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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
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BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
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DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
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HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
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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
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LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
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MOROZ, Mike	River Heights	NDP
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MOYES, Mike	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
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PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
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WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 7, 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, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy name and for the welfare of our people. Amen.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Please be seated.

The honourable—orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

House Business

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Honourable Speaker, pursuant to rule 34(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt). The title of that resolution is Protecting Lake Winnipeg from Sewage Pollution.

Further House business, please call Bill 201, resume debate.

The Speaker: It has been announced that, pursuant to rule 34(8), I am—the honourable Opposition House Leader has announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Riding Mountain. The title of

the resolution is Protecting Lake Winnipeg from Sewage Pollution.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 201—The Manitoba Emblems Amendment Act (Provincial Stone)

The Speaker: And now it's also been announced that we will resume debate on Bill 201, The Manitoba Emblems Amendment Act (Provincial Stone).

It stands in the name of the member for St. Boniface, who has four minutes remaining. *[interjection]* Second reading debate.

MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface): C'est un plaisir d'être de retour en Chambre avec mes collègues et c'est aussi un plaisir de rappeler à tout le monde que le mois de mars est le mois de la Francophonie mondiale. Alors—

Translation

It is a pleasure to be back in the House with my colleagues, and it is also a pleasure to remind everyone that March is World Francophonie Month. So—

English

It's an honour to be back. I hope everyone's ready to rock. It's also an honour to remind everyone that the month of March is the international month of la Francophonie.

It's also an honour to be back here to speak about emblems, emblems of Manitoba, specifically in regards to fossiliferous dolomitic limestone, also known in French as pierre calcaire dolimitique fossilifère *[fossiliferous dolomitic limestone]*.

I'd like to remind everyone that when we speak about emblems of Manitoba, I believe that emblems of Manitoba need to be representative, they need to be inclusive, not exclusive, and somehow represent all of Manitoba. And, I've had the chance to look at the geological map of Manitoba, and I'd like to point out that limestone, or fossiliferous dolomitic limestone, represents about 15 per cent of the geological footprint of Manitoba, whereas 'precambrian' granite actually represents 70 per cent of Manitoba. And when we think about that, we think about the

Canadian Shield, we think about the boreal forest, we think about minerals—not just minerals that we've extracted so far but also critical resources—and of course, hydroelectric power.

And what's interesting about 'precambrian' granite is that thanks to glaciation, a lot of that granite has found its way to southern Manitoba. We also know it as fieldstones, and I know that in my family and my ancestors in Letellier, St. Jean Baptiste, St. Joseph, Vassar, South Junction over the years spent many, many, many hours picking those fieldstones out of the fields and making piles of them. And that's what we see in southern Manitoba: piles and piles and piles of limestone everywhere.

And what of the town—what about the town of Gladstone? Has anyone had the chance to speak to the good people of the town of Gladstone? I mean, are they willing to change their name to the town of fossiliferous dolomitic limestone? I'm not sure. However, I know that their name a long time ago was Third Crossing, so maybe they'd be open to it. I'm not sure.

But back to speaking about our favourite topic here: fossiliferous dolomitic limestone, also known as pierre calcaire dolomitique fossilifère [*fossiliferous dolomitic limestone*]. I think we should take this opportunity maybe to be looking at all of our emblems, how they represent Manitoba, and if there's an opportunity here for MLA Ewasko to perhaps go back to the slatestone—[*interjection*—sorry.

The Speaker: Order, please. The long-standing rule is that you can't use a member's name.

MLA Loiselle: My apologies, I was rocking and rolling too hard there.

But perhaps there is an opportunity here to go back to the slatestone chalkboard and make sure we get this right.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker; merci, l'honorable Président.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to speak in favour of this great bill, and the contribution that Tyndall stone has made to architecture across Manitoba, Canada and the world. With its unique characteristics, the Tyndall stone is like no other limestone. As a result, the desirability in architecture across our country has been significant. The significance that Tyndall stone has had on Manitoba

architecture since its discovery deserves the recognition that this bill sets out to achieve. As we walk up the stairs of this very Legislative Building, we are surrounded by the beautiful detail that this Manitoba stone possesses.

* (10:10)

The Tyndall stone holds the global heritage designation for broad significance to humanity. It is the only Canadian stone on the worldwide list, which contains only 32 stones across the entire world. This prestigious recognition is included together with stones as widely recognized as the Carrara marble used in ancient Rome.

Tyndall stone has primarily been used as a building material and can be seen in construction across Manitoba for 200 years. It was first discovered in 1823 by the Hudson's Bay Company employees who noticed an exposure along the banks of the Red River near Selkirk.

Some of the very first buildings to see this unique stone was Lower Fort Garry in 1832 and, a short while later, the St. Andrew's Anglican Church in 1845, both of which still can be seen standing today.

At this point in time, the limestone, unique in beauty due to its fossils and molting, was not recognized by the name Tyndall stone. The name Tyndall stone came after the discovery of a major deposit in Garson, Manitoba in 1894. The quarry we know today was opened in 1898, and the stone got its name as a result of rail shipments being sent from the nearby community of Tyndall.

This first quarry, opened by William Garson, who has been said to produce 90 per cent of the stone used in the building industry—Mr. Garson ran his quarry until his death in 1911. At that point, Peter Lyall bought the company and opened it as Wallace Sandstone Company.

By 1914, the industry was booming and included three large quarries in the Garson area. Between three companies, nearly 300 were employed. By 1915, the fourth company was in operation and turns out to be the sole company in operation today. A Winnipeg stonecutting shop, opened in 1910, was owned by August Gillis, specialized in cutting Tyndall stone.

By 1915, August and his sons were able to acquire their own quarry, and today, the Garson quarry is still owned and operated by the Gillis family. August Gillis and his sons, Charles and Joseph, were able to

acquire the surrounding quarries, and today, the Gillis family still owns and operates Gillis Quarries Ltd.

It was this quarry deposit that supplied the stone for many of the notable buildings across Canada, including the Legislative Building, which we sit here today. Along with the Manitoba Legislature, the Hudson's Bay store downtown, Winnipeg City Hall, the Manitoba Museum, Manitoba Law Courts, Westminster United Church, Union Station, St. Boniface Cathedral, the Civic Auditorium, Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Manitoba Law Courts and, mostly recently, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights have all been constructed using Manitoba's unique Tyndall stone.

The distinguished site playing host to our unique stone doesn't stop in Manitoba. The Canadian Parliament Buildings in Ottawa have also been proud to showcase the unique characteristics of Tyndall stone in its construction.

Other notable buildings across our country include the Canadian Museum of History, the Saskatchewan legislature, Banff hotel and the Empress Hotel in BC.

Outside of Canada, Tyndall can also be seen at Canada House in London, the Canadian embassy in Berlin and many other private and public buildings of distinguished architecture.

Although the greatest recognition can be made in large public buildings that I have listed, Tyndall stone has also had significant contribution to many other buildings across our province and country. Through the prairie landscape of Manitoba where wood wasn't as readily available, it is common to see many turn-of-the-century houses and community buildings built or finished detail with Tyndall stone that we are so proud of today.

Therefore, I look forward to seeing this amazing stone being recognized as our official provincial stone.

Thank you.

MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips): It's a privilege to speak to The Manitoba Emblems Amendment Act today, designating the mottle-'dolomytic'-dolomitic limestone quarried near Garson and Tyndall as the official stone of Manitoba.

I'm excited because I spent all night practicing the pronunciations of 'fossiflerous' dolomitic limestone. I got the nod of approval from my colleague from Waverley, so that's good.

I—truthfully, I wasn't familiar with this limestone before I came into this building. I've had the privilege of coming in and out of this building many times prior to being elected, and I'm familiar with the architecture, the beautiful motifs, the design of the masonry work and the significance of the number 13, I believe it is. But it wasn't until MLA school and walking through the corridors where I learned about Tyndall stone and how special it is in preserving fossils within the walls of this building.

And a lot of my colleagues have already spoken about the impressive lists of buildings and landmarks across Manitoba and Canada constructed out of dolomitic limestone, of course, the Manitoba Legislature being one of them. But also, abroad, the Canada House in London also has this Tyndall limestone, the embassy in Berlin, of course, CMHR here in Manitoba.

And I also want to take a note—or take a moment here just to note of the passing of the architect behind the design of the CMHR, Antoine Predock, who has made a—in—an incredible impression on our city landscape here in Manitoba—or here in Winnipeg. But the use of that limestone in that building from Manitoba.

So using these stones coming from our province, it might be a Manitoba thing. I know I get excited any time I hear about a Manitoban doing something incredible elsewhere in the world. We all sort of get excited to know if someone's doing something in entertainment or something in politics. But, you know, we have this stone that's being used in different buildings across the world and I think that's a point of pride for Manitoba and we should definitely be proud.

A rock isn't just a rock. I never thought I'd get elected to talk about rocks in this Chamber but, you know, there is something meaningful in this, too, because we take pride in anything that comes out of Manitoba. We are an export province. We export a lot of agriculture products and, you know, connecting into that a little bit is we sit on land that was, at one point, a body of water. And this fertile land now feeds the world. It feeds us. We export a lot of grain, a lot of pulse and a lot of other natural resources, and limestone being one of them. So it's something to be proud of.

So with the construction of this building beginning in 1917, thousands of tons of dolomitic limestone began moving from the quarry in Tyndall to this location. Tyndall stone was one of the oldest stones used in the construction of the building dating

back to 404–440 to 450 million years ago during the Ordovician age, whereas the Bedford limestone from the Mississippian period, 350 million years ago, and the Botticino marble was the Jurassic period, only 119–or 190 million years ago. These are very big numbers and kind of puts into perspective what a speck human history is in our planet's history and, you know, you get to see the preservation of these fossils when you're walking around the building, and it's humbling.

The Ordovician age saw a rapid explosion in the diversity of marine invertebrates, many of which have been fossilized and can be seen throughout the building: 'snills', cephalopods and trilobites can be found everywhere. The largest fossil is 3 metres long and 30 centimetres tall. I'm told it's in the east portico, so I'll have to go on a scavenger hunt before the afternoon session, just try to find it. So often we think of this building as a human accomplishment but in reality, so much of its beauty has been carved out by nature itself.

These are the type of stories that interested me growing up here in Manitoba, you know, coming on field trips to this building and learning more about its history, and still learning about it. The stories where science meets politics, where arts meets our natural world. Over the past few months, it's been wonderful to see the school groups from across our province, including my riding, come to the Legislature to see this beautiful building—that the people's building—and learn more about it.

As a kid, there's nothing quite like walking up the grand 'scarecase' and hearing stories about the two bison on the sides of the staircase and how they got into this building—almost unbelievable—or entering the Rotunda and seeing everyone's head turn upwards with open mouths to look at the grandeur of this building.

* (10:20)

So, like I said earlier, let's be honest with ourselves, rocks are pretty cool and they're an accessible way for kids to gain a deeper appreciation of this building.

Earlier in this session, my colleague, the MLA for Waverley told the Chamber that he was talking to his kids about this very bill and they were deeply curious about it. Why? Because it's an accessible and interesting example of how this Legislature works and how it helps capture kids' imagination and focus.

I think it's the greatest power of this bill to not only honour the history of Tyndall, but to speak to the people's curiosity about Manitoba's geological and architectural history. And all that starts in the classroom.

Among the many fantastic civil servants who work in this building are the folks in the tour department who took us on our MLA school tour, who worked tirelessly to tell the story of this building and about the rich history about its construction.

Often they guide students through their first real encounter with politics, and the legislative tour is something that sticks with so many kids throughout the entirety of their life. And it's probably on the legislative tour that most kids in Manitoba even hear about Tyndall stone.

I want to just conclude by drawing from Carol Shields' critically acclaimed novel, *The Stone Diaries*, the story of Daisy Goodwill Fletts [*phonetic*] moves through the strata of her life never quite settled and never quite defined: And there is my father to consider, for he comes now, walking home down the quarry road. He's whistling, slapping at the sandflies, kicking up dust with his work boots. He's exhausted.

The distance between Garson and Tyndall is two miles. The other quarry workers, after a day in the lime kilns, were working with their picks at the stone face, ride home to Tyndall in the company wagons, their boots hanging over the side.

Sturdy teams of horses, those beautiful thick-muscled ark-worthy beasts, scarcely seen nowadays, pull them homewards. But not my father. He prefers to walk. He's an odd sort. That's what's said of him in these parts. A loner. Daft-looking. Goes on his own way. A quick worker though. No flies on him. Smart with machinery, he has a touch. Quiet, sober, comes from Stonewall, comes from the Stonewall township himself. And his wife too. As for his wife, well, there is enough women there to keep two or three fellows busy all night long—should have left that out—He likes to stretch his legs after a day spent bending over the limestone face or peering into the inwards and cantankerous old steam channel.

The quarry is only a few years old, discovered in 1896 by a farmer digging a well behind his house, and sold four years later to one William Garson, the owner and proprietor. Already 100,000 tons of stone have been cut and carried away, and already the landscape has been transformed so that the earth steps down in

tiers like an open-air arena, with shelves measuring some 12 to 36 inches in height.

There is controversy about how much stone actually lies beneath the ground. Some say the way things are growing, the place will be quarried out in five or 10 years. Others, more optimistic and more knowledgeable, estimate that there seems to be half a mile wide and run all the way down to Winnipeg and beyond.

The stone itself, a dolomitic limestone, is a more beautiful and easier way to handle than which my father knew growing up in Stonewall, Manitoba. Natural chemical alterations give its unique lacy look. It comes in two colours, a light buff mixed with brown, and my favourite, a pale gray and darker gray models.

Some folks call it tapestry stone and they prize, especially, its random fossils—gastropods, brachiopods, trilobites, corals and snails. As the flesh of the once-living creatures decayed, a limey mud-filled, the casings and—hardened to rock. My father has had only limited schooling, but he's blessed with a naturalist curiosity and not long ago, he hacked out a few of the more interesting fossil pieces and carried them home to show his wife, Mercy.

This stone has inspired artists, writers, business leaders and politicians alike. It's an honour to be in this place, surrounded by such beauty, and every day with my colleagues carrying out important work on behalf of Manitobans.

Thank you.

MLA Mike Moyes (Riel): It's my pleasure to rise to speak to this bill today; the first bill of the interim Leader of the members opposite. Clearly, this is a priority for the members opposite; not health care or education, but rocks, and that's fine.

I'm happy to rise and speak to Bill 201, The Manitoba Emblems Amendment Act. I am pleased to rise not only because I'm a fan of 'fossiliferous' dolomitic limestone.

An Honourable Member: Who isn't?

MLA Moyes: Exactly.

But because emblems matter; symbols matter, and I think they matter for a variety of reasons, but ultimately, they have the power to bring people together and they help to forge a collective identity. They remind us of a shared history and, more importantly, our shared future.

In short, I would argue that symbols and these emblems speak to what our government is all about and what we are representing, and that is a one Manitoba. This is a province where people, regardless of their background and their history, can feel that they are part of something greater—something bigger—and I think that's really important.

There's a number of other commemorative symbols, some more well known, some a little less known. For example, the great grey owl is our avian provincial emblem; something that we can see in the wildlife of Manitoba at all different times and something that represents the greatness and vastness of our geography.

Another one is the white spruce, our arbor—our arboreal emblem that was chosen mainly, I believe, because of the historical and extensive use by the people and using it for time immemorial.

Now, our probably most well-known official commemorative symbols—that would probably be the prairie crocus. It's something that often we see on pins. It's often something that you learn about as a child, and it's a beautiful flower.

And I think it's important for us to make sure that we're giving the due diligence when we're choosing these symbols; hence, why we need to discuss this 'fossiliferous' dolomitic limestone, and to make sure that we're giving it the time necessary to make sure that we're making the right decision moving forward.

Now, another reason why I'm very pleased to rise and speak to this important bill, as demonstrated by the members opposite bringing it forward once again, as the interim Leader, is the historical aspect. I know a lot of folks have spoken to that—the different buildings and different pieces, and even going back further. But I'd like to just highlight a few different things.

So, we can go back through the geological and the geographical history and it actually goes back over a half-billion years, and that's when Lake Agassiz covered our province. Our province was a sea of blue. I'm glad that that is no longer the case. And, through that, and through different biochemical processes, 'fossiliferous' dolomitic limestone began to be created.

Now, one of the great things about this process that took place is that it baked in many of the creatures that lived in the lakebed, and that is where we get to have the privilege now, in modern times, to find these fossils and to see them, and to kind of revere that historical aspect.

Now, when Lake Agassiz dried up, a prominent vein of 'fossiliferous' dolomitic limestone was raised to the surface and that preserved these fossils. And it's something that our paleontologists now can use to learn about Manitoba's historical environment and ancient ecosystems.

* (10:30)

Now, moving forward in history, limestone played a significant role in other historical buildings, as have been mentioned, the least of which or not the least of which, I should say, is the building that we stand in, something that I feel a great honour and privilege to come to every day and to represent the people and the constituents in my area. But I'm sure that's for all members in this building. And walking into this building and seeing the beauty of the architecture and seeing the beauty of the material, including the limestone, is something that brings me a lot of joy and something that brings a sense of awe.

Now, one of the things that—or one of the other things that is so fantastic about this is when somebody is new to the building—children, school groups, family members—come to the building and you can see their eyes light up when they're walking the halls.

One of the things—one of the honours that I had as a new member in this building was I got to meet a school group from Riel. And in that time when they were first coming in, they were obviously looking at the grandeur of the building and were pretty awestruck. And the excitement just increased dramatically when I was able to point out a few fossils. It blew their mind that it was right here in the architecture and I think that that is pretty fantastic to see.

Now beyond this building, 'fossiliferous' dolomitic limestone has been used in other major historical buildings, including Lower Fort Garry, which the members opposite have described. It was also used in 1845, in St. Andrew's Anglican Church, which is the oldest stone church in western Canada. It's something that is used in the Law Courts across the street; in Parliament, the centre block of Parliament specifically; in more contemporary buildings; in our art gallery, the Winnipeg Art Gallery; the Manitoba Museum and, as mentioned, the Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

This limestone is a Manitoba treasure. It's something that I would compare to Italian marble, which is revered around the world. I think that our limestone is something that is revered. And maybe it's a hidden secret, maybe it's just about—maybe Manitobans are

the ones that know about it. But I would argue that it's something that we could maybe promote more.

And so I appreciate the members opposite bringing this important bill forward on this important topic of geological significance so that we can highlight it as a true emblem and symbol of Manitoba.

Now, I was a history teacher for a number of years, and one of the things that I like to do as a history teacher was to really highlight how our environment shaped events. And when you look at the different architectures, and when you talk about Lower Fort Garry, and when you talk about all these historical events or historical buildings, I think they do play a key role. And I think that it's important to just mention some of the things that went into them.

For example, the workers that built this building. One of the things that I really revered coming here on tours and in MLA school was seeing the different workers and that historical perspective of workers and workers' rights, going and building this grand building with very little safety regulations, with very little, I guess, regulations and something that we care deeply about on this side of the House. *[interjection]* Thank you.

And so we really want to highlight the workers. We are the party of workers. We are the party that want to be on the side of working-class Manitobans. And so I really appreciate the fact that—of all their work to build such a grand building and to move forward.

An Honourable Member: All Manitobans.

MLA Moyes: Absolutely. But workers played a very key role in building Manitobans, and we will continue to stand with them moving forward.

Now, one of the things I'll just conclude on is—it brings me just a lot of joy when I think about Manitoba as a province and some of the emblems that we're going to have and some of the things that we're going to be able to move on. And so I do want to thank the members opposite for bringing forward this important, critical bill of geological significance so that we can highlight these Manitoba wonders. And I'm really hoping that, moving forward, we can choose these emblems in a non-partisan and collective spirit.

So thank you very much, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Nellie Kennedy (Assiniboia): It pleases me greatly, Honourable Speaker, to stand before you today and my colleagues across the way, to speak to this really important piece of legislation,

The Manitoba Emblems Amendment Act, for our provincial stone, brought in by our members across the way here.

I would like to say that emblems are important. I think all of us can agree when we see, say for example, the Canadian flag, or our provincial flower, the crocus; I think it brings us great pride to know that these things mean a lot to us, and as Manitobans and Canadians, there are things that we really hold important to us.

I will say, being elected to represent the people of Assiniboia has been a great privilege and honour. And I would say walking into this building every day is a true honour; to climb the stairs of the Legislature and see the amazing beautiful building that is the people's building.

This is a great honour to be able to have the Legislature open again to the public. I think everyone would agree that it's wonderful to be able to have Manitobans come into this building and to see the beautiful architecture, the building that is belonging to all Manitobans.

And what I would say is something that was really interesting to me when I was able to go to MLA school and go on the tour of this beautiful building, I really had no idea that there were fossils captured in the limestone here. And I was amazed. I went home and spoke to it about that to my children. I've had them come to the Legislature to take a look themselves. It's been pretty remarkable to see all the wonders that were built right in this beautiful building that we call the Manitobans' building.

I would like to say rocks to me are—make me think of my childhood. I grew up on a farm in—just in the Interlake here in Manitoba; been a Manitoban all my life. And one of the things that I loved to do with my brother every summer, when we'd spend hours and hours outside, was picking rocks. And we would shine them and wash them and collect them and go home to our parents and show the beautiful stones that we found on the road. And we felt like we had treasures in our hands. It was a really lovely, special moment for me as a child.

Also I remember my dad, who was a farmer all of his life, spent his whole entire life in the Interlake. His parents moved here at the early 1900s. They were involved with clearing the land and pioneering the land, and creating the fields in which they have contributed for many, many generations and years in this province.

My dad would tell me stories about picking the rocks from the fields and being able to make it so that it was something that could be used to grow crops on. And if you drive around the Interlake, you know, I would be driving with my dad and he would be pointing out the rock piles in the fields. They were off to the side or these—and they, to me as a child, being so young, these rock piles looked enormous to me.

And I just thought: wow, can you imagine moving these things by hand; that farmers and people did this? They moved these rocks from the fields to be able to create this land, in order to farm and make a living and contribute to Manitoba's agricultural sector.

It's pretty remarkable, and I've always been really proud of the fact that I come from a family who's worked so incredibly hard and have been one of the founding farming families within the Interlake. It's a great source of pride.

* (10:40)

Also, with regards to, you know, some childhood memories I have, you know, the crocus being our provincial flower, I remember, you know, seeing fields of wildflowers in the ditches. One of my favourite things to think about is the naturescapes of Manitoba's landscape and the beautiful rural areas within our province.

And I have so many memories of just picking wildflowers and crocus and all of these beautiful things that I would then bring home and show my family. And I believe my dad was the first person to tell me about the crocus and how it was the provincial flower for Manitoba.

With regards to limestone, I think it's really interesting to me. I know it's a part of my life. On my house, there is limestone, which is really quite interesting. We've always—my husband and I have thought, should we paint over it? But, you know, it just feels like this is something that's—something that really shows very Manitoban thing. And so we've decided not to.

We also have granite in our kitchen. It's something that we really were very excited about when we redid our kitchen. And our neighbour and family friend owned a granite shop. And so I got to go shopping and see all of this beautiful granite and got choose something that would go in our kitchen and be a part of our home where—family home for years to come.

And so, you know, this lovely man who's a family friend, his name is Joe [*phonetic*]. He came in and measured our kitchen and put down this beautiful granite that, even to this day, I think it's about 10 years old, my husband and I, you know, often say, do you remember when Joe [*phonetic*] came here and how quickly he put this granite into our home? And it was just a really remarkable time. Our daughter was just only six months old, and we took on redoing our kitchen. I don't know what we were thinking, but we did it. We got it done.

So with regards to the—I'm going to—practising—in practice by a member here, my colleague, practising this—trying to find—one moment here. So fossiliferous dolomitic limestone. It's really interesting here, the history of it. [*interjection*] Thank you. Really, really interesting.

It was designated a Global Heritage Stone Resource at the beginning of this year by the Subcommittee on Heritage Stones, which is a part of the International Union of Geological Sciences. It's only—the only Canadian rock on the list, and that list includes Carrara marble, used in the construction of the Pantheon, and Makrana marble, used in the construction of the Taj Mahal, which is really remarkable.

I will reiterate some of the things that my colleagues have stated, which I think is just really remarkable. The Manitoba Legislative Building, of course, as we've said, is largely constructed of mottled dolomitic limestone. And of course, you can see numerous fossilized organisms. The building and its stone carvings belong to all Manitobans.

And that's why we, as I said before, began reopening the building to the public. So we want to make mottled dolomitic limestone our provincial stone, we can't close off the Legislature. It really is one of the most important feats of engineering that's used mottled dolomitic limestone.

Mining development strategy is really important, it's a critical component, of course, of Manitoba's economy. And dolomitic limestone continues to be an important part of that industry, and that I think that's really important to note in Manitoba.

And we're committed, the NDP, to creating sustainable mining practices that are co-developed with Indigenous nations. And I think that's incredibly important.

We've also—talking about mining—we have to acknowledge the importance that unions have played in industries across Manitoba, especially in the mining

industry. And certainly that's something that the NDP supports. The development of safety equipment and regulations, sufficient breaks for workers, and labour laws that protect the health of miners, were all driven forward by union organizations, and I think that's incredibly important to note. Unions continue to be instrumental in all industries—

The Speaker: Order please. The member's time has expired.

Just a quick note to all members before we move on to the next speaker. Please try and keep your papers off the microphones because it doesn't sound bad to you, but to the people listening on the other end it's more than just annoying, so please try and keep that off your microphones.

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): I am pleased to stand on Bill 201, the provincial stone emblem, introduced by the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) and the interim Opposition Leader. Congratulations on that new role.

This is, you know, when we think about what is up for debate in the Manitoba Legislature, we often think of health care, education, cost of living—

An Honourable Member: Affordability.

MLA Cable: Affordability. But it is a great Thursday morning when we can have a good discussion about provincial stones and symbols that represent our province.

My colleagues have put so many valuable points on the record today, including personal experiences with Tyndall stone and their experiences in the Legislature with their own children or with school groups. And I will say that I remember the first time that I came into this building and I was astonished at the beautiful stone. And not only because when we consider the time and the generation that it was built, we didn't have the machinery to do the work. That it was hauled in by hand. That there was tremendous, tremendous amount of planning and execution that happened in order to get this done.

And when I look around, you know, this stone is incredible because it becomes a diary of ages gone by, and to walk through the building and to look at the crustaceans and the larvae and the different pieces that are in the stone, it's like an encyclopedia of organisms of our province, and it's hard not to be overwhelmed or distracted.

I'm a person who loves to learn and I love to investigate the things around me. So I find myself

walking down the hallways and pointing at the different pieces that are in the stone, and I know that if you are lucky enough to come here on a legislative tour, that a good part of the tour is having the guide point out the different pieces that are in that stone.

And when you walk through and see the school-children pointing at the different pieces and getting excited about rocks and geology and our provincial history, for me, that makes it worth it. And when I think about what they're learning here, like, this is education at its finest, where it's integrated, and we get to see students experience things that could be abstract concepts in real life.

When I think about the importance of this stone and stones in general in Manitoba, I think about education. Immediately, I think about education. What are the opportunities for people to learn about this incredible resource we have, and I know that at Brandon University, at University of Manitoba, at the University of Winnipeg, at the—well, really at most of our post-secondaries in the province, students have the opportunity to learn about geology. And why is that important? There are so many sectors in our province that need skilled geologists.

We need people to know about this stone and about the importance of fossiliferous dolomitic limestone. But we also need them to know—understand composition and how we sustainably and responsibly resource those materials. How we—how we extract them from the earth.

* (10:50)

I was honoured last week to tour the North—to tour a mine with the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses), and the minister of economic development and investment, trade and natural resources, and I had the privilege of seeing firsthand how we mine in Manitoba. In this particular case, it was nickel mining. *[interjection]* What was that noise?

An Honourable Member: Keep going.

MLA Cable: Okay. In this particular case, it was nickel. It was not—*[interjection]* What's happening? It was not Tyndall. It was nickel, but it was incredible to see firsthand—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Cable: —how mining works in this province, and when it's done right. And to see, you know, it's incredible; we go way underground. I took video to show my children because this is an opportunity that very few people get to embark on, unless they have

the skills, perhaps a geologist or are employed in the mine. Very few people have the opportunity to see how it's done.

And so when I look around at this phenomenal stone and I think about how it was harvested and brought into this building, not with modern machinery like we have now, but by hand, it makes me wonder how it was ever done.

But in our mines in Manitoba now, we have ways to sustainably harvest. We have health and safety requirements that will ensure that our workers are safe, which we know is incredibly important.

One of the things that was fascinating to me is that this particular mine has put in lights underground in the mine, strip lights, because being underground, as you can imagine and not having a sense of day and night and light and dark, can have an emotional toll on folks. So they are considering now that long-term toll on workers' health.

And when I think about, again, what it would have been like to harvest the stone that is in this building, I don't believe that those provisions would have been in place for those folks. So I'm glad that we have come to the place that we are here.

We know that symbols of all sorts are very important. We have flags. We have the provincial flower. We have the beautiful owl.

An Honourable Member: Great Seal.

MLA Cable: Great Seal. The member from Concordia has the privilege as the Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Mr. Wiebe) to be—take charge of the Great Seal. But again, as my colleagues have said, it's so important to consider the symbols that we choose to represent all of us, as one Manitoba; as Manitobans from the North and from the south and from rural and urban communities. And we know, by looking around the Legislature, that this place that we call home is so diverse now.

We have folks from all over the world who have come to join us here and to—were so grateful—have taken their rightful place in our Legislature. We need to ensure that the symbols that we use in our province to represent us as a people are fully representative of everybody.

And I am very appreciative that this bill was brought forward to consider Tyndall as our provincial stone. There are a lot of merits to this stone and to having this stone as a provincial symbol.

But I want to save a little bit of time for the minister responsible for mining to put a few words on the record.

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources): Honourable Speaker, I'm just pleased to be putting a few words on the record with respect to Bill 201, The Manitoba Emblems Amendment Act (Provincial Stone).

It's a—you know, it's important that we debate these things to their fullest extent, to make sure that Manitobans feel fully represented in this Chamber for all bills that are put forward before us, so that we're making wise decisions as a community.

And I like to debate—what I like debate—I have often liked to talk and focus on the people. So during my debate for Bill 201, I will be focusing on the people of Manitoba, as it relates to this bill. And as I—before I begin discussing specifics on Bill 201, I want to just acknowledge that this is my first opportunity to speak since we've been back in the House this session, for the spring session.

And we did just come out of February, which is Black History Month, which means a lot to me and many Manitobans across this great province. So I just want to take a time to acknowledge all of the hard work that went into creating a simply fantastic month of events.

Quite frankly, it went from more than a month late, January to—into March, and the events don't stop; they'll continue throughout the year. But this is just a really—I want to take a moment to acknowledge all the people who did amazing and hard work to make Black History Month happen. That's—that Black History Manitoba and their team, Nadia Thompson and Rhonda Thompson, Mavis McLaren and the entire team who make that—bring that to life and make sure that Black history is acknowledged, celebrated, taught and really appreciated by the entire Manitoban community. I went to many events and it was a real pleasure to do that.

Now coming back to the bill that we're discussing today, Bill 201, it's my pleasure to be talking about this. And I said I'm going to be discussing the human side of this.

So I want to begin by really acknowledging the people who do the critical work to identify rocks in Manitoba, and that's our geologists. I have the great pleasure of being the Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources. And

as part of that role and responsibility, the Manitoba's geological team is in my department.

And so I have had the great pleasure to tour their facilities, see the places that they work and understand a little bit of the great work that they do to understand the foundation, quite literally, of our province. And understand what makes up Manitoba's bedrock and our geological profile.

Throughout getting to understand the work that they do and seeing the survey tools and seeing the equipment, the advanced technology—to understand and get a sense of what types of minerals and rocks are around our province; what does the northern Manitoban region look like in terms of its profile and potential for mineral development and exploration; the southern Manitoba, with its potential for helium, for oil, gas; for other regions, where we deal with things like Tyndall, limestone. The variety and the number, vast number of quarries that we have in Manitoba.

All of that information—all of that terrific potential that we live up to, and quite frankly, the fact that we are here today discussing limestone, happens because of geologists. And so I want to just talk about them and really appreciate the work that they do, and get on the record that we're really thankful for having fantastic geologists in Manitoba.

And, frankly, because our geological profile in Manitoba, we attract geologists to this great province. And we're very happy about that, the fact that geologists want to come here and study such a terrific place for geology. And understanding the potential that it has to bring to our province.

On top of that, I also want to give a big shout-out to all the engineers and geoscientists. These engineers and geoscientists are the folks who really understand—use the information from geologists and then now understand how that can be put to use to build Manitoba.

The really good work that I know that engineers, geoscientists do allow us to understand how can we use these rocks, how can we understand the bedrock and understand the foundation, the frame to build Manitoba up and allow us to be the successful, innovative, creative province that we are today.

I think about projects like the dams that we have in Manitoba that allow Manitoba to have clean energy right across the provinces. Those projects don't happen without geologists doing the groundwork, geoscientists doing the groundwork, and engineers

doing the groundwork, to lay down the basis for us to have a clean and advanced economy, clean and advanced energies network that is the envy of everyone around this province.

And so I'm very thankful for the work that they do. And that is, you know, acknowledging the fact that Bill 201 is specifically talking about one type of rock. And so, when I think about, you know, the idea of honouring and putting, as an official emblem, one rock like limestone, I want to make sure that we fully recognize the knowledge and the vast amount of information that geologists, geoscientists and engineers have developed over the many, many—

The Speaker: Order please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have four minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

DEBATE ON RESOLUTIONS

Res. 1—Calling on the Provincial Government to Remove the Federal Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills for Manitobans

The Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions.

The resolution before us this morning is the resolution, Calling on the Provincial Government to Remove the Federal Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills for Manitobans, brought forward by the honourable member for Fort Whyte (MLA Khan).

And the debate will continue, standing in the name of the honourable member for The Maples who has five minutes remaining.

MLA Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Order. Sorry. Order, please.

The honourable minister will have six minutes—or, the honourable member has six minutes remaining.

MLA Sandhu: It is always an honour to rise in the House to speak to the bills. Hopefully yourself, Honourable Speaker, and all the members had a good winter break, and hopefully you all had to spend quality time with your family, loved ones and also your constituents.

Honourable Speaker, when we are talking about this resolution, this resolution is like fighting; fighting with the Government of Canada. And this is also a tired approach of the PCs, where they could have

done so much in their previous seven years to help Manitobans, but they couldn't do anything.

So now, on Thursday morning, second day sitting in this session, the PC Party of Manitoba wants the government to break the law.

This is 'astounding'. Like—we're—if you look at their record speaking in the Leg., they want to see everybody follow the law and the rules, and on Thursday morning, they're telling the government to break the law.

During the election, most of the people that we have visited, even these previous—and during the winter break also, most Manitobans want us to concentrate on our health-care system. Our health-care system in the last seven years is broken under the PC government. We are onto the path of building what PCs have broken. Manitobans want real solutions to real problems, but PCs are all asking us to just break the law.

Our government was given a mandate to fix health care and address affordability concerns for families. On January 1, our NDP government lowered provincial gasoline tax, actually got rid of the 14 cents per litre. That has saved Manitobans hundreds of dollars each and every day and also every month.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

This is also the time where inflation has gone down to the lowest in the country because of the approach of this NDP government, our finance minister, on this.

Again, as I said earlier, PCs want us to fight with the federal government on each and every day. But the solutions will be found sitting on the table, not fighting with the PCs, not fighting with the Liberals, not fighting with any other political parties. All the solutions will be found when we sit on the table across from each other, and we talk about the issues.

We have seen this story before where the PCs want us to break the law. Just before the election, they said, you know, we have opinions from the experts that we can actually fight Ottawa on carbon tax, but when we—NDP got into the office, we couldn't find any of the opinions from any legit lawyer or anything in that regard.

Manitobans want to turn over a new leaf. They want a government that will tackle the affordability concerns as well as climate crisis. They want a government that tackle—affordability is a big issue. We all know that. Health care is another one. Education

is also. We know that doing nothing on the climate profile isn't an option anymore. We have seen the realities that face us now. Climate change is a real—is impacting our economy. It is a demand—excellence and for all us to work together and solve it.

We have already secured a commitment from the federal government to make greener home heating, like geothermal heat pumps, viable and even a desirable option for families in other provinces. By being a responsible government, we have proven that you can advance the climate environment and portfolio and make more affordable for Manitobans.

Again, I want to say, Honourable Deputy Speaker, this is an honour to rise in this House. And—but the PCs want us, today, is to break the law. But we, as a NDP government, will follow the rules but make more life affordable for all of Manitobans.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Seven out of 10 Canadians are against the carbon tax. They're against this tax increasing coming April 1st. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation three days ago released a poll that showed 70 per cent of Canadians are against this crippling tax; 70. Canadians agree that the carbon tax is not wanted or needed; 70 per cent, Honourable Speaker, 70 per cent. Yet the NDP choose to ignore this high percentage of our population.

Let's get down to the actual cost of this carbon tax. The figures I'm presenting come from an actual Manitoba Hydro bill and is for a property located in Lockport, Manitoba.

The property consumed 643.592 cubic metres of natural gas during the billing cycle. The debilitating rate of carbon tax imposed is 12.39 cents per cubic metre, and that relates as follows: natural gas, including the cost of delivery, was \$158.09. The carbon tax is 79.74. The GST on the carbon tax, the tax on the tax, is \$3.99. The total extra imposed due to the carbon tax is \$83.73, Honourable Deputy Speaker. The total percentage of tax applied is a whopping 52.9 per cent tax.

It's absolutely staggering once you put the numbers down on paper that, if that wasn't bad enough, come April 1st, this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and the NDP are allowing the federal coalition of Liberals and the NDP to increase the tax to Manitobans once again. Come April 1st, the carbon tax is going up to 15 cents per cubic metre. Once that increase takes effect, our cost will go from 52.9 per cent it is right now to 64 per cent. This is based on the dollar value

of \$96.54 of carbon tax and the GST, again, a tax on a tax of \$8—pardon me—\$4.83 brings the total to \$101.37.

* (11:10)

I know the NDP have great difficulty with basic math, so I'll try to keep it simple. The natural gas consumed was \$158. The current carbon tax applied on the bill was just under \$84, which cost right around 53 per cent. Under the watch of the NDP, that bill will see the carbon-tax-related increase rise to \$101.37, or 64 per cent. That will have an estimated annual cost of an additional \$760. Ouch.

If this type of consumer gouging was happening anywhere in our province or country, I would hope the elected government would step up and fight for what is right. If the basic necessities that we use in our daily lives are not protected by our elected officials, then they have failed.

When the NDP fails to stand up to Justin Trudeau and his cash grab carbon tax—money-sucking, ridiculous, unfair burden that hurts every Manitoba, then we must ask ourselves what is going on with this government. This NDP government campaigned on being ready to govern. Well, Honourable Deputy Speaker, nothing is further from reality.

Nearly six months into their term, and we have seen nothing. I mean nothing related to long-term affordability for Manitobans. They have no plan, and I believe it's right in their name: NDP stands for no darn plan. They are just sitting back, waiting for initiatives—waiting for the initiatives of the past PC government to come to light, and then they'll quickly swoop in and claim that work as their own.

Just like that slimy boss who takes credit for all the ideas and hard work of his employees, Honourable Deputy Speaker, this NDP government loves to claim credit for things they don't do. So let me give them credit for some things that they have done.

They have failed Manitobans by not having a plan to stand up to the federal government and demand the tax of the Trudeau Liberals and demand that the—that coalition remove the carbon tax from home heating. And if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. A 64 per cent tax to heat your home is a failure.

They have failed Manitobans by not having a plan to continue the PC government's direction to build more personal care homes. If you plan to fail—they're doing it very well. So they should try to plan to make

sure that they have homes for our seniors. And the fact they don't, it's a failure.

Honourable Speaker, they've planned to—they've failed to properly plan and support our schools. The schools that require heating systems. There—they've failed to make sure those schools have the appropriate tax dollars to cover the carbon tax that they're going to incur.

They've failed on every example that I've brought so far. And if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. The NDP—or no darn plan as I now see it—actually has failed Manitobans by cutting out-of-province surgeries. The hospitals need the funds that we—to heat the hospitals. And with no plan to improve the quality of life for Manitobans, again, Manitobans are faced to suffer. They—and no damn plan.

But what they do well is deceit, Honourable Deputy Speaker. They take the PC government surplus of hundreds of millions of dollars, add creative forecasts and an NDP spin and present it to the people of Manitoba as a \$1.6-billion deficit. Why would they do this, they ask? Why would they do this?

They are doing this so they can come back at a later date when the real numbers come in, and they can say, look what we've done. Honourable Deputy Speaker, failing to stand up for Manitobans is inexcusable. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) and the NDP are failing to protect Manitobans. Permitting the carbon tax on home heating penalizes Manitobans and punishes them for just wanting a warm place to live.

There is currently no easy, affordable alternative to high-efficiency natural gas furnaces. Air-to-air geothermal systems are expensive to purchase. It can cost a consumer over \$20,000 for equipment and installation. And if they do not perform in the coldest of months—the Manitoba Hydro even states they do not work at -10° and colder—consumers have to have an alternate key source of heating.

Why would you invest something that would not provide you what you need all year round? It just seems to be another kind of NDP plan to me—or lack of plan.

The ground source heat pumps do not have the restriction of -10° , but the cost it puts to most Manitobans is beyond what they can afford. The cost on a new build, to put in a system of geothermal, is up to \$40,000 on a brand new build. For existing homeowners, they would need to landscape and repair their yards. After the wells are drilled, the trenches

are dug and the equipment is installed, the return on investment is just not there.

The most effective operating system for heating homes are natural gas, high-efficiency furnaces. And just like the NDP, the return on investment just isn't there. When you fail to plan, you've planned to fail, and they are failing badly.

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): Honourable Deputy Speaker, I'm so honoured to rise today to represent the Fort Richmond constituency and speak to the member for Fort Whyte's (MLA Khan) resolution.

It's unfortunate that the member for Fort Whyte forgot about the concerns of south Winnipeg as he brought forward this resolution. This is actually the second time members opposite have brought this motion to the House. It only further demonstrates a lack of initiative for creating new policy solutions for Manitobans.

South Winnipeggers are passionate about the climate, about affordability and about unity, all of which this resolution disregards for a recycled motion that only reminds Manitoba why they chose not to support a Progressive Conservative government in October 2023.

To get the logistics out of the way, the carbon tax is a federal tax. We are a provincial government. And we are focused on working with the federal government to advocate for fair and equitable solutions to both the affordability crisis and climate change.

In our first days in office, we've shown that maintaining a collaborative relationship with the federal government benefits Manitoba. We've announced several agreements with the federal government that are born out of a respectful relationship. This included the two recent health-care agreements that will mean more doctors, more nurses, more health-care aides and support workers and shorter wait times for south Winnipeggers.

The member for Fort Whyte's government closed the only emergency room for south Winnipeggers at Victoria Hospital. We have gained a commitment of \$434 million to invest back in our health-care system. Our NDP government believes in collaboration rather than the division the PCs encourage.

Why Progressive Conservatives chose to waste money fighting a hopeless fight? We've seen securing—we've been securing agreements that will fix our health-care system. In October 2021, the members

opposite lost their ineffective court battle, wasting taxpayer dollars in the process. Since taking office, we have focused on developing policy that benefits Manitobans and, most importantly to me, benefits south Winnipeg.

* (11:20)

I know the concerns of my constituents. They are fed up with fighting back and forth with the federal government on the federal tax. South Winnipeggers want to see a provincial government that brings new ideas to the table.

As the members opposite refused to empathize with struggling Manitobans while they were in power, our government is empathizing, listening and creating policy that directly impacts families across the province.

Our government is focused on tackling affordability concerns as well as the climate crisis. Every Manitoban feels the reality of climate change, where you can see wildfire smoke out of your window or on your drive to work. This crisis is real and it's not going to go away if we simply ignore it.

South Winnipeggers are environmentally friendly. They care deeply for the environment that surrounds them. So many of my constituents talk to me about their work in protecting our water, in cleaning up parks and cycling around their neighbourhoods. They understand, as this government does, too, that climate change is real.

We want to reward Manitobans, like the people of south Winnipeg, for their efforts in reducing their carbon footprint. That's why we promised to offer Manitoban families rebates for new and used electric vehicles. I know the people of south Winnipeg are looking for ways to reduce emissions and lower their energy costs. We are going to do just that through a co-delivering on the oil to heat pump program with the federal government, which will include air and geothermal.

We will be able to achieve what the previous PC government could never do, which was collaborate in good faith with our federal colleagues and secure a \$500-million commitment to increase heat pump capacity.

I know south Winnipeg is looking for unity in the government and leadership. They want to see federal and provincial governments collaborating on policy, not our provincial government fighting losing court battles and breaking the law.

We can't continue down the path of ignoring environmental issues in this province. That's why we are prioritizing a net-zero energy grid by 2035. Our government will be leaders as we look to help homes and businesses go green, including heat pump installations.

I've also heard from the university students in my constituency. They are terrified for their future. We must think of the future generation as we bring policy and motions forward in this House. Young people in this province have been rightfully concerned, and we want to fulfill their demands for action. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2018 emphasized the challenge it would be to keep global warming below 1.5°C.

Five years later, burning fossil fuels and unsustainable energy and lead use has led to global warming of 1.1°C. We need an immediate plan of action to address global warming and lower emissions before the earth surpasses 1.5°C over pre-industrial levels.

It's essential that we deliver on climate policy now so that future generations don't bear the cost of our inaction. I want the future of south Winnipeg to be a green future that incorporates the incredible minds and thoughts of our students, who have been advocating for greener government for the last seven years.

Manitobans won't need to fight their government or their premier to take action on climate change. Instead, we will fight together as a province against global warming. Part of this work is making sure people can afford to be environmentally friendly in Manitoba. We've done wasting taxpayers' money and harming our progress towards a net-zero future. South Winnipeggers are looking for a government that is fiscally responsible, and that's what we have set out to do.

One of our first pieces of legislation in government was to lower costs for Manitobans. We provided relief for families and businesses by pausing the gas tax, creating savings of 14 cents a litre when you fill up. This addressed the—some of south Winnipeggers' concerns for affordability. They know they can trust that this government to put their needs first. It's a first step for immediate relief as we work hard on long-term affordability solutions.

This all goes back to what our government continues to focus on, which is the everyday lives of people in Manitoba, not a fight that will lose the

province—provincial money, but a policy that prioritizes what really matters.

I am grateful for this opportunity to put the needs of south Winnipeggers on the record. It's time to address the real issues Manitobans care about. This includes maintaining unity over division in this province and this country, making sure everyone in Manitoba can afford to pay the bills and put food on the table and taking real action in the fight against climate change.

I'd like to thank the member for Fort Whyte (MLA Khan) for giving me this opportunity to highlight some areas he has forgotten in bringing forward this solution.

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I'm happy to—thank you—I am happy to have this opportunity to speak and get a few words on the record regarding this very important resolution, which calls on the NDP provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for Manitobans, a heating cost, a cost that is essential to all the lies—lives of us here, all of us here in this Chamber.

The NDP government—or the no-darn-plan government—needs to commit to making life more affordable for all of us here. And the one thing they need to do, for most Manitobans during this affordability crisis, is reduce costs. And we all know that there's many ways that they can do that. We all know that.

And, you know, the reality of the NDP temporary gas tax provided little to no savings to Manitobans. We all know what they say about the affordability and savings plan with this temporary gas tax, but the reality is there was no savings in this.

Manitobans will have paid about \$275 in carbon tax on their heating costs, and the \$250 at the pumps just got swallowed up in heating costs. Where's the savings in that? There is no savings. And by 2030, the carbon tax on home heating will cost Manitoban families an average of \$719. That is not helping families now or in the future.

And in a few years, this NDP government will shut off your gas heating and force families to buy new furnaces. How many are going to be able to afford that extra cost?

We have many Manitobans now who are struggling. They're going to food banks to feed their families. They aren't going to be able to afford that

additional cost to heat their homes. And these future costs are going to rise and rise, that are—and place further financial barriers and burdens and challenges on families here in Manitoba.

This government likes to say they're going to save you money in obvious places, but what they don't tell you is the background behind it. What is the background behind it? Let me tell you. The NDP, they like to tell you, and what's going to happen down the road is taxes are going to go up in other places, and this is going to put burdens—this places a burden on taxpayers and it puts that on others, organizations and businesses and other jurisdictions across our province that have no choice in this matter.

You know, this important tax removal is a great measure to help ease the affordability crisis within our great province.

* (11:30)

Why doesn't this government want to help struggling families, all of us here with this essential cost? You know, our Western provinces have made the commitment. Why does the NDP not want to make this commitment here?

You know, I've been hearing, and I'm sure we've all been hearing this in our constituencies from our constituents, about affordability and the cost of living and the many, many challenges we all face. One of the very issues is the impact it has on all of us and the cost of day-to-day living. We all shop for clothing, all of us here. We all shop for household items. We all buy groceries. We all travel with some mode of transportation, for those that are fortunate enough to own a vehicle and drive.

But, you know, for just a moment here, let's talk about the temporary gas relief. You know, that did not help all Manitobans. And, you know, for those that did not own a vehicle, for those that did not own drive, they—or drive—they did not see any of that. They did not feel that. This did not help those people who didn't go to the gas pumps.

You know, Manitoba is a leader in developing one of the cleanest and greenest electricity systems in the world. Its total natural gas consumption is less than 2 per cent of Canada's total demand. Manitoba Hydro is 97 per cent clean, green energy, and a federal carbon tax punishes this effort and investment and unfairly puts the burden on Manitobans.

This government wants to take the credit for helping ag producers by reducing costs with gas tax,

but if it wasn't for our PC members here on this side of the House listening to the ag producers, including Keystone Ag Producers, Manitoba Beef Producers—we were all there and listened to these organizations and our farming industry and producers. We heard the concerns and understand what this meant for these people and their industries. This government would have completely ignored the industry and the needs of such and not made the amendments to that particular bill.

True savings for many residents of our province is to remove the carbon tax from natural gas on hydro bills. That alone would save a household more than \$1,000 in heating costs over the next three years. This is tangible. This is something that Manitobans can see. This could be money in their bank account, a savings.

These monthly and daily costs add up to a great deal. We all know the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and members opposite have flip-flopped around on this, and maybe they can all afford to dance around the carbon tax issue wearing flip-flops. And perhaps the Premier can afford to heat his home at a tropical temperature and afford to flip-flop around this issue in his home.

But the reality is Manitobans cannot afford to sustain the heating costs today, nor the increased costs in the future. Mr. Speaker—sorry, Mr. Honourable Deputy Speaker—we all know too well the struggles many have, the sleepless nights, the stress some may face with the constant worry about where to save money or get money for the essentials like milk, bread, cereal, fruits or their next meal to provide for their family.

These are the real facts, the real fears that people are facing. What Manitobans are asking for is to make life more affordable. And with one step at a time, there could be huge strides forward with a solution and a positive outcome for so many.

Build this momentum, make an impact to help families by removing the carbon tax off heating bills.

Will this NDP support this resolution?

Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park): It is great to be back in the Chamber, and I hope that all my colleagues enjoyed their times back in their constituency. I know I sure did, and it is an honour to put some words on the record on this important subject.

So what I see in this PC resolution is so incredibly emblematic of the 2023 campaign. While your NDP team was focused on solutions that brought

everyone together on the issues of affordability and climate, we saw the PC Party try to divide us. We promised to fix health care, lower costs for you and your family and tackle climate change, things that Manitobans made very clear to us they wanted to see their provincial government to do.

So what do the PCs do in response to this? They try to make this federal issue a provincial issue and advocate for us to burn our bridges with the federal government. Instead, we've chosen to stay in dialogue with the federal government to advocate for Manitobans. What the PCs have really proven is that they don't really know what to advocate for on the Manitoba stage. In the midst of an identity crisis, they're grasping at straws.

I hope that we can get back to the business of making life better for Manitobans with real solutions. Your NDP government is focused on finding real solutions for real problems, making sure Manitobans can access health-care systems in a timely manner and that we listen to staff, making life more affordable by saving them 14 cents a litre at the pump while also doing our part to lower emissions and empower working families to choose greener home heating methods.

They continue to pick fights and drive division on this issue like they've done for years, when they could have done something to save Manitobans money, like scrapping the fuel tax. We've seen this story before and we know how it ends: wasting taxpayers' money and harming our progress towards a net-zero future.

Manitobans notice that many of the ministries in the Manitoba Legislature changed when the NDP took power last fall, but they might not have noticed one subtle change when the Ministry of Environment and Climate under the PC government turned back into the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change under our government.

These names matter, Honourable Speaker. This type of rampant climate change denialism does nothing to help anyone, and it's not what Manitobans want; 75 per cent of Manitobans want a government that considers climate. Every Manitoban feels the reality of climate change when you can see wildfire smoke and you breathe it out your window or on your drive to work.

This crisis is real, and it's not going to go away if we simply ignore it. We know that doing nothing on the climate change profile isn't an option anymore. We've seen the realities that face us now. Climate

change is real. It's impacting our economy, so it demands action for all of us to work together to solve it. Hopefully, the PCs realize people voted for a change in government and can find it within their party to change their divisive ideologies.

We want to reward Manitobans for their efforts in reducing their carbon footprint. That's why we will offer Manitoba families rebates for new and used electric vehicles.

We know Manitobans are looking for ways to reduce emissions and lower their energy costs. Manitobans are facing both a climate crisis and an affordability crisis. The fuel tax holiday is a first step in addressing affordability. Climate change is real and we need to face it together as a province. Climate change is not cheap. Ignoring climate change is not a solution to the cost of living crisis for Manitobans.

* (11:40)

When we are considering the economic effects of climate change, we need to consider the damages to assets and property including insured and non-insured damages for households and businesses; lost income for workers due to closures or damaged transportation linkages; costs to the public sector including immediate disaster response relief and support; longer term cleanup and recovery and rebuilding of infrastructure; specific impacts on vulnerable and/or marginalized populations, such as people with low incomes, renters, seniors, Indigenous people, immigrants and people with disabilities. These are not insignificant effects. They have real economic consequences for Canadians.

Too often, when we calculate potential investments, we fail to include the full financial costs of climate change. On this side of the Chamber, we keep our eyes on the whole picture.

We're seeing the PCs focus only on the short-term costs and neglect these very real long-term costs. Right now, Manitobans have been paying millions of extra dollars for private agency nurses to staff our hospitals. Why? Because the PC government tried to cost cut by firing nurses across the province when they got into government in 2016. And now it's coming back to bite Manitobans.

From health care to climate change to infrastructure projects, we've heard the same short-term ideology from the members opposite over and over again. And Manitobans are footing the bill.

They claim to be the Progressive Conservative Party, progressive on social issues, conservative on fiscal issues. Seeking to save public dollars is an admirable goal. But time and time again, the PCs prove that they will never look at the long-term costs of their actions. They need to start living up to their mandate and their name because we've seen their divisive rhetoric on social issues and we've seen that their cost-saving promises rarely pay out.

In Manitoba, Manitoban business leaders, non-profits and civil servants have been leading the way on innovative climate solutions that also tackle rising affordability. It's our job as legislators to help them succeed in moving our province forward, not dragging us backwards into scraps with the federal government that do nothing but waste everyone's time.

I want to tell a quick story about some of these forward-thinking leaders across Manitoba. And earlier in February, some of my colleagues and I had the pleasure of going out to Brandon and enjoying the rich multicultural festival and meeting with folks out there. And we had the opportunity to meet with some businesses.

And one business that I want to point out is Bushel Plus. And I'm thinking about the ways that they've been so innovative and creative in capturing wastage. One company—yes, Bushel Plus, they're home to North America's #1 DropPan System. So how it works is you would attach the drop pan under the combine. And once you're beginning your harvest, the pan would drop from the combine and capture wastage. By capturing wastage, a farmer can see their overall waste numbers and apply a concave to their combine to help mitigate the loss.

This innovation has helped farmers lower waste and it has added value and profit. This is an example of local innovators taking steps to reduce waste while providing farmers with an opportunity to earn a living for their families.

Manitobans everywhere are leading the charge towards a more affordable and sustainable future. Let's not let them down by dragging them into this mess. Let's move forward to solve the problems we've been sent to this provincial Legislature to solve. We can do it together, with the courage and determination I know is in each and every one of us.

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I am so glad to have the opportunity to rise in the House today and speak

to this very timely and relevant and important resolution put forward by my colleague, the member for Fort Whyte (MLA Khan).

What this issue really comes down to is affordability for Manitobans. There's no secret that the cost of everything has gone up, and most Manitobans are feeling the pinch. And now, come April 1st, another expense that we all pay for, the carbon tax, is set to go up again.

In fact, it's scheduled to go up every year until 2030. And most of the carbon tax we pay is baked into the cost of everything we buy. As my colleague, the member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza), put it so eloquently yesterday during question period using the example of a loaf of bread: the cost of all of the inputs and processes that go into making that loaf of bread have gone up, and that cost is passed on to the consumer. And why has that cost gone up? The carbon tax.

So that part of the carbon tax is largely hidden. But one place where it's glaringly obvious how the carbon tax is harming affordability and driving up the cost of living is on your heating bill. If you heat your home with natural gas, as most of us do here in Manitoba, all you need to do is look at your hydro bill, and you can see the carbon charge that you are paying on the cost of heating your home. And, below that, you can actually see the PST that you're paying on the carbon tax. The tax on tax. That's a separate discussion.

The carbon tax on home heating costs Manitobans about \$275 every year. I can buy a lot for \$275. That's a fair amount of groceries for my family, a family of six. That's new hockey equipment for my son, or money I could put towards the soaring cost of braces, which three out of my four kids now need.

So we can have a discussion about whether or not the carbon tax is an effective means of fighting climate change. I suggest that it's not. But, I will focus my comments today on the issue of the carbon tax as it applies to home heating. So members will recall that in the fall, Justin Trudeau decided to exempt home heating oil from the carbon tax, and, of course, that tax break largely applies to Atlantic Canada. It was no help at all to anyone here in Manitoba.

So premiers across the country objected to this. They pointed out how inherently unfair it is to exempt Atlantic Canada from paying a carbon tax on home heating while forcing the rest of the country to continue paying it. A Canadian is a Canadian is a

Canadian, said most premiers across the rest of the country.

And it was so interesting, the federal response to this. One of their ministers or MPs actually told the media, well, if Western Canada wants an exemption on home heating, they should elect more Liberal MPs, which I found absolutely appalling and just shows the depths that the federal Liberals will sink to. And, ultimately, Trudeau's decision to give some Canadians a carbon tax break undermines his government's justification for imposing this carbon tax at all.

But premiers across the rest of the country stood up for the residents of their provinces and stood up to Trudeau on his decision to privilege some Canadians over others for purely political reasons. But not the NDP Premier (Mr. Kinew) here in Manitoba. No, no. He flip-flopped on this issue several times, ultimately doing nothing to help Manitobans.

Contrast this with Saskatchewan, where Scott Moe actually took the carbon tax off home heating for the residents of that province and has been steadfast in his opposition to Ottawa, and now we see the federal Liberals having a temper tantrum. But the Conservative government in Saskatchewan has steadfastly stood up to Trudeau, stood up for the residents of that province, and they're showing just how partisan, political and petty the federal Liberals are on this issue.

But here in Manitoba: nothing. Vague platitudes from the Premier and no action. He avoids answering any questions on the carbon tax because he's scared of angering Justin Trudeau. And where does that leave Manitoba families? Paying more every single year just to heat their homes. And it's not just homeowners. It's non-profit organizations. It's businesses too.

I was recently contacted by the operator of a large non-profit health-care facility here in Winnipeg, and they are paying hundreds of extra dollars every year just to keep the facility warm in the winter. And this is a facility that houses some of Winnipeg's elderly, most vulnerable citizens. It's a non-profit. They're not making money. And they too are dealing with skyrocketing costs across every line item of their budget, and now they have to pay more just to keep the furnace on. It's making it harder for them to stay afloat.

And it's businesses too. It's no secret that, post-COVID, many businesses are still struggling to get back on their feet. They're dealing with labour shortages, inflation, and rising costs across the board.

And now, under the NDP, we can see they are going to be dealing with a very unfriendly government, creating a very business-unfriendly environment, but, on top of all this, the carbon tax is going up every single year, and the cost of heating their business and their business premises is going to go up every year as well. And it's worth remembering, businesses don't get a carbon tax rebate. Businesses pay a significant amount into the carbon tax, and they get nothing back.

* (11:50)

So I'd like to thank the member for Fort Whyte (MLA Khan) for bringing this important issue forward. I hope that today is the day that the NDP will choose to finally stand up for Manitobans and will pass this resolution.

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): It's my honour to rise today in this Chamber. We are all back and I welcome everybody back for good discussions here. And I also want to take this opportunity to congratulate our Deputy Clerk, Tim, for his new position.

Why are we talking about the carbon tax today? Because there is too much carbon in the environment.

And I want to say thank you to the member for Fort Whyte to create this opportunity to talk about the carbon tax and carbon and environment. Thank you, member for Fort Whyte. But I want to say this: our forts won't be white anymore if we didn't do something about carbon. We have to get together, think about the strategies, how we can protect our environment.

If we are talking about tax on something, that means that something is there. And that something is concerning. That's why we're talking about the tax on it.

Who created this situation? Us, the humans. It's about the balance between the greed we have and the responsibility that we have, that we must recognize, to take care of this earth, to take care of our waters, to take care of our air and all other natural resources.

We failed. We failed. As humans, we failed. *[interjection]* I'm coming to that too. Who failed? We as a human race failed to take care of our natural resources. That's why we are at this point when we are fighting with each other, to blame each other for that reason. We're all to be blamed for the situation we are in.

And instead of fighting with each other, we need to get together and fight climate change. That's what we should be doing. And it's our democratic system that allows us to elect a government that leads. And Manitobans elected us.

I have seven minutes remaining and I would do my best what I could do, and this government had seven years, they could do something good. But they chose to wait for those seven years to go away and then tell the government what to do.

If we talk about environmental policies in Manitoba, under their watch, did they fail or pass? I can remember, there used to be two environmental ministers here, one after another. And the people of Manitoba were not impressed by the policies they brought forward. And we are seeing the results now. I don't know where those good people are now.

Everybody works hard, but sometimes we try, but we fail. That's what happened to the PC government for the last seven years. They tried but failed. And the policies that they are suggesting now are the policies they like and are the policies that people don't like. That's why they are sitting on this side, not this side. Because the people of Manitoba didn't like their leadership on the environment file.

Today, I ask people of Manitoba, who trusted us to lead on everything including the environment file, should we be taking lessons from the failed government or should we trust our leadership, our great Finance Minister, our great Environment Minister, our great Cabinet members and caucus members? What should we do now, I am asking the people of Manitoba? They have already answered on October 3rd that we are the ones who deserve to lead and get us out of this crisis.

We are seeing so much happening these days on various parts of Earth: droughts, lack of moisture, farmers getting out of business, lack of feed for cattle and livestock due to uneven discontinued patterns— weird patterns in the environment— floods. And it has impact on our economy, on our health, on our mental health and so on. So, rather than getting together and thinking of using science and technology or research or vision or something like that to get out— us out of that crisis, we are simply fighting with each other.

If this policy was a great policy, and the PCs like this policy, and the people of Manitoba should have stamped on it. They should have liked what they have done on the environmental file. And during the

election campaign, what did they say? They said that, we pledge to fight carbon tax if re-elected.

When you are telling the people of Manitoba, this is what we would do, and people of Manitoba say no, what does that mean? That means what was said is not something that the people of Manitoba like. They like a leadership that is not dividing people. They like a leadership that has some vision. They like a leadership that's diverse itself.

And they like a leadership that takes care of Indigenous education, that wisdom that we have with our elders. Whenever we get a chance to sit together with those elders, they tell us what's the right thing to do, how do we care about our environment. Are we listening to those people?

Are we even trying to understand the depth of that knowledge and the roots of that knowledge that we have right here in our neighbourhood? How much time we are spending on this? How much consideration we are giving to this aspect of the policy development? I don't think it's enough.

And we know that what our farmers went through and are going through right now, they're struggling with these impacts of environment. And the farmers are stewards of land. They know how to take care of the land.

They know that if we didn't care for the environment, if we didn't care for the land, farmers know that if they didn't do something right, their next generation's future wouldn't be great—

The Deputy Speaker: Order. The time being 12 p.m., when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Brar) will have one minute remaining.

The House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m.

CORRIGENDUM

On December 1, 2023, page 277, second column, the ministerial statement heading should have read:

Vaughan Mitchell

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 7, 2024

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Debate on Second Readings—Public Bills

Bill 201—The Manitoba Emblems Amendment Act (Provincial Stone)	
Loiselle	539
Narth	540
Devgan	541
Moyes	543
Kennedy	544
Cable	546
Moses	548

Debate on Resolutions

Res. 1—Calling on the Provincial Government to Remove the Federal Carbon Tax on Home Heating Bills for Manitobans

Sandhu	549
Perchotte	550
Chen	551
Byram	553
Oxenham	554
Cook	555
Brar	557

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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