

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

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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
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REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
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SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
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WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Tuxedo	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 28, 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's 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.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**The Speaker:** As agreed by the House on May 21, 2024, this morning the House shall consider concurrence and third reading of Bill 207, The Islamic Heritage Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); Bill 208, The Two-Spirit and Transgender Day of Visibility Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); and Bill 212, The Asian Heritage Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended) with the debate to proceed as follows: (1) the bill sponsor may speak for up to five minutes; (2) a member from another recognized party may speak for up to five minutes; (3) the independent member may speak for up to five minutes; and (4) the Speaker shall put the question.

Therefore I will call concurrence and third reading of Bill 207, The Islamic Heritage Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Is there leave to amend the agreement from May 21 to call second reading of Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act, if we are done with the previous aforementioned bills?

**The Speaker:** Is there leave to amend the agreement from May 21 to call second reading of Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act, if there is additional time?

Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS—  
PUBLIC BILLSBill 207—The Islamic Heritage Month Act  
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks  
and Months Act Amended)

**The Speaker:** Therefore, now we will move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 207, The Islamic Heritage Month Act, commemoration of days, weeks and months act 'amembered.'

**MLA Nellie Kennedy (Assiniboia):** I move that Bill 207—[*interjection*] Oh, yes. I move, seconded by the honourable member from Waverley, that Bill 207, The Islamic Heritage Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion agreed to.*

**MLA Kennedy:** It's such a pleasure and an honour to be here to be reading for the third reading of The Islamic Heritage Month Act.

So Manitoba is home to many people who have called our province home for decades, even centuries. As Manitobans, we shared common values, like understanding, acceptance and unity. It was my honour and privilege to introduce Bill 207, The Islamic Heritage Month Act, last month.

By recognizing every October as Islamic heritage month, Manitobans from all walks of life will be able to celebrate the invaluable contributions Muslim communities have made to the fabric of our province's diverse tapestry.

By uplifting our Muslim neighbours and celebrating our common values together, we create a better, more equitable Manitoba for all. I'm so proud to be a part of a government as diverse as ours that sees representation as a priority.

I was able to introduce The Islamic Heritage Month Act during the month of Ramadan. This made for a very special and remarkable occasion for the Muslim community members who attended the bill's introduction here in the people's building. I was grateful to have my family and community leaders, like Shahina Siddiqui present to witness this historic occasion for Muslim Manitobans.

Thank you once again to all the amazing people who were here that day. It is you who make our community and our province special.

Bringing forward The Islamic Heritage Month Act means celebrating and acknowledging the legacy of Muslims who have played a pivotal role in shaping our province. By doing this, we're remembering the many people who came to Manitoba in the early 1900s as farmers who worked the land or as students looking for a brighter future.

Two such people were my paternal grandparents, Jemillia and Ali Abas, who moved to Manitoba in 1914 and who were among one of the first 10 Muslim families here in Manitoba. These new Manitobans would come together and form the Manitoba Islamic Association, creating a space for those Muslims who called our province home and a place of belonging for newcomers of the Islamic faith.

Now, Manitoba is home to over 20,000 Muslims. And as the population continues to grow, so do community gatherings for Friday prayers and projects, with the province's first mosque on Hazelwood long being established in 1975.

By embracing Islamic heritage month, we are celebrating diversity and inclusivity and reminding ourselves of the importance of fostering understanding, respect and harmony among all Manitobans, regardless of their background or faith.

This bill also emphasizes the importance of education and awareness regarding Islamic heritage. It provides an opportunity for Manitobans to learn about the rich tapestry of Islamic civilization, its contributions to human progress and its shared values of compassion, tolerance and social justice.

\* (10:10)

Through educational initiatives, public events and cultural exchanges, we can foster greater understanding and appreciation for the diverse perspectives that enrich our collective identity.

By commemorating Islamic heritage month, we reaffirm our commitment to building a society where every individual feels valued, respected and empowered to contribute to the common good. To quote Shahina Siddiqui, chair of Islamic History Month Canada: What better way to build bridges than to offer people the opportunity to know each other and grow in mutual respect and compassion?

Recognizing Manitoba's rich Muslim heritage and honouring this special month to educate, share, celebrate and empower our youth to feel at home, this bill's passage is something that we all agree on, including members opposite. Quoting my colleague, the member from Fort Whyte: This bill is important and it's something that's needed.

With that, I look forward to continued unanimous support for Bill 207, The Islamic Heritage Month Act. Let us come together to honour the past, celebrate the present and build a future where diversity is embraced and inclusivity thrives.

**MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** It is my pleasure to put some words on the record for Bill 207, The Islamic Heritage Month Act.

I would also like to thank the member for Assiniboia (MLA Kennedy) for bringing forward this bill. It was really wonderful to have the member for Assiniboia share her upbringing, to share her family stories with the House. I am truly honoured to be able to stand up and speak to such uplifting, positive bills today.

Bills such as heritage month, commemoration days, awareness days, are not ones in which political games should be played. We all need to work together to foster relationships and understanding with one another, to collaborate with all groups and to work to resolve, to reconcile all wrongdoings.

Heritage months are periods within a calendar year that are designed to celebrate and acknowledge different ethnic groups. These times, these weeks or months and the celebrations that come along with them, are important in providing the space to teach and learn about cultural history.

The intention of heritage month is to recognize and celebrate the contributions that different cultures and social identities have made to improve and

strengthen our province. These observances highlight the achievements that different cultures or social groups have made.

Bill 207, the Islamic heritage month, offers an opportunity to celebrate, to share, to educate on the vibrant history of Muslim heritage. It is also a time to recognize their contribution to society and our communities socially, culturally, economically and politically.

We are proud to have had the first Muslim man, my colleague and friend, the member—Fort Whyte elected to the Manitoba provincial Legislature. I am very grateful to have the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) as part of our caucus. He has so much to teach, so much to share, and we have all, I'm sure, learned much from him already. He has a great pride in his culture, in his faith and thoroughly enjoys teaching us all.

During the second reading of Bill 207, The Islamic Heritage Month Act, the member for Fort Whyte shared some very interesting facts about the pivotal role Islamic heritage has played in society. He shared about coffee and how it was first brewed in Yemen and helped for the late—and helped through the late nights of prayer and devotion. He shared about algebra and the history of the flying machine.

Diversity inclusion in a workplace is important as it creates fairer, more accessible workplaces for all; allows for exposures to different perspectives and problem solving; leads to innovative thinking and allows companies to hire the best employees from a diverse pool that leads to increased customer satisfaction.

Manitoba is home to rich and diverse communities and we are all very proud of it. We should all respect and value and celebrate diversity and we have. Manitoba currently has over 25,000 Muslims. They play a significant role in society. We are proud that Manitoba has so many wonderful cultural communities that they call Manitoba home.

The Islamic heritage in our province has influenced many different areas of human knowledge to improve the world we live in, and has played a pivotal role in many things, from arts, sciences, to medicine and architecture, music and humanities.

Manitoba Muslim community has made a significant contribution to volunteerism in the arts, creative industries, sports, business, trades and the public service.

Diversity and inclusion in our society as a whole is an essential driver of innovation, empathy and society's well-being, creating a rich landscape of perspectives and ensures that all individuals are present and actively involved, integrated and valued in all aspects of life.

We can all play a role in eliminating and combatting all forms of prejudice, discrimination and Islamophobia. We all know that for the Islamic community, it has not been easy, and what they have faced as far as prejudice and discrimination is completely intolerable.

Bill 207, Islamic Heritage Month Act, should inspire us all to advocate for human rights, to step up and act when needed and to work together towards a just and compassionate society.

With those few words, Mr.—Honourable Speaker, I leave the floor to anyone else who wants to speak.

**The Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 207, the Islamic heritage month, commemoration of days, weeks and months act amended.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?  
[Agreed]

I declare the motion carried.

**Bill 208—The Two-Spirit and Transgender  
Day of Visibility Act  
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks  
and Months Act Amended)**

**The Speaker:** We will now move on to Bill 208, the two-spirit, transgender day act of visibility act, commemoration of days, weeks and months act amended.

**Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park):** I move, seconded by the member from Lagimodière, that Bill 208, The Two-Spirit and Transgender Day of Visibility Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Oxenham:** Last week during the committee session on Bill 208, The Two-Spirit and Transgender Day of Visibility Act, we witnessed powerful and moving testimonies from the two-spirit, trans and gender-diverse community.

The stories shared were deeply personal, shedding light on the challenges and discrimination faced by individuals who deserve our unwavering support and advocacy. There was such a beautiful lineup of presenters who all spoke so eloquently and shared their hopes and dreams for the future, a future that uplifts and celebrates two-spirit, trans and gender-diverse people.

It was truly a sight to behold, Honourable Speaker, seeing some of our Conservative colleagues visibly moved by these testimonies. This underscores the universal resonance of these stories, which touches hearts and stirs emotions. Yet, I implore my colleagues across the aisle to channel these emotions into tangible action and genuine support for this bill.

While emotions can be a powerful catalyst for change, they must be accompanied by concrete support for legislation that strives to uplift marginalized communities. It's not enough to showcase transient empathy in committee rooms. Real progress comes from advocating for policies that protect and empower those who have been historically marginalized and oppressed.

\* (10:20)

So today I call upon all members, including my Conservative colleagues, to move beyond performative displays of sentiment and demonstrate a genuine commitment to the rights and well-being of two-spirit, trans and gender-diverse individuals.

Honourable Speaker, let us not allow fear or prejudice to overshadow the imperative of equality and respect for all Manitobans. In a society that values inclusivity and diversity, I challenge you to stand up in solidarity with those who have long been silenced and marginalized.

Let's ensure that our legislative actions reflect our professed values of equality, acceptance and respect for individuals, irrespective of their gender identity or expression. It's time to turn empathy into action.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** I'm pleased to stand in the Chamber today and put a few words on the record in respect to Bill 208, The Two-Spirit and Transgender Day of Visibility Act. This bill aims to recognize and honour the contributions and visibility of two-spirit and transgender individuals within our province.

I'd like to thank the member from Kirkfield Park for sharing their personal stories with us in the House.

I want to acknowledge the importance about sharing personal stories and recognizing the contribution of two-spirit and transgender individuals in Manitoba, not just today, but every day. It is important to note that all individuals are worthy of deserving respect and to recognize that coming out is not easy and takes courage.

Coming together as a community and showing love instead of hate and violence is a first step to change in recognizing gender identity. No matter what colour your skin is, your background or culture, all people deserve to be treated with love and respect.

I want to take a minute here, and I don't want to run out of time either, but during MLA school, I got to know the member from Kirkfield Park quite well, and it didn't matter, you know, who they were or anything like that. He's a person, and he's a person that deserves the respect, just like other people that come out as well, too.

At the committee, I was touched by Elder Charlotte's story. Her story was one that she was—they were involved in not only the '60s Scoop, but the—also the reservation schools that they had to endure, but they still come through with a positive note, and I'll never forget that. It was a very moving story that they told.

In my constituency of Portage la Prairie, a local movement, Pride Portage la Prairie, is a not-for-profit group that has comprised mainly of volunteers that celebrate individuality, diversity and community. An important part of their movement is standing up for the human rights of Portage la Prairie citizens, in particular, the 2SLGBTQ+, Indigenous people and women, and ensuring that they are provided a safe and accepting environment for everyone to be themselves.

On June 9, and I'm proud to say that I will be there, the annual Pride rally will take place and bring together the 2SLGBTQ+ community and its allies together to celebrate who they are and look to the future with no discrimination, violence and hate towards communities.

Many people and organizations work hard to advocate and provide the proper resources and support for this community.

In conclusion, Bill 208, The Two-Spirit and Transgender Day of Visibility Act, represents an important opportunity for us to promote awareness, inclusivity and support for the two-spirit and transgender individuals in Manitoba.

We must continue to listen to the voices of two-spirit and transgender people, understand their needs and work together to create a society where everyone feels valued and respected. We are put here on this earth to make a difference, so my last words to everyone here is let's make a difference.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak on this today.

**The Speaker:** The—any other speakers?

Seeing none, the question before the House is concurrence on third reading of Bill 208, The Two-Spirit and Transgender Day of Visibility Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?  
[Agreed]

I declare the motion carried.

We will now move on to concurrence and—oh, the honourable member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz).

**MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader):** Honourable Speaker, I'd like to request a recorded vote.

**The Speaker:** A recorded vote has been called.

Call in the members as previously—my mistake. Recorded votes get deferred until Thursday at 10–11:55.

So, now we will move on to—

**An Honourable Member:** So when is the vote?

**The Speaker:** That vote therefore is deferred until Thursday at 11:55 a.m.

**Bill 212—The Asian Heritage Month Act  
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks  
and Months Act Amended)**

**The Speaker:** We will now move on to Bill 212, The Asian Heritage Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

**MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond):** Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko), that Bill 212, The Asian Heritage Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**MLA Chen:** Honourable Speaker, I am proud to rise today to speak on the third reading of The Asian Heritage Month Act. I am incredibly grateful to see this act receive support from all parties in this House. This new commemorative legislation isn't just words on a piece of paper; it is the recognition of nearly 150 years of Asian-Canadian contributions to our province.

With the support from Asian communities, each year in the month of May, we will see Asian Canadians in Manitoba continue to celebrate their cultures and heritage. This past weekend at The Forks, organized by the Asian Heritage Society of Manitoba, there were over 60 groups from different Asian communities who joined this year's Asian-Canadian showcase and celebrated their cultures.

It is organizations like the Asian Heritage Society of Manitoba that promote and foster Asian-Canadian identity by bringing together community and encouraging the sharing of differences and appreciation for diversity.

The Asian Heritage Month Act will serve as the foundation for the community to continue the important work, including education programming and cultural events. Other highlights of this year's Asian Heritage Month include an Asian-Manitoban comedy show, Asian-Canadian writers showcase, Asian Heritage High School Symposium, FascinAsian Film Festival and CanAsian network seeing Winnipeg's Asian community join with Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto and Montreal in a national virtual showcase.

Honourable Speaker, we honour those who came before us by proclaiming that we will carry on their legacy and continue to build vibrant and welcoming communities in Manitoba. All of the showcases are just highlights of the talented Asian Canadians who are making recognizable contributions to our province each and every day.

As the first Chinese-Canadian MLA in Manitoba's history, I hope to inspire those who come after me the same way I, myself, was inspired by those who came before.

\* (10:30)

And that's what this act is all about: empowering our future generations through memory, celebration and connectedness.

I also hope that with the enactment of Asian Heritage Month in Manitoba, educators are inspired to establish educational toolkits of Asian-Canadian history

for teachers to merge the lessons in classrooms so our children and youth feel proud and inspired by their cultural identity, because Asian heritage is Canadian history.

I also want to share these words with Asian women and girls: We are often faced with patriarchy and old ways of thinking that create barriers for women to become leaders. We face many harmful stereotypes as ethnic women.

I hope that the enactment of Asian Heritage Month Act put forward by an East Asian woman will inspire those Asian women and girls who are told that they are not able to make change or are discouraged by structural barriers and discrimination, that they can make a difference.

Lastly, I want to express my deepest gratitude to all the individuals, groups, committee organizations and committee leaders who send their support for this act, whether they came to witness the introduction of the act or sent me their encouraging words. I look forward to celebrating with all of you when this act is received royal assent.

Thank you, xiè xiè, merci and miigwech.

**MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Once again, good morning. All members should be proud of the diversity we have in our beautiful province. Recognizing May as Asian Heritage Month is really showing our stance as a province on equity and inclusion.

Bill 212, the Asian Heritage Month, is an important bill, as are all other bills and commemoration the diversity we have in our wonderful province.

Commemorative days are observed to recognize and honour various social, historical and cultural issues. I'm once again pleased to be able to get up in this morning and speak to the bill the member for Fort Richmond (MLA Chen) brought forward in the House.

Having a bill brought forward that seeks to positively acknowledge the contributions of the Asian community in Manitoba—we all have a duty to advocate for human rights, to step up and act when needed and work together towards a just, compassionate society. It is our duty as people to foster a sense of unity and to stand together and support one another.

We can all learn from one another. We can recognize and appreciate our differences, and it is important that we celebrate with one another. We all have some-

thing to bring to our society, and we all should celebrate what different cultures contribute to our province and our society.

Asian Canadians have enhanced the diversity of Manitoba and have introduced so many amazing things to our province. Asian Canadians have introduced a broad and rich variety of languages, cultures and traditions to our province. This is something to celebrate.

Bill 212, Asian Heritage Month, is a wonderful way to celebrate the contributions of Asian Canadians to province.

Now, as I mentioned before in my earlier speeches, commemoration days are positive to look forward to, but often the past has some history that can cause a more sombre tone. Many past laws in Canada were not welcoming, and we were not kind and accepting to Asians and South Asian workers.

Dating back to 1885, there were laws in place that were cruel and wounding to Asians. There were Japanese internment camps during the World War II, the Komagata Maru incident and, more recently, Islamophobia and COVID-19-related racism and hate crimes that have been very serious, very harmful consequences for the Asian and South Asian Canadians.

When we think about the contributions of Asian Canadians to our province, we should also remember what they have gone through and what they may still be going through—those challenges. It really does give a whole other level of appreciation for what they stand for. For their perseverance, their light through the darkness, we learn today and teach tomorrow to ensure history does not repeat itself.

There are amazing organizations in our province that celebrate Asian Canadians. The past—this past month has been packed full of shows, symposiums, festivals and showcases, celebrating the Asian-Canadian community in Manitoba and celebrating the Asian heritage as a whole.

A big shout-out of appreciation to everyone who came together and dedicated their time to making this year's Asian Heritage Month a fun-filled month.

When I spoke during second reading of this bill, I shared some information on the goals of the Asian Heritage Society, and I feel like now is the perfect time to just remind people of the expected outcome, as shown on their website. They want to build on relationships with Indigenous communities, engage in Indigenous traditions and celebrate; continue to networking, communication and collaboration amongst



the Asian-Canadian groups as established last year by the undertaking of collective community projects. And I'm going to not go into all those because I'd like to put a few more positive words on the record.

I was very happy to see this go to committee. I was very happy to be part of the committee that saw this go forward. And I, again, would like to thank the member for Fort Richmond (MLA Chen) for bringing this forward, and I could see the pride and the smile on her face when this had passed.

So thank you, once again, for the opportunity to speak to Asian Heritage Month.

**The Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 212, The Asian Heritage Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

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

I declare the motion carried.

**MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader):** Is it the will of the House to call it unanimous?

**The Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it unanimous? [*Agreed*]

## SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

### Bill 300—The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act

**The Speaker:** As previously announced, we will now move on to second reading, debate of Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act.

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** I move, seconded by MLA for Seine River, that Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Fondation dénommé « The Winnipeg Foundation », be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

#### *Motion presented.*

**MLA Loiselle:** I am pleased to introduce Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act.

As we know, The Winnipeg Foundation has over 100 years of history here in Winnipeg. Founded in 1921, The Winnipeg Foundation Act has been amended and actually modernized in 1943, 1980, 1990 and 2004.

So as we all know, The Winnipeg Foundation is not only the largest foundation in Winnipeg, in Manitoba, but also in Canada. It's also the oldest, and in fact, I'm proud that just the other day we had the

chance to celebrate foundation's day here in the Rotunda at the Manitoba Legislature.

And this act will allow The Winnipeg Foundation to modernize in two key points: first of all, in regards to the composition of who is on its board, and secondly, how they distribute their financial recordings at the end of the year.

So this bill contains amendments to this act that will support The Winnipeg Foundation in updating their act to support changes in their methods of governance. I know that The Winnipeg Foundation wants to stay as inclusive and representative on its board of all Winnipeggers and Manitobans.

\* (10:40)

I am honoured to sponsor this amendment to support The Winnipeg Foundation's mission in being a catalyst for strengthening community well-being by promoting philanthropy, creating partnerships and supporting diverse, charitable organizations.

We know, Honourable Speaker, that all foundations across Manitoba, and I believe there's 57, play a key role in supporting our communities across Manitoba in different ways.

We know that The Winnipeg Foundation here in Winnipeg has done some incredible work in all of our communities, both culturally and linguistically.

In fact, the new CEO of The Winnipeg Foundation is Sky Bridges, a Métis man, which speaks to the diversity and the inclusion that The Winnipeg Foundation is trying to promote in including all communities in the important work that they do.

So, Honourable Speaker, I'm pleased to present this bill to the House for its consideration.

Thank you, merci, miigwech.

## Questions

**The Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes—10 minutes will be held, with questions in the following rotation. 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 open for questions.

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** I'd like to thank my colleague from St. Boniface for the—this bill. I know he and I both share a passion for community foundations.

One of the provisions here is removing the mayor of Winnipeg from the board of directors of The Winnipeg Foundation. I just wonder if the member opposite has consulted with the mayor or his team on that change.

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** So, thank you for that question.

Yes, so I've consulted with The Winnipeg Foundation, The Winnipeg Foundation has consulted with the mayor. As we know, the mayor is a political position. The Winnipeg Foundation is trying to stay as apolitical as possible on their board and as inclusive and diverse as possible. So yes, we have consulted.

Thank you.

**MLA Mike Moroz (River Heights):** Always curious with bills like this, find out what the motivation of the member was. What inspired you to bring this forward?

So, can you elaborate on what it was, specifically, that inspired you to introduce this bill that amends the act related to The Winnipeg Foundation?

**MLA Loiselle:** I had the opportunity to serve on the board of Francofonds for over eight years and I recognize the important work that all foundations do in Manitoba and all of our communities. It was a natural fit for me when The Winnipeg Foundation reached out in regards to this bill and I'm very, very proud to move it forward.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** Will the mayor be able to appoint someone to the board to represent the mayor's office and the City, or is it just no representation at all?

**MLA Loiselle:** I think it's important to note here that when The Winnipeg Foundation goes out every year and seeks members to represent our diverse communities and expertises on their board, they go out and seek out what they feel is needed, whether it's someone from a specific cultural group, whether it's someone who has specific legal or accounting, you know, expertise, and representations from different groups.

Honestly, I think they're trying to stay as apolitical as possible and that's why they've asked to remove the mayor from their board.

Thank you.

**MLA Moroz:** I would like to follow up my previous question.

The Winnipeg Foundation has a great relationship with the community as a whole. Could you explain to us a little bit how the changes you're suggesting will, in fact, improve that connection to the community?

**MLA Loiselle:** Well, in fact, one of the amendments is very important in regards to how The Winnipeg Foundation shares its financials with the community.

So, what they're asking for is to share their yearly financials on their website so it's actually more accessible to more people in Winnipeg.

We know that Winnipeg is home to over 840,000 people. Not all of them read the paper, so by making it accessible on the Internet, it actually includes and makes it more accessible to more people so they can find out about the fine work that The Winnipeg Foundation does every year.

Thank you.

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** Thanks for the person—the member for St. Boniface for bringing this bill up—forward.

How does the—this bill change the current reporting requirements for the audit reports of the foundation?

**MLA Loiselle:** So The Winnipeg Foundation will continue to have audited statements every year, and they will continue to share those audited statements with the community every year. But what they'd like to do is to do it through their website annually so it's more accessible to more people.

Thank you.

**MLA Moroz:** I just want to explore a little bit, if we might, the change in dynamic between The Winnipeg Foundation and the mayor's office in the absence of the mayor as a mandatory member of the foundation.

**MLA Loiselle:** So I think it's important to note that in 1921, when The Winnipeg Foundation was founded, I think it's obvious that having the mayor on the board at that time up until this point was an important connection to Winnipeg.

But now we see that Winnipeg has become a very diverse, very multicultural city with different groups involved.

And by removing the mayor, it actually allows for, you know, I think more representation, more inclusion from those groups and making the foundation actually

less political, more apolitical, by removing the mayor from the board.

Thank you.

**Mr. Jackson:** Again, thanks to my colleague.

Just wondering if he can share why he chose to be prescriptive. I know the act as it was written was also prescriptive that it was only newspapers. Now he's leaving newspapers and adding on the website, as opposed to making a more general provision in the bill that they must publish their audited financial statement publicly and leaving it up to The Winnipeg Foundation as to the best avenue to do so.

**MLA Loisel:** Well, I'd like to thank the member for that question.

As we know, our world is quickly moving to a digital world. A lot of people like to access their information on either their phone, their tablet, their computers, that sort of thing.

And I think The Winnipeg Foundation what it's trying to do here is trying to make their information more accessible to more people using a digital platform, therefore their website, to share their information in regards to their financials on an annual basis.

Thank you.

**MLA Moroz:** I just have one final question, Honourable Speaker, and it relates to the sort of feedback that you've gotten from The Winnipeg Foundation about your proposed amendments. I know you did a lot of consultative work with them.

Can you give us a little bit of insight into the feedback that you got in relation to your changes?

**MLA Loisel:** Well, as I previously mentioned, The Winnipeg Foundation Act has been amended over the years—1943, 1980, 1990, 2001, I believe. So it's important for The Winnipeg Foundation to stay current in the work that it does.

I know that when they were here for the foundations day, they asked about how, you know, the bill was progressing and they were very eager to move things forward, because it allows them to stay current and pertinent in the work that they do in our community.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** What is the current makeup of the board of directors for The Winnipeg Foundation? Who is currently required to be on the board?

**MLA Loisel:** So that's a very important question, actually.

I asked that question, and what The Winnipeg Foundation tries to do, it tries to stay as inclusive as possible. It tries to have gender parity. It tries to include as many members from different communities as possible. As you know, Winnipeg is a mosaic of cultures. And it also tries to seek out specific skillsets from certain people, whether they be legal, accounting, cultural, linguistic communities, as they try. So their makeup is very diverse across all sections of Winnipeg.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** Question for you is, what if newspapers as we know them cease to exist in the digital age? Will the digital publishing be sufficient to satisfy the legislation or does it have to be in hard-copy print of some kind?

\* (10:50)

**MLA Loisel:** So as we know, Honourable Speaker, not only are we moving towards, you know, a digital world but also a paperless world. And the information being provided on the website of The Winnipeg Foundation and as they control their website, I think it makes it very accessible. As long as the World Wide Web keeps on operating. I think they'll be okay in sharing their financials on an annual basis.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** Can the member tell the Assembly about some of the great work that is done by The Winnipeg Foundation and all of its community foundations that it supports around the province?

**MLA Loisel:** Thank you for that question, Honourable Speaker.

Having served on the board of Francofonds for a number of years, I've seen firsthand the work that, you know, foundations can do often here in Manitoba. Yes, we have a great network of, you know, municipal, provincial, federal governments that work in all of our communities, but sometimes there's a gap. And often that gap can be filled by the support of a foundation.

And I think about Francofonds, The Winnipeg Foundation, the Jewish Foundation, the Brandon—city of Brandon foundation and all the 57 wonderful foundations that we have here in Manitoba that fill that gap when sometimes we need that little extra help to put a project forward, whether it be a small—

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

**Mr. Piwniuk:** I know in our days when the—when it came to our government—PC government, we actually had agreements with Winnipeg Foundation when it came to the Conservation Trust and the GROW Trust and the Manitoba Heritage Trust. We did a lot of work, especially in rural Manitoba.

I just wanted to make sure that the member—his government is going to continue with those relationships with The Winnipeg Foundation to continue those programs.

**MLA Loiselle:** Well, thank you for that question.

Actually, it's a very good question because it speaks to the fact that when governments and foundations work together, they can have a long-lasting impact. You know, I'm thinking in regards to, you know, other projects that governments have, you know, been part of.

So yes, we will continue that relationship, and I thank the member for his question.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member—no more—the time for questions has expired.

### CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

*(Continued)*

#### Bill 207—The Islamic Heritage Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)

*(Continued)*

**MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader):** On House business.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Waverley, on House business.

**MLA Pankratz:** Honourable Speaker, could you please canvass the House for leave to revert to the decision on the concurrence and third reading motion for Bill 207, and ask the House to consider the bill as having passed unanimously.

**The Speaker:** Is there leave to revert to the decision on concurrence and third reading motion for Bill 207, and is there also leave for the House to consider the bill as having passed unanimously?

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

### SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

*(Continued)*

#### Bill 300—The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act

*(Continued)*

#### Debate

**The Speaker:** We will now move on to second reading debate of Bill 300.

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** It's a pleasure to rise today and put some words on the record for Bill 300. I want to thank my colleague from St. Boniface for bringing this bill forward. As I mentioned during question period on the bill, it is changes that I think, you know, we can see make a lot of sense, in particular with the updating of the auditing requirements being published digitally.

As we know, less and less people are getting their media and their information and their news in print format. Whether that's good or bad, I'll leave that commentary up to the pundits. But nonetheless, that is the trend we're seeing in my generation, certainly.

And so, by requiring The Winnipeg Foundation, which is a very important part of our community, to put their audited financial statements online, it just increases the visibility and accessibility of these very important financial statements.

And very, very passionate about community foundations. As you know, Honourable Speaker, my bill, Bill 202, is currently set to come back for third reading and concurrence on Thursday—creating Community Foundation Day—so I appreciate the support of government members previously, the previous stages on that bill and look forward to that moving forward. And I want to thank my colleague for bringing this forward.

And as Progressive Conservatives, we certainly believe in The Winnipeg Foundation model. We've seen this model expand across Manitoba in many of our communities—57 of them, to be specific—following The Winnipeg Foundation's need as—or example as not just a provincial standard but, in fact, a national standard as the first community foundation of its kind in the country.

We know that Canada looks to The Winnipeg Foundation for leadership in terms of the direction that Winnipeg Foundation is taking and how to modernize its programs, its initiatives and its support for communities and non-profit organizations, students,

et cetera. So, we know that it is a leader and, in fact, a leader across the country.

And our Progressive Conservative team has certainly partnered with The Winnipeg Foundation on a number of occasions during our time in government, allowing them to manage funds in order to provide better programming for areas, particularly with respect to the environment, creating the Conservation Trust, the GROW Trust, growing—and the Wetlands GROW Trust, pardon me, as well as a personal favourite of mine, the Manitoba Heritage Trust to protect those important heritage buildings and programming across the province.

I think we lose too much of our historic downtowns and our historic buildings in communities across the province, and so this fund was set up through The Winnipeg Foundation in order to provide consistent ongoing availability of funds to protect those buildings that are rich in the history of this province. And I thank The Winnipeg Foundation for their excellent work in stewarding those funds and bringing them forward for organizations to access to ensure that these important historical items in our communities are preserved.

Honourable Speaker, the Conservation Trust, as well, was a \$102-million fund established in 2018 as part of Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan to fund the activities that promote conservation of natural resources by creating, conserving and enhancing natural infrastructure.

And I would say that in addition to that, the GROW and Wetlands Trusts are extremely popular. If this government is doing any consultations at all with watershed districts across the province—I know I go to my local Souris River Watershed District meetings often and their events. They do incredible work preserving wetlands across the southwest corner of the province, and these folks have steady, consistent funding now to fund over on top of their operating expenses, special initiatives, whether it's preserving wetlands and funding landowners for leaving that land unplowed or it is, you know, planting shelter belts.

You name it, Honourable Speaker, that funding comes from these trust funds that were set up. And so, I know the watersheds organizations are very, very pleased that these funds exist and will continue to exist for the rest of time, thanks to the exceptional stewardship of these initial endowments from the Province of Manitoba under our PC team to The Winnipeg Foundation. And so their stewardship ensures that the conservation of our environment, our natural

habitat for ducks and all kinds of other waterfowl are protected for years and decades to come.

And so we thank The Winnipeg Foundation for that. Look forward to reading their updated, audited statements now once this bill is implemented. Look forward—look forward to reading that digitally and all the initiatives and outcomes that they are funding through these trust funds that were set up under our previous Progressive Conservative team.

And so I think it's important to note that, you know, my colleague is proposing the mayor of Winnipeg be removed from the board. He said in the Q & A that the mayor was consulted on this and he's quite pleased to be removed. I can't verify that. I hope that's true. I'm sure it is.

And I would just say it's quite a feather in the member for St. Boniface's (MLA Loiselle) cap. It's not very often that an MLA gets to single-handedly remove the mayor of Winnipeg from a board, so that's a nice little footnote in his political career. He's terminated the mayor of Winnipeg from one of his jobs and I'm sure he's lighter for it—

**The Speaker:** Order please.

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

\* (11:00)

## RESOLUTIONS

### **Res. 18—Supporting the Provincial Government's Universal Nutrition Program**

**The Speaker:** The hour is now 11 o'clock and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Supporting the Provincial Government's Universal Nutrition Program brought forward by the honourable member for Riel.

**MLA Mike Moyes (Riel):** I move, seconded by the honourable member for Seine River (MLA Cross),

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government is making critical investments in education and affordability to support families and kids in Manitoba; and*

*WHEREAS the former PC Provincial Government failed to develop a comprehensive poverty strategy to address Manitoba's high child and family poverty rates; and*

*WHEREAS families in Manitoba have been struggling to pay their bills and get food on the table; and*

*WHEREAS research shows that access to healthy foods is essential to facilitating student learning, well-being and success; and*

*WHEREAS Food Banks Canada reported that in last March alone, over 20,000 children visited a food bank in Manitoba; and*

*WHEREAS the current Provincial Government is investing in this province's future by investing in the nutrition of our kids; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government has adopted a universal nutrition program so that no child will go to school hungry; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government, starting in the next school year, is expanding food programs in all school divisions so that there will be food available in every school for every kid who needs it.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to keep investing in the province's future by strengthening education, feeding kids and making life more affordable for families in Manitoba.

***Motion presented.***

**MLA Moyes:** I stand before you today with a vision, a vision for a healthier, more prosperous future for our children. It's a vision where no child goes hungry while at school across our great province, where every young mind is fuelled with the nutrients it needs to thrive and where opportunity is not limited by the socioeconomic status you are born into.

Today I speak to you about the imperative of implementing a universally accessible nutrition program in our schools. Specifically, this resolution calls on the government to keep investing in the province's future by strengthening education, feeding kids and making life more affordable for families across our province.

These items are things that I believe every Manitoban would support and this resolution is an opportunity. It's an opportunity for every member of this Legislature to unequivocally state that they support education, that they support feeding kids that are hungry and that they support making life more affordable for families.

As a teacher, I saw the impacts of food insecurity each and every day. There were kids that would be in my classroom that would not eat lunch, sometimes not have—that would—sometimes would not come to school without even having breakfast and would be

going running on fumes. This is unfortunate and should not happen in a province like ours.

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

We have a lot of resources. We are a rich country. We are a prosperous nation and we have the resources necessary to ensure that all kids in school can be fed.

Kids cannot learn if they are hungry. It is that simple. And we believe that all kids that are hungry should be fed while at school so that they can regulate themselves, so that they can achieve their—to their full potential, and that they can have better learning outcomes.

As a Province, we pride ourselves on our commitment to education and that's why we increased funding for the K-to-12 school system by \$104.2 million. This funding ensures that students are going to get more attention from their teachers, their EAs and their clinicians. The funding will also help ensure that there are more resources and it will improve graduation rates by ensuring that students' basic needs are met and by fostering stronger ties between families and schools.

We understand that investing in our youth is investing in our future. Yet despite this understanding, there remains a critical gap in the well-being of our children, one that threatens not only the academic success but their overall health and development.

It's a sobering fact that many of our children arrive at school each day without having breakfast and come with empty lunch boxes. How can we expect them to excel academically when their basic nutritional needs are not met? How can we expect them to concentrate in class, to engage in learning, to reach their potential, when their stomachs are growling with hunger?

The consequences of food insecurity among our youth are profound and far-reaching. It affects not only their physical health but their mental well-being and their ability to learn. Hungry children are more likely to experience fatigue, irritability, difficulty concentrating, all of which are going to hinder their academic performance and limit their future opportunities.

Once again, we know quite simply that hungry kids can't learn. That's why, in Budget 2024, we set out to get food to every child in every school that needs it. This food would help set them on a path for success, for their education and for their overall future.

To do this, our government is partnering with schools, families and community partners to make sure our kids get the education they deserve, including the food they need to learn and grow. We believe that children who experience food insecurity or poverty should not be disadvantaged at school because of hunger.

And that's also why, as soon as we were elected in 2023, we cleared the backlog of schools of the wait-list that was on the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba. And in Budget 2024, our NDP government invested \$30 million to create Manitoba's first universally accessible nutrition program.

In that, \$15 million is going to go directly to school divisions for local meal programs based on enrolment and socioeconomic factors; \$6 million of that is going to go to those schools and communities with the highest socioeconomic need; and \$9 million is going to further grants for nutrition programming at the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba.

Implementing a universally accessible nutrition program will have a direct and positive impact on educational outcomes. Research consistently shows that proper nutrition is linked to improve cognitive function, memory and attention span, all essential components of effective learning.

When students have access to nutritious meals at school, they are better equipped to focus in class, participate actively and retain information. This, in turn, leads to higher academic achievement and success. Moreover, a universally accessible nutrition program can help address disparities in academic performance that are often linked to socioeconomic status.

By ensuring that all students, regardless of their background, have access to the same nutritious meals, we can level the playing field and create a more equitable learning environment. This not only benefits students—individual students, but also strengthens our education system as a whole, leading to greater student engagement, higher graduation rates and, down the road, a more skilled work force.

By ensuring that our children are well-nourished and ready to learn, we are not only investing in our future, but also in the future prosperity of our province. Beyond the academic benefits, a universally accessible nutrition program will send a powerful message to our children that they are valued, that their well-being matters and that we are committed to investing in their future. It fosters a sense of community and solidarity where no child is left behind. It also promises to build

a sense of belonging within the school and has the potential to improve attendance for some kids that are dealing with food insecurity on a daily basis.

To put an exclamation point on the importance of all this, let me outline just a couple of statistics. In 2022, one-in-four children in Manitoba lived in food-insecure households; 33 per cent of food bank users in Canada are children. That is why all members of this Legislative Assembly should support this resolution.

We should all be working to ensure kids—that all kids have a good education and that starts by meeting students' basic needs. It also highlights how this universally accessible nutrition program will help families during a time when affordability is an issue.

This is just another way that we're making life more affordable for all Manitobans. As you know, in Budget 2024, there were 21 different ways that we made life more affordable for everyday Manitobans. We had the \$1,500 home affordability tax credit, a broad middle-class tax cut, a tax credit for renters and seniors, real \$10-a-day child care for every day of the year, doubling of the fertility tax credit, making prescription birth control free, lowering auto insurance rates, standing up a rebate for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles and, as the members opposite's favourite and Minister of Agriculture's (Mr. Kostyshyn) favourite, lowering rent on agricultural Crown lands.

The list goes on and on and on. These items are going to make a real difference for Manitobans.

In closing, I urge you to join me in supporting this resolution. Let's come together as a province to provide the best education for our kids, that we ensure every young mind has the opportunity to thrive and that life is made more affordable for families in Manitoba.

\* (11:10)

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

### 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.

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** Thanks to my colleague for the resolution.

Just a question to start off with: the resolution speaks to the broader commitment of this NDP government to introduce a universal nutrition program.

Can the member outline how many schools that \$30 million is going to add nutrition programs to?

**MLA Mike Moyes (Riel):** The great thing about our program is that every single school is going to have the opportunity to access these funds. We want every single child, every single school, every single school division across our great province to be able to have access to food, so that our students can thrive.

**MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson):** I thank my colleague for Riel for proposing this resolution as well as for his years of labour as an educator.

Educators have been clear that kids can't learn on an empty stomach and we're a team that listens to the experts. That's why our NDP government has taken historical action to ensure kids in Manitoba don't have to go to school hungry.

And so my question to my colleague is: What is some of the benefits of a universally accessible nutrition program?

**MLA Moyes:** I think it's pretty clear that by implementing Manitoba's first universally accessible nutrition program, that we're going to boost all students' learning.

Students are going to be more successful. We're going to ensure that students have access to healthy food that's going to allow them to do better academically, do better behaviourally and that is going to have a huge impact on our education system as a whole.

Additionally, a portion of that funding is going to communities with the highest economic need so that all Manitobans can reach their full potential.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** When you break down the amount of \$30 million, based on the number of days and the number of students, it works out to 50 cents–52 cents per student, per day.

What is the government going to feed a child for 52 cents?

**MLA Moyes:** One of the things that we're looking to do is that we want to collaborate with people like—or, groups like the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba. This is a significant increase to that group.

Additionally, we want to make sure that we are collaborating with parents, school divisions and schools

to ensure that there's different programs based on their needs.

So some schools might not need a full program. Some schools might need a kind of grab-and-take-away program, where they can just take some snacks; other programs might need a more fulsome program. And that is why we want to collaborate on an individual basis for each and every school.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** The last person that served as the MLA for Radisson ignorantly stated that feeding kids in schools was a hashtag bad idea.

Manitobans remember PCs' out-of-touch education record. They underfunded schools, they took away integral resources for kids, disrespected teachers, like they disrespected health-care workers.

Now, my question for my colleague is: Can he remind us of what the previous, failed PC government said about the need for universally accessible nutrition program and where he thinks they stand now?

**MLA Moyes:** Thank you to my esteemed colleague from Radisson for that question.

It is unfortunate that there are some words on the record from members opposite in the past that were not in favour of nutrition programs, calling it a bad idea, as was mentioned. I believe the former failed premier, Brian Pallister, called nutrition programs state-funded cafeteria meals.

This is the wrong approach. And I would hope that members opposite are now on side, believing in our kids and knowing that nutrition programs are an important way that we can improve our education.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** This is a very quick question.

Can the member opposite tell me who will be sourcing the food items, shopping for the food items and, of course, preparing and delivering food and the meals?

**MLA Moyes:** Thank for the question from my colleague from across the way.

One of the things that I like most about our program is the fact that we want to work on an individual basis with school divisions, with different schools, so every program is not going to look the same.

We are not looking to run this from Broadway. We're looking to partner with different groups. We want to partner with those school divisions and schools based on their needs.



**MLA Dela Cruz:** As my colleague for Riel has stated, our NDP government is working hard, collaboratively, to help those who need it most. Manitobans were done with seven and a half years of the rising costs and cuts to education. Instead they elected our NDP team with a new approach.

My question for my colleague is: What has the reception of the nutrition program been so far?

**MLA Moyes:** I think that our government's universally accessible nutrition program has been very well received. I know that the Manitoba Teachers' Society has been calling for this for a long time. The Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba and Breakfast Club of Canada have applauded this initiative.

And some other adjectives that have been used is visionary, that we're taking a lead, that parents are suffering right now under an affordability crisis and that this is going to go a long way to helping that out. So I believe that it's been very positive. I hope that members opposite are feeling the same way.

**Mr. Jackson:** I certainly appreciate that the member opposite has outlined that not all students in the public system are going to need this nutrition program.

However, just some rough math: \$30 million is what they've budgeted for it, divided by 288,000 pupils in the province and approximately 200 instructional days in an academic year, which amounts to about 52 cents in nutrition funding per student, per day.

Now again, not every student is going to need that. But you're not buying very much with 52 cents per student per day, so does this minister—or this member think that they've budgeted enough funds for this proposed program?

**MLA Moyes:** I think that nutrition programs are incredibly important and by partnering with the different groups, like the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, by clearing their backlogs, by making sure that it is available to all students, we're going to go a long way to improving our education system.

**MLA Dela Cruz:** Honourable Deputy Speaker, for a very long time Manitoban school divisions were denied a partner at the provincial level. And it's a new day here in Manitoba. Our NDP team is doing the work to help people raise healthier families and live in safer communities. This is what our government stands for, unlike members opposite.

How did the previous PC government fail children in Manitoba?

**MLA Moyes:** Thank you to the member for Radisson (MLA Dela Cruz) for that question.

As a teacher, we saw and I saw, personally, the cuts in education year after year after year. It impacted all—it impacted schools across the board. There were school divisions that had to cut their nutrition program. They had to cut therapy. The wait-list for a whole variety of services was at an all-time high. There was all-day kindergarten that was cut in the Winnipeg School Division.

We also saw that when child poverty rates increased to 24 per cent in 2021, making us the second highest child poverty rate in any province, they continued to cut. That's why we're taking a very different approach.

**Mr. Perchotte:** Honourable Deputy Speaker, the member opposite had said that in looking at this resolution that not all the students will need the program. I would hope the consultations have been done to identify the percentage of students that will.

Can you tell me how many students based on a percentage will actually need this program?

**MLA Moyes:** Thank you for the question.

Given that this is a brand new program and that it is universally accessible, that would be a pretty difficult number to come up with. We want to make sure that kids have access to it, that all kids across the board in any school can access food.

Sometimes it's going to be on a regular basis, sometimes it might just be on a day that they forgot their lunch. And that's the great thing about our program, is that it's going to be universally accessible, but it doesn't have to look the same way for all kids.

\* (11:20)

**MLA Dela Cruz:** Honourable Deputy Speaker, with Budget 2024, our NDP government is ensuring that we're helping people who need it most. It's going to lower costs for families and bring in Manitoba's first-ever universal nutrition program.

My question for my colleague is: How does our government's universal nutrition program tackle child food insecurity in Manitoba?

**MLA Moyes:** Thank you to the member for—from Radisson for that question.

Our government's universally accessible nutrition program sets aside a portion of that budgeted amount to the socio-economic communities that need it most.

And we want to make sure that hungry kids in every school have access to healthy foods.

We want to make sure that if a parent forgot to pack a lunch, that child is not going to go without, and we want to make sure that those families that need an— a little extra support can get it so that they don't have to try to learn on an empty stomach.

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

### Introduction of Guests

**The Deputy Speaker:** Before we move on to debate, I will recognize members of the public.

In the public gallery, we have seated folks from CDI College, 12 students under the direction of Tyler Warren and Robyn Oftedal, which—who are guests of the honourable member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara).

### Debate

**The Deputy Speaker:** And with that, the time for debate has begun.

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** I appreciate the time today to put some words on the record as the critic for Education and Early Childhood Learning. *[interjection]*

I'm not sure what my colleagues over there are heckling about. I haven't even had the chance to put any word on it.

**An Honourable Member:** We're trying to support you. Nobody clapped for you. We'll clap for you.

*MLA JD Devgan, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

**Mr. Jackson:** Oh, well. If you want to—thank you. See, Honourable Deputy Speaker, we're building bridges across partisan lines here in the Chamber this morning. Isn't that a wonderful example for the folks who join us in the gallery and online.

I have to say, though, I think there are some gaps both in the resolution as it's currently written, as well as in the nutrition program, which was announced earlier this year by this government.

In January, we know the Manitoba government announced their plan to create this \$30-million school nutrition program. But as I outlined earlier in my question to the member for Riel (MLA Moyes), which he didn't really address, \$30 million split between 288,000 pupils or students in the province, with the approximately 200 instructional days in an average

K-to-12 school year, the current program amount, that \$30 million, amounts to about 52 cents in nutrition funding per student per day.

So, Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker, I don't know the last time you went to the grocery store, maybe it was last night or over the weekend, but I'm not sure you're buying very much nutritional value for a breakfast or a lunch or even a snack for 52 cents.

And we know the Premier (Mr. Kinew) made empty threats when it came to grocers: We're going to have to bring down their grocery prices, or he was going to step in and take action. We've seen that be a hollow threat from this Premier. Not sure how he really thought he was going to do that or if he really thought about the comment before he made it at all. But, nonetheless, he made it and made that commitment to Manitobans that he was going to bring grocery prices down, and he hasn't, and he hasn't brought them down.

So we're wondering now how they expect school divisions to pay for an appropriate breakfast or lunch or snack for 52 cents per student. I guess we'll see come September when this program is implemented.

And another question that, unfortunately, I just didn't have the time to ask was: Does this \$30 million include the necessary infrastructure upgrades that schools are going to need to store this food?

I know, as the member and I agree, many schools don't have nutrition programs. That's a problem. They're also going to need the infrastructure to deliver these programs, even if it's as simple as just, you know, the average snack needing to be refrigerated.

Is this \$30 million providing capital funding to school divisions to purchase the refrigeration equipment? If so, then that 52 cents per student, per day number goes down and it will be less cents on the dollar for snacks per student every day.

So I am not opposed to providing snacks to kids whose families cannot afford to put food on the table. We are in an affordability crisis and students need to have healthy meals at home. That's why our previous Progressive Conservative government introduced the home nutrition learning program, so that the boxes of food were delivered to families at their doorstep on a weekly basis, families who needed the food, not delivered at school. These members opposite think it's better to deliver it at school than to deliver the fresh food at home. That's up to them. They're in government now.

But the question is, have they budgeted appropriately to actually deliver this program or are they leading Manitobans to believe that this is going to be done and universally implemented, when in reality they've either set themselves up for failure by not budgeting enough money or they're going to massively increase the cost of this program and have to fund it through other means.

And so that leads a lot—leaves lots of questions to be answered by this government. The member for Riel (MLA Moyes) isn't responsible for this, of course. This comes down to the Minister of Education and how this funding is going to be rolled out by his department.

And so we, you know, we're looking forward to getting more details, certainly, about how that \$30 million is going to be broken down across school divisions and across schools. And again, where is the capital funding to ensure the necessary food services infrastructure is provided to school divisions to deliver on this NDP government's commitment?

Or perhaps that's why they allowed education property taxes to increase, because they knew that they weren't going to budget enough to actually deliver this program in a real way, and so they knew that the school divisions were going to need the extra dollars on the backs of farmers and other hard-working property owners.

Nonetheless, we will continue. Of the 52 cents, we see across the country persistently high inflation rates, especially with respect to groceries. And we know that buying the groceries cost at least 5 per cent more than they did this time last year in Manitoba per the latest Consumer Price Index report from Statistics Canada. So those grocery prices aren't coming down and school divisions are now going to be in the market looking for the cheapest way to find a 52-cent snack to deliver every day to students in their divisions.

According to a recently released report from Food Banks Canada, Manitoba's poverty report card received an overall D- report since the beginning of 2024, with a grade of F in poverty measures and F in the legislative process. So perhaps the member for Riel's bringing this resolution forward to try and upgrade that F to a D- in their legislative record and report from Food Banks Canada. Not sure, but nonetheless, this is certainly worse than last year with many troubling statistics that reflect the public situation when it comes to affordability.

And I'd like to read just a few of those for you: 40 per cent of people feel worse off compared to last year with respect to affordability—that's from Food Banks Canada; 40 per cent of Manitobans are spending more than 30 per cent of their income on housing; 52 per cent provincial disability 'welfare' as a per cent of the poverty line; and a 26.8 per cent food insecurity rate.

And so while the minister and the member for Riel and their government are telling Manitobans that they're going to be addressing this by providing nutrition universally across all schools, we know that they have not budgeted appropriately to actually deliver that in a real way.

And that's good; they're getting one good meal at school, if it's actually rolled out the way they've committed and actually delivered in every school in every corner of the province. What about the other meals? The Premier (Mr. Kinew) has not met his commitment to lower grocery prices to ensure that groceries are more affordable for families in this province.

\* (11:30)

And let's come back to that word universal for just a minute. When they announced this as a campaign commitment and when they announced it in January, the quotes were that this was going to be a universal nutrition program. Regardless of income, regardless of need, every kid was going to get food in schools. And that's what the member for Riel has reiterated today.

However, in a recent interview—actually, several of them—the Premier appears to be walking back on these premises and changing the tune of how he approaches the program in public dialogue. It's no longer about a universal program but a universally accessible nutrition program. And here's the quote. In a recent interview, the Premier said not that every kid in Manitoba needs to eat as part of the school program, but that it has a reach across all the divisions and regions of the province.

So the question is, is it universal or not? And what is the criteria for students accessing it? Is that going to be up to school divisions to identify the kids that need it and the kids that don't? Is it up to the student to identify themselves? And how do school divisions plan to deliver that, if it's up to each individual student to identify every day?

These are fair questions to ask. I understand the members opposite don't like to be asked questions.

I get it; it's difficult being in government. They've had a very difficult reality check since they walked in on October 3rd. And that's okay, they've got time to adjust.

But these are questions that are going to be important for school divisions to get answers to, so that they can successfully fill the gaps that this minister and this government have left in their outline of how this program is going to work, and so that they can actually deliver this program in 'weal'—in a real way that successfully and positively impacts Manitoba students.

Thank you, Honourable Assistant Deputy Speaker.

**MLA Billie Cross (Seine River):** I'm very happy to rise and put a few words on the record as a former educator to speak a little bit about my experiences with kids being hungry in schools.

I guess I'd like to start by saying, I'm incredibly proud to be part of a government that puts people first, that we put children first, that we understand the importance of education. We understand the importance of making sure we meet people where they're at.

On this side of the House, there are 11 MLAs that have worked in the education system in some capacity, whether it be as an educational assistant, school trustee or a teacher. Myself, my journey through education was an interesting one. I started my career as a lunch supervisor while my kids were in school. It was the most convenient way to make sure that I was able to care for their needs, be available when they needed me. And so I worked in my kids' school lunch program, supervising children while they ate.

That was my first experience seeing children be hungry in school. At that time, we lived in Transcona. We lived in a pretty good community where you would think that folks would not experience food insecurity, but that was simply not the case.

We were pretty forward-thinking in the lunch program. Folks did have to pay \$1 a day for supervision, but that didn't just cover the wages of the folks supervising the kids. We made sure it also covered some extra expenses so that any child that came to school without a lunch or was hungry would be fed. They would not have to go through the day without having that need met.

I also worked as a—not worked, I volunteered on our school PAC, and I was the hot lunch coordinator. And one of the things I did, I quickly realized that not every student can afford hot lunch once a month. It was a burden on their families. So I made sure that

I identified families that maybe couldn't afford to provide their kids with that opportunity.

And so I was pretty creative with the way that I ran my hot lunch program. I put a little extra dollar amount on the cost for that lunch program so that students who couldn't afford to have that hot lunch would still get a hot lunch, even though they couldn't afford to pay for it.

There are so many creative things that we can do to make sure that kids have their needs met. Imagine being a kid in a school. Everybody around you is having pizza or they're having a hamburger that day, or they're having chicken, or they're having Subway. And you come and you have a homemade lunch. It's not a really good feeling for children. And it's particular, younger children because when they see others have something, they want it too.

Once I—my next step in my career and education, I moved up and I became an educational assistant and I worked in a middle school. In fact, I worked with the Minister of Education. He was the vice-principal and I was one of his educational assistants. And so as an EA, oftentimes you are working with students that sometimes experience food insecurity or you're called upon to assist lunch programs, nutrition programs, anything that's really needed. I would administer medication to students who required it. I was sort of the jill of all trades in that capacity.

And so we also had kids in that middle school in Transcona who experienced food insecurity. And sometimes it was simply because parents couldn't afford enough groceries at home while they were focusing on paying bills, making sure rent or mortgages were paid. Other times, kids do forget their lunches. Kids forget to eat or kids take medication that put them in a position where they don't feel hungry at specific times but they do later on.

And so it's important that folks understand that nutrition programs, when we're talking about infrastructure and who is going to administer these programs, this is already happening in schools. Schools have created their own programs. They've created their own systems for making sure that kids get fed. We identify kids. We don't let kids be hungry in schools. We have taken that upon ourselves as educators to make sure that no kid goes hungry.

I eventually became an educator and I worked in a different division. I actually worked in the community of West St. Paul, a very affluent community, and I still had students who experienced food insecurity.

In fact, there was one instance where I had a student who missed a week of school, and so when you have students who are away on a multiple--day basis, you contact home. It's important.

And I don't know if members, you know, all the members in the Legislature understand the relationship that parents have with educators or that teachers have with families. We spend more time with people's children than they do during the course of a school year because of work and because of other things, and so we take that responsibility seriously as educators. Those kids are our kids. We love those kids. We care for those kids. We don't want to see them go without. We want to make sure they're safe and protected.

And so, I was a teacher and all the colleagues around me, who had a closet in my classroom, an extra shelving unit, that was filled with food. I had a little mini fridge that, on a weekly basis, I would fill with yogurt, milk and other products. I always had apples in my classroom. I had granola bars. And as a school, we actually had sandwiches in the freezer that we prepared. That way, if kids forgot their lunch, they would get a sandwich and then they would get snacks with it. Kids in my classroom didn't go hungry.

So this one student who didn't come to school for a week, I called home to inquire to make sure everything was okay, to see if they needed any supports. And what I found out was that his parents didn't send him to school because they didn't have food in the home that they could make to send for lunch. What they had in the home was what they needed to eat for their other meals.

And so I informed them that--send them to school anyways. We will make sure that he's fed. We will make sure that he has what he needs without shame, without--you know, without making assumptions about what was going on in their home. It was a safe place for students to be, and most of our schools are.

Members opposite, you know, spent last summer talking about parental rights without an understanding of the relationships that teachers and schools have with families. We as educators are very open and collaborative with families. I never once had a situation where I didn't speak to parents or students about situations.

And so I think it's important for folks to note that parents do have a great deal of rights and participation in our school system.

And when it comes to feeding kids, I don't think there should be any hesitancy from anybody in this

room to make sure that children are fed. Not every child is going to access a nutrition program, and so when members opposite talk about numbers and 52 cents a day, that's looking at a worst-case scenario and we know that that's not what's happening in Manitoba.

We do know that there are many families that need support, but not all families. And even if there was a situation where every family or every student in our school system required nutrition, we're just filling gaps right now of a system that already exists. As I mentioned, teachers and schools are already putting resources in to make sure that kids have what they need and that they're fed.

I think it's important to also talk a little bit about, you know, the record that members opposite have when it came to education.

As an educator, I felt abandoned. I felt attacked. Bill 64 was a really prime example of that, and I think it was a really big mistake on their part to bring a bill like that forward.

\* (11:40)

In fact, at that time, I was a grade 9 teacher, and I was teaching a government unit. And we were teaching--part of the curriculum is to teach students about how bills become laws, about the different levels of government, division of responsibilities, first, second, third readings, all the things that we do in this place. And so, we decided to make it an authentic experience.

Everyone was talking about bill 64. Kids were asking questions. So, we actually took the documents provided by the provincial government at the time, and we shared them with the students, and we let them do an open-ended project where they could examine bill 64 and make a decision whether they thought it was good or bad.

We invited members of the Legislature to join us via Zoom to talk to the students about how bills are passed, how laws are made, the work they do in the Legislature, not just about bill 64, but an understanding of the processes that take place. And at that time, the members opposite, when they were in government, refused to participate in this project with all the grade 9 students at the high school I was working with.

Members of the Liberal government--or Liberal Party and the NDP party participated. We had former educators. We had folks from the media come in and

talk to kids about these things. But members opposite refused and, actually, they doubled down.

At that time, the Education minister was Cliff Cullen, who decided to go to the media and admonish the teachers—myself and two other teachers—for doing this kind of work in the classroom. And what he said is that government and politics have no place in a classroom.

Now, had he actually read the curriculum documents, he would understand what a misstep he took, because we were teaching according to the curriculum, in an authentic and meaningful way that had students engaged. And so, can you imagine Education minister not knowing the curriculum and not knowing what is being taught in schools and then admonishing teachers for doing their job. Well, that news story made it nationwide. And so, I think it was the beginning of the end for bill 64.

We're not going to do those things on this side of the government. We're going to put people first. We're going to support educators and students and make sure everybody has a great life.

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** Very happy to rise today and put some words on the record about the resolution brought forward about the—supporting the provincial government's universal nutrition program.

And as my colleague had mentioned before when he got up, we had some reservations on what the universal definition is if we are universally—if the universal definition means that every single child in our education system has access to this program, that we could feed hungry children and have them not worried about their stomachs but actually concentrate on what's being taught to them. It's a great a thing. It's absolutely fantastic that children are not going to be worried about hunger and moving forward.

And as educators that—we have several in the Chamber in our government, and as a parent of an educator, there's nothing more concerning than watching your student struggle through life instead of concentrating on the curriculum ahead, worried about not just nutrition but social-economic activities happening in their home or abuse or other things. But this is one aspect that we could focus on to really help those children move forward.

I went to a lot of schools in Winnipeg growing up. I started off at Heritage in St. James and moved over towards the North End and went to Lord Nelson,

Luxton, Tyndall Park, River East—that was another school I went to. I went to Andrew Mynarski and Sisler High. And there was a tremendous differential in all the schools that I went to.

And, as a very young child growing up, my mother entered the workforce when I was at a very young age, and I guess my parents gave us a lot more responsibilities than we were able to do. So, often we went to school without lunches. Lunches weren't prepared for us, or we would scramble because we slept in a little bit or we were running late. And I often brought what I refer to as a jam sandwich, which was simply two pieces of bread jammed together.

And as I would sit there at lunch and I would watch the other students who had these little brown bags that were full of nutrition and apples and cheese sticks and on and on, I looked at them with envy. And it wasn't that this was not attainable for me. It was. I had to put some work in there and get off my butt and make my lunch in the morning. But being a small child of seven years old or eight or nine, those were not a priority at the time so often I would go school.

There was no additional funds for me to purchase milk or juice and I'd see these other kids going and getting these packages, so perhaps if I had more nutrition I'd be a lot taller than I am today. But here then, that may be irrelevant but the fact of the matter is I did think a lot about how hungry I was during the day. And unfortunately, it just wasn't seen in the family. My parents would go shopping on payday every two weeks and we didn't have a lot, so when the groceries came in on payday, we were like vultures throughout the weekend; we attacked that food like we hadn't seen any before. And then come the part of the week we'd make nice lunches, but after a while, the lunches kind of got boring and back to the jam sandwiches.

And as I take a look at this and I say it would be wonderful if we could feed every child. My background in business and planning says we have to plan every detail out to make sure we get things right, because if we fail to plan, then we just plan to fail.

And my colleague from Spruce Woods—and during question period I also asked about the \$30 million and how that relates when you break it down. If truly every child can attain nutrition at school, that's 52 cents. And I break it down to the planning—and my colleague from Agassiz had asked the question that says who administers this, who buys the groceries, how is it stored, what about the equipment? My colleague from

Spruce Woods referenced refrigeration. And those are details that need to be asked.

Who is paying for those people to go do that? What does it cost for that—for the groceries to be either delivered or picked up? Who plans the meal planning? How is the food stored? And if there are students like young Richard with the jam sandwiches who wants something nutritious one day but the next day he doesn't require it, how do they determine and plan ahead that, you know, today we've got from this class we need 15 students that's going to have lunch and tomorrow might have 24. So, that's a planning nightmare to know how much to have in reserve in case somebody didn't bring a lunch that day, or lunch wasn't packaged.

When I went through the different schools, the ones I remember clearly that there was more colleagues of mine that didn't have lunches as opposed to the ones who did, was Andrew Mynarski and Sisler. And both of those schools are—have a lower income base around there. There's a fair amount of poverty in the area. And I truly believe that education and opportunity can raise you from poverty.

Also, we've seen in the previous PC government's budget where the tax bracket before you pay any taxes was increased to \$15,000. That puts a huge amount of money on the tables of the people at home to spend on groceries.

\* (11:50)

When we take a look at 52 cents a day per meal, a family of four over the course of a month, that would give them \$187.20. I cannot feed a family of four for \$187.20, and I believe that we're very fiscally responsible in our house. We don't eat fancy. We have a garden, we harvest from our garden, we have some gardening done year-round that we harvest from. We buy our food typically direct from the producer, whether it's a hog producer or a cattle producer. We try to go direct and eat as fiscally responsible as we can, and yet \$187 would certainly not cover a family of four for a month.

And I want to make sure that when we look at a program, that we do it to make sure that we meet the needs, that the outcomes are being achieved exactly what the intent is to be.

So, \$30 million may seem like a tremendous amount of money, and for many people it is beyond belief how much money that is, but when you break it down for 288,000 students, it's really not a lot of money per student.

We need to have something that addresses the equipment. What vehicles are picking up the groceries, who's being paid to get the groceries, where's the groceries going to be stored, how's the groceries being kept so they don't spoil, how do we identify who gets what groceries what day, what is a nutrition program going to look like in the long term?

Now, these children, whether it's a snack for breakfast or it's lunch, then we have a bigger problem that 52 cents gets diluted very quickly to 26 cents per meal. And we cannot begin to think that we can feed children on that.

We need to have a really comprehensive look at this to make sure that the outcomes that we desire are going to be exactly what the bill intends.

And I certainly support children and education and families getting out of poverty. And I think that hunger in your belly is not going to accomplish that goal, so please have a look at this, and let's find a way to get these kids fed effectively.

Thank you.

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** It's an honour to have the chance, in both official languages, to share my thoughts on this universal nutrition program, which I believe is due time to happen here in Manitoba.

And I know that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Perchotte) went on about sandwiches, so I couldn't help but reflect on sandwiches. And we know that sandwiches are beautiful, sandwiches are fine. I like sandwiches. I eat them all the time. I eat them for my supper and I eat them for my lunch. In fact, if I had a hundred sandwiches, I'd eat them all at once. Yes.

Mais, l'honorable Député-Président, chaque enfant au Manitoba mérite un bon départ et la chance de construire une bonne vie saine. Les enfants ne peuvent pas apprendre le ventre vide, c'est évident. On a tous besoin d'un bon sandwich, ici et là.

Notre gouvernement NPD prend des mesures historiques pour fournir de la nourriture à chaque enfant dans chaque école qui en a besoin à travers le Manitoba. Par conséquent, il est résolu que l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba exhorte le gouvernement provincial à continuer d'investir dans l'avenir de la province en renforçant l'éducation, en nourrissant les enfants et en rendant la vie plus abordable pour les familles, ici au Manitoba.

L'honorable Député-Président assistant, nous élargissons considérablement les programmes alimentaires dans toutes les divisions scolaires à partir de

l'année scolaire prochaine afin qu'il y ait de la nourriture disponible dans chaque école, pour chaque enfant qui en a besoin, et c'est important.

L'ancien gouvernement conservateur Pallister-Stefanson a fait des coupures en éducation et a menacé les écoles et les familles avec le projet de loi 64. Notre gouvernement adopte une approche différente. Nous travaillons avec les écoles, les familles et les partenaires communautaires pour nous assurer que nos enfants reçoivent l'éducation qu'ils méritent, y compris la nourriture dont ils ont besoin pour apprendre et grandir.

Alors, nous allons nourrir chaque enfant dans chaque école qui en a besoin, l'honorable Député-Président. Notre équipe du NPD sait que lorsque nous nourrissons les enfants à l'école, nous les mettons sur la voie du succès pour leur éducation et pour leur avenir.

Nous devons investir dans l'avenir de chaque – de cette province en veillant à ce que nos enfants aient le soutien dont ils ont besoin pour s'épanouir et grandir. Nous avons pris des mesures historiques pour créer un programme de nutrition universellement accessible d'ici l'année scolaire 2024-2025.

Les enfants souffrant d'insécurité alimentaire ou de pauvreté ne devraient pas être désavantagés à l'école en raison de la faim. Donc, cela fait partie de notre plan plus vaste visant à créer une stratégie de lutte contre la pauvreté complète au Manitoba.

Nous avons augmenté le financement de subventions au Conseil de nutrition infantile du Manitoba, de 2,5 millions de dollars à un total de 3,87 millions de dollars pour cette année scolaire.

Pour l'année scolaire 2024-2025, notre gouvernement du NPD investira un montant record de 30 millions de dollars, il faut dire, dans 3 volets complémentaires de programmes de repas scolaire pour garder – pour garantir que tous les enfants aient un accès sans obstacle à la nourriture, y compris : 15 millions de dollars alloués directement aux divisions scolaires pour des programmes de repas locaux, basés sur l'inscription et les facteurs socio-économiques; 6 millions de dollars pour les écoles publiques dans les communautés présentant le plus grand besoin socio-économique; et 9 millions de dollars de subventions pour des programmes de nutrition, incluant l'expansion du soutien au Conseil de nutrition infantile du Manitoba.

Cela aidera les familles qui ont du mal à trouver de l'argent pour les courses et garantira qu'oublier de

préparer un déjeuner ne laisse pas un enfant affamé et capable d'apprendre.

Donc, en investissant en éducation – nous savons que c'est important – le Budget 2024 augmente le financement des écoles de la maternelle à la douzième année de 104,2 millions de dollars. Le financement garantira que les élèves bénéficient de plus d'attention de la part de leurs enseignants et de leurs auxiliaires et de leurs cliniciens.

Il y aura de meilleures ressources et des taux de diplomation améliorés en répondant aux besoins de base des élèves et en favorisant des liens solides entre les familles, les communications et les écoles.

Alors, merci M. l'honorable Député-Président. Et je vous souhaite une bonne journée.

### **Translation**

*But, Honourable Deputy Speaker, every child in Manitoba deserves a good start and the chance to build a good, healthy life. Children cannot learn on an empty stomach, that is obvious. We all need a good sandwich, here and there.*

*Our NDP government is taking historic steps to provide food for every child that needs it in every school across Manitoba. Therefore, be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urges the provincial government to continue investing in the province's future by strengthening education, feeding children and making life more affordable for families here in Manitoba.*

*We are significantly expanding food programs in all school divisions starting next school year so that there is food available in every school, for every child who needs it—and that is important.*

*The former Pallister-Stefanson Conservative government made cuts to education and threatened schools and families with bill 64. Our government is taking a different approach. We are working with schools, families and community partners to ensure that our children receive the education they deserve, including the food they need to learn and grow.*

*We are going to feed every child that needs it in every school. Our NDP team knows that when we feed children in school, we set them up for success in their education and in their future.*

*We must invest in the future of this province by ensuring our children have the support they need to thrive and grow. We have taken historic steps to*



*create a universally accessible nutrition program by the 2024-2025 school year.*

*Children suffering from food insecurity or poverty should not be disadvantaged at school because of hunger. Thus, this is part of our broader plan to create a comprehensive anti-poverty strategy for Manitoba.*

*We have increased grant funding to the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba from \$2.5 million to a total of \$3.87 million for this school year.*

*For the 2024-2025 school year, our NDP government will invest a record \$30 million in three complementary streams of school meal programs to ensure all children have barrier-free access to food, including: \$15 million allocated directly to school divisions for local meal programs, based on enrolment and socio-economic factors; \$6 million for public schools in communities with the greatest socio-economic need; and \$9 million in grants for nutrition programs, including expanded support for the Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba.*

*This will help families struggling to find money for groceries and ensure that forgetting to pack a lunch does not leave a child hungry and unable to learn.*

*By investing in education—and we know it is important—Budget 2024 increases funding for K-to-12 schools by \$104.2 million. The funding will ensure that students get more attention from their teachers, support staff and clinicians.*

*Meeting students' basic needs and fostering strong links between families, communities and schools will lead to better resources and improved graduation rates.*

*Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker. And I wish you a good day.*

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I appreciate the opportunity to stand in this Chamber and speak to this resolution brought forward by the member from Riel and—this resolution 18, supporting the provincial universal nutrition program.

And I also want to say thank you to the—my colleagues on this side of the House; the member from Spruce Woods, who brought forward some good information in terms of the funding formula that the NDP government have used to administer this program.

And I would also like to say thank you to my colleague and member from Selkirk for sharing some of his personal stories with us and the value of nutrition at a very young age.

We all know and understand the importance of nutrition and how critical it is for the very young people in our world. We also know the challenges that many families are facing when it comes to affordability and the difficulty many families are struggling with financially, and the 'high'—high cost of living. It's hard to buy groceries and put food on the table. Just trying to pay our month-to-month expenses is becoming a growing challenge for many of us here in Manitoba.

A recent report from the Food Banks Canada has given Manitoba an overall D- in alleviating poverty in this—in the province. This is a decrease since the report—

**The Acting Speaker (JD Devgan):** Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Agassiz will have eight minutes—nine minutes remaining.

The time being 12 noon, the House is recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 28, 2024

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