

**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. 54A - 10 a.m., Thursday, May 9, 2024**

ISSN 0542-5492

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

| <b>Member</b>           | <b>Constituency</b> | <b>Political Affiliation</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| AL TOMARE, 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                          |
| 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                           |
| <i>Vacant</i>           | Tuxedo              |                              |

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 9, 2024

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

**The Speaker:** O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will, that we may seek it with wisdom and know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and 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.

House business.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

##### House Business

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, on House business, Honourable Speaker.

Pursuant to rule 34(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. King). The title of the resolution is holding the provincial government accountable for a security rebate commitment.

And further House business, Honourable Speaker—*[interjection]* He has to do this first? Okay.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** It has been announced that pursuant to rule 34(8), that the private member's resolution to be

considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Lakeside. The title of the resolution is holding the provincial government accountable for the security rebate commitment.

The honourable government—sorry about that.

#### Speaker's Statement

**The Speaker:** I'm advising the House that I have received a letter from the Opposition House Leader indicating that the opposition caucus has identified Bill 213, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act (Expanding Liquor Retail), as their first selected bill for this session.

In accordance with this letter and rule 25, Bill 213 will be considered this morning as follows: second reading debate will begin immediately after this statement; the question will be put on second reading motion at 10:55 a.m.

### SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

#### Bill 213—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act (Expanding Liquor Retail)

**The Speaker:** I will now call second reading of 213, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act, expanding retail liquor.

**Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North):** I move, seconded by the member from—MLA from La Vérendrye, that Bill 213, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act (Expanding Liquor Retail), be now read for a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wharton:** I am very pleased to rise today to present to the House Bill 213 to expand liquor retail in Manitoba. I want to take this opportunity to speak to Manitobans directly.

Would you like to be able to purchase a beer at a liquor outlet in rural Manitoba or wine and spirits at your local hotel vendor? Our PC team believes it's

time Manitoba modernizes its liquor laws to bring the province into the 21st century. And it's time to give consumers more choice and better convenience when they buy their alcohol.

Honourable Speaker, Bill 213 amends The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Act and The Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Act. The bill will establish a five-year pilot project allowing retail beer vendors, specialty wine stores and craft manufacturers to sell all types of liquor. This bill will establish a five-year pilot project, again, to ensure this happens.

In today's economy, businesses need to be flexible and nimble to stay competitive and satisfy their customers. However, Manitoba's liquor retail licensing system is restrictive, limiting retailers on the kinds of products they can sell and where. Bill 13 takes a very important and much-needed step to forward—and to give forward retailers the flexibility they need and the ability to sell all liquor products carried by Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries.

Modernizing our liquor laws and expanding liquor retail is about levelling the playing field for all Manitoba businesses. It's about reducing red tape, and it's about giving Manitoban consumers what they want: more choice and convenience when they go shopping across this great province of Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, Manitobans have been asking for this legislation for years. We have met and heard with many Manitobans at the door. We have met and heard with our fantastic wine store operators, our beer vendors, our hoteliers, our restaurateurs and our craft manufacturers. We have heard from Manitobans, and our team has been working hard to deliver.

Progressive Conservatives are committed to strengthening consumer choice in Manitoba, levelling the playing field for businesses and encouraging competition in a fair and open market.

The NDP are clearly not. They have blocked our efforts every turn for the past seven years. Even the Education Minister agrees with me, Honourable Speaker. It's time for them to park their ideology and support consumer choice.

Honourable Speaker, expanding liquor retail builds upon and improves our system by allowing retailers to grow their businesses with more product offerings. Expanding liquor retail will allow vendors and specialty wine stores expand their product selections and expand their services across Manitoba as part—as a five-year pilot project. Additionally, dozens

of craft liquor manufacturers will be eligible to expand the assortment of liquor products they are able to retail in their manufacturing location.

We want to do this thoughtfully and carefully. We want to make sure we get this done right, which is why we propose a five-year pilot project. This confirms a commitment on our side of the House to supporting entrepreneurship in every ever-growing and evolving industry in the retail landscape right here in Manitoba.

\* (10:10)

Many other Canadian provinces already allow expanded liquor sales, and to many Manitobans, this is common-sense policy. They go to other provinces and wonder why they have an easier time purchasing liquor there than they do in their own home province, Honourable Speaker.

It's time for expanded convenience in liquor sales in Manitoba. Expanding liquor retail creates new opportunities for retailers by opening up sales of hundreds of new wine and spirit products from the province. Liquor vendors will be able to retail up to 100 new beer and cider cooler products. Specialty wine stores will have the ability to sell 700 new spirits, beer, cider and cooler products. And craft liquor manufacturers—really the backbone of our industry here in Manitoba—will have the ability to stock and carry the products they want in their retail store.

We want Manitoba businesses to be entrepreneurial. We want to give them the opportunity to form new retail partnerships, to branch out and carry spirits and wine in their—within their community that they are produced. Expanding liquor retail will support growth and businesses expanded into these new lines of product offerings.

Businesses will be able to open new storefronts and renovate their existing stores. And they will be able to hire more staff to manage and sell their new products that they will be offering to their customers every single day.

Boy, Honourable Speaker, I'm looking forward to the questions and answers later.

Honourable Speaker, expanding liquor retail means people living in Winnipeg will be able to purchase wine and spirits at more than 100 new locations in Winnipeg. It means residents in Brandon will be able to purchase spirits and wine at a dozen new locations. Expanding liquor retail also increases the convenience for other rural communities by allowing Manitobans the ability to purchase spirits and wine of

up to 170 new locations and cold beer up to 180 additional locations throughout the province. This will generate new opportunities for existing retailers across the province to expand and meet customer demand.

Honourable Speaker, Progressive Conservatives are committed to strengthening consumer choice in Manitoba, levelling the playing field for businesses and encouraging competition in a fair and open free market. Expanding liquor retail creates convenience for customers and consumers and removes red tape for locally owned Manitoba small businesses, the backbone of Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, because Manitoba's liquor system restricts retailers, Manitobans often have to drive and go to multiple shops and stores to purchase liquor products. Expanding liquor retail eliminates the inconvenience by allowing all existing liquor licence retailers the option to sell all liquor products sold by the province. Again, a five-year pilot project.

Honourable Speaker, expanding liquor will particularly be beneficial in rural Manitoba, who need to drive long distances to purchase different liquor products at different locations. Manitoba must adjust to the rapidly changing retail landscape and give businesses the opportunity to participate in a pilot project to expand liquor retail here in Manitoba. We have 'propoposed'—pardon me—we have proposed a five-year pilot project under conditions set out by the provincial government.

That's right, this is a non-partisan issue. This is an issue that government can come together with opposition for the betterment of all Manitobans to ensure convenience and choice is available. We want to modernize our wine, beer and liquor retailing systems in a way that enhances the role of the independent businesses while providing safe, enjoyable experiences for Manitobans. Manitobans largely support this move.

Many provinces across the country allow for fully open and a competitive market. It's time to move Manitoba into the 21st century when it comes to liquor retail, Honourable Speaker, and I look forward to the debate. And I look forward to seeing this bill move through the Legislature with unanimous support to third reading and royal assent.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

### Questions

**The Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the

sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

**MLA Nellie Kennedy (Assiniboia):** The privatization of liquor sales is a part of the PCs' plan to cut services. While they want to rake in the benefits, we want Manitobans to feel safe in our communities, have access to addictions treatment and maintain low impaired driving rates in Canada. This is thanks to Manitoba's public services.

Can the member opposite tell us what his party has to gain from attacking public services?

**Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North):** It's certainly—appreciate the question from the member from Assiniboia.

However, I don't believe anywhere in my second reading we talked about attacking anybody. As a matter of fact, we're looking at enhancing product retail here in the province, and across this great city of Winnipeg, as well, Honourable Speaker.

We certainly thank and support and will continue to support all the fine, hard-working folks that work in the public sector and also supporting our private-sector retailers here in Manitoba as well.

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** My question is for the member from Red River North, as some across the way may not realize that already more than 170 private liquor vendors exist in Manitoba, while only 63 public retailers in Liquor Mart.

My question for the member is: Is this going to expand that number of private liquor vendors?

**Mr. Wharton:** I thank my colleague from La Vérendrye for that very important question.

This, again, bill represents a pilot project to expand on retail offerings to Manitobans with choice and convenience with existing licensee holders, Honourable Speaker. So that's correct.

I know the members opposite, a number of them are new to the House, and I certainly welcome some additional questions on this very important non-partisan bill, Honourable Speaker.

We're looking forward to, again, support—unanimous support of Bill 213 to provide convenience

and choice for Manitobans when it comes to liquor retail here in Manitoba.

**MLA Kennedy:** Honourable Speaker, Manitobans have not forgotten the chaos that the PCs caused last summer by forcing MBLL workers to strike. Their disrespect to Manitoba workers left us with a mess to clean up, when they—all they had to do was listen to workers.

Why does the member opposite and his opposition party continue to attack MBLL workers?

**Mr. Wharton:** Again, I'll educate the member from Assiniboia that is new to this House.

Honourable Speaker, and having the honour of serving as the MBLL minister for two years, working with Liquor & Lotteries, Manitoba Hydro and also Manitoba Public Insurance, I can tell you that the respect I have for all the front-line workers we have in our public sector system. Other than the ideology that you've been—the member's been working with within her party, it's too bad that her ideology has moved one way, and that's attack, attack, attack.

We know that this bill is—Bill 213 will require Manitoba's retailers to offer additional product and services that, in turn, offer more choice and convenience for Manitobans.

I wish the member from Assiniboia would get off the—

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

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** My question to the member from Red River North revolves around consultation, and I'm sure the current minister of Liquor & Lotteries, as well as the previous minister of Liquor & Lotteries, had their phone ringing constantly and questions asked about when this bill will be coming forward and when it will be expanded.

So who was consulted and who has been pushing for this legislation?

**Mr. Wharton:** I thank my colleague from Brandon West for that very important question.

And over the last seven years, when—seven and a half years during government, where we brought this bill forward, where it was blocked by the NDP ideology, we know and they know—and for benefit of the newer members in the House—that there was a whole host of consultation done.

Whether it be industry, whether it be restaurant association, hoteliers, Manitobans at the door, we

have consulted and will continue to consult with Manitobans during the five-year pilot project.

This will give government and new government and our government forming in 2027 a good idea, Honourable Speaker, of exactly what Manitobans expect—

**The Speaker:** Time has expired.

\* (10:20)

**MLA Kennedy:** Manitobans are very satisfied with MBLL and their liquor stores. They receive excellent service, and revenue is invested into essential services like health care.

Does the member agree with the public that MBLL provides a strong level of convenience, satisfaction and security?

**Mr. Wharton:** Up for this—up for debate today is expanding retail choice with existing licensee and licence holders, Honourable Speaker.

We, again, as I acknowledge earlier and I'll acknowledge again, I certainly support the 63 publicly owned retail stores in our great province and particularly in the city of Winnipeg, with over 30 locations. We support their staff, we support the great work they're doing and in keeping customers safe and also keeping the employees safe, which we championed, Honourable Speaker, during a very challenging time in liquor retail.

Very proud of that on this side of the House. I hope the members get on board with expanding liquor choice here in this great province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** To the honourable member from Red River North, I would like—you mentioned a five-year pilot project.

Can you tell us what will happen or what is expected to happen after the five-year pilot project is over?

**Mr. Wharton:** I thank the member from Lakeside, my colleague, for that question.

And again, the five-year pilot project is going to provide further detail on Manitoba's 20th century retailing practice that we have currently now. We want to ensure that Manitoba moves to the 21st century when it comes to retail liquor here in Manitoba, and particularly in Winnipeg, as well, Honourable Speaker.

And certainly that five-year project will give ample time for Manitobans and industry to weigh in, and government to weigh in as well, on what

would be the best practice going forward. We feel that offering more choice and convenience for Manitobans, ensuring that they can get their products closer to home, is important to all Manitobans.

**MLA Kennedy:** Honourable Speaker, this piece of legislation today is a repeat from the Pallister era and the Stefanson agenda.

Manitobans wanted new ideas and a new approach in government, which is why they voted for an NDP team. While we work and—will we work hard every day to fulfill the mandate given to us by Manitobans.

My question to the member opposite is: Is this a sign that the member opposite, that the PCs are out of policy ideas?

**Mr. Wharton:** It certainly gives me an opportunity to remind the member—the new member from Assiniboia, that every piece of legislation that has been introduced in the last seven months by the NDP was our legislation that we moved forward when we were in a government, Honourable Speaker. So thank you for that opportunity, I really appreciate that.

And again, we—this side of the House makes decisions on best policy for Manitobans, and that's exactly what Bill 213 does, Honourable Speaker. It provides what Manitobans have been asking for: better choice, more convenience, so that when you get in your vehicle, particularly in rural Manitoba, you don't have to stop at five different outlets, spending money on fuel.

By the way, there is an affordability crisis here in Manitoba. I'll just remind the member of that. This will also—

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

**Mr. Narth:** As the critic for Liquor & Lotteries, this is a portfolio which I've studied extensively, and members across the way may be unaware that private liquor vendors provide a 90 per cent profit margin to Manitobans and to our economy, while the public stores only provide 10 per cent.

With that being said, can the member from Red River North clarify for this House: Will the 63 stores be affected in any way, whether that be staffing or product delivery within Manitoba? Are those stores still protected and untouched?

Thank you.

**Mr. Wharton:** Again, I'd like to thank my colleague from La Vérendrye for that great question.

And absolutely, the great work that they're—our Liquor Marts are doing will continue. This has nothing to do—Bill 213 has nothing to do with affecting the great employees and the Liquor Marts throughout Manitoba and in Winnipeg, Honourable Speaker.

So I ask the NDP again to park their ideology, shelf it for a while, so to speak, so that they can understand again how important and how much this means to Manitobans to get our liquor retail out of the 20th century, put it back into the 21st century, Honourable Speaker, and make sure that Manitobans are safe. They've got convenience and choice, and that's exactly what they've been asking for, for seven years. I hope they get—

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

The time for question period has expired.

### Debate

**The Speaker:** The floor is now open for debate.

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** Honourable Speaker, first of all, we're clear in our support for the MBLL and the public liquor system. We feel this system serves Manitobans well. In addition to keeping good jobs in our communities, our public model allows us to make investments in health care, education and infrastructure.

We know that when we invest in MBLL, we're investing in local jobs. MBLL revenue provides investments that go to central services like schools and hospitals. Keeping distribution in public hands ensures that profits are invested in public benefits like schools and hospitals.

We take a reasonable approach. We want to reduce social harms while ensuring the strongest social investments are made. We do that by supporting a public model in Manitoba. The PC approach is one that will only take away local jobs and sell off the—our liquor system.

Former premier Brian Pallister attacked workers in MBLL stores, saying government agencies hasn't always been famously associated with customer service. After making the criticism, MBLL had to send out a memo thanking workers for the exceptional customer service, 'perseveeing' through a year marked by a high number of thefts and the pandemic.

In the last elections, Manitoba rejected the PC Party hack and slash and privatizing approach. In fact, the PCs are talking about how Manitobans have been calling on lawmakers to modernize our liquor

laws. They seem to have forgotten that they failed to get this job done when they were in power. They seem to forget their legacy when it comes to MBLL is quite different. They forced workers out on strike and blamed them for wanting a fair pay.

What's our record when it comes to respecting workers? Within three months of taking office, we settled five outstanding collective agreements with MBLL workers. Workers are feeling respect from this government for the first time in years. That's what a new day for Manitoba looks like.

The opposition also likes to talk about choice. It's important to note that this new bill doesn't even go far as the one they tried to pass in government. Some of the new members across the aisle might not know this, but it was thanks to our NDP opposition at the time that we're not selling beer sold in convenience stores.

It's unclear to us, and perhaps the members opposite can inform the House as to if they thought their previous legislation went too far. Because it's clear to us that they went too far on a number of issues.

So perhaps this bill is an attempt to right the wrong from the previous government. We have to admit it's refreshing. It's refreshing to—I see an ounce of humility from the opposition as they begin to reconcile with their record. We invite members opposite to let us know what else they feel they went too far. On this side of the House, we know we have quite a few examples.

But, ultimately, this bill is a step towards privatization. Our team is confident that we're brewing a bright future for local jobs and producers in Manitoba. Can the members opposite say the same? *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

The—*[interjection]* Order.

The member from Red River North can quit hollering across the aisle, particularly when the Speaker is standing.

\* (10:30)

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 213, expanding liquor retail. As the critic for Liquor & Lotteries, taking my role seriously, I feel that I have a strong understanding of the liquor market within Manitoba.

I represent a constituency of Manitoba where we are seeing some of the most rapid population growth in the province, but yet I do not have a single

government-run Liquor Mart in any of my communities. My constituency is able to be served by privately run liquor and beer vendors. I am able to see first-hand the efficiency that this brings to the market, but also notice the restrictions imposed by an archaic legislation and regulations.

Bill 213 is a well-thought-out and effective piece of legislation. I spoke the other day on how smart policies really do work, and this is one of those policies. This bill does something that all Manitobans are wanting, but specifically Manitobans in the larger centres, like Winnipeg, that are limited on choice of where they can purchase liquor. At the same time, this legislation expands the product offering for independent businesses in Winnipeg and other large urban centres that have been limited for far too long.

What many urban residents don't realize is just how diverse the liquor retailing system is in Manitoba. Manitoba has one of the most diverse liquor retailing systems in all of Canada, including hotel beer vendors, rural liquor vendors, duty-free stores, restaurants' off-sales, specialty wine stores, retail manufacturers, temporary retail locations such as farmers' markets, and publicly operated Liquor Marts that we're all so familiar with. These retailers are a mix of both public and private retail, with approximately 63 Liquor Marts, nearly 250 hotel beer vendors, over 170 liquor vendors and a dozen specialty wine stores.

Unfortunately for many Winnipeggers, they primarily see liquor being sold through the government-run stores and some off-sale beer vendors. These Manitobans in larger urban centres are limited to purchasing their favourite drink of choice at an MBLL-run store, even though they have a well-respected beer vendor who holds a Manitoba liquor vendor licence. This beer vendor is not able to sell anything outside of what is licensed to beer vendors, even though they provide a safe establishment to retail liquor within their community.

In rural Manitoba, we have forever seen liquor retailing being done through privately owned and operated stores. This model works well and allows Manitoba business owners to establish a liquor retailer where the market shows the demand. The model works well, but falls under some unfair restrictive regulations.

In a city like Winnipeg, a public store is able to sell all liquor products, including specialty wines, hard liquors, spirits and beer. Although the public liquor store is able to sell the entire product line, the beer vendor is restricted to only beer and a select



variety of coolers. Simply—but similarly, but even further restrictive in rural communities, where a beer vendor must only sell beer and a liquor vendor is only able to sell wine, spirits and hard liquor.

Bill 213 builds upon and improves our system by allowing retailers to grow their business with more product offering. What is important to realize is this a pilot project and that we aren't expanding private retail liquor across the province. This bill sets out to build upon and improve our system by allowing retailers to grow their business with more product offering, still while maintaining the public-run Liquor Marts within the existing markets.

Manitobans have been asking for this legislation for years, along with liquor and beer vendors. More recently, we have seen and welcomed the expansion of craft liquor manufacturing within Manitoba. These businesses offer their products within their businesses but are bound by archaic legislation and regulations restricting how they present their products within a business setting. Many other jurisdictions across our country have flourishing retail businesses alongside the craft liquor manufacturers.

With Bill 213, these licensees will be eligible to expand the assortment of liquor products they're able to retail in their manufacturing location. What this bill directly means to Manitobans is that people living in Winnipeg will be able to purchase wine and spirits at more than 100 new locations.

The residents of our second largest city, Brandon, will be able to purchase spirits and wine at a dozen new locations. Along with the cities and larger urban towns, this bill also increases the convenience for other rural communities who already are served by a private liquor retailer. In these communities, this will allow the ability to purchase spirits and wine at up to 170 new locations and cold beer at up to 180 new locations. This essentially doubles the number of locations where these products are available.

As much as Bill 213 is great for expanding choice for Manitobans, by not increasing the number of private liquor retailers but instead by expanding their product line, this bill simply makes good business sense by using untapped potential within the marketplace. By doing so, this bill generates opportunities for existing retailers across the province to expand and meet customer demands in a similar way seen in many other provinces across Canada. This will allow for new opportunities for these existing businesses which will, in turn, encourage growth and investment within our communities across our province.

Businesses will be able to renovate their facilities to carry the additional products, hire more staff to manage and sell new products and, in turn, generate additional revenue.

What many Manitobans don't understand is that this will be done in the most economical fashion. What is unknown to Manitobans who have only ever purchased liquor in a public vendor is that more than half of the total sales in our province is done through licensed private retailers and less than half through the public stores.

What we also don't hear about is the profitability that private liquor stores bring to the Manitoba economy. Liquor retail prices are regulated and set by MBLL regardless of the location that sells them. This means that your wine of choice costs the same in rural Manitoba stores as it does in the large city Liquor Mart.

The profit margin between the wholesale acquired cost and retail final price for spirits is 150 per cent. I think I need to repeat this for the other side: profit margin of 150 per cent. Even though the liquor has a profitability potential of 150 per cent, MBLL sets a profitability level for all private liquor vendors at only 11 and three quarter per cent. So that should leave a huge profit margin, right?

But even though there is such a tremendously small profit margin, more than half of the liquor is sold that way throughout our entire province. With an overall gross profit margin on liquor of more than 100 per cent and a net of only 36 per cent, it allows us to quite accurately calculate that private liquor retailing in Manitoba is providing the province a nearly 100 per cent profit margin while public retailing is functioning at approximately 10 per cent. All of these numbers are easily accessible in the 2022-23 MBLL annual report.

For me, as a fiscally responsible Manitoban, this raises tremendous questions for me. The private model is allowing for Manitobans to provide a service and product in their businesses while providing employment on only 11 and three quarter per cent profit margin and contributes nearly 100 per cent profit margin back to Manitobans and our economy, while publicly run stores are needing to take nearly 90 per cent profit margin to provide the same product and service to Manitobans while only contributing a 10 per cent profit margin back to our economy.

This bill makes sense on all fronts. It doesn't affect the poorly producing public stores, allowing

them to remain fiscally responsible—fiscally irresponsible while expanding liquor accessibility through the existing private vendors. This a win for Manitoba consumers—

\* (10:40)

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

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** The only thing that sounds right about this bill is that two plus one is three. I'm happy to rise in the Chamber today and debate Bill 213.

I would start by asking you, Honourable Speaker, how happy are you about your current wireless telephone bill? Is it public or private? I am told it used to be public, and at that time, I was not in Manitoba so I didn't experience that.

But in various parts of the world where I lived over those years, I have seen—I have seen—governments and poor leaders dismantling the public services. It could be telephone, it could be hydro, it could be health. It could be Liquor & Lotteries. That has happened in the past in various parts of the world. And people have ruined the great, successful public departments that used to earn the revenue and fund our essential services like health care, education and infrastructure.

Today, we are debating this bill as a private member's bill from the honourable member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton). I appreciate his services to Manitobans for so many years, but I respectfully disagree with this legislation that he proposes today.

Why? Because it's not good for Manitoba. Why? Because it tells us to change the current system of liquor sale in Manitoba, which is a successful model. And to me, it seems like a supply-driven ideological bill. I don't think anybody asked us to go this way. If the people did, we should look at the recent election results. They rejected the government that favoured privatization in many, many departments.

So it's people's building, it's people's decision, it's people's demand and people are above us who represent those people. So I think we should follow what people want. I can't recall somebody coming to me or our caucus saying, hey, why don't you privatize liquor sales in Manitoba? I can't remember.

But I don't know where this idea came from. Is it ideology? Or there were, like, three people in Manitoba out of 1.3 million that came to this member's office and said bring this bill. I don't know. He can

address this question when he gets a chance to stand up and say something.

So I have been hearing a lot from a few members who spoke before me that it's not going to impact immediately. It's not about the immediate impact. It's about the long-term impact of this policy. Things start in parts. When we started a wrong path, we started with the first step. So this is the first step. Nip the evil in the bud. We should stop it right now, and we stand against this bill. We would not let it happen.

This is not the first effort by the PCs. They have done similar things in the past. I would like to remind everybody listening, all Manitobans, that the PCs brought bill 40. Where is that now? We stood against it. We stopped it. And then what happened to that bill? Everybody needs to find that out. Google it, read it and see what happened to it. It was withdrawn. Who brought forward that bill? PCs when they were in power. Okay, who pulled it back? PCs. Why? Why didn't they go forward with that bill if that was so great? We stopped it.

Manitobans stopped it, actually. And then they tried again. They brought bill 42, then again bill 9 and now two plus one is three: 213. So this is not the first effort by the PCs to bring forward a proposal to privatize our liquor and—liquor sales in Manitoba.

And how beautifully my friends on the opposite side, you know, I actually, I salute how smart these people are. They would use the word modernization. Wow. Modernization, wow.

But what modernization actually means is—nobody would clap now because they tried to modernize, quote unquote, modernize Crown lands. What happened to Crown lands? Okay. Nobody is—okay, nobody from that side—well, I am appreciating the word modernization and nobody from the opposite bench is clapping now.

It's the same word. Come on, guys, it's the same word: modernization. Well, it's like deceptive to Manitobans. Say privatization; be clear. If you stand for privatization, stand strong and say that we're going to privatize. Don't hide behind the beautiful word modernization.

Okay, then they talk about the choice. You can go to any store, you can go to a grocery store, you can buy liquor. Okay, well, not under this bill, but you have said that. You have said that in the past.

So I am taking my 11-year-old for a Slurpee and the guy asks, hey, Dad, what's that product there? It's

liquor, okay. So that's the direction this—PCs are indicating to go towards. We stand against it.

When we talk about employees, Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries employees, they are well-paid public servants and they have good lives. They are able to feed their families and they are well-respected. They have employment benefits.

Now think about those workers' precarious jobs that private liquor shops offer; how well they are paid, how those families and people are able to feed their kids. Be in their shoes, my friends. We are taking away these well-paid public sector jobs by going into this direction.

And everything like this starts with a pilot project. I have seen that, not just in Manitoba; all over the world. I have worked in three continents and I have seen that happen all over.

So people start with a simple little example and then expand, and then they damage the well-established public organizations, Crown corporations. And they have tried to dismantle Manitoba Hydro. They have already sold Manitoba telephone system.

So that's their record. We stand against and we would stand against forever against this policy. We would not let that happen.

When it comes to ownership, who is the owner of Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries? All of us, guys. All of us; all Manitobans. And what we're doing now is we're working against ourselves now. Sell it to somebody else and they would create jobs. Well, we're the owners, we're creating jobs and we own that organization, and we get that profit and revenue that we're investing in health care, education and infrastructure. Why is it bad?

So the only thing which sounds right about this bill is two plus one is three.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

\* (10:50)

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I'm going to get up for a couple of seconds, a couple of minutes here before we get to the vote. I'd like to thank the MLA for Red River North for bringing forward this bill, Bill 213. It's evident, and it should be evident to all Manitobans and to the media that are watching, the hundreds or thousands of Manitobans that are watching this morning on the debate on Bill 213, that it's evident that the NDP side of this House is nothing but fear mongers.

We heard from the member from Brandon East. He stood up, he spoke out of his 10 minutes allotted almost four minutes today on Bill 213. We heard the wannabe Ag Minister, the MLA for Burrows, stand up and talk about Crown lands. We know that, you know, we know that this bill is bringing forward some choice for Manitobans. It's a pilot project. We know that the NDP—I know that the House leader right now is busy. She wants to get up and speak to this bill and she's bullying—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I would caution the member at some of the language he's using, calling people wannabe and different names is bordering on unparliamentary, but at the very least it's inciting what we don't want to see in this Chamber. We want to see people trying to work together and get along and calling names isn't going to foster that.

**Mr. Ewasko:** Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for your guidance on that. I was just, exactly, trying to point out that I think the government side should try to work together more with their members on their side. And I think there's a lot of divisive things that are happening on that side of the House.

We know that the Ag—the current Ag Minister, the MLA for Dauphin himself, mentioned that the community of Cowan has a liquor store but doesn't—is unable to sell beer, so he is agreeing the fact that some of these—if some of the members of the NDP would actually get outside the Perimeter, and I see that the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) is shaking his head that yes, he agrees, that some of them should be getting outside the Perimeter and seeing what is available to some of these other communities throughout Manitoba.

I just want to say, Honourable Speaker, that the NDP continue to put misinformation on the record. They—I don't even think they've read the bill. They obviously don't understand the bill and that Manitobans are actually asking for more choice. It's unfortunate that this coming summer, as we've seen them cut the Parks budget dramatically. You know, people who leave Winnipeg, come out to God's country, which is the Lac du Bonnet constituency, go to the Whiteshell, West Hawk and Falcon, they're also looking for choice and availability of their liquor products.

So, Honourable Speaker, I just want to put a few words on the record. I would also like to ask the minister from Brandon East what is his family saying from St-Lazare to his stance on this?

So thank you very much for the opportunity to put a few words on the record this morning.

**Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** It's—I'm always pleased to stand up and speak in support of our amazing liquor stores and our amazing public services. You know, I question the intent of this bill. In the words of the member from Burrows, there's some coded language here, and we know the slippery slope that legislation like this leads to.

I will speak personally, that I am fully in support of our public liquor stores. I am fully against privatization and I can tell you why. You know, when we invest in our own province here with the revenues, the profits from Manitoba liquor stores, we put over \$600 million back into health, social services, prevention.

When I went knocking door-to-door in my community, I can tell you that not one person told me that they were feeling like they were really unable to access the kind of booze that they wanted. What they did tell me is that they were concerned about addictions. They were concerned about our unsheltered relatives. They were concerned about the lack of supports for mental health services. And I can guarantee that if we expand privatization, that all of those revenues will not be seen in Manitoba and—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

In accordance with rule 25 and as previously announced, I am interrupting debate to put the question on second reading of Bill 213, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act (Expanding Liquor Retail).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**The Speaker:** I hear a no.

#### Voice Vote

**The Speaker:** All those in favour, please say aye.

**Some Honourable Members:** Aye.

**The Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**The Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Can I have a recorded vote, please.

**The Speaker:** A recorded vote having been requested, in accordance with rule 24(7), the division will be deferred until 11:55 a.m. this morning.

The time for—the honourable Opposition House Leader.

**Mr. Johnson:** Can you canvass the House to see if there's will to recognize the clock as 11.

**The Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to recognize the clock as being 11 o'clock?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**The Speaker:** I hear a no.

**Mr. Johnson:** Yes. Can I call Bill 211, please.

#### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

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

**The Speaker:** The honourable Opposition House Leader has called Bill 211. [*interjection*]

Order. Order. Order. Order. Order.

So the second reading of Bill 211 has been called. So we will resume debate on Bill 211, standing in the name of the honourable minister of education—advanced education, who has seven minutes remaining.

**Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** I am pleased once again to rise to talk about this very important topic, especially because it's such a lovely day today and yesterday as well. It's a great time to visit Manitoba parks. As a note to everybody in the House, Manitoba parks opened this weekend. So get out and enjoy them.

And while we're talking about Manitoba parks and licence plates, I want to commend the folks who are working in our parks to keep them strong and clean and to ensure that they're running smoothly. And I want to commend the minister for ensuring that the staff—or the—that the complement is well resourced.

And I just want to take a moment to reassert our government's position on keeping parks public. It's so important. Manitoba parks are here for all Manitobans to enjoy, and we're going to keep them that way. We're going to keep rates affordable. And we're going

to ensure that every person is permitted to enjoy a Manitoba park.

Folks are very excited about talking about provincial parks, and I understand why. You know, it's such a great opportunity in our great province.

When I tell people from other areas, you know, what it is that they could come and see in Manitoba, we might not have the big mountains that British Columbia has. We might not have some of the amazing waterfalls that Alberta has, but we have prairies for days. And we have a whole host of different trees and beaches and amazing wildlife. Just on the way here today, I saw a fox in my neighbourhood. And we can all agree—I'm sure on all sides of the House—this is a non-partisan issue, that we want to protect wildlife, that we want to ensure that animals are—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

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

\* (11:00)

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 13—Respecting Middle-Income Taxpayers

**The Speaker:** The hour now 11 o'clock and time for private members' resolutions.

The resolution before us this morning is resolution 13, Respecting Middle-Income Taxpayers. It has been brought forward by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain.

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** Honourable Speaker, I move, second by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Perchotte), that,

*WHEREAS under the previous NDP Provincial Government, Manitoba had one of the highest rates of personal taxation, fees and property taxes in Canada; and*

*WHEREAS the previous NDP Provincial Government raised the Retail Sales Tax, also known as the PST, expanded the PST to multiple services, raised vehicle registrations fees, raised fuel taxes, and refused to index the personal income tax system to protect Manitobans from inflation; and*

*WHEREAS the current Provincial Government is raising education property taxes for middle class Manitobans by approximately \$148 million annually; and*

*WHEREAS under the current Provincial Government school divisions have been authorized to raise local property taxes by as much as 17 per cent; and*

*WHEREAS despite the Premier's threats of "consequences" if grocery stores failed to reduce their prices, the cost of groceries is higher today than on January 1st; and*

*WHEREAS the current Provincial Government has raised taxes on physicians, pharmacists, engineers, lawyers and other occupations important to Manitobans; and*

*WHEREAS a recent Probe Poll shows that 4 out of 5 Manitobans do not believe Budget 2024/25 will make their life more affordable.*

THEREFORE BE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to eliminate property taxes and recognize the higher education and property tax and relief, which is—expired date fails to protect Manitobans from the cost of living crisis nor provide them with permanent, long-term affordability measures.

**The Speaker:** The motion wasn't read correctly.

But is it the will of the House to adopt the motion as written—to consider the motion as written? *[Agreed]*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to eliminate property taxes and recognize that higher education and property taxes and relief with an expiration date fails to protect Manitobans from the cost of living crisis nor provide them with permanent, long-term affordability measures.*

**The Speaker:** So the motion has been moved by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk), seconded by the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Perchotte),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to eliminate property taxes and recognize that higher education and property taxes and relief with an expiration date fails to protect Manitobans—*[interjection]* Order. Fails to protect Manitobans from the cost of living crisis, not provide them with a permanent, long-term affordability measures.

**Mr. Piwniuk:** I'm proud today to come up to give a few words on the bill—the resolution 13 when it comes to the—you know, making sure that Manitobans—affordability for middle-class income payers resolution.

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

And, Honourable Speaker, I know one of the reasons why I actually ran here as an MLA was the situation that was—happened with the Selinger government at the time. I was on the west side of the province, I remember the—at that time, the premier wanted to raise—knocked on doors on 2011 election and basically said that they were going to raise the PST.

And, Honourable Deputy Speaker, when it came to before that, after the election of 2011, they increased—they put sales tax—provincial sales tax on insurance and on different accounting fee—bills and legal fees. And so this was a really—impact to—a start of a increase in tax, especially to the middle class—our society.

And so one of the reasons why I ran was that the next year, the Selinger government put a 1 per cent increase, about 8 per cent, on provincial sales tax. Being from the western side of the province, that was an impact to our businesses, our industries, to actually compete with Saskatchewan, which had much lower PST, personal exemption tax, when it came to personal exemptions for people with incomes. The tax brackets creped up and basically made it more—less affordable, especially for middle-class residents in Manitoba.

And so when we came into power, Honourable Deputy Speaker, we actually increased the tax bracket so that people can make more money and pay less on the different brackets. And that was one thing that the NDP government never did, was actually index tax brackets. They kept on taxing middle class more and more, even some of them union members who were making good money, like, over \$60,000, were getting taxed every year, increases, because the tax brackets didn't increase with inflation.

And when it came to the PST, you know, there was actually—we actually did a FIPPA, the Selinger government was even in critic—increase it 'til 10 to 11 per cent, because their—were spending money uncontrollably. And the fact is that the impact was that Manitobans were paying more and more, and it was going to affect every single member, especially the middle class and even the poor.

And fact is, when we came into government, we actually increased the personal exemption so that people can make more before they get taxed on the first dollar. We actually increased tax brackets, especially for the middle class, which really needed to be looked at, because again, the middle class are so important to our economy. They are mostly the

members who actually work in our workforce, and by increasing the—not increasing the tax bracket, they were being taxed more and more every year.

And now, Honourable Deputy Speaker, with this new government, the NDP government, I don't think it's going to be any different. And as the thing is, they're also not even focusing on the revenue coming into this province.

They're actually—they cut the economic development committee of Cabinet. That was a big opportunity to showcase what we have to offer for the province, especially when it comes to economic growth. We had clean energy. We created a—tax brackets, tax policies to entice corporations and investment to come to this province to create more jobs, especially in the middle class.

And right now, this NDP government is—what they're doing with their—when it comes to property taxes, every house that has over 308—\$368,000 is going to see a tax increase in their property. And that includes, like, such constituencies in Winnipeg like Tuxedo to Charleswood to River Heights to Rossmere and Radisson. These are big impacts to—also through the southern constituencies of Waverley and Seine River and Lagimodière.

So this is going to be a big impact to a lot of taxpayers, especially the middle class that we're going—when we move forward here. So the thing is, when—I want to see here is making sure that this government doesn't do the same thing because I always say—I remember in the business world, we say, especially when it came to the stock market, history doesn't repeat itself but it does rhyme.

I believe that the rhyming is always been done since the Pawley government. They more than doubled the debt during that time. The Selinger government more than doubled the debt in their time. And I believe that this NDP government, I believe, is going to double the debt again the way that they're going.

They promised over \$3 billion of promises out there, and they're actually—they'll look a bunch, you know, when they talk about the horse pulls the social cart, you know, when our—we were in government, we didn't want a horse to pull a cart. That was back in the day. And my dad used to use horses back when he was young. We wanted to use our—like, a 5,000-horsepower tractor to pull that social cart. And that was where we were going.

But they want a horse, they want to go back to a horse, which is really funny, because when I was in a

farm, my grandpa used horses. We want to use tractors. We want to make sure the economy grows.

But now they—or what they're do—want to do here, is they're going to siphon off the growth, the economic growth of this province, they're going to tax the middle class. And the thing is, when we did, even with the—when it came to the people with less incomes, we increased the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. We basically took a lot of people off the tax roll because the fact is we were able to give personal exemption for higher. We gave more tax credits to the poor and making sure that they had a better standard living.

But we also want to do, is we want to educate the lower—the low-income earners to make sure that they have an opportunity and have better jobs in this economy, that they can actually become more middle class.

But the message that this NDP government is sending to the business world, to investment into this province: join a union, because the fact is we're going to create more of a middle class. That is the backwards idealism that I can honestly say here, Honourable Speaker, because I have been there in the business world. And the thing is, when it comes to more taxes, the uncertainty, investment does not come to this province.

We want—when we were in government for seven and a half years, we were transparent. We created new policies, we wanted to be more competitive with Saskatchewan, and we did that. By creating that opportunity, we've become a have province. When that becomes a have province, then we get more younger people coming into this province for jobs and opportunities.

But with this NDP government saying that to the business world, join a union, we're going to create a middle class. Business—there's a lot of fear right now in the business community, or in the investment community, that this is not a place to do business. And what it's—going to happen now is that, as much as they're—you're here for the middle class, the middle-class jobs are going to be leaving this province, Honourable Deputy Speaker, and that really concerns me.

And this is why, today, we are putting up this resolution to address this, to make sure that Manitobans are aware that this sheep in wolf's—the wolf in sheep's clothing, that this NDP government says that they're going to balance the budget by the end of next—like, the end of this term is a farce, because we know the history.

I know the history lessons. I know the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), he was there in the—during the Selinger government. When they normally did, they doubled the provincial debt, he doubled the Manitoba Hydro debt. They actually took money from Manitoba Hydro to balance the budget. When we came in with balanced budgets legislation, the first few years that they could do was they actually took money from Manitoba Hydro.

\* (11:10)

And where does that money come from? It comes from taxpayers, especially middle-class taxpayers who paid for that money to grow in that—in the Crown corporation.

And what they did was they took money from that Crown corporation to balance their budget, their overspending. And when that came to an end and they couldn't tap into Manitoba Hydro, then they were bringing of a huge deficit and huge debt for this province that more than doubled it.

And then they had to come up with new taxes, like the PST on house insurance, increase the PST at 8 per cent. And the biggest concern to Manitobans, especially to the middle-class society is that they were going to increase that PST by 10 to 11 per cent. This is—was a way that, you know, how can we compete with our partners.

And now what they have done now with doctors, they want to recruit doctors, but what they're going to do is they're going to raise their taxes on their properties. And not only are they bring—increase the properties—taxes on the properties, the education taxes are going to increase too, based on as much as 17 per cent.

So that doctor who is going to be coming to this province—and then what they've done is that they've taken off the personal exemption from that doctor. There's not—if the doctor has a choice to go to Saskatchewan, Alberta or to anywhere else in the country, they have an advantage over Manitoba to live in those places. And this is the concern that we have and when it comes to our side of the House, we did so much to attract business, attract professionals to come here and to have a strong middle-class society based on private sector jobs that would come to our province, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

And I want to leave it at that and looking forward to any questions—to answer any questions.

### Questions

**The Deputy Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips):** It's a privilege to stand in the Chamber today and it's an opportunity for me to remind Manitobans of the colossal mess the PCs left with the Manitoba finances.

But they don't have to take it from me. They could listen to the Laurentian Bank who said, quote, the fiscal House in Manitoba was not in order when the NDP took office after winning the general election after the last fall. The cuts and mismanagement of the previous government left us with a massive \$1.6-billion deficit.

So my question to the member opposite is: Will he and his party take responsibility and apologize to the countless Manitobans they hurt with their cuts and mismanagement?

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** Well, I want to thank the member for the question, but the member should actually do some homework. But the thing is, when it came to our fiscal year of 2022-2023, we had a \$275-million surplus. He maybe do some research; the only differences are maybe go to a dictionary between surplus and a deficit.

And the thing is, Honourable Speaker, we actually gave them \$275,000—basically a surplus, but they gave us over \$800-million deficit when we came into power. So I'm not going to take any lessons from that member across the street.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** The NDP are raising taxes on doctors and skilled professionals and tradesmen by phasing out the basic personal amount.

Just like Greg Selinger raised the PST and fuel taxes on working people, the Kinew NDP are now raising income taxes on skilled professionals, doctors and health-care workers.

Can the member elaborate on how much our PC government continues to save Manitobans with last year's tax reductions?

**The Deputy Speaker:** I will remind all members that we must refer to the government by something—not the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) name. So to clarify for all

members, including myself, you can refer to a government by the Premier's name but not by a party name—you can't refer to the party by the Premier's name.

**Mr. Piwniuk:** I know I've been in that role before, and I know what it's like. And I just want to thank the member for the question.

And when we came into government in 2016, the PC Party came into government in 2016, every year, like I said, we actually increased the tax brackets so that we didn't have the bracket creeping. And we also increased the basic personal exemption every year to be more competitive with our province of Saskatchewan.

And the NDP government—we probably saved over \$300 million when it comes to income tax and we saved over \$326 million in the fiscal coming year so, Honourable Deputy Speaker, we did a lot—our part to make sure that it was more affordable for basically the middle-class earners out there, and we did our part.

**MLA Devgan:** What we're doing in Budget 2024 is rebuilding the health-care system and lowering costs for Manitoban families. We'll take no lessons from that party. Whether it's the homeowners tax credit, the renters tax credit, and whole measures, or broad measures of tax relief for middle-class taxpayers, our government's focused on making life more affordable for Manitobans.

It can't be said of the PCs, so my question is: Can the member opposite tell us why they charged Manitobans a gas tax every single time they filled up at the pump?

**Mr. Piwniuk:** The—Honourable Deputy Speaker, you know, when we actually, when we get the gas tax, that was what—going into our highways. We're increasing our tax—our infrastructure cost at capital expenditures by a lot.

We had such a deficit of infrastructure problems when we inherited from the PC—from the NDP government back for the 16 years of them being in power. So the fact is that was when the gas tax was going right through into infrastructure.

Right now there are actually going to be—they reduced the amount of money that's going to infrastructure. So now Manitobans are going to pay for that in the long run, but at the same time, when that tax gets back on there, what are the members going to do when they're going to say to the public when their increases in gas tax—gas per litre is going to go up? What are they going to tell the Manitobans when it comes to that situation?



**The Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Agassiz–Agassiz. [*interjection*] Apologies.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** This resolution speaks to increased taxes by the NDP government on homeowners by ending the phasing out of the education property tax and allowing school divisions to raise school taxes. Can the member tell us how much the NDP government are raising taxes on middle-class homeowners?

**Mr. Piwniuk:** The Honourable Deputy Speaker, when it comes to the NDP's budget, they're going to be increasing—they're allowing school divisions and some school divisions are actually increasing the education taxes up to 17 per cent in most—in a lot of cases. And the thing is, they're also increase—by reducing the property tax credits that we were giving to Manitobans, it made it really affordable for people to stay in their homes. And that's been taken away now.

And the fact is they're raising, overall, when it comes to homeowners, the middle class, over—by over \$148 million, Honourable Deputy Speaker. That is a big impact and that is a lot of money coming from pockets of hard-working Manitobans.

**MLA Devgan:** So let's talk about the money of hard-working Manitobans and how it was spent. The last previous government sent money to billionaires and millionaires. That money could have been invested in health care and education.

So my question to the member opposite is: Can they stand up and say that they respect middle-class taxpayers, even though his previous failed government sent big payouts to Cadillac Fairview and a whole host of billionaires out of our province?

**Mr. Piwniuk:** Honourable Deputy Speaker, maybe the member should get—take an economic lesson because the fact is, when investors come into this province, they spend a lot of money. And when they get taxed over and over so much, when it comes to education taxes and stuff, they're less competitive and that money can go out of this province.

\* (11:20)

So we want to make sure that when they actually have a benefit of reduced property taxes, that it—they pass it on to the consumer, but if they're going to get taxed more by this NDP government, they're going to pass it on to the consumer.

**Ms. Byram:** We know the NDP like to raise taxes and create new taxes every time they are in power. They created the payroll tax in the '80s and the land transfer

tax. They have raised the PST on numerous occasions when they have been in power.

Can the member tell us a bit more about how the NDP have raised taxes and what the NDP are doing to raise taxes in the middle class now?

**Mr. Piwniuk:** Yes, and I want to thank the member for the question.

And, you know, back in the '80s, I remember the—it was the Pawley government that actually put in—when it came to the land transfer taxes and payroll taxes from the Selinger government. We basically—what we want to do is sort of eliminate a lot of that opportunities to reduce the payroll taxes.

That was something that we were going to look at and making sure that we indexed it at first to make sure that it's more competitive for companies to come into this province to actually create more jobs. That means more jobs—more private sector jobs and more jobs for the middle class and for people to come back to this province.

We wanted to make sure that we were welcoming investors, but we also wanted to welcome back people who actually went to other provinces, which the NDP actually had a vast amount of people going to other provinces—

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

**MLA Devgan:** So in our budget alone, we're lowering costs for Manitobans. In Budget 2024, they'll be paying 5 per cent less in auto insurance, and we're working on lowering hydro costs as well.

So my question to the member opposite is: Why did the PCs hike hydro rates by over 20 per cent when they were in power?

**Mr. Piwniuk:** Well, Honourable Deputy Speaker, I like to give the member across a history lesson of what—maybe he doesn't run—understand, but, you know what, it was the Selinger government that actually doubled the debt for Manitoba Hydro. When you have debt—okay, well, I'll give you a—we'll say economic lesson here. When you've doubled the debts of a company, there has to be more revenues to pay the interest on that debt.

So the fact is we were saddled with a double debt on Manitoba Hydro. Then, the thing is, we have to get an income tax to offset the interest expense that we had to pay because of this Selinger government, Honourable Deputy Speaker. So I'm not going to take any lessons from the member from across.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** My question is simple. I heard about the NDP death tax. Can the member tell us a bit more about that tax the NDP would level on Manitobans and what the PC Party did about it?

**Mr. Piwniuk:** The great—that was a great question.

The NDP for 17 years continued to levy death tax on grieving widows and grieving families through their probate fees, which added a great deal of paperwork burdens on their families, costs through lawyers and through the terrible times on the deaths of loved ones and created a great legal burden on these families.

And these families had to pay the—on that levy, and basically they had to pay lawyer fees because there was more paperwork to do.

And, Honourable Speaker, thank you very much.

**The Deputy Speaker:** And with that, the question period has concluded.

### Debate

**The Deputy Speaker:** The floor is open to debate.

**MLA Billie Cross (Seine River):** I'm really happy to be able to stand up and put a few words on the record.

I guess I'll start by looking at the title: Respecting Middle-Income Taxpayers. I'm going to say a few different things.

Number 1, why aren't we just respecting all taxpayers? Why do we have to pick and choose which taxpayers we respect?

And I'm curious: Do the members opposite include Indigenous women in that sentence. And yes, I will never stop talking about the hurt inflicted upon Indigenous people in this province by members opposite. They don't get to pick and choose who they respect. Our job as MLAs is to respect all citizens, to respect all humans and to put them first and foremost in our thoughts as we do this work.

Members opposite love to stand up and talk about taxes—cutting taxes. Well, I guess my question is, how do you pay for services if you don't pay taxes? If they had their way—if members opposite don't want to collect any taxes, then I guess we don't provide services, which I think would be their preference. I think that they only believe in the wealthiest citizens of Manitoba and they think about them first and foremost.

I also find it extremely ironic and a little bit humorous that all the business people on the opposite

side failed while they were in government. They talk about fiscal responsibility and the great things they did. But it was a failure, and we know that because they're over there. So when you have a—when you have members that only think about themselves and their businesses or their friends' businesses, this is what happens.

On this side of the aisle, we think about all Manitobans. We understand the importance of representing everyone and finding a balanced approach. You know, in civilized societies, taxes are important. They pay for health care. They ensure the citizens have the best opportunities for education. They ensure that people are healthy. They ensure that we have roads to drive on. They ensure that we have all the services we rely on a daily basis.

However, members opposite, they still kind of live in a different time period, you know, a very Eurocentric, colonial-valued way of life, where they don't understand that in this place we can share resources. We can share things. We can work together to make this the very best province possible.

As I stand here today and I look to the middle of the room, I see a representation of the earliest treaties that happened here in Manitoba; and for those that don't understand, treaties aren't agreements. They were not just simply documents to say: hey, you're going to stand there or you're going to hang out here; you're going to live here; we're going to own this, you're going to own that. It was about a relationship, a relationship of how we could live on this land together, how we could share resources, how we could make our society the very best place to be.

You know, our NDP government believes strongly in those values. We believe in reconciliation. We believe in the people of Manitoba.

We're taking a bold approach in Budget 2024 by helping those that need it the most. Member opposite noted, you know, people in Seine River are going to be affected by our changes. Well, I'll happily share that I canvassed my neighbourhood, over and over and over, over a two-year period of time. And what I heard from folks that are affected by what you're saying is that they would happily pay the full amount of their education property taxes if it meant—if it meant—schools were properly funded, if it meant all children had the best education possible, if it meant those of them working in the education system had good working conditions.

Members opposite, they—it falls on deaf ears. It's like they have sand in their ears. They just don't listen

on that side. You know, they failed Manitoba families. They failed citizens. People were living in bus shelters. And to them, that was okay. For folks who—in Manitoba, you'll notice that this past winter, people were not living in bus shelters. We made sure they were housed. We made sure they were safe.

Members are heckling when I talk about people living in bus shelters, like it's something to heckle about. They keep talking about being non-partisan. Come on over. Join the party here, where we care about people.

You know, they failed people in so many ways. They left behind a huge deficit. They can paint it any way they want; the facts are there. Manitobans know the truth.

You know, Budget 2024, we introduced 21 ways Manitobans can save, including a \$1,500 homeowners affordability tax credit for everyone. Members opposite said we're picking winners and losers. Well, I would argue the only losers are the sore ones on the other side. Everybody who owns a home in Manitoba will get \$1,500 under this program.

I don't understand why members think other people are more deserving. Why is it wrong to give everybody the same amount? You know, in other situations, they're going to call for equality. They're going to call for equity. We've given everybody that.

You know, Manitobans elected us to do a job. They elected us to rebuild health care and to try and lower costs for them and their families. We brought in that \$1,500 affordability tax credit. We've extended the gas tax.

Now let's talk about Seine River and the gas tax. Folks love it. And in my constituency, I have a large number of business that are landscapers. They are thrilled with this tax cut. It means that they can put more dollars into their business.

\* (11:30)

We are bringing in several—several—broad middle-class tax cuts, income tax—raising income tax brackets and increasing the basic personal amount. We're saving Manitoba families as much as \$5,000—*[interjection]*

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

I'd invite members, if they want to talk across party lines, they could join each other in the loges. Members in the Chamber would love to hear what the member for Seine River (MLA Cross) is saying.

**MLA Cross:** So, our government is working every day, like I said, to lower costs. We're stopping the PCs' practice of sending cheques out of province to billionaires who don't need it.

You know, the one—No. 1 thing I heard from people on the doorstep was, could you have some fiscal responsibility, could you respect the work we do and the taxes we pay and use that money on Manitobans. We're telling you that's exactly what we're going to do.

We're reversing damage that the PCs made to who—when they raised hydro rates. We're implementing progressive tax measures, ones that make sense, where we're not picking winners and losers. And, in fact, I'm going to list the 21 ways that we're going to help Manitobans save money in Budget 2024.

We've extended the gas tax holiday, which has resulted in three months of having the lowest inflation rate of—in Canada. How can you go wrong with that?

The \$1,500 homeowners affordability tax credit.

Broad middle-class tax cut that increases personal income tax, bracket thresholds and the basic personal amount.

We doubled the fertility treatment tax credit. That is huge to so many Manitobans. It's a tax credit that would have benefited my own family, my sister in particular. It's a tax credit that would have benefited a best friend of mine, who spent a great deal of money just to create a family.

We're increasing renters tax credit. That's huge. Renters need our support.

We're increasing the seniors top-up because we need to respect the seniors in our province.

Free prescription birth control; that is something so many folks need.

We are bringing in \$10-a-day child care all year-round.

We are lowering auto insurance rates by 5 per cent.

We're providing a \$300 security system rebate for families and small businesses. I'm a small-business owner. We operate a business in the downtown area and this rebate will be extremely helpful. We received no kinds of rebates or supports from the PC government while they were in power. We do care about small businesses. They are the backbone of our economy.

We are providing a \$4,000 rebate for people to purchase a new electric vehicle or a plug-in hybrid; \$2,500 if you buy a used one.

We're increasing financial support for low-income renters.

We are funding seniors accessibility upgrades. I have a number of seniors in my constituency who need accessibility measures to ensure that their wheelchairs stay operational and in good shape.

We're doubling the prenatal benefit. That is huge. We need to ensure that mothers are healthy and that their babies will be born healthy, and so that's the least that we can do.

We're increasing E-I-and-A support for low-income families as well.

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** All right. Thank you, Mr.—or sorry, Honourable Deputy Speaker. It's sort of my privilege to put a few words on the record in relation to this important topic.

I've noticed, last few weeks, my friends on the opposition benches have liked to quote things that I've said in this Chamber back to us and—very flattered by that, you know. Thank you.

And so I figure, you know, want to give them some fresh thoughts and hot takes that they can now quote me again in this Chamber, especially when it comes to progressive taxation.

And I want to start with this, explaining what it was like on election night, on October 3. It was such an amazing atmosphere, such an amazing feeling. *[interjection]* Yes, and I feel I need to do this because there's some new PC MLAs in this Chamber which will never, ever get to feel that, right? Never, ever get to experience what many of us experienced on October 3, you know, the excitement and the energy. But what we really got a sense after is relief from the people of Manitoba; that the past seven and a half, eight years of PC government was bleak. It was really bleak and people in Manitoba was losing hope.

You know, we're a jurisdiction where our weather is harsh and unforgiving and we have an, you know, an isolated community. And I'm proud that I come from a place where if you're driving on the road and you see somebody stuck in the ditch in the winter, you stop. You stop and you push them out. And any Manitoban knows that that's what you have to do.

**An Honourable Member:** Or you change the tires.

**Mr. Wasyliv:** Or change tires on a lonely country road.

And that's who we are as Manitobans and that's what makes this place very special and unique. And over the course of the PC government, we lost that. We became more mean-spirited as a province. We became more divided. There was more hatred and bigotry. And it sounds, you know, maybe counter-intuitive, but taxation actually is the glue that holds us together because it provides the resources we need to respond as a community.

So what is the record when it comes to affordability and taxation from the previous PC government? Well, they made the tax system less fair for everyone. They cut taxes disproportionately that benefited the wealthiest Manitobans and the largest corporations and actually many out-of-province billionaires. Huge cheques were sent to Cadillac Fairview in Toronto, to the Koch Brothers in Kansas City, to the Saputo conglomerate in Toronto.

And that's money that didn't go to Manitoba schools. That's money that didn't help support our struggling health-care system. And, you know, the argument, usually from Conservatives: well, we do this to grow the economy, but here's the fact. In 2016, when they took office, Manitoba had the second fastest growing economy in Canada. By 2023, when they were leaving office, we had dropped to seventh. In fact, Manitoba, over the course of the PC government, underperformed almost every other province in Manitoba, right?

Well, who benefited in those eight years? Well, you know, Galen Weston got a massive cheque from the former PC government. They gave him \$325,000. He was making record profits and they thought, you know what, you know? He needed more.

In fact, Heather Stefanson came out and said that if we don't give Galen Weston, one of the—I think he is one of the richest individuals in Canada—if we don't give Galen Weston \$325,000, Superstore was going to collapse, right? That's PC economics. That's the kind of ridiculous economic, you know, dribble that was coming out of this previous government.

And you know, the idea here is that this is not your grandfather's PC Party. This was the most fiscally reckless government in Manitoba's history. They had cut \$2 billion in tax revenue that went to the very wealthy and many out-of-province corporations. Well, that had to come from somewhere, so they borrowed money to give rich people tax cuts. And this

is not something that we discuss enough in this House, and we need to.

They raised the Manitoba debt by \$10 billion in eight years. That is an increase of 40 per cent. Manitoba has never seen their debt jump in such a short time by that amount. In 2016, when they took office, interest on Manitoba's debt was around \$900 million. When they left office, it was over \$2 billion a year. That's \$2 billion that didn't go to our schools to support our children. That's \$2 billion that didn't go to our health-care system.

\* (11:40)

And they borrowed that money. So that means middle-class Manitobans are going to have to work harder to pay off PC debt. Their children are going to have to work harder to pay off PC debt. Their grandchildren are going to have to work harder to pay off PC debt.

So, you know, what they couldn't do is seem to balance the budget, right? Balancing a budget is an NDP policy. If you look at the Schreyer years, they did it eight years in a row. Doer did it 10 years in the row. When the Filmon government was—dark days of the Filmon government—it was eleven years in Manitoba; they did it four times.

So the Stefanson-Pallister government—how many times did they balance a budget in eight years? Twice, sort of. But there's a big asterisk.

They balanced the budget based on—and my friends on the opposition benches are going to love this one—Trudeau sending us an extra billion dollars that we weren't expecting. Justin Trudeau balanced the budget in Manitoba. So I want all the opposition members to join me: Thank you, Justin. Because Justin Trudeau balanced the budget in Manitoba. It wasn't the PC caucus. So, you know, where's the axe-the-tax crowd now, right?

But, you know, more seriously and more troubling was to pay for the rich people tax cuts, they cut the valuable services of Manitobans. What's not a funny matter is they defunded the education system. They defunded health care. And they made lives, just on an everyday basis, more expensive for Manitoba.

And, you know, as a former school trustee, I saw this. So when you starve an education system for money, well, what happens? Parents just don't give up. They have to start using their own money to start paying for the stuff that government used to take care of. And you saw an explosion of school fees. And so middle-class families who think, you know, I send my

kid to public school, all the sudden are asked for increasing amounts of money to send their kids to a public school.

And, you know, when you have premier after premier on the Conservatives' side who's a millionaire, they just don't get it, right? Because they don't use the public system. They send their kids to private school, so they don't care if they—you underfund public education. They don't care if health care is underfunded because they'll just pay the money to go down to the Mayo Clinic, right?

But this is what it—what I mean when—that taxation holds us together, because when we have a functioning province with a functioning tax system, we can afford a world-class education system that every Manitoba benefits and you don't have to be a millionaire to access. If you have a world-class health-care system, every Manitoban benefits, and you do not have to be a real estate baron or insurance baron to benefit.

So when we look at this resolution, it's not only disingenuous, it's really quite sad. And I hope that my friends on the opposition benches will, you know, reflect and choose a new path, because Manitobans certainly wanted that on October 3, and again, you are absolutely welcome to quote me on any of this.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** I'm very happy to rise and put some actual truth on the record. Looking forward to the future for Manitobans.

I have mentioned several times in this House that I had a private business. In that business, we travelled across North America. And as I travelled across North America, I have often asked a question to the people we were working for about wages, about taxes, about taxation, property tax, their health-care system, what's going on—all this prior to my foray into politics.

And I found that, as a business travelling across Canada, that the wages that we paid our employees was at standard or above standard than similar industries that we had. But yet, the take-home pay that each of those individuals had was less than they would get from other provinces.

And I know that Manitoba doesn't have the same population base that they have in Ontario or Quebec or BC, but that shouldn't be a reason to be penalized in respect to fiscal management of the government to make sure your taxes are prudent, to make sure that you're not paying more than your fair share.

So when the PC government came into power, I seen with the changes that were done to the tax brackets, employees' cheques actually got larger without any raise from myself. Raises were due to come on scheduled intervals, but without those raises, the take-home pay came larger.

And then the budget of 2023 that was put forward by the PC government further increased the take-home pay for the employees that I had. And people were starting to get pretty happy about what they seen. Unfortunately for the PCs, we were not in government at that time. By the time that the last changes took place, the NDP was now in government. And of course, the NDP again took the blue-box gift that was given by the PC government, wrapped it in the caution orange and passed it off as their own idea. It was very clear that the tax brackets which were given were done on the PC side and able to index year after year after year.

So having everybody's ideas in mind, having the \$15,000 personal tax exemption, took a number of lower-income people away from paying any tax at all. And if we have an opportunity where we can have people pay less amount of tax and they have more money to spend, they're going to spend that on our economy. Our economy is going to grow. As the economy grows, we create more jobs. As we create more jobs, we have more tax revenue coming in from the new workers. We have a nice cycle of economy growth and people feeling better about themselves, having more free income to spend.

So when we talk about respecting middle-income taxpayers, it's because the middle income are the ones that are targeted by the NDP government over and over and over again.

People don't mind paying taxes and when I talk to people about taxes that are available, they don't mind paying their fair share. They get very insulted when they pay more than their fair share, when they are forced to dig into their pockets or their savings to cover costs because of government overrun or government overreach.

We have to be very mindful of the choices that we make today are going to be here for decades to come. We're producing legislation that is looking at taking money out of the pockets of the average Manitoban. We need to make sure that these Manitobans have the money available to treat their families out, to have the kids in sports, to develop better mental health, to make sure that our communities are strong, to make sure

that we are taking care of all the people in our communities that we need to.

We can't just keep taxing people to death. It's a situation where we need to go. We need to make sure that we're doing the right thing.

So those are the words I wanted to put on the record, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Thank you.

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** Bon matin, l'honorable Député-Président. C'est un honneur d'avoir la chance ce matin de partager avec l'Assemblée mes pensées vis-à-vis cette résolution, et au sujet qui parle des respects envers les contribuables à faible revenu.

Je trouve ironique que les membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre présentent une telle résolution, vu le manque de respect que ce gouvernement—le gouvernement Pallister-Stefanson—a eu envers les Manitobains pendant les sept dernières années.

D'ailleurs, je suis fier de faire partie d'un gouvernement qui a pris l'initiative de remettre cette province, la populace—essentiellement nos services—de les remettre sur la bonne voie.

J'aimerais aussi rappeler que le 3 octobre, quand les Manitobains et les Manitobaines ont décidé d'élire un gouvernement — un nouveau gouvernement — c'est parce que les Manitobains et les Manitobaines voulaient le changement.

Quand on parle de cette résolution qui parle de respect, les Manitobains et les Manitobaines voulaient du respect, s'attendaient à du respect, s'attendaient qu'un gouvernement, autre que le gouvernement qu'ils voyaient pendant les sept dernières années, voulaient un gouvernement qui allait simplement respecter les Manitobains et les Manitobaines au niveau de la santé, au niveau de l'éducation, au niveau de rendre la vie plus abordable, au niveau des services en français, au niveau du travail qui se doit être fait avec les communautés telles que nos communautés autochtones, nos communautés de nouveaux arrivants—un gouvernement d'ailleurs qui reflète la diversité qui existe ici au Manitoba.

Et cette résolution qui vient des membres de l'autre côté de la Chambre, je la trouve absolument ironique, puisque pendant les sept dernières années, le gouvernement Pallister-Stefanson a manqué à son devoir, a manqué le respect envers nos travailleurs dans le domaine de la santé, a manqué de respect envers nos éducateurs, nos éducatrices, a manqué de

respect pour nos communautés autochtones, a manqué de respect pour nos femmes autochtones.

Et d'ailleurs, en parlant de respect, les Manitobains et les Manitobaines savent qu'à la dernière campagne—savent que les Conservateurs ont avancé avec une campagne raciste qui visait à diviser la province, à créer le chaos, à essayer de s'accaparer le pouvoir, quand on sait que le Manitoba veut être une province unie où tous les Manitobains et les Manitobaines sont respectés.

Alors cette résolution, encore une fois, je la trouve ironique, parce que nous avons finalement un gouvernement qui croit à l'empathie, qui va prendre soin de nos communautés, qui va travailler avec nos travailleurs de santé, qui va être juste d'ailleurs envers nos communautés pour mieux prendre soin de notre province.

Et je suis fier de voir que notre gouvernement met de l'avant 21 façons qui vont aider les Manitobains et les Manitobaines à rendre la vie plus abordable. Et d'ailleurs j'aimerais en faire une liste, mais certaines de ces priorités commencent avec la continuation des coupures de 14 sous sur le prix de l'essence, qui a été extrêmement bien reçue par les Manitobains et les Manitobaines et continue d'être bien reçue par les Manitobains et les Manitobaines.

D'ailleurs cet impact incroyable a eu l'effet d'une réduction de l'inflation ici au Manitoba trois mois de suite, qui est vraiment incroyable, puisque non seulement est-ce que nous avons le plus bas prix d'essence de n'importe quelle province au Canada, mais nous sommes la seule province à voir le taux d'inflation diminué trois mois de suite. Et j'encourage tous mes collègues à applaudir le fait—applaudir—applaudir—applaudir le fait que la taxe de 14 sous a continué à avoir un effet positif ici au Manitoba.

Une autre chose que je trouve incroyable c'est que notre gouvernement croit à la réconciliation économique avec les peuples autochtones. Notre Budget 2024 a mis en place d'ailleurs plusieurs initiatives pleines (ou pour être) capables d'appuyer nos communautés autochtones avec un fonds économique. Et j'en suis extrêmement fier, parce que nous nous devons d'appuyer nos communautés Métis, Premières nations et Inuits. Et d'ailleurs, Monsieur l'honorable Député-Président—

### **Translation**

*Good morning, Honourable Deputy Speaker. It is an honour to have the opportunity this morning to share with the House my thoughts on this resolution, namely*

*on the fact that it speaks about respect for low-income taxpayers.*

*I find it ironic that members on the other side of the House would introduce such a resolution, given the lack of respect their government—the Pallister-Stefanson government—has shown Manitobans over the past seven years.*

*As a matter of fact, I am proud to be part of a government that has taken the initiative to get this province, its people and essentially our services, back on track.*

*I would also like to remind you that on October 3, when Manitobans decided to elect a government—a new government—it was because Manitobans wanted change.*

*This resolution talks about respect, and Manitobans wanted respect—they expected respect. They expected a government different from the one they saw for over the last seven years, they wanted a government that would simply respect Manitobans in the areas of health care, education, increased affordability, French-language services, and collaboration with communities like our Indigenous communities, our newcomer communities. They wanted a government that reflects the diversity that exists here in Manitoba.*

*And I find this resolution from the other side of the House absolutely ironic, because for the past seven years, the Pallister-Stefanson government has failed in its duty, has failed to respect our health care workers, our educators, our Indigenous communities, and our Indigenous women.*

*And speaking of respect, Manitobans know that in the last campaign, the Conservatives led a racist campaign aimed at dividing the province, creating chaos, and trying to grab power, when we know that Manitoba wants to be a united province where all Manitobans are respected.*

*So once again, I find this resolution ironic, because we finally have a government that believes in empathy, that will take care of our communities, that will work with our health care workers, that will be fair to our communities to better take care of our province.*

*And I am proud to see our government putting forward 21 ways to help Manitobans make life more affordable. And I'd like to make a list, but some of these priorities start with the extension of the*

*14-cent cut in gas prices, which was extremely well received by Manitobans and continues to be well received by Manitobans.*

*In fact, this incredible impact has had the effect of reducing inflation here in Manitoba for three months in a row, which is truly incredible, since not only do we have the lowest gas prices of any province in Canada, but we're the only province to see the inflation rate drop three months in a row. And I encourage all my colleagues to applaud the fact that the 14-cent tax cut has continued to have a positive effect here in Manitoba.*

*Another thing I find incredible is that our government believes in economic reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples. Our Budget 2024 put in place several initiatives to support our indigenous communities with an economic fund. And I am extremely proud of this because we owe it to our Métis, First Nations and Inuit communities to support them. And by the way, Honourable Deputy Speaker—*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

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

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

*(Continued)*

### **Bill 213—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act (Expanding Liquor Retail)**

*(Continued)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** As previously announced, I am interrupting debate to conduct a recorded vote on the second reading motion of Bill 213, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act (Expanding Liquor Retail).

## Recorded Vote

**The Deputy Speaker:** A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

\* (12:00)

The five minutes provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I am directing that the bill—the bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 213—[interjection] Order. The question before the House is second reading of Bill 213, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act (Expanding Liquor Retail).

## Division

**A RECORDED VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows:

### Ayes

*Balcaen, Bereza, Byram, Cook, Ewasko, Guenter, Jackson, Johnson, Khan, King, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Narth, Nesbitt, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Schuler, Stone, Wharton, Wowchuk.*

### Nays

*Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Cable, Chen, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Fontaine, Kennedy, Kinew, Kostyshyn, Lathlin, Loiselle, Maloway, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Naylor, Oxenham, Pankratz, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Simard, Smith, Wasyliv, Wiebe.*

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Ayes 20, Nays 31.

**The Deputy Speaker:** The motion is accordingly defeated.

\* \* \*

**The Deputy Speaker:** The hour being past 12 p.m., this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. today.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 9, 2024

CONTENTS

| <b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>   |      | <b>Debate on Second Readings—Public Bills</b>  |      |
|--|------|--|------|
| <b>PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS</b>   |      | Bill 211—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Manitoba Parks Licence Plates)  |      |
| <b>Speaker's Statement</b>   |      | Cable  | 1722 |
| Lindsey  | 1713 |  |      |
| <b>Second Readings—Public Bills</b>  |      | <b>Resolutions</b>   |      |
| Bill 213—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act (Expanding Liquor Retail) |      | Res. 13—Respecting Middle-Income Taxpayers   |      |
| Wharton  | 1713 | Piwniuk  | 1723 |
| Questions  |      | Questions  |      |
| Kennedy  | 1715 | Devgan   | 1726 |
| Wharton  | 1715 | Piwniuk  | 1726 |
| Narth  | 1715 | Nesbitt  | 1726 |
| Balcaen  | 1716 | Byram  | 1727 |
| King   | 1716 | Perchotte  | 1728 |
| Debate   |      | Debate   |      |
| Simard   | 1717 | Cross  | 1728 |
| Narth  | 1718 | Wasyliw  | 1730 |
| Brar   | 1720 | Perchotte  | 1731 |
| Ewasko   | 1721 | Loiselle   | 1732 |
| Cable  | 1722 | <b>Second Readings—Public Bills</b>  |      |
|  |      | <i>(Continued)</i>   |      |
|  |      | Bill 213—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act (Expanding Liquor Retail) |      |
|  |      | <i>(Continued)</i>   | 1734 |

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>**