

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. 32B - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 19, 2024

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

The Speaker: Please be seated.

Before we get to the orders of the day—

An Honourable Member: Matter of privilege.

The Speaker: I recognize the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson) on a matter of privilege, but I would ask his indulgence to allow me to introduce some guests in the gallery before we proceed with that.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: So, I'd like to draw attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today, from the Canadian Association of Retired Persons, Manitoba chapter, Carmen Nedohin, Helen Halliday, Marilyn Robinson, Laurie Bowering, Rick Barker, Elaine Cowan, Maxine McRae, Mohammed Ali; Manitoba Association of Senior Communities, Age-Friendly Manitoba initiative, Connie Newman; from seniors advocacy co-ordinating committee, Todd Simms [*phonetic*], Lucille Bruce. And they are the guests of the honourable member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara).

Welcome.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): As we've been discussing, a matter of privilege is a serious issue which requires attention, and the matter which I rise on today is certainly no exception to that rule.

Earlier this week, the Minister of Education was asked—or last week, I, rather—about some issues regarding schools. And so I rise as my earliest opportunity, given the recent announcement as Education critic.

The question is on the Minister of Education's decision to cancel the construction of nine new schools while failing to provide information to myself, as Education critic, and all members as to their plans to meet growing student demand.

This fundamentally prevents the ability of members of this Chamber and myself to conduct my duties as Education critic and MLA for Spruce Woods. The

fact that the Kinew government has refused to provide the necessary information regarding these critical facilities impedes my ability and the abilities of all members to do their jobs and appropriately represent the views of their constituents and represent those individuals and make sure that they are advocating accurately as to the government's plans and address the growing student demand in their constituency areas.

And so I would, you know, move this matter of privilege, seconded by the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), that this matter urgently be looked at. And included in that wording of the motion, I would move that the member for Borderland—seconded by the member for Borderland, that this matter be referred to an all-party committee of this House to ensure that the matter is investigated appropriately.

The Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): I'm wondering if there is leave of the House to consider immediately, while we have our guests in the Chamber and in the gallery, to introduce—I apologize—to introduce the Minister of Health's—where is that bill, where is it; bill 35, establishing a seniors advocate.

Is it possible to introduce it while we have guests in the room? And then after, resume debate on the private—matter of privilege.

The Speaker: So there's a request before the House for the House to allow the introduction of bill 35, the seniors advocacy act, for introduction at first reading and then resume the matter of privilege.

Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: Leave has been denied.

The honourable Government House Leader, on House business?

MLA Fontaine: No, in response to the matter of privilege. I wanted to respond first.

The Speaker: Okay. The honourable Government House Leader, in response to the matter of privilege.

And before we go any further, I just want to make sure that everyone understands that I remind the House that the remarks at this time by honourable members are limited strictly to relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

MLA Fontaine: I just want to take a couple of minutes to respond to the 'menner'—member opposite's fictitious matter of privilege. But, first, let me begin by apologizing to the guests in the gallery that we have with us today, who—seniors who have dedicated their lives to Manitoba, who have made Manitoba a better province and who have been advocating for many years for a seniors advocate office.

And I want to apologize to my colleague, the member—the minister for Health, who has been such an active member trying to bring forward this legislation. I want to apologize on behalf of members opposite—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'd like to remind members that in response to the matter of privilege, their comments should be relevant to the matter of privilege.

MLA Fontaine: I, you know, this matter of privilege is fictitious, as I said, but, again, I want to acknowledge the folks that are in the gallery today that have worked so hard to see a seniors advocate office established, and unfortunately every single member, while they're waving at the folks in the gallery, are actively preventing the Minister of Health to be able to introduce the bill.

So, again, I think we're on day two of members opposite wasting everybody's time in this Chamber. It's a fictitious matter of privilege. It's abusing the House and some of the rules and tools that we have to be able to do the business.

As I said yesterday, and I'll repeat it today, we have to get on with the work that we have in this Legislative Assembly. We've got good bills that members opposite don't want us to be able to introduce, including the seniors advocate office and that is just shameful.

Don't wave to them. Don't acknowledge them. You could sit down and let our bills pass. Don't give them, like, fake—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business.

The Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Johnson: Could you please canvass the House for leave to pause this matter of privilege so that the House may consider private members' statements followed by ministerial statements, with the understanding that, after the statements and responses, we will immediately resume with this matter of privilege for Spruce Woods.

The Speaker: Is there leave to pause this matter of privilege so that the House may consider members' statements and ministerial statement, with the understanding that after these statements, we will immediately resume this matter of privilege?

Is there leave? The statements and the responses to the ministerial statement, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

* (13:40)

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Baljot Rai

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Today I rise to recognize Baljot Rai, who has performed outstanding environmental research to address the impacts of invasive zebra mussels and eutrophication on Lake Winnipeg.

A grade 12 student at St. Paul's High School, Baljot first presented his research at the 2023 Bison Regional Science Fair alongside more than 200 students from across our province. By crushing and thermally activating the shells of zebra mussels, Baljot used the shells to absorb almost 60 per cent of the phosphorus in water samples similar to those collected from Lake Winnipeg.

While the research is preliminary, Baljot's technique would one day—could one day be used to counter the rampant blue-green algae blooms which accompany eutrophication and threaten our lake's marine biodiversity.

Last year, Baljot and two other Bison Regional Science Fair finalists travelled to Edmonton for a Canada-wide science fair. His innovative research was awarded a scholarship and attracted international attention, as bodies of water across the globe face similar problems. Out of the many presentations from our country's sharpest young minds, Baljot's project was

selected as a finalist for the prestigious Canadian Stockholm Junior Water Prize.

Baljot and the next generation of Manitobans will inherit the environment that we leave behind, making it vital that we support their passion and ingenuity while incorporating their ideas and perspectives into our long-term environmental solutions. Baljot Rai's keen mind and dedication to Manitobans' marine—Manitoba's marine ecosystems stand as testaments to the power of young people to change our world for the better.

Please join me in congratulating Baljot Rai, who is accompanied by his mentor and Bison Regional Science Fair organizer Dr. Anju Bajaj, for his outstanding contributions to environmental science and to the health and economy of our province.

Thank you, Baljot.

The Speaker: Further members' statements?

Celebrating Spring

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Today marks the first day of spring, traditionally observed as a time of rebirth and renewal, as our earth begins to wake up from the dark months of winter, bringing more sun and warm weather back to our lives.

Today is commonly called the spring equinox, which means the northern and southern hemispheres receive roughly equal amounts of sunlight. Neither hemisphere is tilted more toward or away from the sun than the other. This only happens twice a year.

Our days will continue to grow until the June summer solstice. It's an important time for the new life to grow and flourish with the longer days ahead of us. We will get to spend more time enjoying the daylight with our families and see all the beautiful things Manitoba has to offer. Many communities and cultures across the world gather to celebrate such a magnificent event. It's a celebration of new beginnings, wishing prosperity and welcoming the future while shedding away the past.

That's why families use this time to deep-clean their homes and closets and buy fresh clothing. Many Indigenous communities see this as a time to connect with the earth, to share teachings of strength and hope. Physically and spiritually we must show respect to the earth by planting the seeds that help us grow and reconnect to the land.

No matter your background, there are so many different reasons to embrace the season, especially in

Manitoba, where our winters may not always be too kind, and it gives us hope for better days and better weather ahead.

I wish everyone today a healthy, happy and prosperous spring season.

Thank you.

Festival du Voyageur

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): Boozhoo, tansi et bonjour. Aujourd'hui, il me fait grand plaisir de prendre la parole pour porter honneur au Festival du Voyageur, qui vient de fêter sa 55^e édition – et d'ailleurs nous avons l'équipe et la famille des Voyageurs officiels avec nous dans la galerie.

Organisée par le Festival du Voyageur inc., cette célébration de 10 jours de l'histoire de la Francophonie, des Métis et des Premières nations est un incontournable de la communauté de Saint-Boniface.

La programmation du Festival 2024 a compris plusieurs sites et une variété d'activités riches et diverses. Que vous soyez un passionné de la musique en direct, des sculptures de neige, des compétitions amicales ou de la nourriture traditionnelle comme la tourtière, vous êtes sûrs de trouver tout ce que vous cherchez au Festival.

En tant que le plus grand festival d'hiver de l'ouest canadien, le Festival du Voyageur attire des milliers de Manitobains à Saint-Boniface, ainsi que dans nos communautés francophones.

Cette année, notre résilience a été mise à l'épreuve, car le Festival a continué à évoluer, malgré un hiver doux et l'absence de neige.

Le Festival du Voyageur a eu lieu—le premier Festival du Voyageur a eu lieu en 1970 avec le soutien de 18 organismes communautaires. Depuis, le Festival a grandi et accueille aujourd'hui plus de 75 000 visiteurs par an.

Le Festival est devenu une célébration communautaire importante pour tous les Manitobains qui croient en la mission de partager la langue et la culture francophones du Manitoba tout au long de l'année. Le coup d'envoi de cette année était spécial, car des dirigeants des trois niveaux de gouvernement se sont joints aux célébrations d'ouverture.

C'est également la première année où nous avons rendu un hommage tout à fait spécial à Louis Riel en tant que premier Premier ministre du Manitoba à l'occasion de la journée Riel, le 19 février 2024.

J'aimerais aussi prendre cette occasion pour dire un grand merci aux incroyables bénévoles et au personnel du Festival qui n'ont jamais cessé—

Translation

Boozhoo, tansi and hello. It gives me great pleasure to stand here today to honour the Festival du Voyageur, which has just celebrated its 55th edition. And in fact, we have here with us, in the gallery, the official Voyageur team and Voyageur family.

Organised by the Festival du Voyageur Inc., this 10-day celebration of the history of the Francophonie, the Métis and the First Nations is a must in the Saint-Boniface community.

The Festival 2024 programme included several sites and a rich variety of activities. Whether you are a fan of live music, snow sculptures, friendly competitions or traditional food like tourtière, you are sure to find everything you are looking for at the Festival.

As Western Canada's largest winter festival, the Festival du Voyageur attracts thousands of Manitobans to St. Boniface, as well as to our francophone communities.

This year, our resilience was tested, and the Festival continued to evolve as we faced a mild winter and the absence of snow.

The very first Festival du Voyageur was held in 1970 with the support of 18 community organizations. Since then, the Festival has grown to welcome over 75,000 visitors a year.

The Festival has become an important community celebration for all Manitobans who believe in the mission of sharing Manitoba's francophone language and culture throughout the year. This year's kick-off was special, as leaders from all three levels of government joined in the opening celebrations.

This was also the first year that we paid a very special tribute to Louis Riel as Manitoba's first Premier, on Louis Riel Day, February 19, 2024.

I would also like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to the incredible volunteers and staff at the Festival who never stopped—

The Speaker: The member's time has expired. Is there leave for the member to finish his statement?
[Agreed]

MLA Loiselle: Sans eux, notre Festival ne serait pas en mesure de faire rayonner l'histoire et le patrimoine de notre riche culture franco-manitobaine et métisse.

Au cours des 55 dernières années, le Festival du Voyageur a aussi été un bastion de la protection de la langue française, puisque la langue est le véhicule de la culture. Le Festival nous rappelle que nous avons le droit d'être fiers en tant que Francophones, Métis et Manitobains.

Nous félicitons le Festival du Voyageur inc. pour une autre année prospère. Je sais que je parle au nom de tous les Manitobains en disant que nous attendons avec impatience le 56^e retour du Festival du Voyageur l'année prochaine, en 2025. Hé ho.

Translation

Without them, our Festival could not help showcase the history and heritage of our rich Franco-Manitoban and Métis culture.

Over the past 55 years, the Festival du Voyageur has also been a stronghold of protection for the French language, seeing as language is the vehicle of culture. The Festival reminds us that we have the right to be proud as Francophones, Métis and Manitobans.

We congratulate the Festival du Voyageur Inc. on another successful year. I know I speak for all Manitobans when I say that we look forward to the return of the Festival du Voyageur for its 56th edition next year, in 2025. Hé ho.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before proceeding with further members' statements, I'd just like to officially acknowledge that there are staff, the official family of the Festival du Voyageur, that are joining us here in the House as they celebrate the 55th edition of the Festival du Voyageur.

Welcome, on behalf of all members, to the House.

Troy Barkman

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Today, I recognize Troy Barkman, dedicated business owner and recipient of the 2023 rural employer of the year award.

The rural employer of the year was part of the 17th annual Apprenticeship Awards of Distinction gala. The awards ceremony took place in November of this past year and recognizes the outstanding contributions that employers, journeypersons and instructors make to Manitoba's apprenticeship training system.

Troy is the owner of Paradise Landscape and in-Design. He is a Red Seal landscape horticulturist, arborist, who is dedicated to his employees and to building individual relationships with each. Troy has

always strived to build a strong, diverse team and maintain a transparent communication within his team. He ensures his team is constantly up to date with industry standards and new trends and works closely with local suppliers in southern Manitoba to bring the best quality products and services.

If you take a moment to read the reviews on Troy's business, it's quite apparent that he has an immense passion for landscaping. It's also apparent from reading the reviews that Troy has built a team with superior work ethic and attention.

Troy has had a passion for landscaping since his childhood, where he would spend days in the garden with his grandparents. He started landscaping professionally in 2010, opened Paradise Landscape and in-Design in 2015, and has been growing his business ever since.

* (13:50)

This is not Troy's only accomplishment. He has won the Gold Medal at Skills Manitoba for landscape and gardening, was nominated in both 2018 and 2020 for small business of the year, and was nominated in 2022 for employer of the year before walking away with the title in 2023.

Please help me congratulating Troy on his accomplishments.

Fuel Tax Suspension

MLA Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Manitoba's new government eliminated the 14-cent-a-litre fuel tax, effective January 1, 2024, to a public feeling the full effects of inflation.

As the Elmwood MLA, I have had non-stop personal feedback—positive feedback from residents. Even with the spring fuel price adjustments and fluctuations Manitoba remains the province with the lowest price for gas in all of Canada.

As of Sunday, March 17, 2024 Fuels on Sargent Avenue had gas at \$1.15.9 litre, while Calgary's average price was \$1.46.9. That's 31-cents-a-litre less in Winnipeg than in Calgary where the gas comes from.

Statistics Canada acknowledges, in its recent report, that Manitoba's decision to remove the provincial gas temporarily, beginning in January, has contributed to its low inflation rate of 0.8 per cent in January 2024. That's less than 1 per cent. And today, the new inflation numbers for Manitoba are 0.9 per cent, still below 1 per cent.

So this is a great start for a new government getting immediate results with a bold move—the first time a provincial government has eliminated the total gas tax.

Conservatives are jealous. They didn't think of this measure first. The fact that not one Manitoba government has cut the gas tax since I was first elected 38 years and one day ago. That's why our Finance Minister's promising more affordability measures and will take meaningful steps to make life more affordable for Manitobans when he presents his 2024 budget on April 2.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

The Speaker: As previously agreed, we will now have ministerial statements.

Gas Pipeline Shutdown Update

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources): I rise today to provide an update to Manitobans about Imperial Oil's unplanned maintenance work of a gasoline pipeline.

Imperial Oil has advised the Province that it temporarily shut down its pipeline that runs between Gretna and a terminal here in Winnipeg.

This pipeline provides gasoline, diesel, and jet fuel to customers in Winnipeg and the surrounding areas. The pipeline will be shut down for approximately three months to work on a stretch of line near St. Adolphe.

Imperial Oil's decision to do maintenance on the pipeline and undertake repairs was made after proactive pipeline inspections identified integrity concerns in a section of pipe south of St. Adolphe.

I want to reassure Manitobans that our government has been in close communication with Imperial Oil and the gasoline suppliers who use the line. We have been assured by Imperial Oil that the line was not compromised and no materials have been spilled into the environment.

The Manitoba government has taken several steps to lean on suppliers to maintain gasoline supply and to ensure the maintenance work is being done quickly and safely.

First, we made sure there was a strong plan in place to maintain supply by providing alternative methods of fuel delivery via rail and truck.

Next, we activated our incident command structure to work through logistical issues and ensure regular monitoring of repairs.

We have also convened a response group with Imperial Oil and Manitoba's largest fuel suppliers who are managing fuel supply and providing alternative methods of delivery.

This group will provide daily updates to government about their progress and bring concerns to our attention immediately.

We have developed a dedicated team of inspectors from our environment, compliance and enforcement branch to oversee Imperial Oil's maintenance work. These inspectors will ensure all necessary precautions are taken to protect the surrounding environment. We reached out to other levels of government, including federal government, other provinces and North Dakota, to address permitting, explore options for fuel delivery and initiate collaboration.

Our government is committed to working closely alongside local stakeholders, communities and industry to maintain communication during this maintenance period. Today I've confirmed that fuel trucks are already on their way to Winnipeg from Gretna, Manitoba.

We continue to lean on Imperial Oil and other suppliers to maintain supply for Manitobans and ensure prices stay affordable. We will continue to update Manitobans in this House and in news bulletins.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt), I would like to inform the House of a small change in the process moving forward.

Since the rule requiring 90 minutes' notice of ministerial statements was adopted in 2016, it has been our practice that for each and every statement the Speaker would announce that the proper notice had been provided in accordance with subrule 27(2). Starting today, I will no longer be making this announcement prior to every ministerial statement. If the required notice was received, the minister will be recognized and then may immediately make their statement. I will only be making an announcement should the required 90 minutes' notice not be provided.

I thank all members for their patience and will now recognize the honourable member for Riding Mountain to respond to the ministerial statement.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to address the Imperial Oil pipeline shutdown, which has disrupted the secure supply of gasoline, diesel and jet fuel to the city of Winnipeg and surrounding communities.

Late Sunday, March 17, Imperial Oil announced rather suddenly that the Winnipeg Products Pipeline would be shut down to address concerns over the integrity of a section of the pipeline just south of St. Adolphe. We have been told this shutdown will last three months. This will allow Imperial to be urgent—make urgent and extraordinary repairs to prevent a catastrophic failure and protect Manitoba's environment.

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) has warned Manitobans that this is a situation that we're going to have to live with as Manitobans for the next few months. The Premier has also stated that Winnipeg has about a week's worth of fuel, with trains and trucks being mobilized to minimize the disruption of supply.

The law of supply and demand is simple: when demand outstrips supply, prices will rise. Any prolonged fuel shortage in Winnipeg over the next three months may lead to increased prices and bring immense challenges for consumers and businesses alike. We must consider the impact this will have on Manitobans to get to work, bring their kids to school, buy their groceries, travel and sow their crops.

Manitobans are already struggling with a cost-of-living crisis and can't afford sudden price hikes at the pump. The Premier and his NDP government have tried to downplay the current situation and some media reports suggest that gas prices will not go up. But as Manitobans woke up Monday morning and turned on the news, they heard reports that prices had jumped 6 cents per litre at some stations in the city. They heard reports that some gas stations had already started to implement \$50 fuel limits. Against this backdrop of this rapidly unfolding situation is a 23 per cent carbon tax height on April 1, and this government's failed gas tax blip.

On this side of the House we know that maintaining an uninterrupted supply of fuel to the city, our airport, our industries and our farmers is vital for Manitoba's economy. We understand any prolonged disruption in a supply shortage will impact communities at a time when families and businesses cannot least afford it. It's a job of this NDP government to be honest, transparent and accountable to Manitobans. This is no time to downplay an unprecedented situa-

tion of this magnitude. It's imperative that the government take immediate action to prevent fuel prices from getting out of control.

* (14:00)

We encourage the government to use two simple tools available to them: extend the provincial gas tax holiday today, and oppose the outrageous federal NDP-Liberal carbon tax—

The Speaker: The member's time is expired.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

The Speaker: Does the honourable member for Tyndall Park have leave? [*Agreed*]

MLA Lamoureux: I'd like to thank the minister for this update on a crucial and rapidly evolving situation here in the province. We have since learned that gasoline and diesel will be traveling by truck and rail with higher frequency to ensure minimal consumer disruption. I think it is important that the government continue to provide all updates so we can all be aware of the gravity of the situation.

Honourable Speaker, there are a number of important considerations that this government can update Manitobans on, for example: how much can Manitobans expect this to impact the price at the pump; will this government be extending its tax holiday on fuel; will this disproportionately affect surrounding communities; how will this affect our heavy industries, like trucking and farming.

Honourable Speaker, this incident speaks to the importance of energy capacity in our province. The transition away from being fully reliant on fossil fuels is well under way. Our province relies on petroleum, but we also need to be thinking about our future energy needs, which undoubtedly require an updated energy grid to support electric vehicles and widely available and accessible charging stations across the province.

We also need to be thinking about bolstering our renewable energy capacity and how we can add to and supplement Manitoba Hydro's electricity generation to fuel our energy needs for the future. This was expressed to us loud and clear from the previous CEO of Hydro.

Honourable Speaker, incidents such as this highlight the need to diversify our energy capacity for the current and future generations.

In closing, I'd like to thank the minister for the update and encourage regular ones until the issue has been resolved.

Thank you.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

(*Continued*)

The Speaker: As previously announced, we will now return to the matter of privilege raised by the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson).

Is there anyone else wishing to speak?

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I would like to just take a moment to address the ongoing matter of privilege here.

I think that it is very important that we resume orders of the day, not only because we have guests who have come out to the Manitoba Legislature, but there are some very important pieces of legislation that I think all Manitobans would like to hear more about and we could benefit from, including the seniors advocate; including anti-scab legislation; including trans visibility, just to name a few, Honourable Speaker.

But with this said, we also need to recognize that it is very hypocritical right now for the NDP to be standing and sharing what they are. For the member of St. James to say that the PCs are abusing these Chambers is hypocritical. It was not long ago, and I was in these Chambers, when the NDP were in opposition, and they did the very same thing. They did this tactic. They had guests come and fill the galleries, and then they would filibuster. And they did this for multiple days.

So for them to say that this is shameful—I somewhat agree. I do think that it would be good to move on. But it is completely hypocritical for the NDP to use that as a line. I think that all of us MLAs could do a heck of a lot better. Our current ministers and our Premier (Mr. Kinew) of the province, they played this exact game while they were sitting on this side of the House. It's time to do better.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: As there are no other members wishing to speak on the matter of privilege, I have a ruling for the House.

On the matter of privilege raised by the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson), I would like to inform the House that a matter of privilege regarding the role of the critic does not form the basis for a matter of privilege.

On page 224 of the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada*, Joseph Maingot notes that parliamentary privilege is concerned with the special rights of members, not in their capacity as ministers or as party leaders, whips or other roles, but strictly in their capacity as members in their parliamentary work.

Therefore the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson) cannot claim the protection of parliamentary privilege for the performance of his duties as a critic, but only as an MLA. The provision is supported by rulings from Speakers Rocan, Dacquay and Hickes. Further, past Manitoba Speakers have ruled that a dispute between two members as to allegations of fact does not constitute a breach of privilege.

Bosc and Gagnon advise on page 148 of the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* that if a question of privilege involves a disagreement between two or more members as to facts, the—[*interjection*] Order, please—as to facts, the Speaker typically rules that such a dispute does not prevent members from fulfilling their parliamentary functions, nor does such a disagreement breach the collective privileges of the House.

On this basis, I would therefore rule that the honourable member does not have a *prima facie* case of a matter of privilege.

The honourable official critic—the honourable—[*interjection*] Official Opposition House Leader.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Respectfully, Honourable Speaker, I would like to challenge your ruling.

The Speaker: The ruling of the Speaker has been challenged.

Voice Vote

The Speaker: All those in favour of the ruling, 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 Ayes have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Johnson: Could we please get a recorded vote.

The Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Please call in the members.

* (15:00)

The one-hour time for the ringing of the bells has expired. Therefore, I'm asking the bells to be turned off and the House proceed with the vote.

The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Speaker be sustained?

Division

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

Ayes

Altomare, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Cable, Chen, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Kennedy, Kostyshyn, Lathlin, Loiselle, Maloway, Marcelino, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Naylor, Oxenham, Pankratz, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Simard, Smith, Wasyliw, Wiebe.

Nays

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

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 30, Nays 21.

The Speaker: I declare the motion accordingly passed—the ruling sustained.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): On a matter of privilege.

* (15:10)

The Speaker: The honourable member for Riding Mountain, on a matter of privilege.

Mr. Nesbitt: Honourable Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege. The privileges of members of this House, as you know, are long-standing of—and of the utmost importance.

As the *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* at page 61 notes, and I quote: The privileges of the members of this House of Commons provide the absolute immunity they require to perform their parliamentary work while the collective and corporate rights of the House are the necessary means by which the House effectively discharges its duties.

Beauchesne, at page 11, defines privilege as, and I quote: The sum of the particular rights enjoyed by each House collectively as a constituent part of the High Court of Parliament and by members of each House individually, without which they could not

discharge their functions and which exceed those possessed by other bodies or individuals.

Beauchesne goes on to note, and I quote: The privileges of Parliament are rights which are absolutely necessary for the due execution of its powers. They are enjoyed by individual members because the House cannot perform its functions without impeding use of the services of its members. Beauchesne makes this point by citing the authority of Erskine May.

There are, then, at least two dimensions to the privileges of members of a Legislature or House, one a collective dimension and an individual dimension. The matter of privilege that I raise today in this House concerns the latter, the individual dimension of the privileges of members.

Neither the House of Commons Procedure and Practice nor do Beauchesne's indicate a level of importance or hierarchy between the collective and individual aspects of the privilege of members. While the House of Commons Procedure and Practice notes, and I quote: Privilege essentially belongs to the House as a whole. Individual members can only claim privilege inasmuch as any denial of their rights or threat made to them would impede the functioning of this House.

This is a conceptual rather than moral or democratic dependence. The individual rights, Honourable Speaker, of members constitutes collectively the privileges of the House and are just as central to the fundamental right of Parliament to discharge its duties.

Thus, it is reasonable to infer that both the individual and collective dimensions of the privileges of members are on equal footing and are of equal importance.

First in the importance among the individual privileges of the members of this House is freedom of speech. Honourable Speaker, the ability of members of this House to speak freely regarding any matter of business that might come before this House goes to the very heart of the privileges of members of the Assembly.

As Beauchesne, fifth edition, notes in paragraph 55, and I quote, Honourable Speaker: The privilege of freedom of speech is both the least questioned and most fundamental right of the Member of Parliament on the floor of the House and in committee.

The House of Commons Procedure and Practice states at page 93, and I quote: Freedom of speech

permits members to speak freely in the Chamber during a sitting or in committees during meetings. This freedom is essential for the effective workings of the House.

Honourable Speaker, a necessary component to the proper exercise of freedom of speech is the ability of members to have access to the relevant information needed to discharge their duties. In order to comment on a bill, for example to be debated and discussed in this House, it is necessary for all members to have access to the text of this bill.

Honourable Speaker, our job as legislators, as members of the official opposition and as MLAs requires all members of this House to have the necessary information provided to us so that we can truly and faithfully represent the voices of the tens of thousands of Manitobans that we represent.

For yourself, Honourable Speaker, and indeed all parliamentarians, is answering the question of whether the privilege is necessary to protect parliamentarians in discharge of their legislative and deliberative functions and Parliament's work in holding government to account for the conduct of the Province's business.

Honourable Speaker, in debate on an opposition resolution of the morning of Thursday, March 14, the member for Seine River (MLA Cross) revealed details of a bill that had not been previously introduced by the government.

The member for Seine River said, and I quote from Hansard: there is legislation on notice that will hold polluters accountable and require them to notify all affected parties when there is a spill.

A fundamental component of an elected Legislature, whether government or opposition, is the right to be provided parliamentary information, specifically the introduction of new legislation and its content on a priority basis. Failure to do so puts all legislatures at a disadvantage when speaking to or about pending legislation.

This release of information prior to the bill being introduced undermines the freedom of speech of all members and prevents the kind of informed, reasoned, collective debate that is necessary for this House to discharge its duties.

Honourable Speaker, I would suggest it is an abuse of the process, and I would further suggest and submit it undermines the privileges of the members of this House.

After taking time to research this issue, I believe I have raised this issue at the earliest opportunity.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), that the Honourable Speaker immediately direct the government to no longer use debate to discuss bills that have not been introduced, and secondly, to immediately refer this matter to the Rules committee.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited strictly to matters relevant, comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity, and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): It sounds like the member opposite is interested in hearing the content of bills. Well, have I got news for him. We've got a whole bunch of them on this side of the House, bills that are going to make Manitoba a better place. And we want to introduce those bills and show all members opposite the good content within.

Now, once we've introduced those bills, there'll be plenty of time for debate, and he's certainly welcome to go through them line by line and have very fulsome debate in this House. And then, believe it or not, Honourable Speaker, he even gets a chance to vote on that legislation and Manitobans can see where they stand on issues like supporting workers in Manitoba, like supporting seniors in this province by establishing a seniors advocate.

I like protecting our communities through stronger legislation that goes after organized crime. I would hope that the member opposite would want to debate those. He would want to have his time on the record and then have an opportunity to vote on it. But again, all the opposition continues to do is waste this Legislature's time and waste Manitobans' time.

We ask them to stop with these matters of privilege that don't amount to anything, and move on with the business of this House.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: A matter of privilege is a very serious concern. I'm going to take this matter under advisement to consult with the authorities and will return to the House with a ruling.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): On a matter of privilege, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Agassiz, on a matter of privilege.

Ms. Byram: Honourable Speaker, on a matter of privilege.

I rise today on a truly important matter of privilege that has impacted my ability to participate as a member and adequately represent my constituents in Agassiz. This is a serious matter that I am raising today, and I encourage members opposite to listen closely. I understand that they have been quite vocal this afternoon.

I'm bringing forward a situation that has directly impacted my ability to participate, as well as goes against long-standing rules of not just this House, but all similar assemblies. Bosc and Gagnon explain the rights of members of an assembly in House of Commons Procedure and Practice, 3rd edition, and I have referenced that material substantially in preparing these remarks, as well as other legislative precedents.

* (15:20)

As these experts write, a complaint on a matter of privilege must satisfy two conditions before it can be accorded precedence over the orders of the day. First, the Speaker must be convinced that a prima facie case of breach of privilege has been made; and second, the matter must be raised at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Speaker—Honourable Speaker, I believe that both of these criteria have been met, and I will explain why. Is—with great honour and privilege that I am here to speak to this very important matter. I was elected to represent the people of Agassiz and stand up for Manitobans, and that is what I'm doing here today, standing up to speak about this matter of privilege, and one that the NDP have no right to infringe on.

All of us here in this Chamber have been elected to represent our constituents and our constituencies, and we need to work together with the common goal and respect the rules of this Legislative Assembly. I like to believe we are all here for the same common goal, but it is becoming more and more apparent that the NDP are not here for all Manitobans. And that is why I rise here today, at my earliest convenience, on this very important matter of privilege, Honourable Speaker.

As Speaker Bosley noted, if an honourable member is impeded or obstructed in the performance of his or her parliamentary duties through threats, intimidation, bribery attempts or other improper behaviour, such a case would fall within the limits of parliamentary privilege. My ability to participate was directly impacted by the actions of this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and this Minister of Labour and Immigration (MLA Marcelino).

As Speaker Milliken remarked in October of 2010, it is indisputable that it is a well-established practice and accepted convention that this House has the right of first access to the text of bills that it will consider. Unfortunately, yesterday this Premier and his minister breached this long-standing convention and spoke to the media and labour leaders about a bill that has not been introduced in this House, Honourable Speaker.

In June of 2017, Speaker Regan considered a similar matter federally, where the contents of changes to the Canada Transportation Act were provided to media outlets prior to their publication in the House. He referenced Speaker Parent in his ruling: although the members of the House should always be the first ones to examine the legislation, after it has been introduced—after it has been introduced—and read the first time, this rule must be balanced against the need for the government to consult both experts and the public when developing its legislative proposals.

I must be clear, Honourable Speaker. That is not what occurred in this situation. This was not the development of this bill, but rather, the members opposite that were frustrated and decided that their plans superseded the rules of this very House. And that is unacceptable, Honourable Speaker.

These rules apply to all of us here in this Chamber. There is no exception. Rules were not rewritten yesterday to accommodate for the Premier and the minister to breach the rules of the House simply because they were not happy that business was not as they hoped for.

Members of this House should always be—should always be—the first to examine legislation after it has been introduced and read for the first time. And, again, this was not the case yesterday. This is clearly a *prima facie* breach of privilege, Honourable Speaker.

These members violated long-standing traditions and rules, and they did so knowingly. They knew that their legislation had not been distributed in this House. This is also part of a precedent with this minister,

where she rose in second reading on a bill earlier this session, without reaching out to opposition and offered the traditional bill briefing.

I understand that the minister—not like the role that we, in opposition, play, but we represent Manitobans as faithfully as she does and it is concerning to see such disregard for the Manitobans that I represent.

And today, this is clearly the first time that I could rise in this House on this matter, as it just occurred yesterday. So that criteria is met.

To communicate exactly how serious this is, I have further references from other speakers to share with the House; hopefully, to carry out how important this is.

On April 19, 2016, Speaker Regan delivered his ruling on a matter along similar lines. Amendments to the Criminal Code were reported to media before they were introduced in the House. In that instance, the chief government whip rose and apologized on behalf of the government because it was not authorized.

Unfortunately, Honourable Speaker, that is not what happened here yesterday. Yesterday, we saw a knowledgeable and intentional violation of these rules, and I will express exactly what I mean, because it is vital to your ruling on this matter.

Yesterday, the Premier and his Minister of Labour and a slate of labour leaders descended on the grand staircase, and this was for a media. And they were available and they had this scheduled, disregarding the fact that the legislation had not been introduced in this Chamber. They spoke at length and in detail. And again, this had not been introduced in this Chamber.

The Premier talked about a suite of legislation that this House hasn't seen. His Minister of Labour spoke about details, including the scope of this legislation that I still have not seen, and how it compared to other jurisdictions.

* (15:30)

Bea Bruske for the Canadian Labour Congress and Kevin Rebeck spoke about the bill with familiarity and with more awareness than any member not on the government benches. And I suspect many of the minister's colleagues have not read the bill, either.

Mr. Ryback [*phonetic*] spoke about the intent and spoke of two pieces of legislation that have still not been introduced and Ms. Bruske even put up a blog post on these bills, that of which I'll come back to.

This significant breach of privilege came in response to a question from a reporter. The minister, knowing the answer would violate the privilege of members, turned to the Premier (Mr. Kinew) to look for permission to respond.

Am I allowed to answer this question, she asked. The Premier granted that endorsement. Just go for it, he said. The minister joked about their shared disregard for the rules. She said, and I quote: What's another matter of privilege, right?

That's about 19 minutes into the recording.

I wish that was the only evidence that this bill had been shared and that the members opposite have absolutely no respect for this Legislative Assembly or its rules. But that's not all.

I mentioned a blog post earlier. At the top is a photo of the member from Fort Rouge with Labour Congress president Bea Bruske, and they're smiling in front of a campaign sign for the member from St. Boniface.

But I'm not going to read too much into that, Honourable Speaker, other than to say it's peculiar, if not overtly inappropriate, this labour leader, who has more access to bills that will be presented to this House, than duly elected members. But I digress, and return to the blog post in question.

In it, at the Canadian Labour Congress website, president Bea Bruske celebrated the legislation that was not introduced.

Traditionally, opposition and stakeholders alike reserve commentary on bills they haven't read. However, the post detailed the legislation's content as it pertains to the banning of replacement workers, automatic certification, the signing of union cards. And that's a fact.

Honourable Speaker, I should be learning about bills we are debating in this House when a copy of the text is distributed to this Chamber. I should not be learning of the details in the blog post of a booster for this government.

The impression that this is leaving is that if you campaign for this Premier you get preferable access. This constitutes a violation of members' privilege.

Manitobans sent me and every other member on these benches to this Chamber. They did not send Kevin Ryback [*phonetic*] of the MFL. They did not send Bea Bruske and the CLC.

So, Honourable Speaker, I ask: Why are these groups getting access to the business of this House and

why is this minister joking about violating the privilege of our members?

As the examples I presented earlier show, Honourable Speaker, a minister is encouraged and entitled to consult with Manitobans in the crafting of legislation. But there is a difference between consulting on the content and having special interest groups presenting to media on intimate knowledge of a bill that has not been tabled.

In his April 19, 2016 ruling, Speaker Regan quoted extensively from Speaker Milliken using precedent to form the basis of his ruling that a *prima facie* case was evident.

In March of 2001, Speaker Milliken ruled that the convention of the confidentiality of bills on notice is necessary, not only to that members themselves may be well informed but also because of the pre-eminent role which the House plays and must play in legislative affairs of the nation.

Speaker Regan concludes: In this instance the Chair must conclude that the House's right of first access to legislative information was not respected. The Chair appreciates the Chief Government Whip's assertion that no one in the government was authorized to publicly release the specific details of the bill before its introduction.

Still, it did happen, and these kinds of incidents cause grave concern among honourable members. I believe it is a good reason why extra care should be taken to ensure that matters that ought properly to be brought to the House first do not, in any way, get out in the public domain prematurely.

In December of 1986, Speaker Fraser addressed a matter of privilege where a member alleged that an American pharmaceutical company had advance knowledge of a bill that had not been introduced. I think it is appropriate for the Chair to remind all honourable members that these kinds of incidents do cause grave concern among honourable members, and I believe it is good reason why extra special care should be taken, especially by ministers, to ensure that matters that ought properly to be brought to the House do not, in any way, get out in the public domain and cause concern to honourable members and often to ministers as well.

* (15:40)

Honourable Speaker, these are two separate Speakers who have confirmed what the Minister of Labour and Immigration (MLA Marcelino) clearly

knew: that to present on these bills to the media was a breach of our privileges as members and a violation of contempt of this House. The minister's comments to media, joking, what's another matter of privilege? She asked permission from the Premier (Mr. Kinew) because she knew it was wrong, and he permitted this breach.

To conclude, I encourage you, Honourable Speaker, to echo the words of Speaker Regan: thus the available precedents lead me to conclude that this incident constitutes a *prima facie* question of privilege.

Honourable Speaker, I have presented an obvious case, including the fact that the minister and Premier were aware of the breach. I want to assure members opposite, who have amplified ill intent to these matters that we are raising, if they would simply stop breaking the rules, we could get into the important business of passing laws for Manitobans.

Therefore, I move, seconded by the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan), that this matter be referred to an all-party committee for review.

The Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that the remarks at this time by honourable members are limited strictly to relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity, and whether a *prima facie* case has been established.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): As you have just put on the record here, my response is in respect of whether or not this was the earliest opportunity that the member opposite had to raise her matter of privilege. And I would submit to the House it is not.

We know that the members opposite, in their attempt to stall our legislation or block our legislation, actually already had a couple of individuals get up today. If this was such a concern to the member opposite, and it was, in fact, a matter of privilege, she could have gotten up at her earliest opportunity, which would've been right at 1:30 p.m. But, alas, Honourable Speaker, she had other individuals that came up before her.

And I do just want to—I would be remiss if I didn't put on the record, again, that each and every one of the members opposite are attempting to stall and block important legislation that we're seeking to have royal assent, that will make Manitoba a better province, that will protect workers, that will finally establish a seniors advocate office.

It was pretty shameful, Honourable Speaker, to have seniors that have been doing this work for so long in the gallery, to sit here and see the shameful display of the members just wasting everybody's time. They're wasting all of our time. They're wasting your time, they're wasting my time, they're wasting all of our time on this side, they're wasting the clerks' time—I feel so bad for the clerks that are just sitting here and having to deal with this nonsense.

So, again, I would hope that the members opposite, you know, it's quarter to four; they can sit down, they can do the job that they were elected to do and allow us to introduce our bills—our really, really good legislative agenda that we have—and allow us to get on with the business of the House here.

So, again, I would disabuse the member opposite in respect of a matter of privilege. It's not a matter of privilege; it's another attempt at trying to stall really important, progressive, critical, transformative legislation.

The Speaker: On the matter of privilege raised, I would note that similar matters have been raised in the House over the last number of years. I will observe that the underlying principle here is the primacy and authority of the Assembly. As elected representatives, it is our duty to carefully consider the business before us so that we may make informed decisions. Any matter destined for consideration by this body, including legislation, should be introduced and explained here first before it is shared with the public or the media. This has been the practice of this place for almost 150 years.

In recent years it has become more commonplace for members on both sides of the House to discuss in general or conceptual terms potential legislation outside of the House in advance of the introduction. These discussions have occurred in the form of consultations with stakeholders and also through interactions with media. I would give the caution to all members that such discussions must not reveal and relate any detailed provisions of upcoming legislation to ensure that the primacy and authority of the Assembly is not infringed on. To aid in this matter, members might consider having press conferences or media briefings after the legislation has been introduced.

In the current circumstances, no specific evidence was provided to the House that the media or others received copies of the legislation or detailed information about specifics of the bill. This is a crucial point because in the absence of such proof it is difficult for a presiding officer to rule that any privileges were breached. *[interjection]*

I would remind members that the Speaker is speaking, so they should not be.

Accordingly, after careful consideration of the matter, I am ruling that a prima facie case of privilege has not been established. However, I would strongly urge all members to reflect on the information I have presented today. I would note that while this circumstance does not constitute a breach of privilege, it could be considered discourteous to the Assembly.

Should a similar situation occur in the future, as your Speaker, I would remain obligated to carefully consider all of the evidence presented and deliver a ruling.

Thank you.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): I respect your—respectfully, Honourable Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

The Speaker: Ruling of the Speaker has been challenged.

Voice Vote

The Speaker: All those in the House who are in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Speaker, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Speaker: All those opposed to sustaining the ruling of the Speaker, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Speaker: I believe the Ayes have it.

* (15:50)

Recorded Vote

Mr. Johnson: A recorded vote, please, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: A recorded vote has been called for. Please call in the members.

* (16:50)

The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm directing the bells to be turned off and the House to proceed to the vote.

So the question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

Division

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

Ayes

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

Nays

Balcaen, Bereza, Byram, Cook, Ewasko, Goertzen, Guenter, Hiebert, Jackson, Johnson, Khan, King, Lagassé, Narth, Nesbitt, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Schuler, Stefanson, Wharton, Wowchuk.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Tim Abbott): Ayes 31, Nays 21.

The Speaker: The motion is accordingly passed.

The ruling of the Chair is sustained.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

The Speaker: The honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. King).

No, sorry.

The honourable member for La Vérendrye.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to rise today on a matter of privilege. I do have a very important, significant issue that I would like to raise as a matter of privilege in this House. I think it's something that all members should pair—pay very close attention to, and it is something that I think all members, certainly on this side of the House, feel is an important matter of privilege.

The NDP have made it clear that they are willing to be misleading on the record. I have raised the issue of special risk extension policies through MPI twice now in this House. My colleagues have also raised this issue with the minister at committee.

Yet, every time this issue has been raised to the minister responsible for Manitoba Public Insurance, he has provided inconsistent and incoherent responses to the line of questioning.

I wanted to carefully review both House records, being Hansard as well as archived video footage of House proceedings, review the minister's and MPI's comments in media as well as speak to my constituents who were impacted by this minister's inaction on the SRE issue, who I was advocating for in the first place when I raised this issue in question period.

I am raising this issue at my soonest available opportunity, after being able to complete a full review on the situation.

When asked in question period on March 7, the minister stated, and I quote, but there is a lot of work to do, and if he—referring to myself, asking the question—had spent some time at committee with us the other day, he would have heard the officials from MPI.

So not only did the minister refuse to answer my question, but now he is directly limiting access to answers from his officials. Only those members who were able to attend his committee were worthy to receive responses from this minister.

That directly impacts not only my ability to do my job, both as Infrastructure critic but also as the MLA for La Vérendrye. It limits all of our abilities as MLAs, and thus as representatives for each of our individual communities, to be able to do our jobs and hold the minister responsible for MPI to account for his failings to serve Manitobans who rely on the service and services that MPI offers.

That same day, on March the 7th, instead of answering my questions, the minister referenced, and I quote, that this government—referred that this government, we have identified the problems, we have put in a new board, a new CEO. It is a new day at MPI.

While the minister may want to brag about his new appointments at MPI, it is still evading the question—the line of question with which my constituents are directly concerned.

Instead of standing up for Manitobans just trying to make a living, delivering goods to communities across the province, this minister dodged the question.

Independent delivery drivers, for-hire trucking companies and long-distance owner-operators are the backbone of our provincial economy. I'm not sure if the minister understands how crucial this industry is to our province. But, to put it into perspective, everything we use or consume each day has relied on a truck

that needs this type of insurance that this minister and Manitoba Public Insurance have been ignoring.

Honourable Speaker, this minister may be able to ignore this industry and these people, but I cannot. These are the people who I am accountable to. These are our friends, our neighbours, kids' baseball coaches and people that care so much about this province that they just want to be able to do the work and contribute without disruption.

I have had the opportunity to speak to constituents who felt that taking on greater risk by purchasing a truck and a trailer on their own would provide the opportunity to provide more for their family and also this very province.

It has been these families that are now left sitting and wondering if they may not only lose their new investment but also the home which they are raising their families within.

I think that we can all agree that Manitobans should not be driven to homelessness as a result of a strong work ethic but a government not capable of running a viable insurance company.

On March 12, I raised this issue again in the House. Once again, the minister admitted—attempted to limit my rights as a legislature—as a legislator to ask him any questions regarding MPI. He said, and I quote again: We had an opportunity just the other day, here in the Legislature, to come together at committee and ask the experts at MPI about some of the challenges that we've been facing under the former government and how those decisions of the former government impacted the work that they do.

So once again—

The Speaker: Order, please. When the House next meets, the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth) will be able to conclude their matter of privilege.

The hour being 5 o'clock, the House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 19, 2024

CONTENTS

Matter of Privilege

Jackson 835
Fontaine 836

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Members' Statements

Baljot Rai
Schmidt 836

Celebrating Spring
Byram 837

Festival du Voyageur
Loiselle 837

Troy Barkman
Lagassé 838

Fuel Tax Suspension
Maloway 839

Ministerial Statements

Gas Pipeline Shutdown Update
Moses 839
Nesbitt 840
Lamoureux 841

Matter of Privilege

(Continued)
Lamoureux 841

Matter of Privilege

Nesbitt 842
Wiebe 844

Matter of Privilege

Byram 844
Fontaine 847

Matter of Privilege

Narth 848

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>