executive at UFFW, put countless volunteer hours into this campaign, and I can't thank them enough.

I also received the support of several other unions. To my friends at MFL, CUPE, LiUNA, ATU, Unifor, thank you very much.

And to my family: my wife is incredible. We've been a team for more than half of our lives, and none of this could have been accomplished without her. The work she put in behind the scenes is staggering, and I'm overwhelmingly grateful for the limitless energy she has for our family, our community and her career. Her ability to find just the right moment to give that little bit of extra support, on top of everything else she does every day, is something I will never take for granted. My three kids inspire me to do this work and have already sacrificed so much for us to be able to embark on this journey.

Finally, I'd like to thank all the residents of Waverley for their engagement with my campaign and continued investment after the election. The conversations I had at the door were meaningful, substantive and will be a part of all the decisions I make in this position. I promise you I have been listening very carefully and will bring forward the concerns and issues specific to the community.

Honourable Speaker—or, Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, until recently, I never saw a political future for myself. Being on the front lines as a firefighter and paramedic, I had the great privilege to help countless people on their worst days. It is difficult, yet fulfilling work.

But, like so many of my colleagues here in the Chamber who also came from front-line work in health care, justice and education, I was attuned to the many ways that our government could better support front-line workers.

Through my experiences as a firefighter and paramedic, I have developed a unique perspective on the fragility and resilience of the human spirit. These past years have exposed me to the realities of people's lives in their most challenging moments, giving me a profound appreciation for the importance of empathy in our work as lawmakers.

Seeing individuals in crisis at moments when they need help the most has taught me lessons that can't be learned from books or degrees or debates in the Legislature, and it has shown me that our society often judges people on their worst days and perpetuates inequalities, instead of providing the support needed to help them recover and repair their lives.

This perspective is what I will bring to my role as MLA for Waverley. It's the backbone of my commitment to Manitobans and all the members sitting here today.

I have been on the front lines. I have seen where our policies fall short. I understand that what we do here affects real lives, and this understanding will guide my approach to legislation.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, what we heard in the Throne Speech was a call for unity. For us to come together and get our hands into the legislative work that will lift everyone up.

Across our campaign in Waverley, we heard that people are tired of divisive and polarizing rhetoric from their representatives. Instead, we need to focus on evidence-based approaches to the many challenges facing our province.

For years, we have understood that homelessness, addictions and mental health are all sides of the same coin. We have understood the positive effects of harm-reduction strategies that don't demand immediate sobriety from the people we are walking with. But for years, this Chamber refused to put that evidence into practice.

People are complex. We need provincial systems that work with front-line workers to meet people where they're at. We need provincial systems that respond to people with dignity, not ones that push people to the margins because they are unable to meet us on our terms and do what we want rather than what would be best for them.

So, as outlined in the Throne Speech, this government is committed to working with community organizations to help shelters across Manitoba operate 24-7 with sufficient resources to meet the needs of our neighbours.

You know, one story comes to mind. Working as a fire paramedic, I reversed an overdose for the same patient struggling with opioid addiction multiple times over the course of multiple months. And every time we reversed the overdose, they would wake up, apologize—and think about that: they would get up and apologize; that's where they were at in their life—and say they wanted to get help. We tried multiple times to help them find that help.

We became friends. We went so many times, that the patient knew me on a first-name basis. The last time I saw them alive, they were sitting in the back of a police car and they called out to me by name.

Then, there was a longer break in responding to their home—multiple months. We all hoped that they had received proper treatment. But this is the problem with being a first responder. Sometimes you don't get to see what's going on behind the scenes.

One morning at the beginning of my shift, we got a call for an overdose at their address. And that morning, unfortunately, there was nothing we could do to help them.

This story is close to my heart, and there is no doubt that it will drive the work that I do here in this Chamber.

\* (15:00)

We need to tackle issues holistically and with a harm-reduction lens. My friend who didn't make it, and so many others, bounce in and out of our provincial systems, putting them at risk.

As a front-line responder, I know that transfer points between two different organizations are always the most dangerous places, where careful administration and collaboration are needed to ensure that everyone is on the same page and that important details are not lost.

We see this when paramedics bring patients to hospitals, when officers help people find community resource centres or when formerly-incarcerated folks are released on bail.

With the newly created Ministry of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, and under the guidance of the incredible member for Point Douglas (Ms. Smith), I know that we are on the right track already. And I should say the honourable member for Point Douglas.

We will move away from a system where the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing. Under the former government, the organizations responsible

for supporting Manitobans had such narrow mandates that no one could appreciate the full picture or develop meaningful trust with those accessing services. But with this new department, I am very excited for what we can create in the next four years.

The increased investments in essential services our government will make, including 40 new firefighters in Waverly West, and the province-wide target for 200 new paramedics, also gives cause for optimism. The best strategy to tackle homelessness and addictions cannot succeed without a robust and dedicated network of first responders and community support workers.

The Throne Speech laid out our plan to reopen the Victoria emergency room as one of this government's first major investments in health care. And this was the No. 1 concern for residents of Waverly when I was out door-knocking.

Winnipeg is a growing city, particularly along its outer edges, and we cannot keep believing that three hospitals' emergency rooms are going to be enough. Rural Manitoba is also growing, but over the past several years we saw medical services for communities across the province centralized in downtown Winnipeg.

Patients who are rushed to Health Sciences Centre from rural communities, particularly Indigenous reserves, often find that their family members are forced to travel great distances to see them, not knowing where they will stay when they arrive in Winnipeg. This is a problem. When people receive care far from home, it makes it almost impossible for loved ones to be part of the healing process, and we know this is incredibly important in that process.

As I mentioned at the beginning of my time, many of us are newly elected members who never had any intention of running for office. But after these past seven and a half years of neglect and cuts for educators, for nurses, for first responders and other front-line workers, many of us knew we needed to make a change.

I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize the member opposite representing Brandon West as a fellow front-line worker, and thank him for his years of service.

It does disappoint me, however, that he is now representing a party that spent their time in government freezing municipal funding and redirecting funding away from important front-line services, and in so doing, defunding law enforcement, fire and paramedic services.

So, hopefully, he can provide some much-needed perspective on what it is to be a front-line worker to his party, and I very much look forward to collaborating with him in our new roles to make certain that in the future, our law enforcement, firefighters and paramedics are adequately supported.

Over the past few weeks in this Chamber, I've also heard a few comments from members opposite and, you know, across the board, about the newness of this government and its members, maybe painting it in a negative light. That somehow it makes us less qualified to speak on issues of importance or to be good legislators.

I want to remind everyone that while the 42nd Legislature was in session, the class of 2023 were teachers shaping young minds, farmers putting meals on plates, nurses providing care with unwavering dedication and firefighters responding to emergencies across the province.

We saw the way the previous government's policies affected Manitobans and said that it was enough. I would argue that those who write policy and pass legislation are not the most knowledgeable about policy. Rather, it's those whose lives are shaped by the policy decisions who need to be considered experts.

We need to draw—[interjection]—thank you. We need to draw on each other's strengths and experience to be the effective leaders Manitobans sent us here to be.

Since this is my inaugural address, I'd like to wax philosophical for just a moment.

I recently read David Robertson's *The Theory of Crows*, recommended to me by my father, who is sitting up in the gallery.

A powerful story, and I'd like to pull a quote to conclude my address today: Regret covers everything. It's thick like fog. It's hard to see through. Your grandfather says that he doesn't regret anything because you can't change what happens. I don't know if I believe him. I think we all wish that we could go back and do at least one thing over again.

In life, we sometimes find ourselves navigating through that thick fog of regret; decisions made that cast shadows on our path forward. These words resonate with the universal truth that, in our pursuits as people, and specifically in this moment, in this space, as members of government, we're bound to make choices that we may later recognize to be wrong.

It speaks to the acceptance of our fallibility and the inevitability of past decisions. It's a call to confront

regret with grace and acknowledge that, as individuals and as a society, we're not immune to missteps. I say this to members on all sides of the Chamber.

It's also important to recognize the vulnerability in this acknowledgment. This shared yearning for second chances emphasizes our collective humanity. It encourages a humility that appreciates the imperfections in our political narrative and fosters a spirit of learning and understanding.

As we work our way through the political landscape, I'd encourage us all to carry with us the humility to learn from our regrets, to embrace the lessons they offer, and to build a more compassionate and empathetic future.

In acknowledging our shared fallibility, we open the door to a brand of politics that grows—that values growth, understanding and the collective wisdom found in those choices that we make.

It's a great honour to represent the people of Waverley in this Chamber. I look forward to working closely with my constituents and the members of this Chamber in the years to come.

I've also had the pleasure of connecting with our military service members and their families in my role as special envoy for military affairs and have already begun working together so that Manitobans will never forget the bravery of our active service members, our veterans and those who gave their lives for our country.

Over the next four years I know that our team will work to fulfill the trust that Manitobans have given us. By working together, we will strengthen our health-care system, make life more affordable and invest in our front-line workers. After hearing this government's Throne Speech, I can confidently say that I know Manitoba is on the right track.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiseau):** The honourable member for Interlake-Gimli.

No. Sorry. I apologize.

The honourable member for Brandon West.

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** Thank you, Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker. I'll make sure I have that right throughout my speech today.

This is a time to bring thanks to family, to friends and for those that helped us along our journey. And I

want to make sure that that is the forefront of my address on this Throne Speech.

So I would like to start out, because it's happened before where you forget family members because you take it for granted. They are there with us every single day, every step of the way, when we take on endeavours such as this.

So for myself, I would like to thank my wife, Sharlene, for always supporting me; and Sharlene, thank you for being there, for making sure that the home fires are burning when I'm out working and doing what is required to support out family, and I appreciate that every single day, I know that you're behind me.

My wife and I have been together for 37 years, and together we have two children, four grandchildren, four granddaughters—four beautiful granddaughters—and one grandson on the way, to join us in the new year.

\* (15:10)

I have to state that these little people, my grandchildren, are the reason that drove me to go into politics.

*Mr. Diljeet Brar, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

I want to make a brighter future for them, a future that they can hold in Manitoba, where they can reside here with great jobs. They can be here and represent the people of Brandon in the work that they will do into the future. And I know it will be them that leads the way as we move forward.

So, thank you to my family as well: my son Riley; my daughter Sawyer; my parents, Moe and Gale; and my in-laws, Bob and Mary, as well as my brother Darin and his wife Grace, and my sister-in-law Angela, her husband Doug, my brother-in-law Raymond and his wife. All of you, thank you very much for your support—sorry, his wife Elaine. All of you, thank you very much for your support, because it truly takes a lot of people to make sure that this process goes forward. So, thank you.

With the thank of my—thank you to my family, it's incumbent upon me to thank those who put me here today, to be able to be inside of such a humbling place, to know that I'm one of less than 900 people in all of Manitoba's history that gets to sit within this Chamber, that gets to debate, that gets to make laws and that gets to have the privilege of sitting here day in and day out and representing Manitobans.

So, to the individuals of Brandon West, who put their trust in me, thank you and I will serve you with dignity, with honour and with grace, as I move forward within my career.

Also, my team that helped get me here. I have to point out, especially, Terry Jaenen, who was my campaign manager and who I have also hired as my CA.

Terry literally was with me every step of the way, and I say that literally because we put in 15 to 20 thousand steps every single day, going door to door within Brandon West; and she was with me every single step of the way. Every night, every day and every afternoon of our campaign, it was her and I going door to door and hearing the issues.

And so I want to bring this back to the Throne Speech and the issues that I heard were that of justice, of safety and of affordability.

And so, Mr. Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, I'm appalled when I see the Throne Speech and it talks about safer communities. Well, safer communities, to me—I have lived for over three decades on the front line, and to have one paragraph in a 15-page legal-sized document that talks about safety and community safety and well-being is simply unacceptable.

This brings to me to a point of justice and safer communities and I really want to take the time to speak about one program in particular that I hope that this government will embrace and continue to support in the city of Brandon, and not only the city of Brandon but all of Westman.

It's called Community Mobilization Westman, a program that was funded by this government. This PC government put \$80,000 towards this program so that a co-ordinator could be hired and many, many help services could come under one umbrella, holistically, to help those who were at acutely elevated risk. It is simply a risk-driven program that helps those that need it most.

And so, when I look at some of the statistics that are part of Community Mobilization Westman, and, again, it's near and dear to my heart, as I chaired this program for over six years while I was the chief of police with the Brandon Police Service.

So, they have had 923 discussions on cases of acutely elevated risk since their inception; 877 of these discussions have met their threshold for acutely elevated risk on average, each person that they talked to, each person that is a client of theirs has nine risk factors per discussion. That's nine risk factors that are

multiple areas of help services that are required to meet the needs of these individuals.

So, again, I would implore the NDP government to look at this program, continue the funding and increase the funding, as this is truly a holistic program that will help serve them and all of Westman.

Again, I am very passionate about this program; 21,000 square kilometers worth of area that they serve and 110,000 individuals. It is not Brandon. It is not one specific area. It goes all the way up to Swan River; it goes down to the border—the American border; it goes to the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border and all the way to Portage. This is a massive area that is taking care of this area and I'm extremely proud of the work that is done.

So, I'll just do a shout-out to some of the people that are there: Addictions Foundation of Manitoba; Brandon Friendship Centre; the Brandon Police Service; Brandon School Division; Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba; The Canadian health and housing association; Life's Journey; EIA; Manitoba Housing; Probation Services; Housing First; Samaritan House; the Women's Resource Centre; and, when available, the RCMP.

So, this collective group deals with these hundreds and hundreds of cases to come to a solution that helps these individuals. Once hearing of the harm, they go to the door, they knock on the door and they offer help, breaking down the red tape that's created within bureaucracies.

So, again, please support, where you can, this program that will help not only Brandon, but all of Westman.

I would like to talk a little bit, now, about my journey and what brought me here. So, service is what brought me here. I have spent over three decades—33 years, to be exact—in the policing service, but I believe that service is part of my bloodline, and it's deep within my DNA.

My father Maurice joined the military in the 1950s, and he served not only here in Canada, but in Europe as well as in Egypt and the Gaza Strip. He spent 18 years with the military. He was then medically discharged from the military because of an injury that he suffered there and went into teaching. And he spent the next 20 years of his life teaching, serving the students. Not only did he serve Canadians and Manitobans, but now he served the students in Brandon.

My mother joined the RCMP in 1957 as a civilian member, and she was with them for over 29 years. She took a break between 1966 and 1975 to raise my brother and I; however, went back to work serving Manitobans with the RCMP.

My brother Darin has spent over 37 years, now, with the provincial government in areas of conservation, natural resources and now with the Ministry of Environment.

My wife spent over 10 years, before suffering an injury that she could not work any longer, as a front-line service worker—as a nurse.

My father-in-law was a mechanic and served all of his clients through 40 years of business, and my mother-in-law was a nurse on the front lines for over 30 years in Brandon.

My children are now both in the service industry. One is a police officer, and one is a nurse. So I know many of the front-line struggles that people will see, and I will hold this government to account when it comes to service industry and what needs to be done.

So, yes, service is in my blood, and I spent 33 years with the police service serving the citizens of all of Brandon. And now, I have the luxury and I have the benefit of serving the members of Brandon West, and I thank them for this luxury and for this opportunity.

\* (15:20)

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank the Clerk, Mr. Yarish, for bringing together MLA school 101. He taught us great things. The whole group that was part of this, I thank each and every one of you, because—and I say this, and the member from Waverley will probably understand—it was like drinking water through a fire hose. We had so much information coming at us, but they seemed to break it down into segments and make it palatable, make it easy for us to understand and to look at the future of how we can serve in this Chamber.

And I would also like to mention, again, my friend from Waverley, as a front-line officer as well. I had my thanks before you gave your speak. So I want to reiterate that meeting the member from Waverley, I've learned that police and firefighters can be friends. They can have—they can share and they can be friends.

And sometimes you have to take your friends with a grain of salt and everything that comes with it. So I also have to say that it disappoints me that the member from Waverley aligns with a government

that, you know, introduced highway medicine, introduced hallway medicine and closed down the most hospitals across this province in the history.

So it just—it concerns me great deal when they talk about, in this document, the Throne Speech. They talked about how they're going to put health care first. Their record certainly does not show that, Mr. Honourable Assistant Deputy minister–Speaker. So I'm curious as to where, exactly, health care will go under this government, because the record does not speak favourably for them.

So I would like to take the opportunity, again, to reiterate: Why am I doing this? Why have I taken a career that spanned it over 33 years, and now taking a second career? Well, it certainly is not for the money. It certainly is not for the fame. It certainly is not for the long drives every single week—and I'm quickly learning that an MLA from outside of Winnipeg has extra tasks put on them. And my journey isn't that far; I'm two and a half hours away, and I do that every week here and every week back.

But some of my colleagues are from Swan River, are from Turtle Mountain, are from areas that span much further than what I drive. And so, again, we have to thank our families for being there for us and making sure that—they understand. They're with us one hundred per cent of the way when we take this job on. It's not just an individual that takes this job on; it's a whole family. And, again, thank you for taking that time and making sure that you're there for us and taking care of us.

And lastly, I'd like to talk about mentorship, because I think mentorship is very, very important. And in order to get anywhere in careers and move forward in your life, you need people to look up to. And I have many, many—including my family—that I've looked up to for the years. However, I would like to talk about a couple of people that really had significant impact on me during my career and while I was being—while I was learning the journey through the police service.

So, to Harley Bryson, who was my mentor from day one when I started on the police service. Unfortunately, Harley passed away last year; however, I would like to pay tribute to him for all of the work that he did in his guidance—not only in the police service, but also as a friend and a mentor—to never give up, to always, always stand up for what is right, and to always make sure that you're true to yourself. And those are life lessons that I'll take with me to my grave, and I'm happy for them.

And, secondly, to the former mayor of the City of Brandon, Mr. Rick Chrest. It is through him that I actually started to get my first small touch of politics. I was a police chief at the time and he was the mayor, and as a police officer and as police chief, I remained apolitical. Of course, I had my beliefs in what was right and which party actually supported policing, but I was able to ride with then-Mayor Chrest to Winnipeg on several trips for throne speeches, for budget speeches and to meet with various ministers.

And it is at that time that I learned what dealing with government was about. And he took me under his wing and took time to explain processes, procedures, and how to talk and how to get funding, how to get buy-in from government and how to work collaboratively.

So, again, former Mayor Chrest, thank you for your time and for making sure that you guided me, and I am proud to say that a small bit of what you instilled has brought me to where I am today.

And, lastly, I was very honoured to be part of the City of Brandon's leadership team and understanding municipal politics and the need for funding from governments in order for municipal-municipalities to thrive.

So, again, when I look at this document, the Throne Speech, there is very little mention about what they're going to do, what the NDP are going to do with municipalities. Right now AMM is on, and so I hope the promises that are made are promises that can be delivered. There is nothing worse than having shallow promises that you don't deliver on.

And so, again, to my family, to my friends, to my constituents, and to everybody that helped to bring me here today, thank you, and I look forward to many years in this Chamber.

**MLA Mike Moyes (Riel):** I'm deeply humbled to have the opportunity to address this Assembly today. Being the newly elected representative for my community, for the thousands of families that call Riel home, is something that I take very seriously.

The honourable Minister for Families has often referred to the position of being a member of the Legislative Assembly as a sacred honour and one that holds a sacred responsibility. And with both of those thoughts, I could not agree more.

I know that as I accept this honour I have the privilege of working alongside a dedicated team of

members as part of our newly elected NDP government here in Manitoba.

We have a team and a Premier (Mr. Kinew) that takes the responsibility that comes with this honour just as seriously as I do.

I would like to begin my response to the Speech from the Throne by offering thanks. Every member of this Assembly knows that it's impossible to get here alone. I have continued to be blessed in having great people surrounding me.

While I'm not sure if the many hands made light work, I'm certain that I wouldn't be here without the absolutely amazing team that worked tirelessly, both during the campaign and in the months and even years leading up to the election. This includes the former member for St. Vital and Cabinet minister, Nancy Allen, and the current member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) and Minister for Economic Development. Both individuals have served as mentors to me and have been absolutely critical to my success.

When I first expressed interest in running for a seat in the Legislature, both Nancy and the Minister for Economic Development sat me down to let me know exactly what that would entail: that it would be a lot of hard work, and it would take a lot of time away from family and friends, to instead spend it knocking on doors, making phone calls and listening to the concerns of my neighbours.

\* (15:30)

When I came close but didn't succeed in 2019, they were there to encourage me to continue, that the work was still unfinished, and families in Riel deserved to have someone representing them that would work to improve our health care, ensure students got the supports they need to succeed and an economy that doesn't leave people behind.

As soon as I was nominated, the Minister for Economic Development began knocking on doors in Riel whenever he could. During the campaign, I'd often get a text from the minister asking where I was so he could join me on the doorstep after he had completed a poll or two in his own constituency. Similarly, Nancy was a constant source of support and helped organize and door-knock whenever she could, despite being involved in multiple constituencies.

I would also like to thank the entire St. Vital team, and specifically Amber Neufeld and Tino Dogo. I couldn't have asked for a better and more supportive neighbouring constituency. Amber and Tino, both in



the months leading up to the recent election and during the campaign period, did everything they could to ensure success. For this, I am very grateful.

A huge thank you goes out to my own Riel constituency association. This includes long-time president John Helliar, Sally Hamilton and her husband Wayne and son Carson, Barbara Bruske, Zoe St. Aubin, Jack Fraser, Arlene Macklem, Julia Antonyshyn, Melissa Ghidoni, Rachel Hildebrant, Alex Szele, Andrew Walters and Madeleine Mackenzie. This team of dedicated and caring folks have supported me for the past four and a half years and are some of the best people that you can find. They are only interested in making our community better.

To ensure I was elected, they worked day and night for years, fundraising, making phone calls, knocking on doors, dropping leaflets and putting up signs. Their commitment to our project and their belief in me is something that I cherish.

After I came up short in the 2019 election, I had a member suggest in a kind way that perhaps I should consider running in another constituency, since Rochelle Squires was such a formidable opponent. My executive's face—faith, however, never wavered. Instead, they encouraged, believed and worked to ensure that I would have this opportunity.

Thank you to my parents, Neil and Joyce, who, while not officially on my executive, have supported me in every possible way over the last five years, including fundraising, door-knocking and being the absolute best sign crew ever during the campaign.

I would also like to thank my campaign team: Riley Shannon, Julius Chester and Elias Assefa. There are not enough superlatives around for these three individuals. They did a remarkable job and quite simply made my job as candidate very easy. These incredibly talented and thoughtful folks plotted strategy, organized volunteers and ensured that I could focus on simply speaking to constituents. They worked 12-plus-hour days for months, and I feel incredibly grateful for their dedication, hard work and, most importantly, for me being able to call them friends.

Additionally, I'd like to thank the former member for Riel, Doreen Dodick. Doreen has been a key supporter for the past five years and has offered words of wisdom and encouragement when I needed them most. I look forward to working hard every day to try to fill her shoes and conduct myself in a way that would make her proud.

Finally, I'd like to thank my predecessor, Rochelle Squires. Rochelle and I didn't agree on political issues. In fact, I'm sure that if we discussed most topics—health care, education, delivery of services, affordability—we would approach each very differently. Rochelle and I did, however, have a cordial relationship. She was someone that always advocated strongly for Riel and was respectful in never making politics personal. Additionally, I appreciate that Rochelle, no longer constrained by politics, has criticized the hurtful and divisive rhetoric that the PC Party used during the campaign.

So how did I get here? Well, serving in government is something that I've considered for as long as I can remember. While most of my childhood friends grew up dreaming of playing in the NHL or perhaps starring in a movie, I would often think of what it would be like to be the Prime Minister of Canada or the Premier of Manitoba. This desire has never been about power or position; rather, it's always been—and remains—about making a difference for people: putting forward legislation and policies that have a positive impact on people's lives.

Growing up, I remember politics regularly being discussed around the dinner table. These discussions, which often centred on what we saw on the evening news, had a profound impact on my outlook. I learned early on from my parents to not only look out for my own self-interest, but instead to consider the implication for others, for those in our community and for those that perhaps may be from more distant places.

Fundamentally, I believe that there is good in the world, and that it is the government's job to bring people together, to put in place the conditions so people and the different sectors that make up Manitoba can see past their differences to find common ground.

Both of my parents were immigrants. My mom was born in Taiwan. My dad was born in Britain. And also, like so many immigrants and new Canadians, my parents are proud of where they come from and even more proud to be Canadian.

They met in a high school in the unlikely spot of Brandon, Manitoba, halfway around the world from where they were born. My mom came to Canada not being able to speak English. She overcame that barrier and put herself through school to become a nurse.

My dad got a degree at the University of Winnipeg and Red River College before working at Canada Post

as a letter carrier and proud CUPW member for 32 years.

When nursing became too much under Gary Filmon and the PCs, and my mom had to leave her career, my dad became the sole income-earner in supporting our family, a situation that far too many health-care workers and their families in our province can relate to after the past PC government.

Times were tough. We endured strikes as a family and had difficult discussions on how we were going to get by. It is these experiences that clearly define my belief that there isn't a hierarchy of jobs or careers. While I'm incredibly proud of being a member of this Assembly, I believe that all people contribute to making our community.

Despite these setbacks, my parents put my sister Aileen and myself through university, and sacrificed so that we would have as many opportunities as possible. While we may not have had a ton of money growing up, we had a family that loved and supported each other.

Through the many struggles, I never once heard my parents complain of their sacrifices. Rather, they continued to instill the virtue of a high work ethic, the need to look out for others and the importance of a good education. Quite simply, they embodied a spirit that so many Manitobans hold: a desire for better for their children and for all future generations to come.

The desire to work with young people and contribute to shaping their future led me to becoming a teacher. It is a career that I held for two decades and found extremely rewarding. It is also significant for another reason. The University of Manitoba faculty of education is where I met my incredible wife Michelle. While it was her incredible smile and curly hair that drew me to her initially, it is her kindness and fierce advocacy for others that made me fall in love with her.

After graduating from the faculty of education, we both taught at Garden Valley Collegiate in Winkler, which I followed her out there when she received a job offer. After we married following the school year, we moved back to Winnipeg. Luckily, I was hired by the Louis-Riel School Division, a division where I always felt the senior leadership and school trustees did their best to put students first, and to support teachers and educational assistants.

I began at Victor Mager School, a highly diverse school with students and families that often needed extra support. It is here that I saw first-hand how important nutrition programs are in ensuring kids have

their basic needs met so that they can learn. And in case the members opposite don't know, hungry kids can't learn.

Victor Mager School also demonstrated how smaller elementary class sizes are so important to making sure teachers and educational assistants are able to work more one-on-one with students.

While politics was always something I was interested in, it was teaching at Victor Mager School that rekindled my desire to run in politics. I began doing the work to better prepare myself: a journey that included getting a master of arts degree from the University of Manitoba in political studies, with a focus on Canadian government and public administration, as well as a public leadership credential from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

After completing my master's I transferred schools and began working at Glenlawn Collegiate, teaching English and history. It was during this time in 2016 that we began to see our education system dramatically underfunded, never meeting enrolment growth or the rate of inflation, and the members opposite clinging to the notion that any increase over last year was adequate.

Instead, teachers began seeing increased class sizes, less funding for educational assistants, increased wait times for students needing to see specialists, like school psychologists and overall, students not having their needs met.

These issues have continued in education, year after year, for as long as the PCs were in government. The Throne Speech delivered last week by Her Honour seeks to reset the relationship between the government and those in education, health care, the civil service and Manitobans in general.

Many of the problems created by our previous government that I encountered as a parent, an educator and an engaged citizen are addressed front and centre in this agenda. My fellow educators will see resources return to the classroom, with more funding for educational assistants and smaller class sizes that will allow that one-on-one attention from educators.

In addition, the new school nutrition program will be an important step towards improving the educational outcomes for kids whose families are struggling to put nutritious food on the table during this affordability crisis.

\* (15:40)

This Throne Speech ensures that education will not be an afterthought in this new government. Manitoba's future generations must be at the centre of our work.

The Throne Speech also delivered on the No. 1 issue we heard on the doorstep: our broken health-care system. The burnout experienced by my mother many years ago, and by thousands of Manitobans today, are the results of cuts that have pushed health-care workers out of the public system and into the private sector or into different jobs entirely.

This government's Throne Speech pledges to recruit nurses back into the public system by dealing more fairly with unions, creating more favourable working conditions and by stopping the flow of funds to out-of-province medical centres, and instead, investing health-care dollars into expanding capacity here at home.

We will never resolve the backlog of cases if our health-care system is unable to stand up on its own two feet.

Having endured the immense pressures that strikes place on families, I, along with many of my colleagues on this side of the Chamber, understand the real sacrifices Manitoba workers are forced to make to maintain a living wage.

Armed with this lived experience, this government has already begun fulfilling the promise made in the Throne Speech to deal more fairly with unions. By ending the MPI strike, we have taken steps towards rebalancing labour relations in Manitoba to ensure fairness for workers across our province.

In ensuring fairness for Manitoba workers, the Throne Speech also pledges to do our fair share to combat climate change and preserve our natural environment here in Manitoba.

By introducing innovative and sustainable solutions to increase our energy efficiency, like geothermal heat pumps, we will not only create jobs for green industries, but also save Manitobans on their home heating bill and reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

Having been an educator, I know that climate change is on the forefront of many young people's minds as they are forced to wonder what kind of Manitoba they might inherit when they grow up.

Will it be a Manitoba that has destroyed its local ecosystems without helping Manitobans shift away from fossil fuels, or a Manitoba that values their

natural environment and seeks new ways forward in clean energy that doesn't leave anyone behind?

With this government, it will surely be the latter.

The vision laid out by our team in this Throne Speech is one which includes everyone and ushers in a Manitoba which is equitable, sustainable and united.

I would like to conclude my response to this Speech from the Throne by thanking the most important people in my life: my lovely wife Michelle and my kids, Landon and Nyah, for their love, support and understanding.

As every member knows, families are often the ones making the largest sacrifice when someone runs for political office, and mine is no different. Time is the most important commodity and too often I was unable to spend the time that they deserve.

Michelle ensured that my kids had what they needed and kept our household going over the last number of years, all while continuing to work as a teacher. She is an incredible person and someone that I feel blessed to even know, let alone to have as my partner.

It is a new day in Manitoba, with a new government moving to improve the lives of all Manitobans. I'm eternally grateful and humbled to serve the people of Riel, and I promise to work hard and with integrity.

Thank you, Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** Thank you.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** I want to start off by talking a little bit about my constituency before I get into the nuts and bolts of this Throne Speech.

And it's my beautiful constituency and home of Interlake-Gimli that may be the most aptly named constituency in the entire province, nestled between two lakes, and they're two of Canada's largest lakes, I might add.

Life begins on the shores of Lake Winnipeg and Lake Manitoba, where fishing is not merely a trade, but it's actually a way of life. Interlake-Gimli, with its abundant water resources, stands as a testament to the deep connection of our community it has with the lakes and its surrounding waterways.

Whether it's the rhythmic casting of nets or the quiet reflection of a solitary angler, fishing is the heartbeat of our lakeside communities.

In this region, fishing isn't just a livelihood, it's a cultural tradition passed down through generations. Families, friends and neighbours gather, casting lines into the water that cradle the stories of our past. From the annual fish-icing tournaments to the bustling summer seasons, fishing defines the ebb and flow of life in the Interlake-Gimli constituency.

Venturing deeper into the rugged landscapes that define our constituency, trapping emerges as a time-honoured practice, and it's reflective of our intimate connection with nature. The forests and marshes of Interlake-Gimli tell tales of trappers traversing these lands, their skills handed down through the ages, from generation to generation. In the quiet moments of setting snares and checking traps, trappers in our community foster a relationship with the land that extend beyond economic pursuits. They become stewards of the delicate balance between predator and prey, ensuring the health and 'vitality' of our ecosystem. As we navigate the challenges of our modern world, it is essential to recognize and preserve this bond between man and nature that trapping embodies.

Transitioning to the vast fields and fertile plains that characterize our constituency, agriculture emerges as the backbone of Interlake-Gimli's economy. The rolling acres of crops bear witness to the hard work and dedication of our farmers. Agriculture isn't merely about cultivating the land; it's about nourishing our communities, our province and the world.

In Interlake-Gimli, agriculture is a testament to the resilience of our people. Through the unpredictable weather patterns and shifting seasons, our farmers persist, ensuring that the bounty of the land sustains not only their families but the broader community. As we celebrate the harvest, let us remember the hands that toil the soil and the importance of supporting our local farms.

The landscapes of our constituency are not just 'pisceresque' backdrop of a living canvas painted with hues of rural life; cattle farming, with its grazing herds and open pastures is a symphony that 'resonates' through the fields of Interlake-Gimli. It embodies the pastoral rhythms that define our region's rural identity.

Cattle farming in our constituency is more than just a source of income. It represents a way of life rooted in stewardship and respect for the animals under our care. As we navigate the challenges of modern agriculture, it is crucial to preserve the harmony between man and livestock, ensuring that the rural traditions that define our community endure. As the House is aware—I've spoken of it many times in here—I grew up

on a beef farm on the shores of Lake Manitoba. Now, with my kids and grandkids on the farm, it is six generations.

Turning our attention to the cultural mosaic that enriches Interlake-Gimli, Icelandic heritage emerges as a defining thread in the fabric of our community. From the descendants of settlers who arrived on these shores seeking new beginnings to a vibrant cultural event that celebrate Icelandic traditions, our heritage is a living narrative. Gimli is home to *Islendingadagurinn*—say that three times fast—the new Icelandic festival of Manitoba. It's an annual celebration that pays homage to our roots.

The new Icelandic heritage museum, nestled in the heart of Gimli, is a testament to the enduring spirit of the Icelandic community. As we revel in the beauty of Icelandic cultural expressions, let us combine and continue to embrace and preserve this heritage for the generations to come.

I think the Honourable Assistant Assistant Deputy Speaker has been to Culturama, which is a proud event that shares all cultural—cultures in and through, not just Interlake-Gimli but around the province.

\* (15:50)

My home municipality of St. Laurent is full of Métis heritage, and it stands as a bridge connecting two worlds. The fiddle's tune, the sashes, the vibrant beadwork echo the stories of Métis communities that have enriched our region with their unique cultural contributions. And I spoke yesterday of my children and their proud Métis heritage.

In our constituency, Métis heritage is a living tradition. From the gatherings that celebrate Métis cultural to the artistic expressions that adorn our community, the Métis legacy is a vibrant and integral part of Interlake-Gimli's identity. And as a matter of fact, Louis Riel used to come up to my hometown where I grew up, of Oak Point; obviously I wasn't even thought of. It was well, well before—but my family was there, back in the day. And he used to come up there when he was being chased down. He was on the run, as they say, but it was—it's just part of that heritage and tradition from St. Laurent and the surrounding towns where Louis Riel would come and hide out.

Yesterday I was talking about fishing and how important that is to the culture in St. Laurent and the Métis communities, and the member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt) was questioning relevance. Fishing is part of the Métis heritage, and will remain part for years and years to come.

The Indigenous heritage of Manitoba and the Interlake region is a profound and enduring narrative, etched into the very landscapes that shape its identity. Home to diverse Indigenous communities, the Interlake bears witness to a rich tapestry of traditions, spirituality and resilience. From the ancient shores of Lake Winnipeg to the dense woodlands, the land is full with stories of the Indigenous nations who have called this region home for many, many centuries.

The sacred connection to land, marked by traditional practices, storytelling and ceremonies, underscores the vital role of Indigenous heritage in shaping the cultural mosaic of the Interlake. This all contributes to the vibrant and inclusive spirit that defines this unique part of Manitoba.

Now, Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, I now want to shift my focus onto the pressing matters that face not only Interlake-Gimli, but the entire province. So I stand before you to address the glaring omissions and concerning decisions outlined by the provincial government. As we navigate the path forward for our great province, it is essential to scrutinize the government's agenda and hold them accountable for their actions. Or in their—in this case, lack of actions.

The recent announcements left a myriad of questions unanswered, and more importantly, have failed to address critical issues that affect the daily lives of Manitobans. First and foremost, let us address the glaring omission of the government's agenda: the failure to outline a comprehensive plan on how the provincial government intends to make life more affordable for Manitobans to make ends meet.

Affordability is not a luxury; it is a necessity. The omission of a long-term plan to ease the financial burden of our citizens raises concerns about our government's commitment to the welfare of ordinary Manitobans. Furthermore, the government's disregard for small businesses is disheartening. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and yet the Throne Speech failed to offer any tax relief or support measures for these entities facing unprecedented challenges.

Their omission in this critical juncture of economic recovery is a missed opportunity to stimulate growth, innovation and employment across this province. The commitment to make Manitoba a maritime 'provice'—province is ambitious, but what is disconcerting is the lack of commitment to fighting for the same carbon-tax exemptions afforded to such provinces.

As we aim for sustainability and economic growth, it is crucial to address the potential impact of increased taxes on industries and individuals alike.

Equally troubling is the abandonment of plans to build new schools, a crucial aspect of accommodating the growing student population of the K-to-12 system. Our children deserve access to quality education, and the neglect of this essential component raises questions about the government's dedication to investing into our future generations.

Similarly, the abandonment of plans to deliver over 23,000 child-care spaces is a blow to families in Manitoba. Affordable and accessible child care is not only a matter of economic necessity, but also a tool for empowering families and promoting gender equity. This missed opportunity underscores a lack of vision for the holistic development of our province.

The neglect to detail specific measures for the recruitment and retention of educators is deeply concerning. The success of our education system is contingent upon a dedicated and qualified teaching force. Without a clear plan to support and retain educators, the government risks compromising the quality of education for our children.

Turning our attention to health care, the rejection of a much-needed upgrade to hospital projects, including the Health Sciences Centre, is alarming. The refusal to prioritize the health and well-being of Manitobans over political ideology is a disservice to the citizens who rely on these critical health-care facilities.

The 'disbandment' of the diagnostic and surgery recovery task force, which provided care to over 85,000 Manitobans, leaves a void in addressing health-care needs, with no alternative plan. I repeat that: no alternative plan presented. Manitobans waiting in pain are left in limbo, questioning the government's commitment to a timely and efficient health-care service.

The failure to mention how the provincial government will address Manitobans waiting for surgical and diagnostic procedures in the short-term raises concerns about the immediate well-being of those in need of medical attention.

The abandonment of communities set to benefit from the construction of new personal-care homes is disheartening. As the aging population grows it is imperative to invest in facilities that cater to the unique needs of our seniors.

The lack of attention to treatment spaces or recovery-orientated care for those struggling with addictions raises questions about the government's commitment to addressing the mental health crisis in our province.

Disbanding departments dedicated to seniors, mental health and community wellness further disrespects the vulnerable populations in need of specialized care.

Addressing the housing shortage is paramount, yet the Throne Speech fails to mention how the provincial government will increase new affordable and social housing units. With a growing demand for housing, particularly in urban centres, the government's silence on this matter is perplexing.

The absence of a commitment to meaningful action for investments in community art, culture, non-profit and heritage projects or groups diminishes the vibrancy and social fabric of our province. These sectors contribute significantly to our collective identity and must not be overlooked.

The disregard to—for provincial parks and recreational opportunities, along with the spurning of Manitobans who appreciate and enjoy these natural spaces neglect the value of our environment, a plan—and a plan to maintain the positive momentum of Manitoba's tourism sector. It's notably absent, endangering an industry that contributes to over \$1 billion to our GDP.

The signal transition away from a positive plan to develop Manitoba's natural resources economy, which was attracting record investments to the province, is a concerning shift. Failing to acknowledge the crucial role that mining and mineral development play in our provincial economy is a step backwards in fostering sustainable economic growth.

\* (16:00)

The refusal to do an—denounce previous positions advocating for defunding the police, and the lack of attention to addressing the revolving door of catch-and-release through bail reform raises questions about the government's commitment to public safety and the criminal justice system.

The disbandment of the economic development board and the jeopardizing of billions of dollars in investment and thousands of jobs are actions that risk the financial stability of Manitoba Hydro. The commitment to freeze hydro rates without considering the broader implications further jeopardizes the province's energy sector.

Flip-flop; on-again, off-again. The ignorance towards agriculture producers in the agriculture industry, representing nearly 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP, is a concerning oversight. The failure to commit to continuing the five-year, \$500-million annual infrastructure budget 'jeopardizees'—jeopardizes crucial projects that support economic development and job creation.

The Throne Speech presented by the Province, the provincial government, raises numerous concerns and leaves Manitobans with more questions than answers. The omissions and neglect of critical issues affecting our citizens demand immediate attention and accountability. As representatives, it is our duty to hold government accountable for their actions, and more importantly their inactions, that impact the lives of every Manitoban.

Thank you Mr. Assistant—sorry—Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Diljeet Brar):** Before I recognize the next member, I wanted to humbly say that this is probably for the first time that a turbaned member has been in this Chair briefly. So I'm so thankful for that.

**Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière):** Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, I'm humbled to rise for the second time in the Chamber. I want to congratulate all the new and returning members. I look forward to everything we can accomplish together.

It is my honour to affirm the government's Throne Speech and to be part of this new vision for Manitoba. I am proud to say that this government's mandate resonated with my community in Lagimodière, and that the Throne Speech lays out many of the calls to action I heard on the campaign trail.

As a long-time resident of Lagimodière, the idea of finding ways to contribute to my communities has guided how I move through life and consider opportunities. This election was an opportunity to take a stand and say that Manitobans deserve better. I appreciate and welcome the enthusiasm my neighbours have shown in matters of community and politics and am honoured to represent them in this Chamber.

I wanted people to see themselves in our work, and I'm so thankful that the passion, joy and celebration of communal strength is something that resonated with my neighbours. Many joined alongside me in this campaign, and I would be remiss not to acknowledge those whose work and dedication made my presence here possible.

My enthusiasm was merely a starting point, and I am only here today because of dozens of volunteers and thousands of voters. Thank you to my campaign team: Monica Girouard, Lorie English, Frank Restall, Boyd Poncelet, Peyton Veitch and Michael Barkman. Our local executive and EPC, the countless friends and family members—some of them here in the gallery—and volunteers that contributed in so many ways.

Thank you to the people that came before me to make it more possible for folks to imagine queer candidates being elected: members from Wolseley and Union Station, Jim Rondeau and Jennifer Howard.

Thank you to my wonderful friends and mentors, Nancy Allan, Leah Gazan and the members for Point Douglas (Ms. Smith) and Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino).

And to my family: your support felt limitless and truly carried me over the finish line. Thank you to my grandparents Luciana and Paul; my dad Kevin and my brother Michael, who both flew in to help on the campaign; my mom Nadine, who became a door-knocking superstar, both in endurance and skill; and to my husband Andrew, who, without hesitation, joined my on this journey and continues to show up for me in so many ways as I find my feet in this space I have the privilege to work in.

All of these people cumulatively led to our campaign being successful by any metric, while at the same time supporting me during an exciting and at times a vulnerable period of time.

Looking back at my elementary and secondary school years, I was acting on and thinking about ideas of equity, justice and fairness before I had language put to it. Whether it was sharing snow forts in elementary school, disciplinary actions in high school or student protests, student voice and a genuine seat at the table was always something I was seeking and asking for.

I saw that people's first-hand lived experience was valuable in decision making. I am fortunate to have had adults in my life that cared and took interest in my preoccupations. I am thankful to Mme Roy at Collège Béliveau, who tapped me on the shoulder and sent me to a student activist conference in my grade 12 year. That opportunity likely sent me down the path I'm on today.

I spent much of my undergrad engaged with student unions and the student movement. Whether it was advocating for better access to post-secondary

studies, reduced transit fares, extending health-care coverage to international students or ensuring housing met the needs of students, I have always believed that education should be accessible and a true option for anyone to pursue. I am thankful to share those student union experiences with many in our caucus.

My student organizing prepared me for my years on the board of a Social Planning Council of Winnipeg. Eventually taking on the role of president, I grew to and continue to appreciate and interrogate how our government systems often harm people and families. Equally, I appreciate how I saw networks of non-profit leaders come together across sectors to propose solutions to some of our province's most entrenched structural failures.

I look forward to being part of a government that works beyond a four-year election cycle, one that is willing to make those investments, that plants seeds that will bloom over many generations and is willing to tackle those structural realities that so often lead to band-aid policy responses we label as solutions.

In joining the campaign as a candidate, I made the conscious decision to run as an unapologetic gay man that would celebrate difference, queerness and ensure there was space for everyone who wanted to join us. My job was to enthusiastically invite everyone in, to push against the boundaries of what a campaign could be and what it could look and feel like.

I made the choice to trust the constituents in Lagimodière, that they would see the value and the joy, hope and vision our team would ultimately bring to the campaign trail. I hold close to my heart the enthusiastic nurse I met on the doorstep who was raised by two moms, and the countless parents who shared that they want a world where their queer and trans family and community members are cared for, celebrated and thrive.

I am in some ways wildly Manitoban, my dad's Ukrainian family settling several generations ago in the Interlake and western Manitoba, seeking opportunities to farm themselves—farm, establish themselves, and set down new roots. My grandma and grandpa, Paul and Helen, modelling the value of hard work and contributing to community. My mom's Métis side of the family, active in the politics of the region going back 150 years.

I am proud to have deep roots in Lagimodière. My grandmother was born Luciana Lavalée, the granddaughter to Louis David Lavalée. My great-great grandfather fought in the Red River resistance, brought

his brother-in-law Louis Riel's body back from Regina and was active in politics for decades afterwards.

The Lavalles lived along what is now St. Anne's Road, and my nana has recounted many stories about her life growing up in St. Vital and how active our family was in the local community. I aspire to be as present, consistent and thoughtful as Louis and his family were.

\* (16:10)

Needless to say, our government's commitment to recognizing Louis Riel as Manitoba's first premier is met with great enthusiasm from me and my family.

Honourable Assistant Assistant Deputy Speaker, I was fortunate to grow up in the same community my family has invested in for generations. I played hockey at Southdale Community Centre, went to elementary school at Guyot and secondary at Collège Béliveau, had some of my first jobs at St. Vital mall and now live in Island Lakes with my husband, Andrew, and our tiny dog, Richie.

My parents, like so many families, sacrificed and did everything possible to make sure me and my brother had every opportunity to succeed. With me in this Chamber and my brother practising law, I don't want to speak for my parents, but I think they're content with where we've landed thus far.

Honourable Speaker, Lagimodière is a thriving and diverse multigenerational community, one which is growing. Growing communities call for more investments in our communal spaces and facilities, not less. Across the campaign trail I heard from families that we need to expand our network of libraries, access to public transit, recreation centres, community living facilities and resource centres.

These places are the heart of our community but have lacked support from this Chamber over the past several years. Manitobans recognize that healthy communities have these services and without them, the foundation for success and dignity is lacking. Authentically partnering with our municipal counterparts to expand programming and services for our communities will be critical over the next four years.

I've worked in education for over a decade. My work at Seven Oaks School Division with Wayfinders, supporting high school students through mentorship opportunities and advocacy has helped deepen my understanding of the complexity of people's lives and the role government systems and structures play in our experiences.

While supporting youth in care transition to adulthood, I had a student tell me that if the government knew how he had to live, we would change things. Honourable Speaker, we are changing things, and it is my hope that less children end up in care and those that do are provided the tools to navigate their life in a successful way.

Success can look different for everyone, and we need to be open to celebrating different talents and milestones. I have learned so much from the youth that I've worked with and I'm in awe of their insights and gifts.

Someone's ability to be a meaningful member of our community isn't limited by their ability to be employed full-time or be a consumer. Manitoba will be stronger when we value the elderly, disabled folks, youth, artists and knowledge keepers. Our imagination has been limited and narrowed to what worlds we can build, and this is our opportunity, Honourable Speaker, to build a Manitoba that celebrates all of us.

Contributing to Manitoba's success and strengthening our communities will take us all doing what we can. We need to be thoughtful about what we in this Chamber invest our time and energy into, as we are creating the conditions for our communities' successes and hard times.

Youth and advocating for their opportunities is central to why I'm here today. Former students of mine showed up in different ways throughout the campaign, whether at community events, through supportive messages or even volunteering with our team. It felt like a little nudge to assure me that I was on the right path.

While door knocking, I had a group of young children follow me for blocks, asking what I was doing, sharing who they favoured in the election—sometimes me, sometimes my opponent—and insisting that I advocate for more Pokémon when elected.

This curiosity, sense of adventure and confidence are traits we need to nurture and celebrate in young people. The education system is central to ensuring youth have opportunities and a good foundation from which to grow and share talents into adulthood.

While not made lightly, the decision to put my name forward in this election felt necessary. It was my work supporting youth in the education system that led to this urgency to bring my advocacy to a different forum.



Teachers and other educators have been entrusted with helping the next generation of Manitobans thrive but struggle to support every student in the way they need. Youth live complicated lives, and whether they live in the care of CFS, are new to Canada, disabled, Indigenous, queer or otherwise, it's our collective responsibility to ensure that they have the time, space and resources to grow, learn and succeed.

I believe our Throne Speech moves the education system in the right direction as we seek to support those students, staff and families within the system. Whether it's the universal nutrition program or increased staff supports, these will make tangible impacts on the experiences students and families have within the education system.

As an educator, I know the role schools play in feeding kids. Food insecurity is a very real reality for many Manitobans. Our government's universal nutrition program for schools will make a meaningful impact on students' attendance and readiness to engage with learning in a real way. Universality removes any stigma to accessing this program. The act of breaking bread is the coming together that our province needs.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, we've heard time and again that kids across the board need more support. Parents are struggling to find affordable extracurricular activities, child-care spaces and nutritious foods that set up kids for learning and success. Expanding access to child care is a necessity and long overdue as most communities have years-long wait lists.

Along with expanded access, we need to value the people working within early childhood education. Early childhood educators are vital in providing care and meaningful learning opportunities for young people. On the doorstep, the care sector often came up as an important value that Lagimodière constituents and I both share.

Most people either work, live with or know someone who works in a profession that focuses on the care of others. Health-care workers, disability support workers, early childhood educators and many front-line non-profit staff are contributing in important ways to our province, are experts in their field and have skills we need to nurture as we strive for a more welcoming and equitable Manitoba.

I am a proud lifelong learner, and when I decided to go back to school for my master's in public administration, my experiences in the education and

in the non-profit world served me well. I developed a true appreciation for the expertise of the public servants who work within our government's departments. The commitment and care put into the work of public service needs to be respected, and it's most effective when met with a government willing to listen.

Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, I am over the moon that we are a government that trusts experts, values science and is willing to make policy decisions informed by qualified professionals across disciplines and experiences.

Honourable Speaker, whether we're talking about child care, education or health care, we need to design systems that centre people's dignity. Efficient systems that overlook Manitobans' dignity and self-determination are worth nothing. And when we tread on the dignity of some Manitobans, we tread on the dignity of all.

Home care is a public service that ignited passionate conversations on the doorstep across generations, gender, race and socio-economic status. Lagimodière residents and Manitobans more broadly lose when our community members are unable to age in place due to insufficient home-care supports.

Seniors deserve to have the choice to age in the community they've invested in. Kids deserve the chance to grow up alongside their grandparents, elders and other relatives who have valuable knowledge to share with the next generation of Manitobans.

I hold close the experiences shared by the retired home-care worker who regularly advocated for equitable access to the system for her patients; the paramedic dispatcher who shared how stretched the system is; the retired nurse who cried on the doorstep thinking of the system she invested so much into, believing it wouldn't be there for her family when they needed it; and the woman who pulled her car over to talk with me about how wait times for mammograms are impacting multiple women in her family.

Everyone deserves the opportunity to age in community and not be isolated in an institution. Investing in healthy communities and dignity for all is something I spoke to throughout the campaign. These are values I believe we share and a vision we can all get behind.

Honourable Speaker, when we speak of dignity, we must centre the communities who have been historically and systemically pushed to the margins. What Manitobans have is a government that listens to them and believes them, a government whose policies

affirm people's identities and doesn't work against them by ignoring who they are and dismissing their experiences.

There is immense expertise that exists within the disability, houseless, racialized, Indigenous and economically disadvantaged communities to address many of the wicked societal problems governments have been unwilling to tackle. We have a non-profit sector full of researchers and front-line workers willing and able to contribute to this work. They are our partners in addressing food insecurity, homelessness and addiction.

\* (16:20)

The Throne Speech echoes what many of the non-profit community organizations in Lagimodière and across the province have been saying for many years. There is a desperate need for a full spectrum of housing options to address houselessness in Manitoba. New non-profit housing, rentals, rent geared to income and the upkeep of our current stock will all play a key role, and I'm proud to be part of a government who takes tackling houselessness seriously.

We ran a joyful campaign, one which called people in. As I set out to run a fun, queer campaign, I trusted the community of Lagimodière to see the values we could bring to this Chamber.

The last home I door-knocked, the night before the election, a couple answered. They said I was the talk of their daughter's grade 5 class, and to them, that was the sign of a good campaign. They shared they were excited at the prospect of me, a gay man, being their MLA. As a racialized immigrant couple, they felt that possibly we could see each other in our struggles and empathize with each other's experiences.

When we value what brings us together, we are stronger. When we see strength in different perspectives and experiences, we build better worlds. Let's continue that tradition in the years to come.

Thank you. Merci.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, I rise today with a sense of duty and resolve, deeply honoured by the trust placed in me again by the constituency—constituents of Riding Mountain.

Their mandate is clear: to ensure their voices resonate in this Chamber, especially under the governance of the NDP, a party with a history Manitobans remember all too well. This history, marked by prolonged periods of mismanagement and questionable

policy decisions, has not been forgotten by the people of my constituency.

For 17 years our province grappled with the consequences of NDP rule, a time characterized by economic stagnation, bureaucratic overreach and a series of initiatives that far too often missed the mark in addressing the real needs of Manitobans.

*Mr. Robert Loiselle, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

As I stand here, I am reminded of the countless conversations I had with families in Riding Mountain, conversations filled with concerns and apprehension about returning to those challenging times. They spoke of businesses burdened by heavy-handed regulations, of farmers in rural communities feeling neglected and unheard and of young Manitobans facing uncertain futures as they navigated a landscape of limited opportunities.

Therefore, the trust they have placed in me is not just a vote to represent them; it is a call to action to advocate for policies that truly benefit our province, to foster an environment where businesses can thrive, rural communities are strengthened and the youth can see a promising future right here in Manitoba.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, as we move forward I carry with me the voices and concerns of Riding Mountain, committed to ensuring they are not only heard, but are pivotal in guiding the actions of this Legislature. Our province stands at a crossroads, and it is imperative that we, as representatives of the people, steer Manitoba towards a path of prosperity and stability, not back to the uncertainty and challenges of the past NDP governments.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, as we delve into the NDP's Throne Speech and the vision they lay out for environmental policies, a disturbing picture of mismanagement and unrealistic aspirations emerges, revealing a government alarmingly out of touch with Manitoba's fiscal, environmental realities. Their approach to economic development and environmental conservation is dangerously naive, indicative of a government wading into deep waters without a life vest.

They ambitiously plan to fund extensive health-care reforms and other services, but their blueprint is nothing more than a house of cards, set to collapse under the slightest scrutiny. Manitobans deserve a transparent explanation. How does the NDP intend to finance the \$3 billion in commitments made during the election? They claim they—taxes won't rise and spending won't be cut, yet they present no credible plan for stimulating economic growth.

This is typical NDP math: convincing in theory, but disastrous in practice. The NDP government's commitment to protect 30 per cent of Manitoba's land and water by 2030 is a case in point. While conservation is a noble goal, their approach lacks a comprehensive economic strategy support their environmental goals, showing a blatant disregard for vital industries such as mining.

Their silence on this sector during the campaign and in the Throne Speech raises serious concerns about their priorities and understanding of our province's economic and environmental needs.

The NDP's approach to conservation is marked by recklessness, not careful deliberation. Their ideology-driven strategy risks sealing off vast areas of our province without proper consultation with mining prospectors, forestry operators, First Nations and other stakeholders, ignoring the potential economic benefits these lands could offer to nearby communities.

Under our stewardship, we skillfully balanced economic growth with environmental stewardship, a concept utterly foreign to the NDP's disastrous approach as laid out in their Throne Speech.

Their complete disregard for Manitoba's crucial mining and natural resources sectors just isn't an oversight, it's a huge blunder. They're promising the moon with 3 billion in campaign promises, but don't seem to have a clue about where the money will come from.

In stark contrast, our government skillfully balanced robust economic growth with mindful environmental stewardship, a concept that seems utterly foreign to the NDP's catastrophic approach. We just didn't boost Manitoba's standing in the Simon Fraser mining report, we championed significant economic achievements.

We established the economic development board, which laid the groundwork to attract over \$24 billion in new capital investments, generate \$3 billion in new tax revenues, create thousands of new jobs and put Manitoba on a steady path toward finally becoming a have province.

Our government's initiatives, such as the \$142-million Churchill rail line upgrade, and securing a \$50-million financing package for the NFI Group, Manitoba's—or, North America's largest bus manufacturer, reflect our commitment to economic vibrancy.

The launch of the \$100-million Manitoba First Fund was a bold step toward reinvigorating entrepreneurial spirit within the province.

Our efforts in developing the Manitoba Critical Minerals Strategy and the Manitoba Energy Roadmap, and spearheading the First Nations-owned northern trade corridor stand as clear testaments to our government's foresight and responsible governance.

We took Manitoba's Critical Minerals Strategy seriously, aiming to double the mining workforce and turn Manitoba into a leader in the green economy. Compare this to the NDP's approach. They seem dead set on blocking progress and wasting our natural wealth. This is the kind of backward thinking that could drive our province into the ground.

The mining sector alone pumps \$1.9 billion into our GDP, and employs just about 3,000 people. This is big. But the NDP in their Throne Speech just ignored this crucial sector. It's not just worrisome; it shows they're out of touch with what's necessary for our communities, especially in the North.

Our government's contributions have been crucial in strengthening Manitoba's economy, allowing us to support vital services and establish Manitoba as a key participant in the worldwide shift to electrification. Yet the present NDP's tactics seem to be more inclined toward erecting obstacles to investment instead of promoting economic development.

The NDP's lack of a robust economic plan, along with their 'lamish'—lavish promises, significantly endangers our province's financial stability.

But let's talk about the environment. We didn't just focus on the economy; we also took big strides in protecting our land. We set up the \$100-million conservation trust, proving our commitment to keeping Manitoba green and beautiful.

We expanded our protected areas from a modest 350,000 hectares to a massive 7.2 million hectares. That's 11.1 per cent of our province safeguarded under our watch. This is in stark contrast to the NDP's confused approach.

Our initiatives like the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund, pouring over \$9.3 million into 291 conservation projects and a major \$20-million investment in The Winnipeg Foundation showed we meant business when it came to looking after our natural resources.

We also established the \$220-million Provincial Parks Endowment Fund, enhancing natural beauty and conservation in our parks, and diversified the types of protected areas across Manitoba.

Our no-net-loss-of-wetlands policy further underscored our holistic approach.

In contrast, the NDP's Throne Speech, those—they don't get the balance between growing the economy and protecting the environment. Their reckless plans, devoid of any real economic foresight, pose a grave threat to the future of Manitoba.

We demonstrated how to successfully navigate these complex waters. The NDP, however, seems determined to steer our province straight onto the rocks.

\* (16:30)

Honourable Deputy Speaker, the NDP's utter failure to address the affordability crisis is not just negligent; it's a willful betrayal of the people they claim to represent. They've spun a web of empty promises and hollow rhetoric, showing a complete disregard for the pressing realities Manitobans face daily.

Let's be crystal clear. Many Manitobans are struggling every day, but the NDP's Throne Speech is a slap in the face to their efforts. It completely ignores the fundamental issues plaguing our province and offers no viable solutions. Instead, it's filled with hollow promises and lacks any real plan to address the soaring cost of living, a crisis that is hitting Manitoba families the hardest.

Under the Progressive Conservative government, we put money back into the pockets of Manitoba families more than any other party in the province's history. We delivered an astounding \$1.8 billion in tax savings, averaging \$5,500 per family. We slashed the PST to 7 per cent, offering a much-needed respite to families burdened by the NDP's previous tax hikes. Our efforts took more than 75,000 low-income Manitobans off the tax roll.

But what can we expect from the NDP now? More financial burdens. More struggles for the average Manitoban.

Our government cleaned up the colossal mess they left behind, only to watch in dismay as this new NDP government embarks on a path of economic destruction, senselessly dismantling the foundations of progress we laid.

Their abandonment of the Economic Development Board is a glaring example of their sheer ineptitude. While they mouth platitudes about job creation, their actions effectively slammed the door shut on investment opportunities in Manitoba.

This isn't just poor governance; it's economic sabotage. They're sending a crystal clear message to investors: Manitoba under the NDP is a no-go zone for business, innovation and growth.

If there is any value from the previous NDP government, it's that it serves as a grim reminder of their financial recklessness. Billions in budget deficits, a shocking \$23-billion increase in Hydro debt and their infamous PST hike to 8 per cent. They greedily expanded the PST to essential goods and services, mercilessly taking money from Manitobans when they needed it most.

Under their rule, Manitobans were hammered with \$1 billion in new taxes.

Their current Throne Speech suggests they're ready to repeat these disastrous policies, heedless of the financial strain they'll impose on our citizens.

When we took the reigns of government, we focused on fixing the NDP's catastrophic mess. We balanced the budget twice and achieved a \$270-million surplus in the '22-23 fiscal year, at the same time turning Manitoba into an economic powerhouse, the third fastest growing economy in Canada.

Today, more Manitobans are working than ever, labour income is up and the government is seeing record revenues.

In stark contrast, the NDP's Throne Speech blatantly ignores these achievements and offers no road map for continuing this economic success.

The NDP's Throne Speech is a testament to their ideologically driven agenda that prioritizes partisan loyalty over the needs of Manitobans. Their blind allegiance to the federal Liberal-NDP coalition is costing Manitoba families dearly. Cost of living is skyrocketing, pushing more Manitobans to use food banks.

Our government put money into—back into the pockets of Manitoba families, but the NDP is hell-bent on reversing these gains with their reckless fiscal policies and ineptitude when it comes to stable leadership.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, let's be clear: the NDP's incompetent is not just a political failing; it's a direct threat to the livelihoods of Manitoba families. Their Throne Speech is a road map to economic ruin, laying out a path of increased hardship and diminished prosperity for our province.

The PC party stand as a bulwark against this tide of mismanagement and economic folly. We will tirelessly hold the NDP accountable for their actions, ensuring that the prosperity and well-being of Manitoba families are safeguarded against their disastrous and ideologically driven agenda.

Shame on the NDP for their betrayal of Manitoba's trust and future.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, the NDP's Throne Speech is nothing short of an essay in deception and fiscal irresponsibility. Their glaring failure to outline an economic strategy to fund their exorbitant health-care promises is not just an oversight—it's a deliberate act of misleading Manitobans. They're giving false hope when—a time when Manitobans need to rely on these life-saving devices services more than ever.

In stark contrast to our Progressive Conservative government's proven track record, the NDP's Throne Speech is rife with vague assertions and a disturbing absence of concrete financial planning.

We increased health-care funding by 23 per cent since 2016, culminating in an historic \$7.9-billion investment this year. We exceeded our commitment to nursing education, led the charge for fair federal funding, and initiated a 'comprehensent' \$3-billion capital plan for state-of-the-art health-care facilities right across Manitoba.

Our 'initiasives' significantly reduced diagnostic and surgical wait times and expanded health-care access, yet the NDP opposed every step.

Now, Honourable Deputy Speaker, the NDP dares to suggest extensive health-care reforms without any clear funding plan. They 'offer'—offer empty words, promises without action. This goes beyond poor policy-making. It's immoral, giving Manitoba false hope for vital health-care services they desperately need.

Their refusal to provide details in funding these commitments leaves a critical question unanswered: How do they intend to manage the Province's finances without raising taxes or making cuts? As I mentioned before, they did not even provide an economic strategy, just platitudes without substance, promises without plans.

This lack of fiscal foresight is a continuation of their history of financial mismanagement. It is a clear signal that the NDP is not equipped to handle the economic realities of running a government.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, the NDP is not just failing to lead; they are actively misleading Manitobans by giving them false hopes. Already, not only two months into their government, and they are betraying the trust Manitobans have placed in their government.

On this side of the House, we will relentlessly hold them accountable for their hollow promises and their failure to present a viable economic strategy. Shame on them for playing politics with the lives and hopes of Manitobans.

In conclusion, Honourable Deputy Speaker, our Progressive Conservative members on this side of the House are committed to safeguarding the health and prosperity of our province 'agaist'—against the NDP's misguided and irresponsible agenda.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Rachelle Schott (Kildonan-River East):** It gives me great pleasure as the new member from Kildonan-River East to rise today and share some insights on our government's Throne Speech.

Like so many of my newly elected colleagues from both sides of the floor, my journey embodies the vision of this optimistic Throne Speech that focuses on community, on caring for the most vulnerable in our society, on a united Manitoba led by a caring government.

For as long as I can remember, I have tried my best to step up and serve in my northeast Winnipeg home, and I would be remiss if I didn't take some time to celebrate those who have inspired me along the way.

While serving as student council president at Miles Mac Collegiate—go Buckeyes—one of the first events I organized was a fundraiser for a teacher's spouse who was fighting cancer. Despite sending out a long list of invites to every level of government, only one elected official arrived at our barbecue, and that was Harry Schellenberg, the former MLA for Rossmere, asking about a hot dog and how he could help.

Here was a politician showing up for his community. Through the simple act of participation and offering support, he revealed to me what being a public servant is all about. It's about showing up. It's about being there for your community and making that community feel heard and seen.

Ever since that day, I have considered Harry as a mentor to both myself and the honourable member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt). And I always remember

that story of Harry, just there for a hot dog, as an example of who I want to be in my constituency of Kildonan-River East: the representative that shows up when invited, sometimes when I'm not invited, but always trying to be present, to learn from my neighbors how I can be part of the solution.

It is also so important that I take a few minutes to recognize the strong feminist role models in my life that broke down barriers in the 1980s, who I will always look up to.

My Aunt Ginny worked in this very building after years as a teacher, and experienced a different world for women in politics than the one we all strive for today—and all members, women and men and on both sides of the House, must work to ensure we never return to.

\* (16:40)

My Aunt Susan was one of the first women judges appointed in Manitoba. Those who go first are incredibly brave, but they also endure the most. We stand here now because of those who have gone before us and the immense sacrifices that they made.

Finally, when I think of feminist role models who have shaped my political outlook I think of my mom. She's a nurse, and like so many strong women nurses who worked alongside her, she was fired by the Gary Filmon PC government in the '90s. They were all forced to return to school and start their lives over, studying while trying to pay their bills and care for their families, all in an attempt to just get back the jobs they already had previous to that. Hard-working Manitobans should never have to have this experience of what my mom and other nurses like her endured.

At a young age I learned that when the government makes decisions without consulting front-line workers and forgets that there are real people on the receiving end of their policies, it results in devastating consequences for decades to come.

That is why our government is focused on looking after all of those amazing health-care workers who give so much of themselves to look after all of us.

Inspired by women in my family and intrigued by the polite approachable manner of Harry Schellenberg, another watershed moment was for me when I went to Parliament Hill as a young person. I went with the Encounters with Canada program and I met a member of Parliament and other politicians, and it dawned on me they weren't infallible individuals; they weren't an elite group of prestigious untouchables. They were

just real people, and any real person could serve their community as long as they showed up and as long as they cared for their neighbours, as long as they genuinely wanted to do good for others.

This is what I want to do. I want to serve the people of northeast Winnipeg and want to use my compassion and energy for the betterment of my community.

This compassion led to volunteering for different advocacy and political campaigns and realizing I loved being involved, putting my heart into progressive change and putting my outspoken spirit to work.

Campaign work employed my passion for community involvement, representation and advocacy. This especially kicked off in 2007 when the late Kurt Penner, NDP candidate at the time, lost the election for River East by 52 votes in a recount.

Realizing how close he came to a win, I was determined to help him out. I approached him with the same intensity that I still carry today, that we could accomplish what was finally done this October. We could make Kildonan-River East orange.

He mentored me for years with the hope that we could one day work together when he would represent our community in this Legislature. I am thankful for this mentorship and could not be where I am today without his support. Kurt dreamed big about representing his community as a New Democrat, and I am so proud that we made his dream a reality this October.

My grandpa's story is also a testament to the hard-working Manitoban with a passion for advocacy. Many knew him as—in political circles as the sign man volunteer of northeast Winnipeg. Years ago, grandpa's legs were crushed in a mining accident in an unsafe workplace. He was never expected to walk again.

But, stubborn as he is, he did, and he walked for decades, working as a meter reader door to door, and he refused to miss a day of work to the extent that when he retired, they had to pay out his sick days. He retired, so grateful for his good and much safer union job that he chose to give every penny of his sick-day payouts to the NDP. Luckily, grandma snuck some of those pennies to me and the other grandkids.

But my grandpa was very serious about his choice to thank the party and union for all their years—his years of good employment. After all, hard-working Manitobans deserve to be respected and looked after.

In his retirement, he decided to make putting up election signs his mission, and like any great sign

man, he was always ready to tell anyone else who tried to put up signs that they were doing it wrong.

I always joked that grandpa would die happy if he was putting up signs on someone's lawn. And since the good Lord has a sense of humour, grandpa died on Labour Day, no less, after a full day of putting up signs in the 2015 election.

This year I know grandpa would be so proud of me when he saw how many—how much progress my team made on streets that, years ago, wouldn't let him put up a single New Democrat sign. Progress was, as it often is, slow. It took one sign, then one conversation, then together as a community—it took working across party lines to be there for all of our neighbours.

As I said on the doorstep, as citizens we can't control the noise at the top, but we can make small changes in our communities. These changes will have a bigger impact than any of us realize.

It's from these experiences in my family and my own life living in Kildonan-River East that I know the impact politicians can have on a community and on individual lives. I stand here today in recognition of the great responsibility that all of us in this room have to serve our communities well.

We don't want to go back to an era of elected officials ignoring the working person, but instead we must always keep the experiences that these hard-working Manitobans share with us close to our heart. I will be a representative that shows up and makes my constituents feel heard, and I feel so blessed, because Kildonan-River East is a beautiful community to represent. It's a place of friendship, volunteerism and mutual care, and I feel so ready for this role, particularly because I've lived in this area my whole life.

It's my home, and I care deeply for it. I know how beautiful this community is and how it shows up for one another. A true testament to our community is the development of Red River Community Centre. What started out as a tiny flooded rink on the back of a grass and gravel field with only a few thousand dollars in the bank has become a central hub in Kildonan-River East. Initially the centre asked all levels of government for funding, and they were told that they had to match whatever money that they came up with.

Talk about the power of community, as they ended up raising \$400,000 just by going door-to-door and asking people for support in the community. Kildonan-River East is a strong team working together, and now that same community centre has four hockey

jerseys hanging from kids that played hockey on that same rink that grew up to be playing in the NHL.

While my community is extremely welcoming, some areas were nerve-racking to approach as a New Democrat. Parts of River East in particular were always assumed to be of blue persuasion, but entering those neighbourhoods and spending time with the people there felt essential to my campaign. I wanted to serve all of my constituency. Over time, people became very receptive to having a candidate visit them at their doorstep and ask about their concerns, which didn't always happen when previous candidates may have taken their support for granted.

I realized showing up in the community was essential to confront others' assumptions about me and the goals of my party, and those doorstep conversations were just as essential for me to confront the assumptions I carried about fellow community members. After all, we're all neighbours, and just like those fundraising for Red River Community Centre went door to door for support, I made a point of reaching out to everyone I could—learn about how to best serve our community.

I appreciate connecting with constituents across party lines. I think about former MLA Bonnie Mitchelson, and while she was a member of what my son calls the blue team, and I have always been on the orange team, I was still struck by her constant presence in our community while I was growing up. Here was a woman who put her community first for so many years, recognizing the importance of representing your constituents above party lines.

There's a certain presence in our constituency that became clear to me, regardless of the party. Our constituents care deeply about the people around them. You cannot tell me when—you cannot tell when you first meet someone how they vote, but you can always tell how important their community is to them. Nothing excites me more about this role than helping those in the constituency of Kildonan-River East, and I believe wholeheartedly that constituency work is non-partisan work.

This is a lesson that I will carry with me here in the Legislature. I want to work with all people, just as our government wants to work with and for all Manitobans.

Talking to many—talking to as many constituents as possible in every corner of the constituency, the compassion of so many people was also clear, with so many people raising concerns that didn't directly

affect them, but were close to their hearts. This commonly included the issue of homelessness and addiction. Over the years, the pandemic grew—drew greater attention to a growing number of folks struggling with homelessness and addiction, and how that struggle has spread into every neighbourhood in our province.

There was one woman in particular whose story really impacted the way that I viewed these issues in our community. When I visited her door, she broke down, telling me about her daughter who struggles with addiction. Her daughter's struggle and the distress that caused on her family were the reason she was supporting me, with the hope that this new government would work for those struggling.

It is so important that we recognize that folks everywhere struggle with addiction, and it affects people in every part of Winnipeg and all across Manitoba. We need to provide real solutions to help this woman's daughter and so many more people in our province. We need to tear down the barriers that make it difficult for people to find supports.

\* (16:50)

Another common passion of constituents was the need for Manitoba to do better on reconciliation. It's important that we all take part in the effort to address the history of colonization in Manitoba and Canada.

I am proud to stand as a member of one of the most diverse caucuses Canada has ever seen, and take real steps toward reconciliation, steps that my children will be proud of and will come to see as normal, such as recognizing Louis Riel as our first premier and observing Orange Shirt Day each and every year going forward.

I look forward to all the work that is being done, and will get—and get done for my community. It was made clear on the campaign trail that Kildonan-River East constituents need better supports. This includes before- and after-school support, adding more daycare spaces.

Working parents have been struggling with child care, losing their income as a result of the limited support and being able to find a daycare spot. We need to support parents who want to work so that our economy thrives. Parents need to know and be assured that their kids are safe and taken care of. We will bring in a real \$10-a-day daycare to make sure that more—much more is possible for working families.

Much like our young people, some joys I've already experienced in this role as—visiting so many schools.

I care so deeply, also about our amazing seniors. A quarter of Kildonan-River East population are older adults. They especially need our support as we pick up the pieces from the previous government left in our health-care system. Older adults deserve the right to receive care so that they can stay home and live independently for as long as they wish. For that to happen, it will be essential to provide older adults with home care and more affordable housing. That is why our government is committed to supporting older adults with a plan to fix health care and restore our once proud home-care programming.

It is an honour to represent the great people of Kildonan-River East. I believe so strongly that as a local representative, I must be open and accountable to my constituents. That's why we've already found our office. It might not be fully furnished and fabulous yet, but folks are always welcome to come on by. Along with my team, we are continuing to find creative ways to be accessible to our constituents, be it at a meeting at the local library or the good old-fashioned house calls and meeting at your kitchen table.

I am committed to our government's goals to make positive changes in health care, seniors and programming for you and our most vulnerable citizens. I am proud to support our Throne Speech that outlines the goals of this government as they are the needs of my constituents.

Thank you.

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** Assistant Deputy Speaker, your role that, being the first question period, I know myself, I came—when we formed government, I was selected as the Deputy Speaker, and it's an honour to sit in that chair and to actually do the—your first question period, so, congratulations.

And again, not too many people in Manitoba have the opportunity to do that, so it's a privilege to be there and to work with great clerks like the new Clerk that we have now, Rick and Tim and Greg, and everybody that's part of the team. They're always very helpful when it comes to doing question period and doing—even doing Estimates and everything. So this has been great to be part of that when I was—when we were in government, and the opportunity also to be a minister too—minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

But, first, before I get into the Throne Speech here, I just want to congratulate all the new people that came here, who were elected from—on both sides of the Chamber, and I just want to congratulate all of you, and of course, all my colleagues and then the



colleagues on the other side who came back of re-election.

And I'm looking forward to actually get to know and work with the new MLAs from the—on our side of the PC Party, and we have a lot of talent from all walks of life, and it's going to be great to learn from them, but also they can learn from us being here.

This is my 10th year as an MLA, and I'm on my 10th year, so, January 28th will be my official 10-year period and it's—that time goes by fast, so enjoy the time that you're here because it goes very quickly.

And, you know, a lot of people come and go in this Chamber, and as we saw in the last, you know, since the 2016 election and the 2023 election, I think sometimes we actually change MLAs—almost 50 per cent were changed in the last election here.

So, like, I have to honour—say, also, when it came to being in 10 years ago, I came in as—in opposition, so I was also blessed to learn a lot for two years. So, that I can say for my colleagues here that are coming into opposition, that you guys, this is a great time to learn.

Because the fact is you learn so much, and you're up a lot. And I can even say when the members came in 2016 and '19 that were newbies on the opposition of the NDP, I was really impressed with them because they actually had a lot of opportunity to do questions, to go up almost every day.

And I remember when I was in opposition, I was up probably three, sometimes as many as four times a day. Because the fact is you might have a grievance, you might have a private member's statement, you might have a debate and you—and then all of a sudden you might have private members' business in the morning.

So I see that it's a great opportunity when it comes to being on the opposition side, too. So there is some pluses, but also getting you ready for government in four years, or—yes.

So this is an opportunity to, again, to say—put some words on the record here that, you know, our government, when we came in seven years ago, I—and, again, first, before my—the time runs out for the day, I want to say—to thank my constituency of Turtle Mountain for entrusting me again to run the second time for Turtle Mountain. Again, the first time, when I first got—first elected, I represented a constituency

called Arthur-Virden. So when the boundary commission changed back in 2018, my constituency of Arthur-Virden cut right in half.

North went up to the north, to—most of it to Riding Mountain, some of it to Spruce Woods. And the other half went down to the Turtle Mountain. So I've had a lot of, like, I had less—to be there in Virden, to get to know a lot of people when I had my business; I bought it about 30 years ago. So I was able to know a lot of people there.

But I'm a type of person that wants to get to know new people and get to know, build more relationships in this province. And I had the opportunity to—since I was also in the International Peace Garden, I felt that Turtle Mountain was the place to go to because I had really good working relationships with the local municipalities there, with the councillors, the Reeves there already. But it give me an opportunity to get to know the eastern side of the constituency, when it came to Notre Dame.

I have a number of my members of my association, my president is from Notre Dame, and became one of my best friends. And that was the opportunity; there was a crisis that happened, but the opportunity was I got to know so many people.

And one of the most beautiful areas of Manitoba, if anybody wants to drive, go through Turtle Mountain constituency. With the boundary—with the escarpments of the Turtle Mountains and the escarpments by, like, east of Carman to the Notre Dame area, east of Morden-Winkler; it's a very picturesque area. And there's a lot of lakes, lot of tourism.

And being on the International Peace Garden, we worked with North Dakota to making sure that this almost, like, a treasure that's in the middle of the Turtle Mountains is not the best kept secret any more. We want to promote it to become an international destination. So we worked with North Dakota in the last eight—seven years, to make sure that money was—that we came together, as of two nations, to making sure that we make this an international destination.

I know our—the governor of North Dakota's now running for president, and I know it's important—it was his passion, it was also the premier of Manitoba, Brian Pallister, and also with the—our leader now, it was their vision too, also, to make sure that the peace gardens becomes an international destination. Because we have a strategy that we can see across this whole province to get more international people here to do some tourism here.

So that's important that—that was a dedicated area that I wanted to make sure—*[interjection]*—yes.

And so this was a chance to—what we did with North Dakota, and I'm hoping that the member for Brandon East (Mr. Simard), now that he's in Sport, Culture and Heritage and Tourism, that he makes sure that is in the Westman, it is a priority when it comes to continuing working with North Dakota to make sure that we have those great relationships with the Americans and with North Dakota. Because at the same time, it works—by having people reciprocate and touring each other's—from each other's sides of the border, it gives an opportunity for economic development.

And I want to make sure that I am going to be the voice for Turtle Mountain in making sure that the International Peace Garden, Turtle Mountain is not forgotten, to make sure that—not in the past, when it

came to the NDP government of the Selinger days where, you know, if you weren't a constituency in the government, you were forgotten.

I look at our highways. We contribute so much contributions to the oil and industry revenue—

**The Acting Speaker (Robert Loiselle):** Order. Order, please.

\* (17:00)

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) will have 13 minutes and—13 minutes remaining.

The House is adjourned and stands adjourned until tomorrow, 1:30 p.m.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Fuel Tax Amendment Act	
Bill 200—The Firefighters Recognition Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)		Stone	200
Pankratz	193	Fontaine	200
<b>Members' Statements</b>		Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills	
Karen Soares		Cook	201
Sala	193	Sala	201
Rollin' into Rivers Event		Southern Health Physician Shortage	
Jackson	194	Lamoureux	202
Diane and Jack Rainka		Kinew	202
Moyes	194	Asagwara	202
Kenneth "Stew" Clayton		Rural and Northern Physician Shortage	
Piwniuk	195	Lamoureux	203
Acknowledging Health-Care Professionals		Asagwara	203
Lamoureux	195	Grace Hospital Emergency Room	
<b>Oral Questions</b>		Kennedy	203
West Broadway Shooting		Asagwara	203
Stefanson	196	Carbon Tax, Ministerial Responses and Fuel Tax	
Kinew	196	Jackson	203
Provincial Bail Reform		Kinew	204
Balcaen	197		
Kinew	197		
Fuel Tax Amendment Act			
Khan	198		
Sala	198		
Fuel Tax Amendment Act			
Bereza	199		
Altomare	199		

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### Throne Speech

(Fourth Day of Debate)

Perchotte	204
Pankratz	208
Balcaen	211
Moyes	214
Johnson	217
Blashko	220
Nesbitt	224
Schott	227
Piwniuk	230

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

**<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>**