

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AL TOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Fort Whyte	
<i>Vacant</i>	Thompson	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 10, 2022

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

**Madam Speaker:** Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 19—The Beneficiary Designation  
(Retirement, Savings and Other Plans)  
Amendment Act**

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Good afternoon, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 19, The Beneficiary Designation (Retirement, Savings and Other Plans) Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm pleased to introduce this bill to the Legislature when a substitute decision maker is acting for a person who cannot manage their own affairs and transferring assets to another financial institution or moving an RRSP proceeds, the subsequent RRSP or RIF or TFSA into a new plan.

When a new plan is formed, beneficiaries designated under the old plan are not transferred to the new plan. Since the person no longer has the capacity to designate beneficiaries, the original intentions of that person cannot be fulfilled.

These amendments would enable certain legal representatives to carry over the beneficiary designation from the original plan to the new plan when a plan is renewed, replaced or converted, ensuring that the original intention of the plan's creator is fulfilled.

Thank you.

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

Committee reports?

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade):** I'm pleased to table the third quarter financial statements for the Communities Economic Development Fund.

**Madam Speaker:** Ministerial statements?

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

## Kidney Health Awareness

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services):** Madam Speaker, March is recognized as Kidney Health Month, and today, March 10th, is World Kidney Day.

The message remains the same each and every year, and it is to raise public awareness of the importance of kidneys to our overall health and to reduce the frequency and impact of kidney disease.

Early discovery is critical for kidney health and early intervention, especially among high-risk groups. Kidneyhealth.ca, developed by the Manitoba Renal Program, is a website with great information.

During our family's very personal journey through the kidney donor and transplant system, we met many caring health-care professionals and have many thanks for their knowledge and strength. We have recognized local heroes like Luke Hatcher whose family made the very difficult but extremely generous decision to donate Luke's organs and tissues in 2019.

We also recognize Green Shirt Day that recognizes the impact that Logan Boulet had on Canadians and Manitobans who went to sites such as signupforlife.ca to register their decisions to donate their organs and tissues.

Here in Manitoba, there is a dedicated team of physicians, nurses and staff with Transplant Manitoba and the Kidney Health Clinic who provide the highest level of care and access to quality information for those living with kidney disease.

Please show your support by registering with Manitoba's online tissue and organ donor registry at signupforlife.ca. As of March 3rd, 60,059 Manitobans had registered their decision.

November of 2019 was the 50th anniversary of the first kidney transplant in Manitoba; 2022 is a big year too for the signupforlife.ca registry—10 years of online service. To mark the anniversary, the goal is to add 10,000 new registrations by December 31st.

Please go to signupforlife.ca and let your intentions known.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Matt Forsyth**

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** Madam Speaker, today I rise in this House to pay homage to a Transcona family that knows first-hand the ravages of drug addiction.

As an MLA, I've been to two vigils honouring those lost to addictions, and at both vigils my friends Maureen was in attendance, there to ensure the memory of her son, Matt, is not lost.

The most recent vigil was this past Sunday, on Black Balloon Day. In speaking with Maureen, I began to realize the pain and hurt she lives with daily and wanted to share a mother's memory of her son.

Matt Forsyth was born December 5th, 1988, raised in Transcona. He struggled with drugs when he was in high school but he was determined to do better by his family and was able to enter the Behavioural Health Foundation program in Selkirk.

After high school, Matt got his Red Seal in industrial roofing and did really well. Roofing is hard, labour-intensive work, and, as a result, Matt hurt his back. He was prescribed OxyContin and became addicted, eventually having to buy them off the streets. After more ups and downs, he overdosed on November 28th, 2018.

Maureen wants us to know that Matt was somebody's son, somebody's brother, somebody's grandson, somebody's father, somebody's nephew, somebody's cousin, somebody's friend and his life mattered.

Now Derek, Matt's younger brother, suffers from addiction, is on methadone. The result of this? Huge costs to get the help Derek needs in Vancouver because the wait is too long for treatment here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, Maureen wants us to know that she will be tireless in her advocacy, tireless in her love for her boys and relentless in advocating for drug addiction treatment close to home for Manitoba families.

And I thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Stonewall Art Group**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Madam Speaker, I am honoured to stand before you today to acknowledge the showcasing of the Stonewall Art Group preservation of history in paint.

The group consists of Stonewall artists showcasing their creative fair while preserving parts of the town's history in painted interpretations.

Preserving the history of a place gives this community unique character. Artwork carries a special identity in terms of originality and the historical heritage. Very few people stop to reflect on the past and learn about heritage. Therefore, the group is contributing their talents to a local heritage project with a commitment to provide 40 pieces of artwork. Half of these pieces are now completed and hung on display at a local arts centre to allow us a richer understanding of history.

The group feels this history is important 'becu' it connects to 'pecific' times, places and events in our collective past.

In their display they highlight some of the treasured limestone buildings that remain standing and ones that are gone. They also pay tribute to some of the builders and heroes through portraits.

The artists have been working individually during the pandemic and continued to forge forward with the heritage project which kept them connected. The artists' donations are an amazing gift for the centre's exhibit and the community. These contributions can be remembered and honoured.

I commend the Stonewall Art Group on preserving this historical history for future generations.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **St. Mary the Protectress Millennium Villa**

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** My heart sinks when I look at the atrocities that Ukraine is facing lately, but representing a community with a rich Ukrainian heritage makes me feel proud.

I feel honoured to have the opportunity to recognize the contributions of St. Mary the Protectress Millennium Villa in this Chamber.

This was a project which started with an initial purpose of raising funds for an auditorium but later building a senior affordable housing complex.

Millennium Villa has been transforming lives since 1968. The villa is a five-storey, 55-plus rental apartment, built with community, comfort and security in mind.

During my recent visit with the villa residents, I was able to speak with them. Through their heartfelt conversations, I was able to understand the depth to

which Ukrainian Manitobans are hurting for the attack on their identity and homeland.

The villa residents have been making great endeavors to raise funds for Ukraine. Just recently, they have donated over \$4,700 to the Red Cross refugee campaign and Canada-Ukraine Foundation.

They support the creation of an all-party committee to direct Manitoba's response to the crisis in Ukraine and strengthen our call on this government to match all donations made by Manitobans, up to \$5 million.

\* (13:40)

They request the support of general public and the government to help them raise money for Ukraine. They want to offer suites to Ukrainian refugees, but need the provincial government to offer rental assistance supports.

Now is the time to show our solidarity and support for our Ukrainian friends in Manitoba. Ukrainian Manitobans need, want and deserve our full support at this time.

Madam Speaker, I would ask all the members of this House to stand in solidarity with our Ukrainian community and support them during these times of despair.

Dyakuyu.

### **I Love to Read Month**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I rise today to talk a little bit about I Love to Read Month, and what made this past February so special.

First and foremost, Tyndall Park is home to seven elementary schools. We have Garden Grove, Meadows West, Waterford Springs, Prairie Rose, Stanley Knowles, Shaughnessy Park and, of course, Tyndall Park school.

Now, this year's theme was reading around the world, and one of the days it landed on National Flag of Canada Day, so the students taught me lots about different countries, languages and our own national flag.

I also wanted to share that the three most popular books this year were: (1) The Orange Shirt Day, a true story that inspired the movement of Orange Shirt Day; (2) Curious George, a silly monkey who gets into some trouble during a parade, and ultimately gets to meet the mayor; and (3) Uniquely Wired, which is about how a child who has autism and how they have

many special skills and that fair does not always mean equal.

Madam Speaker, whenever I meet with these classrooms, I try to talk about democracy, and I do this by having a vote about what their favourite class is. Sometimes it's art, sometimes it's math, but the majority of the time it's unanimously gym class.

And I've been told to relay to this government that there are some grade 2s that really believe that gym class should be three hours long. And their argument for this debate is that it would be good exercise, it would be good for their mental health and more fun, Madam Speaker.

We know that there is benefit of getting students of all ages involved in politics. And I know my nephews, whose classes I also got to read to, have begun that participation process in the political process—and they don't really have much of a choice, with a grandpa and an auntie being politicians here in Canada.

But, Madam Speaker, I think it's important that us MLAs are in close contact with our respective schools, and I want to thank all of the schools in Tyndall Park for allowing me the opportunity to share so many special occasions with them.

### **ORAL QUESTIONS**

#### **Transfer of ICU Patients to Ontario Government Knowledge of Transfer Plans**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the Premier and the PCs continue to mislead Manitobans.

They've had a week to answer the questions on ICU patient transfers, and the best that they can come up with is that either, yes, the Premier misled Manitobans, or, alternatively, she did not know what was happening under her watch during her time as minister of Health.

Now, that's not a good reflection on this government. So, I'll given them one more chance this week. Can they answer the question?

On which day did the Premier find out about the plan to transfer Manitoba ICU patients out of province?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Madam Speaker, before I address the issue of the—indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, I'm pleased to indicate for the House that today we are committing an extra \$500,000 towards humanitarian relief in Ukraine.

This'll be a total of \$650,000 that will be flowed through the Canada-Ukraine Foundation.

Madam Speaker, to address the issue of the Leader of the Opposition, I believe we addressed this yesterday. Of course, we know that it's not politicians—I know the member opposite believes that it's politicians that are responsible for patient flow. We know that it's not; it's doctors.

It's unfortunate that he doesn't know how the health-care system works.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

### **Surgical and Diagnostic Services Timeline for Backlog Clearance**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** We all know what's happening in the health-care system right now, Madam Speaker.

Patients are waiting longer and longer to get the surgeries and the tests that they need; 160,000 Manitobans are waiting in pain right now, Madam Speaker. That's a record of failure, especially considering fewer surgeries are being done each month that the PCs stay in office.

Their only answer is highway medicine. They want to send surgery candidates to the United States of America to get surgeries instead of investing in health care right here at home.

Invest in Manitoba nurses, that's what we say on this side of the House.

Will the Premier just tell us a date when Manitobans can expect the surgery backlog to be cleared?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Well, Madam Speaker, I thank the member for the question, and I believe I indicated yesterday for the House that the surgical and diagnostic task force is in the process of—and they gave an update on Friday—they're in the process of developing that plan and we look forward to releasing that information very soon.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, it's sad to hear the Premier confirm the continuance of highway medicine here in our province, but we know that highway medicine is happening within Manitoba's borders, as well. Hundreds of Manitobans are being sent hundreds of kilometres away from their friends and

family and supports which could help them through recovery.

Now, we know that we've seen seniors from Winnipeg sent to Flin Flon, seniors from Stonewall sent to Crystal City, and in each of these stories is a story of dignity being lost and suffering being continued.

Will the Premier be accountable? Will the Premier set a date to stop these patient transfers?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** I think it's important that—and I want to thank the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force for the work that they did. In fact, it was posted on the Internet last Friday, Madam Speaker, on their website. And what Manitobans want to see is that we're making improvements and making headway when it comes to surgical and diagnostic backlogs.

So, I want to inform the House today that, CT scans: the wait-list has improved by 12 per cent, Madam Speaker. Ultrasounds in Manitoba have improved by 16 per cent and MRIs have improved by 13 per cent.

We recognize that there's more work to do and we're committed to making sure that we deliver on these services.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

### **Hydro Rate Increases Cost of Living Concerns**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Surgery wait times? Going up, Madam Speaker. Let her say surgeries in her next answer.

We also know what else is going up, Madam Speaker: the cost of gas is rising. Life is getting more and more expensive. Families are feeling the pinch—not that anyone on the other side of the House—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —could relate. The Premier isn't doing anything to help families, neither is the PC Cabinet, nor caucus.

But the Premier is not only not listening, they're actively making the situation worse. As energy prices get more expensive, they keep raising our hydro rates. That's one thing the Premier could do to help families: it would be to stop raising hydro rates.

Will the Premier take action today? Will she stop raising hydro rates like Brian Pallister did?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Well, Madam Speaker, the fact of the matter is when the NDP was in government they increased the debt of Manitoba Hydro.

We are now here having to clean up the mess that they created, Madam Speaker.

You know what? I'd ask him, what is his plan? What is his plan to deal with this issue and to make life more affordable for Manitobans? What is his plan? His plan was to raise the PST on the backs of Manitobans. Let's not forget the legacy of the previous NDP government on affordability for Manitobans, Mrs.—Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Kinew:** Our plan is simple, Madam Speaker: keep hydro rates low.

\* (13:50)

Every Manitoban is seeing the cost of living go up. The price of gas is—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:**—up. The price of milk is up. The price of diapers is up, Madam Speaker. And it's more expensive to heat your home because of this PC government's decisions.

Everyone remembers the emails they got from Hydro this winter. Our bills are skyrocketing. Manitobans need a break. Government can't do everything, but they should at least be able to help out a little.

Will the Premier take action today? Will she stop raising hydro rates?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate any question from the Leader of the Opposition when it comes to affordability for Manitobans.

Let me remind members opposite and all Manitobans the things that we have done to make life more affordable for Manitobans. We indexed the basic personal amount and personal income tax brackets. We reduced retail sales tax from 8 per cent to 7 per cent after they raised it, Madam Speaker. The retail sales tax exemption for personal services, preparing wills, purchasing home insurance, preparing personal income tax returns.

And I know I'm running out of time, but there's so much more we have done to make life more affordable for Manitobans, and we will continue to make life

more affordable for Manitobans in the upcoming budget, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Kinew:** Let's talk about what the Premier and Brian Pallister have been up to, and the impact on families right now.

If you drink milk, milk is more expensive because of orders signed by this government. If you have to drive to school, that's more expensive because of this PC government. And yes, if you have to heat your home, which every Manitoban has to do, that is more expensive because of this PC government.

The cost of living is going up. Manitobans need some help. Can government please respond and assist folks at least a little. Hydro bills are too hard—too high.

Will the Premier stop raising hydro rates today?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, again, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question on affordability for Manitobans because it allows me the opportunity to remind Manitobans of how we have made life more affordable for Manitobans.

In fact, on the education property tax, Madam Speaker, we reduced that and gave back almost \$250 million to Manitoba taxpayers, Manitoba—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** And, Madam Speaker, the budget is coming soon. Stay tuned for more exciting news to make life more 'affordable' for Manitobans.

#### Awarding of Government Contract Conflict of Interest Concerns

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Well, just like Brian Pallister, the Premier thinks that she can play by her own rules.

In 2019, while sitting on Treasury Board, the Premier helped award a \$23-million contract to Exchange Income Corporation. It turns out this company does millions of dollars of business with her family member. I repeat: the Premier had a direct hand in giving a contract to a company that does millions of dollars of business with her husband.

Does the Premier believe giving contracts to companies that do business with your family falls within the law?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Madam Speaker, this is rather disappointing of the members opposite to go down this route about, you know, taking shots at family members of members of this Chamber.

Madam Speaker—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** —yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition demonstrated how he has no idea, you know, how the health-care system works in our province. And now, the member opposite is proving that she has no idea how banking works.

It's unbecoming of members opposite who want to be part of a government when they don't understand how to run health care and they don't know how to run an economy, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns, on a supplementary question.

**Ms. Fontaine:** The Premier sat on a Cabinet committee that gave a \$23-million contract to Exchange Income Corporation. That's a fact. It's in a press release. At the same time, the Premier's family was working at Exchange Income Corporation on stock deals worth more than \$170 million. That's also a fact.

This is a clear conflict. The Premier should not be involved in giving contracts to companies that work with her husband.

Why didn't the Premier—

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** —why didn't the Premier recuse herself from awarding this contract?

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

**Madam Speaker:** I need to be able to hear.

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade):** Well, Madam Speaker, I mean, this is the lowest of gutter politics that I've ever seen in this Chamber. [*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** Madam Speaker, I don't know what the opposition has against business, the business community, and it's the business community that provides assets and—to many companies here and doing business in Manitoba. This accusation is not based on facts.

I would just hope that the NDP would do their homework and not make up untruths like this, bringing this forward and making accusations that are unfounded.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns, on a final supplementary.

**Ms. Fontaine:** This is the second time that the Premier has been found to break the rules.

Manitoba's conflict of interest act states ministers must recuse themselves from any government decision if they have a dependent—like a spouse—who has financial interest in the matter.

The Premier served on Cabinet when a \$23-million contract was awarded to EIC. At the same time, her husband was doing millions of dollars of business with EIC. That's a conflict.

Why did she not recuse herself from this award decision-making processing?

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Madam Speaker, here we go again: accusations coming forward with no grounding evidence of any wrongdoing here at all, clearly baseless.

We've got great Manitoba companies doing great business here employing people. In fact, the questions that the members should be asking, about unemployment rates in Manitoba. We have the lowest unemployment rate in the country. It's because of businesses doing business in Manitoba that people are working.

#### **Awarding of Government Contract Conflict of Interest Concerns**

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** The Premier was part of the lead government agency that gave Exchange Income Corporation a \$23-million contract, and I'll table the government's own press release.

At the same time, the Premier's family was doing millions of dollars of business with that same company, and I'll table the documents that show the \$170 million in business.

Manitobans expect their leaders to play by the same set of rules that we all follow. This is a conflict and—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Marcelino:** —the Premier should not have participated in giving that contract.



Why did the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) not follow the rules?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Just because the opposition brings forward false claims and just because they repeat it doesn't mean that it's true, Madam Speaker. And in this situation it is certainly not true and that's been explained to the members opposite several times.

Now, if they want to find out what true conflict is they wouldn't have to go very far. They could probably go to their caucus office and they could dust off something called the Tiger Dams report. And that would show, Madam Speaker, where we actually had an investigation on the NDP over several years where not only did things not go to Treasury Board, there was actually no proper documentation, no expenditure authority. But they just gave money to their friends because that's how the NDP did it.

I encourage the member opposite, who is relatively new, to go blow off the dust off the Tiger Dams report and then you can see what true conflict is.

\* (14:00)

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Notre Dame, on a supplementary question.

**MLA Marcelino:** The Premier sits on the Cabinet committee that gave Exchange Income Corporation \$23 million of Manitobans' money. At the same time, her family was working for the same company, doing millions in business.

Those are the facts. They can't be denied or dismissed. This is a clear conflict—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Marcelino:** —and it is wrong. The Premier, of all people, should know that.

Why did the Premier not follow the rules? Why does she break the conflict laws?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Madam Speaker, two weeks into session, and the opposition's out of gas. They're going back to the same things they try to do. They try to disparage families. They try to disparage business. They make things up on the floor of the House.

They pretend that they're the conflict officer. They pretend that they're judges, Madam Speaker. They're none of them. They are people in opposition who are going to stay in opposition a long time if that's the best that they can do.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable leader—the honourable member for Notre Dame, on a final supplementary.

**MLA Marcelino:** First, the Premier forgot about selling \$31 million of real estate. It was an oversight. Now it looks like that the Premier forgot her family was helping a company do \$170 million worth of business right as she gave that company a \$23-million contract.

It's wrong, and it's a clear conflict of interest. The Premier should know that if a minister's family has a financial interest in a company, she shouldn't be involved in giving them contracts.

Why did the Premier ignore the conflict rules that all Manitobans are expected to follow?

**Mr. Goertzen:** The member opposite clearly doesn't understand conflict legislation, Madam Speaker. She's not the commissioner. She's not the conflict-interest. She's not a judge.

What I do understand, Madam Speaker, is that if the opposition continues to want to go down a disparaging road, they might think that's it's hurting us. They may think—they go home, they go, oh, wow, we really got one on the Tories today.

They're not hurting us. They're hurting their own chances because Manitobans expect a government who—opposition who wants to try to be government. They expect them to act like it. They expect them to try to actually show that they could some day manage a government, Madam Speaker. They can't.

They don't have real questions. They don't have real solutions. They've got nothing but smears, and they're going to sit there for a long time throwing those smears if they want to, Madam Speaker.

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

**Madam Speaker:** I think we need to take democracy a little more seriously than what sometimes happens here.

Yesterday, I had to call order 29 times in a—during oral questions. I shouldn't have to do that. This should be a better display of how democracy actually works to all the people that pay attention to what's happening here and count on everybody here to do what is right and demonstrate that democracy does work.

We can see it doesn't work in other places. We need to rise above it and set the bar much higher than what has been happening over the last couple weeks here in this Chamber.

So I'm asking for everybody's co-operation, please.

### **Provincial Nominee Program Fee Waiver for Ukrainian Refugees**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for that reminder, and I hope the government certainly takes my question seriously and gives a serious answer to it.

We need to take action. There is a crisis in Ukraine today, and millions are fleeing for their very lives. We have called for applicant fees to be waived for Ukrainians applying through Provincial Nominee Program. People who are fleeing this conflict shouldn't be forced to pay fees. Getting rid of it is the right thing to do.

Will the minister do what's right and remove application fees for Ukrainians coming to Manitoba today?

**Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, always happy to speak on the success of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, which a PC government created back in 1998 by then former MLA, Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson.

Madam Speaker, we know that immigration is a crucial enabler for economic growth and economic recovery, and we'll continue to welcome many to our province through our Provincial Nominee Program.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Fort Garry, on a supplementary question.

### **Invasion of Ukraine Request for All-Party Committee**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry):** Two point five million Ukrainians right now are refugees living outside their country. Thousands of civilians, including children, are getting shelled and slaughtered. And this government can't sit here today and waive a \$500 fee to give safe passage to these refugees. That's just chilling.

Madam Speaker, the Ukraine Canadian Congress, chamber of commerce and economic develop Winnipeg have written a joint letter to the Premier urging that they work collaboratively to allow those organizations to help settle and support displaced Ukrainians. The organizations are calling for collaboration. We are, too.

Will the government support our call for an all-party committee to help people of Ukraine today?

**Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration):** I want to thank my department for last year's record number of nominations processed last year: a record number of just under 6,300 applications. Also glad to hear, as all Manitobans are, the successful applications were processed at six months or less, opposed to three years under the NDP.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Fort Garry, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Wasyliw:** Manitobans are watching this moment. Manitobans are watching and hearing the minister's non-response. Manitobans are watching that this government has politicized this issue and refused to join with the other political parties in this Chamber for a non-partisan all-party committee.

They're seeing this government refuse to work with the Ukrainian and business communities on this issue.

I will ask: Will the Premier support our call for an all-party committee to support the Ukrainian people, and will you do that today?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Madam Speaker, we recognize the hardships that this war has caused on the Ukrainian people, and we have stood by them and we have worked with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress towards that end.

Today, we announced an extra \$500,000 towards humanitarian aid directly in Ukraine, Manitoba—in Ukraine, Madam Speaker. And, you know, I know—the member opposite, you know, he shouldn't be playing politics with this; he should be celebrating that we are offering more money to those in Ukraine for humanitarian aid. I know that that's what Manitobans, you know, of Ukrainian descent—that's what all Manitobans have been asking for. And today we announced yet another \$500,000, for a total of \$650,000.

We recognize that there's more work to be done. We are working with the federal government with respect to refugees and how we will—and we will open our arms to those refugees, Madam Speaker, from Ukraine. We have indicated that before; we'll continue to do that.

### Post-Secondary Education Tuition Increases

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** This Stefardson [*phonetic*] government is cutting our colleges and universities. And they have said they will implement a regressive tuition legislation that removes tuition caps and forces students to pay different tuition fees. This government fee hikes makes it harder for Manitobans to get good educations, and they're just interfering even more with these institutions.

Will the minister stop interfering and stop increasing tuition for students?

**Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, as the members know—as the member knows, as of yesterday, the Department of Advanced Education is hosting forums of the future of college and university fees. Institutional leaders and student groups have been invited to weigh in. The consultations will focus on things like affordability and accessibility for students, financial stability for institutions and high-quality programming.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Vital, on a supplementary question.

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Moses:** Madam Speaker, tuition hikes are hurting students and families.

In other jurisdictions, where tuition was differentiated by area of study, it simply failed. There weren't better outcomes for students, and it meant that students and their families had to pay more for an education. This is just one of the unintended consequences of this government's poorly considered and conceived approach.

Will the minister stop increasing tuition and repeal bill 33?

**Mr. Reyes:** Madam Speaker, we know that investing in our post-secondary institutions and students are crucial enablers for economic recovery and economic growth. Yesterday's consultations and more consultations will help us draw the path of success together to help grow our province now and into the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Vital, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Moses:** Madam Speaker, funding to universities and colleges have been cut year after year after year after year. Creating different levels of tuition does a disservice to Manitoba.

And as for consultation, important stakeholders such as faculty associations are not even being included and consulted in the implementation of the government's legislation.

Manitoban students want to get a good education, but they can't when this PC government keeps making Manitoban education more expensive and makes it more expensive to go to college and university.

Will the minister commit today to stop increasing tuition for students?

**Mr. Reyes:** While the member wastefully asks non-pertinent questions—as waste is what the NDP are good at, Madam Speaker—we will continue to invest in post-secondary education.

These are not cuts. Just over \$1 billion every year in post-secondary education, \$10.3 million to boost ongoing grant money to support nurse seat expansion, Madam Speaker, and \$350,000 for the permanent—permanent—expansion at Université de Saint-Boniface bachelor of education program.

We know we need more French-immersion teachers. He should know; he lives in St. Vital, Madam Speaker.

### Home-Care Services Constituent Concern

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Manitoba Liberals are very concerned about a growing crisis in home care.

I visited with a senior couple last night in Fort Whyte who have been trying for two years to get their home-care issues addressed. Apparently, their previous MLA, Brian Pallister, wasn't any use at all.

He is paralyzed from the chest down and in a wheelchair. Home Care has been cancelling and won't show up on weekends. She has to move her husband in a sling from his wheelchair to his bed by herself, and they're not pleased that workers aren't vaccinated.

We know from health-care shortages this is widespread.

What is this government going to do to respond immediately to the home-care needs of this couple and so many more like them?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** I thank the member from St. Boniface for the question.

I can't speak to the specifics of the case that he has brought forward today here in the Chamber, but I would welcome him to bring that forward to my department. We would be happy to discuss it with Shared Health.

Home care is very important to Manitobans who want to stay in their home and receive care, and our government is committed to ensuring the Home Care program provides those services.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Boniface, on a supplementary question.

### **Southern Health Region Staffing Shortage**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Still on health care. Yesterday, we touched on a massive staffing shortage in Southern Health, showing that nearly one in four health-care positions are vacant.

I table a March 8th letter from a First Nations resident of Swan Lake to the Health Minister, copied to me, expressing concerns about access to health care at the Lorne Memorial Hospital. Some patients who are seniors are waiting up to five weeks for an appointment and, despite living next to a hospital, there are no ambulances, which means people living just down the street have waited over an hour to get help.

They've requested that the Health Minister join them at a community meeting on April 18th at 1 p.m. in Swan Lake. It's Easter Monday, and I'm going.

Will the minister of the Health and the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) join us?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, I do want to remind members in the House that it was our government that committed \$1.18 billion in 2022 for COVID-19 costs, \$6.98 billion overall funding—an increase of \$156 million from last year: the largest Health budget in Manitoba history.

We are working with our clinical preventative services plan: \$812 million, Madam Speaker, to create services outside of the Winnipeg region in rural and northern and remote communities so that individuals can receive the care close to home.

We will continue to work with our stakeholders and our partners in those communities.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a final supplementary.

### **Housing Accessibility Upgrades Programs Available for Seniors**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Madam Speaker, the government recently split the Health portfolio into two: the Department of Health and the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care. Theoretically, this should mean better care for seniors.

Now, one of my constituents has been doing everything in his power to help his wife be able to remain with him in their home of 45 years. Her pre-existing condition, however, makes it extremely difficult for her to enter and exit their home without assistance.

We have written letters to the minister months ago regarding some financial help regarding having a ramp installed. However, no progress has been made.

Madam Speaker, is there any provincial funding available for seniors needing upgrades to be able to remain in their homes?

**Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Thank you to my honourable friend for the question.

Madam Speaker, stakeholders that we have been visiting with have one common theme, and that is to suggest that seniors stay in their homes for as long as possible. And that's a recommendation that this government is taking to heart and will continue to try to ensure that we are able to accommodate that and accomplish that.

I had—I'd indicated into the House earlier, I will be bringing forward the recommendations of the Stevenson report when I am able, based on blackout, and there are a number of concerns that have been expressed. I've received correspondence from the Leader of the Liberal Party—

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

### **Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Services Pathway to Health Report—Five-Year Road Map**

**Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips):** On February 17th, 2022, the Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness released the pathway to mental health report, a blueprint for an integrated, responsible mental health system.

Can the minister share how this road map was assembled and its impact on Manitobans?

**Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness):** I do want to take a moment to thank the member for McPhillips for that wonderful question.

Madam Speaker, after consulting with over 3,000 Manitobans, we were proud to launch our historic five-year road map. This plan addresses those concerns raised throughout the consultation process, and I want to thank everybody who participated.

We have heard you clearly. We have pledged \$17.1 million in funding for new services in addition to the \$23.9 million in funding to support ongoing initiatives.

Madam Speaker, we look forward to implementing all of our new initiatives to help support Manitobans.

#### **Brandon School Division Cuts to Programs and Staff**

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** Madam Speaker, the Stefanson government's cut to education hurt. Brandon School Division is forced to make deep cuts, including over 10 teaching positions, as well as cuts to speech language pathology, psychology, reading recovery. They are literally cutting supports kids need to recover from pandemic disruption.

Why is this government forcing cuts in Brandon schools?

\* (14:20)

**Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** I'd like to thank my friend from Transcona for the question because it gives me an opportunity to stand up and speak about funding for our K-to-12 system, Madam Speaker.

Unlike the member opposite putting misinformation on the record, I—it gives me the opportunity to put some good news on the record, Madam Speaker. This year alone, for '22-23, we're increasing education funding by over \$120 million.

And, Madam Speaker, that doesn't even count the capital and all the COVID investments that we've made over the last couple years. More good news to come in my next answer.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Transcona, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Altomare:** The Stefanson government's cuts to education are doing lasting damage, just like in Seven Oaks and just like in Brandon School Division. They've been forced to cut program co-ordinators who support drug and alcohol education. This while Brandon is facing an addictions crisis.

Shame on this government. This government is cutting teachers, cutting reading recovery and they're cutting addictions supports.

Why is this minister making such horrible cuts?

**Mr. Ewasko:** Again, I'd like to say I'm thanking the member opposite for the question, but it's unfortunate the member takes this opportunity, as a former educator himself, to put misinformation on the record, Madam Speaker.

You know, I just want to also—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —take this opportunity to—because, of course, I haven't had the opportunity yet, but I'm going to thank my predecessor, the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Cullen), for his hard work on the Education file, Madam Speaker.

It has been a tough couple of years—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —in regards to the pandemic and COVID.

And with that, I look forward to continuing to work hard with my education stakeholders and partners on making sure that we're all working together to student success, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Transcona, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Altomare:** So, I'll just provide another real-world example.

Brandon school trustee Jim Murray says they have no choice. He says this is coming down from the top. This is because of financial pressure—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Altomare:** —they're put in, put in by this crew across the hall. They are doing lasting damage to our schools.

Will the minister, then, stop these cuts to schools, not only in Brandon, but throughout Manitoba?

**Mr. Ewasko:** It's interesting that the member from Transcona decides to reference or quote just a everyday Manitoban, Madam Speaker. And I'd like to thank the member, actually, for the hard work that he's doing as a school trustee.

But that being said, Madam Speaker, again, the misinformation that the member from Transcona continues to put on the record. We're looking at over \$320 million in the last two years going to school divisions. That's a 17.2 per cent increase to school divisions all across this great province of ours, Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. More information to come. More good news to come from this PC government as we move forward into the spring.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

## PETITIONS

### Foot-Care Services

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The population of those aged 55-plus has grown to approximately 2,500 in the city of Thompson.

(2) A large percentage of people in this age group require necessary medical foot care and treatment.

(3) A large percentage of those are elderly and/or diabetic are also living on low incomes.

(4) The northern regional health authority, N-R-H-A, previously provided essential medical foot-care services to seniors and those living with diabetes until 2019, then subsequently cut the program after the last two nurses filling those positions retired.

(5) The number of seniors and those with diabetes has only continued to grow in Thompson and surrounding areas.

(6) There is no adequate medical care available in the city and region, whereas the city of Winnipeg has 14 medical foot-care centres.

(7) The implications of inadequate or lack of podiatric care can lead to amputations.

(8) The city of Thompson also serves as a regional health-care service provider, and the need for foot care

extends beyond just those served in the capital city of the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to provide the services of two nurses to restore essential medical foot-care treatment to the city of Thompson effective April 1, 2022.

This petition has been signed by Pat Moore, Juliet Saiki, Tony Parker and many other Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The population of those aged 55-plus has grown to approximately 2,500 in the city of Thompson.

(2) A large percentage of people in this age group require necessary medical foot care and treatment.

(3) A large percentage of those who are elderly and/or diabetic are also living on low incomes.

(4) The northern regional health authority previously provided essential medical foot-care services to seniors and those living with diabetes until 2019, then subsequently cut the program after the last two nurses filling those positions retired.

(5) The number of seniors and those with diabetes has only continued to grow in Thompson and surrounding areas.

(6) There is no adequate medical care available in the city and region, whereas the city of Winnipeg has 14 medical foot-care centres.

(7) The implications of inadequate or lack of podiatric care can lead to amputations.

(8) The city of Thompson also serves as a regional health-care service provider, and the need for foot care extends beyond just those served in the capital city of the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to provide the services of two nurses to restore essential medical

foot-care treatment to the city of Thompson effective April 1st, 2022.

And this petition has been signed by many Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The population of those aged 55-plus has grown to approximately 2,500 in the city of Thompson.

(2) A large percentage of people in this age group require necessary medical foot care and treatment.

(3) A large percentage of those who are elderly and/or diabetic are also living on low incomes.

(4) The northern regional health authority, the N-R-H-A, previously provided essential medical foot-care services to seniors and those living with diabetes until 2019, then subsequently cut the program after the last two nurses filling those positions retired.

(5) The number of seniors and those with diabetes has only continued to grow in Thompson and surrounding areas.

(6) There is no adequate medical care available in the city and region, whereas the city of Winnipeg has 14 medical foot-care centres.

(7) The implications of inadequate or lack of podiatric care can lead to amputations.

(8) The city of Thompson also serves as a regional health-care service provider, and the need for foot care extends beyond just those served in the capital city of the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to provide the services of two nurses to restore essential medical foot-care treatment to the city of Thompson effective April 1, 2022.

Petition signed by Kelli Martin, Sandra Hayes, Bailey Ernest and many, many other Manitobans.

### **Road Closures**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba Infrastructure has undertaken the closure of all farm-access roads along the North Perimeter Highway, forcing rural residents to drive up to six miles out of their way to leave or return to their property.

(2) The provincial government's own consultations showing—showed that closing the access of some of these roads, including Sturgeon Road, was an emerging concern to residents and business owners, yet the North Perimeter plan does nothing to address this issue.

\* (14:30)

(3) Residents and business owners were assured that their concerns about access closures, including safety issues cited by engineers, would be taken into account, and access at Sturgeon Road would be maintained. However, weeks later, the median was nonetheless torn up, leaving local residents and businesses scrambling.

(4) Closing all access to the Perimeter puts more people in danger, as it emboldens speeders and forces farmers to take large equipment into heavy traffic, putting road users at risk.

(5) Local traffic, commuter traffic, school buses, emergency vehicles and commercial traffic, including 200 gravel trucks per day from Lilyfield Quarry, will all be expected to merge and travel out of their way in order to cross the Perimeter, causing increased traffic and longer response times to emergencies.

(6) Small businesses located along the Perimeter and Sturgeon Road are expecting to lose business, as customers will give up on finding their—a way into their premises.

(7) Residents, business owners and those who use these roads have been left behind by the provincial government's refusal to listen to their concerns that closures will only release—result in worsened safety and major inconveniences for users of the North Perimeter.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure to leave residents access to the Perimeter Highway at least every two miles along its length, especially at intersections such as Sturgeon Road, which are vital to local businesses; and

(2) To urge the Minister of Infrastructure to listen to the needs and the opinions of the local residents and

business owners who took the time to complete the Perimeter safety survey while working with engineers and technicians to ensure their concerns are addressed.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, is signed by many Manitobans.

### Health-Care Coverage

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) Health care is a basic human right and a fundamental part of responsible public health. Many people in Manitoba are not covered by provincial health care: migrant workers with permits less than one year, international students and those undocumented residents who have lost their status for a variety of reasons.

(2) Racialized people and communities are disproportionately affected by the pandemic, mainly due to the social and economic conditions which leave them vulnerable while performing essential work in a variety of industries in Manitoba.

(3) Without adequate health-care coverage, if they are ill, many of the uninsured will avoid seeking health care due to fear of being charged for the care, and some will fear possible detention and deportation if their immigration status is reported to the authorities.

(4) According to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, denying essential health care to undocumented irregular migrants is a violation of their rights.

(5) Jurisdictions across Canada and the world have adopted access-without-fear policies to prevent sharing personal health information or immigration status with immigration authorities and to give uninsured residents the confidence to access health care.

(6) The pandemic has clearly identified the need for everyone in Manitoba to have access to health care to protect the health and safety of all who live in the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to immediately provide comprehensive and free health-

care coverage to all residents of Manitoba, regardless of immigration status, including refugee claimants, migrant workers, international students, dependant children of temporary residents and undocumented residents.

(2) To urge the Minister of Health and Seniors Care to undertake a multilingual communication campaign to provide information on expanded coverage to all affected residents.

(3) To urge the Minister of Health and Seniors Care to inform all health-care institutions and providers of expanded coverage for those without health insurance, and the details on how necessary policy and protocol changes will be implemented.

(4) To urge the Minister of Health and Seniors Care to create and enforce strict confidentiality policies and provide staff with training to protect the safety of residents with precarious immigration status, and ensure that they can access health care without jeopardizing their ability to remain in Canada.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

### Foot-Care Services

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The population of those aged 55-plus has grown to approximately 2,500 in the city of Thompson.

(2) A large percentage of people in this age group require necessary medical foot care and treatment.

(3) A large percentage of those who are elderly or diabetic are also living on low incomes.

(4) The northern regional health authority, N-R-H-A, previously provided essential medical foot-care services to seniors and those living with diabetes until 2019, then subsequently cut the program after the last two nurses filling those positions retired.

(5) The number of seniors and those with diabetes has continued to grow in Thompson and surrounding areas.

(6) There is no adequate medical care available in the city and region, whereas the city of Winnipeg has 14 medical foot-care centres.



(7) The implications of inadequate or lack of podiatric care can lead to amputations.

(8) The city of Thompson also serves as a regional health-care service provider, and the need for foot care extends beyond just those served in the capital city of the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to provide the services of two nurses to restore essential medical foot-care treatment to the city of Thompson effective April 1, 2022.

And this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by Ann-Margaret Ellsworth, Stacy McDuff, Mana [*phonetic*] McMurdo and many other Manitobans.

#### **Vivian Sand Facility Project— Clean Environment Commission Review**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Vivian sands project is a proposed silica sand mine and processing plant to be built in the RM of Springfield. The overall project includes mining claims of over 85,000 hectares, making it the largest claim ever given to a single company in Manitoba's history. It is larger than the city of Winnipeg, which is 46,410 hectares.

The amount of dry, solid sand mined, produced per year, according to the EAP, is 1.36 million tons, and much of this sand will be used in fracking.

A major concern of the proposed mine and plant is that, if developed, it could contaminate the Sandilands aquifer, including both carbonate and sandstone aquifers, which covers much of south-eastern Manitoba. It has excellent water quality and is the water source for tens of thousands of Manitobans, including many municipal water systems, agriculture, industry, private wells and an abundance of wildlife and ecosystems. Further, people in the Indigenous communities that are potentially affected by this were not afforded the required Indigenous consultation from either federal or provincial government officials.

The sustainable yield of the combined sandstone and carbonate aquifers has still not yet been established by provincial authorities.

The mine could cause leaching of acid and heavy metals and pollute the aquifer, as it will go down 200 feet into the Winnipeg formation of the sandstone aquifer. There is concern that the shale, which separates the carbonate and sandstone aquifers—sand and pyritic oolite itself contains sulphides—will, when exposed to injected air from the CanWhite Sands extraction process, turn to acid.

\* (14:40)

An additional concern with the proposed mine and plant is the potential to pollute the Brokenhead River and the aquatic food chain leading to Lake Winnipeg.

Residents in the area have also expressed fears of being overexposed to silica dust during production, as there has been a demonstrated lack of safety and environmental procedures by the CanWhite Sands Corporation during the exploratory drilling phase. Signage and fencing has been poor; identifying and required mine claim tags were missing; there were no warnings for silica dust exposure and no covering to prevent exposure of the silica stockpiles to the elements.

Residents' concerns include the fact that boreholes, which should have been promptly and properly sealed, were left open for a year. The drilling of hundreds of improperly sealed boreholes yearly create significant risks of surface contamination, mixing of aquifer waters and drainage of surface fecal matter into the aquifer.

There is also a risk of subsidence around each borehole as a result of sand extraction.

There are also potential transboundary issues that need to be addressed as the aquifers extend into Minnesota.

This project should not proceed, as no licensing conditions and mitigation measures will alleviate the risk to all Manitobans and the environment since CanWhite Sands Corporation plans to use an unprecedented mining technique with no established safe outcome. The corporation has gone on record indicating that it does not know how to mine for the silica in the water supply and need to develop a new extraction methodology that has never been done before.

Contamination of the aquifers and the environment is irreversible and there are many surface sources of high purity silica that can be extracted without endangering two essential regional aquifers.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to undertake a combined review of the Vivian Sand Facility processing plant and the mining/extraction portion of the operation as a class 3 development with a review by Manitoba's Clean Environment Commission to include public hearings and participant funding.

To urge the provincial government to halt all activity at the mine and plant until the Clean Environment Commission's review is completed and the project proposal has been thoroughly evaluated.

Signed by Janine Collison [*phonetic*], Warren Leclaire [*phonetic*], Roger Leclaire.

#### **Diagnostic Testing Accessibility**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition has—is as follows:

No. 1—[*interjection*] I'm waiting.

(1) Until recently, diagnostic medical tests, including for blood and fluid samples, were available and accessible in most medical clinics.

(2) Dynacare blood test labs have consolidated their blood and fluid testing services by closing 25 of its labs.

(3) The provincial government has cut diagnostic testing at many clinic sites, and residents now have to travel to different locations to get their testing done, even for a simple blood test or urine sample.

(4) Further, travel challenges for vulnerable and elderly residents of northeast Winnipeg may result in fewer tests being done or delays in testing, with the attendant effects of increased health-care costs and poorer individual patient outcomes.

(5) COVID-19 emergency rules have resulted in long outdoor lineups, putting vulnerable residents at further risk in extreme weather, be it hot or cold. Moreover, these long lineups have resulted in longer wait times for services and poorer service in general.

(6) Manitoba residents value the convenience and efficiency of the health-care system when they are able to give their samples at the time of the doctor visit.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately demand Dynacare maintain all of the phlebotomy blood sample sites existing prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and allow all Manitobans to get their blood and urine tests done when visiting their doctor, thereby facilitating local access to blood testing services.

And this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

#### **Foot-Care Services**

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background of this petition is as follows:

The population of those aged 55-plus has grown to approximately 2,500 in the city of Thompson.

A large percentage of people in this age group require necessary medical foot care and treatment.

A large percentage of those who are elderly and/or diabetic are also living on low incomes.

The northern regional health authority previously provided essential medical foot-care services to seniors and those living with diabetes until 2019, then subsequently cut the program after the last two nurses filling those positions retired.

The number of seniors and those with diabetes has only continued to grow in Thompson and surrounding areas.

There is no adequate medical care available in the city and region, whereas the city of Winnipeg has 14 medical foot-care centres.

The implications of inadequate or lack of podiatric care can lead to amputations.

The city of Thompson also serves as a regional health-care service provider, and the need for foot care extends beyond just those served in the capital city of the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to provide the services of two nurses to restore essential medical foot care treatment to the city of Thompson effective April 1st, 2022.

We petition the legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows—oh sorry. This has been signed by Jaimie

Henderson, Leona McIvor, Albert McIvor and many other Manitobans.

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The population of those aged 55-plus has grown to approximately to 2,500 in the city of Thompson.

(2) A large percentage of people in this age group require necessary medical foot care and treatment.

(3) A large percentage of those who are elderly and/or diabetic are also living on low incomes.

(4) The northern regional health authority previously provided essential medical foot-care services to seniors and those living with diabetes until 2019, then subsequently cut the program after the last two nurses filling those positions retired.

(5) The number of seniors and those with diabetes has only continued to grow in Thompson and surrounding areas.

(6) There is no adequate medical care available in the city and region, whereas the city of Winnipeg has 14 medical foot-care centres.

(7) The implications of inadequate or lack of podiatric care can lead to amputations.

(8) The city of Thompson also serves as a regional health-care service provider, and the need for foot care extends beyond just those served in the capital city of the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to provide the services of two nurses to restore essential medical foot care treatment to the city of Thompson effective April 1, 2022.

And this is signed by Debbie Brandt, Russ Brandt and Michele Genaille.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### House Business

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** On government business, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Monday, March 14th, 2022 at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 5, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act; Bill 10, An Act respecting Amendments to The Health Services Insurance Act, The Pharmaceutical Act and Various Corporate Statutes; and Bill 11, The Elections Amendment Act.

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\* (14:50)

**Mr. Goertzen:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour—

**Madam Speaker:** The—

**Mr. Goertzen:** Oh. I'm—

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on government business.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm new and just getting used to the role of House leader.

Could you please call for debate this afternoon Bill 9, 12, 16 and 15.

**Madam Speaker:** Under orders of day, government business, it has been announced that the House will consider the following bills this afternoon: second reading of Bill 9, debate on second reading of Bill 12, second readings of Bill 16 and Bill 15.

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 9—The Scrap Metal Act

**Madam Speaker:** I will therefore call second reading of Bill 9, The Scrap Metal Act.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I'll try again, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services (Mr. Helwer), that Bill 9, The Scrap Metal Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm pleased to rise to thank—*[interjection]* I'd like to thank the Minister of Education for his applause.

I'm pleased to rise in the House today to speak to this bill, Scrap Metal Act, on second reading.

Residents, officials and law enforcement agencies, from both urban and rural locations in Manitoba have raised concerns about the need to take greater action to address the growth of theft from metal. These concerns were emphasized in the March 1st, 2021, Engage Manitoba public engagement survey, What We Heard Report on the development of rural crime, biosecurity and metal theft legislation.

Stolen scrap metal is difficult to identify, and there are no province-wide record-keeping requirements involving scrap metal transactions, so it can be challenging to trace and identify sellers of stolen metal.

Most concerning of all is the risk to public safety when metal is stolen from essential infrastructure, including electrical, transportation and fire safety systems. The Manitoba government takes these concerns very seriously and is committed to protecting the property of all Manitobans.

The bill is—purpose is to create a new act that will enhance public safety by regulating the sale of scrap metal.

*Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the new legislation requires scrap metal dealers to obtain and record identification and transaction information from sellers of scrap metal. Scrap metal dealers are prohibited from purchasing scrap metal with cash when the value of the transaction exceeds a prescribed amount, and that amount will be set out in regulation.

Certain types of scrap metal are at a higher risk of being stolen, pose a greater risk to public safety if stolen or have an overriding personal significance such as grave markers. The sale of these types of items will be subject to additional safeguards, including reporting them to the police at prescribed intervals, so

that police have timely notice of the sales having taken place.

Sometimes scrap metal dealers are—innocently or unknowingly come into possession of property with a stolen origin. In these cases, as soon as the dealer has reasonable grounds to believe this scrap metal is in their possession and is stolen property, they must immediately report the matter to local law enforcement. The bill contains exceptions to ensure that it is not overly burdensome on legitimate sellers or applicable to items that are at low risk of being stolen.

Peace officers will be empowered to carry out any inspections to determine compliance of this act. This will include powers to inspect and copy the records kept by scrap metal dealers. Persons who contravene the act will be liable on conviction to a fine.

This legislation will come into force on proclamation in order to provide sufficient time for scrap metal dealers and various law enforcement agencies to prepare to implement its provisions and to allow for regulations to be drafted, and members may have questions about that in the question period.

Scrap metal dealers operating in the city of Winnipeg are already subject to record keeping and reporting requirements under the doing business in Winnipeg bylaw, which also regulates pawn brokers.

The bill will enact a standard, province-wide regime that can be supplemented by municipalities with their own bylaws, so long as they're not inconsistent with this act, and that is true for many pieces of legislation.

Three other provinces have experienced similar concerns and have taken action to enhance the protection of rural residents by enacting legislation to regulate the manner of sales of certain types of scrap metal.

Provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan have already enacted similar legislation. Each of these acts have comparable features to this bill, and will require basic identifying information about each transaction to be recorded.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will have the opportunity to discuss this bill in more detail at the committee stage, and of course there'll be questions, I'm sure, from members at this point.

So, I will conclude my comments after I make mention of the fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I know that other members have brought forward similar pieces of private members' legislation. And it is often

the case where there is a known concern in the community, that members will have heard that in their own individual constituencies, or in others that they're dealing with. And so you often see similar pieces of legislation come to this House.

But that doesn't take away from the good work that other members do in terms of raising issues, and I think it speaks well of this House when multiple members, or more than one member, bring forward an issue, and ultimately the House can agree that it's something that needs to be addressed.

And it doesn't really matter which side of the House then brings forward the legislation that is ultimately enacted. I know that was the case when I was in opposition, and I know that opposition members have brought forward this legislation, as well.

And I'm sure that the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), as one example, will have some questions and probably want to acknowledge that he has seen this as an issue, as well. And I think that that, again, speaks to the overall good work of the Legislature, when we can come together and recognize that there's an issue, and then in a common form, try to address it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

### Questions

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members. No question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I'd like to thank the minister for introducing the bill.

At the recent bill briefing that we had, I recall the minister or the minister's staff making reference to the amount of cash, the limit—the cash limits that would be part of this bill.

So, I'd ask him if he could confirm that the cash limit that was mentioned at the briefing was, in fact, \$50, because he didn't indicate that in his speech just now.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I thank my friend for asking that

question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, along with attending the briefing that we had.

He's correct. That question did come up in the briefing, and I think I said at that time, and I'll repeat for the House, that it seems to me that \$50 seems like a reasonable dollar amount. Of course, it'll be prescribed in legislation, but I would expect it would be either that number, or in the ballpark of that number.

**Mr. Maloway:** With reference to the database that would be kept, and I—you know, I'm thinking now more of Alberta, but I'm certain that you're going to have to—Manitoba's going to have to do the same thing.

In terms of the database that's going to be kept, who is going to keep that, and where is it going to be kept? Is it going to be kept by MPIC, you know, out of province? Is it going to be—well, anyway, just let me know what we're going to be doing with this.

**Mr. Goertzen:** It is valuable for two young people like myself and the member for Elmwood to be speaking about databases, and how the technology is going to be maintained.

I think that that has yet to be determined in terms of the nature of the database, and how it'll be maintained, or where it'll be maintained. But certainly there will have to be a database, and a way to record the information that is provided. And I'm sure that we can speak more about that at committee, but it hasn't been determined at this point.

\* (15:00)

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** My question relates to section 6, where there's a specific exemption for any corporation that is able to carry on business in Manitoba.

And my concern is this: that, you know, individuals who are stealing scrap metal or catalytic converters or other things, that there could be an incentive to form a corporation—might not necessarily related to scrap metal—but that would then sell—

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

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think I understood the point that the member was making and, I mean, I get the point. I think that the likelihood, based on who we're seeing stealing the metal—it seems unlikely. He almost—it almost seems like he's talking about more of an organized crime kind of perspective to be involved in this.

But, you know, it is a point worth making and it's certainly something worth watching. Obviously, there's a good reason why we exempt corporations who, under the sellers section of 6, but certainly, we can watch it and if there are a need to make changes in the future, we can make changes.

**Mr. Maloway:** I'd like to know whether the minister has looked at the Alberta legislation. While it's—it is similar to this bill, there's no provision for incarceration and given that the experience in Alberta is actually turning out more adverse and worse as time goes by, in that more thefts are happening out there, does he not think that by not having an incarceration provision—is setting himself back quite a—

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

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, and there may be other related offences that happen that could result in an individual being incarcerated and, of course, that would be determined by the courts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But if he's suggesting that, you know, the fine provisions aren't enough for deterrence, I think with all pieces of legislation as it deals with, you know, criminal matters are handled federally. But certainly in property matters, the deal with fines in Manitoba, as an example, we learn from the experiences and if there is a need at some point to add a provision that involves incarceration, that could be considered.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, the minister has referred to legislation in BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Can the minister tell us whether that legislation has been effective in reducing thefts of catalytic converters, for example. Have that decreased in Alberta and BC or Saskatchewan or not?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I can't provide, although I'll make a note of it and try to provide comparisons at committee, so I'll make a note that the member has asked this question, try to give him some more detailed descriptions about the comparisons when we get to the committee stage. But from what I'm advised from officials is that it has been effective in other provinces and that's largely why we've mirrored the legislation that they've had in other provinces.

The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) acknowledges that it's been pretty robustly used in Alberta, I think his reference was, but we can provide, I think at committee, some data and—best we can find from those other provinces.

**Mr. Maloway:** Well, the fact is, for the past three years, the experience has gotten way worse in Alberta. And so the question is, if the cases are getting worse, then how can we expect that by bringing in a weaker bill to start with that we're going to, you know, make up for this lost ground.

It would seem to me that if you already know you've got three big increases in the last three years, you'd be wanting to put in some incarceration provisions in here. Maybe you'll want to do this at committee.

**Mr. Goertzen:** My friend will know I'm always open to discussions at committees and we've amended things at different points. I don't believe that government or opposition has a monopoly on good ideas, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think when we're looking at the legislation in Manitoba, we have to recognize that there are other reasons that we can see increases in activity, and sometimes it just relates to how robust the enforcement is. Because, often, we find in these sort of activities, that the deterrence isn't the penalty; the deterrence is the likelihood of getting caught. And so enforcement can play as much of a role as the penalty does.

**Mr. Gerrard:** One of the major problems with the scrap metal industry has been the pollution that is associated with it, and, in particular, concerns about high lead levels in areas where there's scrap metal industries.

I wonder if the minister, in his discussions with people in the industry, had discussions about the problem of lead and pollution, and its adverse effects on children?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, and I know in this House we've often discussed the issue of lead in soil and the challenge and health hazards that that causes, not, of course, just specific to this industry.

But, I would say, it's beyond the scope of this legislation, but it's not a point that's not worth making. And so, I think all of us have concerns when it comes to, you know, the health of our soil and of our environment, but that isn't specific to this.

This is specific about trying to stop an activity that is criminal and that is causing a lot of harm to individuals and to industry.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, just to—the major concern is not necessarily the health of the soil, but the health of the children who live in the area.

And, clearly, whether it is lead manufacturing, whether it is scrap metal, that this is a major concern, and that the major concern is that there are high blood levels—high blood lead levels in children and adults in the area. So, I hope that the minister will follow up on that.

I wonder if—the minister has already talked about Alberta and Saskatchewan. What has been the track record in Saskatchewan and BC if Alberta has actually got—

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

**Mr. Goertzen:** On this one, I didn't quite get the question, because, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you were exercising your powers on the timeline in the right and diligent way. But I think he was still asking for comparisons between the other provinces in terms of how the legislation is operating.

And I committed to him, or to the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), but I'll commit to both of them that we'll look to get some data on comparisons of activity from the other provinces on legislation and present it at committee.

**Mr. Maloway:** I'd like to ask the minister, in his process of consultations with the industry, can he give me a list of companies that he consulted with?

I know as far as Orloff is concerned, they did put up a sign about six, eight months ago, maybe even longer, asking for identification and stuff. So it looks like they're doing some of the provisions or the requirements of the bill already without even being asked unless, in fact, they were consulted by his staff.

So, will he just let us know where things are at with the consultation process?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Because I value my friendship with the member for Elmwood, I would not want to start listing off companies or entities that were consulted with and miss any. And he'll also know that this bill and the consultation part—portions of it would have happened under a previous minister.

But I will, at committee, provide him a detailed list that would not, in any way, jeopardize our friendship by ensuring that it is complete and fulsome on the consultation.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the MLA for St. Boniface, has been very concerned about the increase in crime in his constituency and the increase in problems in terms of scrap metal and people

stealing metals that they could use and sell as scrap metal.

The minister has talked about enforcement. Will there be a specific effort at better enforcement in areas where there have been such high crime rates?

\* (15:10)

**Mr. Goertzen:** Of course, the member knows that enforcement falls to law enforcement, and that's why they're called law enforcement. And, ultimately, you know, we rely upon them in terms of the enforcement that is happening in areas. But I do know that they very closely look at trends and things that are happening when it comes to crime, and they will specifically look to enforce areas and certain kinds of crime where they're happening in a disproportionate level.

So I think the member can rest assured that law enforcement is not unaware of situations that are happening in different areas and regarding different crimes, and they do apply their resources to them when they see that they can.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Are there any further questions?

#### Debate

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Seeing none, the floor is open for debate.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I really do want to thank the minister for taking the initiative in bringing this bill forward as part of a government bill. I mean, for many, many years, we have introduced consumer-type legislation here.

You know, I've done it nationally as well with the air passenger bill of rights and, you know, there we were able to get the bill passed into second reading and we go to committee with the support of parties at the time: Liberals, the—not the Conservatives, not the Conservatives, but Liberals, Bloc and the NDP.

And the environment, you know, in Ottawa is, in some respects, more conducive to this kind of bartering, I guess, when it comes to legislation. For example, there we have the Q and A now that we adopted from them which seems to be working quite well.

But one system they have there that we don't have here—and we could adopt it if we wanted to change the rules again—involve co-sponsoring of bills. And I know that a lot of—Joy Smith being one—was out doing co-sponsoring of some of her bills with some of the

NDP members, vice versa, and it's a lot of cross-pollination there in the private members' part of the legislation.

But having said that, I still say that the minister's done the right thing here by seeing an opportunity to bring in some legislation that is going to address, or will address to some degree, anyway, this problem that is just getting bigger and bigger. I mean, the numbers are there and rarely a week goes by when my office doesn't get a phone call or an email from one of our own constituents or constituents in other constituencies in Manitoba where this theft is happening.

And you know what really irritates people more than anything is that they have to pay a betterment fee to get the catalytic converter replaced. So first of all, the catalytic converter is getting stolen, and then they have to deal with the deductible with Autopac and they also have to deal with the betterment fee. And they really have a big difficulty understanding what that is. But that's just simply an insurance principle that you're not supposed to be benefitting by the loss, and so when your catalytic converter gets stolen, you're actually getting a better car, I guess, because you've got a catalytic converter with all kinds of precious metals in it and so they do charge that extra fee.

And there was a case recently, there have been quite a number of cases, but there was the case of—at Loveday Mushrooms over in St. Boniface where a bunch of the staff there had their catalytic converters stolen. And, of course, now people don't want to drive their vehicles to work anymore, and they don't want to park them outside where somebody can get under the car and steal it—catalytic converter.

Just to tell you how quick some of these thieves can operate, there was within the last year an instance on a weekend, I think, an evening, at one of the car dealerships on Nairn highway where a group of thieves came in, two or three—this is just with the lights on and everything. There was, like—it was a well-lit lot, and they get their cutters and they get—there's—somebody's a lookout, and they get out—one of them gets under the vehicle and cuts off the catalytic converter in three or four minutes, and away they go on to the next vehicle.

And, actually, what they do is they have a shopping list. They could go online and you can get a list of all the most stolen catalytic converters.

And did you know—I don't know what kind of vehicles you're all driving here, but we have the

No. 1 car that has a catalytic converter stolen, presumably that will be one that has a higher value catalytic converter, is a Honda CR-V. And last year, 201 of them were stolen.

So they print out a list of what they—the most—or the most valuable catalytic converters are, and then they go around looking for them. Probably, you know, if that's a Honda CR-V, I'll guess the smartest place to go would be the Honda dealer because that's where you're going to find the most of them.

And they did this in—you know, like—well, broad daylight. It was night, but the lights were on. And, believe it or not, the police came and arrested them, so that they weren't so smart after all because they did get caught.

Another—No. 2, the second most popular catalytic converter stolen is a Hyundai Tucson; and another Hyundai is next, Hyundai Santa Fe. So if you're driving a CR-V, a Hyundai Tucson—Honda CR-V, Hyundai Tucson, Hyundai Santa Fe, there's 201, 198 and 129. And the Sportage, the Honda Element, the F-450, the F-150, Toyota Prius and Ford van and a Honda Pilot.

Those are your top 10. And, after that, it drops off, I guess, and so your catalytic converter is not as popular.

And I've taken to, you know, getting my picture taken with people that have their converters stolen. We've had two of them now in the local newspaper, in the Herald, and they're just—it's totally shocking to them when this happens.

I've got one woman in a seniors' home at 505 Munroe, and, you know, you go out to your car and you get in and you try to start it, and it sounds like an airplane engine, it makes so much noise, and that's how you find out about this. So people don't even know; like, it's not that they even know what it is.

So, now we have the battle of the bills and we have, essentially—we had a bill out in BC, I think that was probably the first one. And then we have the Alberta bill, which is now in its, I guess, third year. And so, we're trying to—we should be able to learn from our mistakes. That would be my guess on the matter.

And so, what you have in Alberta, you have a situation there where you've got, like, three years experience, and so, common sense should say that, if your number of thefts is going up each year in spite of



the fact that you've got this bill, maybe there's something that you should be—you know, you could improve in the bill.

So, one of the things we did here with our Bill 215 is we required the dealers to keep records for five years. It's common, you're—you do that for income tax purposes, so I don't see why this would be a big issue.

But the government bill, Bill 9, that we're debating today, is only requiring two years of records. It seems to me that five years would be, you know, given what Alberta's going through right now with three years, that doing five years record keeping is probably, you know, not a bad idea.

\* (15:20)

Then we've got into the issue of the penalties. And we said, well, okay, let's look and see what Alberta is giving in terms of penalties under their bill. And what you find is that the Manitoba bill, it basically is copying Alberta, right? Basically it just did what the Liberals did; the Liberals just copied Alberta. Well, that's what the Manitoba government is doing right now too. And, well, absolutely you did. And so that's what they did.

And they're doing this at a time when, like, we're three—you know, the horse has been out of the barn now, for three years. So I could understand if you were going into this and this was all new, brand new, legislation. I could understand Alberta saying, well, you know, nobody's got this—well, BC—nobody's got legislation like this, so why don't we go in easy and maybe, you know, go in with lesser fines, lesser record keeping, having the onus for lesser record keeping and go in that way?

But when you're Manitoba and you're already like, you've seen the other guy, three years now, operating this legislation, you should be able to draw some conclusions at this point, right? The numbers are not dropping at all. The numbers are skyrocketing up, okay? So you probably need to be more prescriptive than less prescriptive.

So, what did they do? Well, Bill 9, he's asking—the government's asking for government ID being required. Well, our Bill 215 does the same. So it's government-issued ID.

We want the records to be kept for five years. The government is following Alberta: two years. They're only interested in two-years record keeping. I guess, maybe, it's like, onerous to, like, write some more stuff in your book, right? To go from two years—it

seemed to me, if you're doing it for two years, you could probably do it for five years; it wouldn't be a big problem.

Also, they—in terms of the excluded items, we both—both bills have the same idea there, leaving normal metal cans and stuff excluded under the bill. We are both putting a cap on the cash side of it of \$50; that's an arbitrary figure that—which somebody had to do a call on, but I think \$50 is probably—we should have some cash limit, and \$50 is what the government is suggesting at this point, so I guess that's what it's going to be.

Don't forget, too, that not all of this has to be in the legislation, that some of this can be in the regulations too, and governments tend to do that. They tend to pass a bill, and the bill has its provisions, and then what you do is you promulgate the regulations over six months after the bill passes, and then you bring everything into force. And so it's easy to change the regulations, way easier than it is to change the legislation.

So I can see where maybe some of this they will want to change, want to bring in by regulation, so that if things don't work out, they don't have to come back to the Legislature; they can make some changes at that point.

Now, there is a requirement under both bills to report suspected stolen property. And, you know, that's certainly a problem. And that's the same with both bills.

And then we get down to the issue of the penalties, and for some reason, the Alberta—the government bill, here, based on Alberta, has a \$5,000-maximum first offence fine for an individual and \$15,000 for a corporation, whereas our bill is \$10,000 maximum for first offence for an individual and \$30,000 for a corporation, so twice as much.

So, we want to get serious with the organized crime syndicates that are operating in this business. And you're going to get more serious with them if you double the fines, I would suggest. And, clearly, because the fines aren't working right now in Alberta. Why? Because the number of thefts is going up.

Now, the \$15,000—the government bill is \$15,000 second offence and subsequent offences for an individual, \$50,000 for a corporation and no incarceration at all under the government bill, whereas ours was \$10,000 for that first offence, \$30,000 for a corporation and then \$30,000 second and subsequent

offence for individuals and \$100,000 for a corporation. So, you know, maybe when we get into committee and when we hear feedback and so on that, perhaps the government will relent and maybe increase those penalties, those fines, and maybe include an imprisonment part of it, and that would be a big help.

Now, the catalytic converters—most people, you know, like, even recently, didn't—had never even heard of a catalytic converter. So now this is something that is becoming more well known, and the fact that these things are spiking, and I think it's going to be even more of an issue as time goes by. Some of the precious metals that we're looking at here are rhodium, palladium, platinum. And these items are, like, really worth a lot of money. I don't hear too many people, you know, breaking into jewelry stores anymore, stealing the rings. They're going after catalytic converters. I mean, who would have thought that?

And, like I said, that—some of them are paying up to \$800, so that's not bad, eh? I mean, you've got your list, and you go out for a little walk, walk around the neighbourhood, walk around Transcona, and just take a look there and see what's parked on the street. Maybe go visit some of your friends. But you can see how expensive some of these items are.

So the organized groups of criminals—and, by the way, I have pictures here of some of the people that are active in this whole—in this business. And you know something? They're quite a serious bunch. Like, you've got people who are well armed. Like, there's a picture—this is a picture from the Calgary Herald. So Calgary Herald has catalytic converter thieves arrested with thousands of rounds of ammunition. Like, what in the world are they doing with thousands of rounds of ammunition? And they say, police seize thousands of rounds of ammunition, stolen catalytic converters and body armour after searching an Airdrie home on Sunday. This was January the 18th, this year, just recently.

And here's a picture. Here's a picture of what they picked up in the home. They picked up—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

**An Honourable Member:** One, two, three, four—about six guns along with all these—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order. Members are not meant to be waving pictures around the House while they're speaking. That's considered a prop. And I do believe that if the member wishes to table that image, then that option is available, but to display it as was

being done I believe is a violation of the rules.  
*[interjection]*

Oh—*[interjection]*

\* (15:30)

Order, please. I do need to recognize the member before the member can resume speaking.

**Mr. Maloway:** Yes, we are well aware that we're not supposed to be having exhibits in the House and certainly there've been lots of creative exhibits over the years that we can all think back to seeing around here, but I'm not seeing any dead fish in recent years or dead animals being brought in here as an exhibit. I really didn't think that was going to qualify, but I guess it does. So, anyway, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, this happened in Airdrie, Alberta just recently, and—January 16th, and they found a guy who was wanted on outstanding warrants and they—there was stolen vehicles involved and there were—arrested a number of people. So this is quite an enterprise that people are finding themselves into right now and it's not getting any better, you know. It's not going to resolve itself that quickly.

Now, another case in—also in Edmonton, the Edmonton's Food Bank was—had its catalytic converter stolen from its delivery trucks—from two of its delivery trucks during the busiest time of the year. And so, once again, there was a shock about that.

But now, there is a program out in Alberta and it's sad that we have to—it has to come to this, but they say: you etch it, we catch it. And so what these—what this program is, is they want people to put vehicle identification numbers—VIN numbers—onto their catalytic converters free of charge, and then this is what businesses are doing in Alberta.

They—according to the RCMP, catalytic converter thefts have been on the rise since 2019. So, this is in Alberta: 2019, there was 29 cases. That number jumped to 100—this is in Leduc, Alberta: that number jumped to 106 in 2020, so the next year; and this year 100—150.

And so, you know, I know in my area, people have said, well, you can go ahead and climb under the car and put markings on them, right, but, you know, people are incensed enough about this issue; they don't want to be climbing under their car and putting stickers and so on and identification on their catalytic converter. And when the item is stolen, it's easy enough, I would think, for the thieves to go and file

the number off. But nevertheless, that's something they've been looking at in Alberta.

And Edmonton police charged a man recently after finding 500 stolen converters in a storage locker. Now, who could possibly maintain that 500 of these things was just like, you know, a onesie and twosie, right? Like, I just stole one here or I steal one there—but 500 of them? That is a serious number of catalytic converters. And the question is who's buying these things? Like, how are they getting them to the final place?

So, anyhow, I really think they've got to put some—maybe commercial crime—RCMP commercial crime was going to have to spend some real effort into finding out exactly where things are going.

The catalytic converters can be removed in seconds, and, for example, they're saying, well, it's easy money, and so in Alberta they have companies, like Fountain Tire, Kal Tire, Canadian Tire, Chrysler Dodge Jeep, they're all gotten involved in here to provide this etching service for the items.

So the government is in good company here because, by bringing this in right now as a government bill with us supporting it, hopefully with getting a couple of amendments out of it, I think if you have the business involved, like you have out in Alberta, there's a decent chance that we can slow down some of this activity, because this is not something that we want to let get further out of hand here.

So, you know, I think there's a few other points that I could make about this, but I suspect we also have some more of my—oh, these would be exhibits, I guess, eh—but these are happy constituents of Elmwood who are posing with me regarding the catalytic converters. I'm just pointing out to you that it can't be just Elmwood that's active. I'm sure there's a lot of activity on this going here with other, like, everywhere. I mean, there's no one constituency that this is not a part of.

Now, I'm just going to take another quick look here at some of the Alberta information. The article that I'm looking at right now talks about catalytic converter thefts up across Alberta despite legislation to curb crime.

And the—they're talking about the Edmonton food bank has multiple catalytic converters stolen in recent years, including last February. Catalytic converter thefts have risen across Alberta despite the legislation, so in spite of legislation aimed at making it harder for

criminals to sell stolen metals for scrap, and this is what Alberta is facing.

So, for those of us here in the Legislature who thought that, good, we're going to get this catalytic converter legislation, we're going to follow Edmonton, we're going to follow Alberta, and this is all going to solve the problem, well, sadly, that's not what I'm here to tell you about. The news is the opposite, that this is a situation that has deteriorated, it's gotten worse, not better, and that we are catching up, or trying to catch up, after the problem has got itself in a worse situation.

So how this is all going to shake out now over the last—over the next little while? I'm not a hundred per cent sure, but nevertheless, the—we're going to have to have committee hearings on this bill, and hopefully there will be maybe more than just the interested people appearing before the committee. Hopefully we can attract some people that have actually had these catalytic converters stolen themselves.

And I also did want to make a comment, too. This is not all—only about catalytic converters. We're talking about copper wire here as well, and there are issues. There's construction sites where copper wire and other metals are being stolen from—very, very common when people are building new homes. There's also Hydro sites. There have been cases with Manitoba Hydro where people have broken into the Hydro site and loaded up the copper wire and taken it away.

\* (15:40)

And not only that, but somebody in the—in downtown Winnipeg was telling me about how there's a really bad practice that goes on with some people, that they are taking the copper wire and they burn the rubber off the wire to strip it down to just pure copper, and it's worth more money; it's worth, like, double the amount when that is done.

Unfortunately, the people doing it cause themselves a lot of, you know, health problems, medical problems, because it's a poisonous exercise. And I've heard, you know, more than one case of this happening, and so this is another thing that we're going to have to come to grips with this.

Anyway, I want to thank you very much for your time. I'm sure that many of you are excited and would like to listen for another hour or two, but that's not to be the case today.

So thank you very much.

### House Business

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** On House business.

Pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business, will be one put forward by the honourable member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino). The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Improve Adult Education.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It has been 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 Notre Dame. The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Improve Adult Education.

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**Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye):** It is an honour to be able to stand up in this House today and put some words on record in regards to Bill No. 9, The Scrap Metal Act, brought forward by our Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen).

In businesses that I have been involved in, I did have dealings with scrap metal dealers, as our companies did generate a fair bit of scrap metal. A couple times of year, some scrap metal dealer would come around and we would sell him our scrap metal. This would include batteries, old engines, car parts and catalytic converters.

I know the member from Elmwood has been very passionate about this subject, especially catalytic converters, so I would like to share a story with him about how things have changed over the years. Back then, nobody would put a new catalytic converter on when theirs was plugged up, as back then, there was still leaded gas and unleaded gas, so they would eventually plugged up if leaded gas was used. They would just put a pipe in its place. Many manufacturers made a custom pipe that fit right in place. Of course, that is illegal today; you're not allowed to replace a catalytic converter. It's part of the emission standards.

Back then, we would have several catalytic converters in the scrap pile as they were not worth a lot of money. If we got between \$2 and \$5 for one we were happy. Now they could bring several hundred dollars on the market.

Since then things have changed. The prices for scrap metal has gone up a lot, especially for metals like copper, aluminum, brass, bronze, nickel, stainless steel and many others. With the constant rise in scrap metal prices, the temptation to collect metals that do not belong to you has increased.

Today, we're always hearing stories about the theft of things like wire that is made from copper or aluminum, batteries from vehicles, especially from equipment that may have several batteries. Older homes that may have lightning rods on the roofs with heavy copper wire going down to the ground rods—this one may not be as prevalent as some of the other thefts, but I'm sure the member from Elmwood is old enough to know about the ground rods and the lightning rods on the roofs.

The theft of catalytic converters right off the vehicles that they are part of has increased immensely. A thief can slide under a vehicle with a simple pipe cutter and in minutes remove a catalytic converter and be gone. We know that the theft of metals has grown over the years, and there are more residents, both rural and urban, filing complaints. Law enforcement agencies are asking for changes so they can make it more difficult for thieves to be able to sell the stolen scrap metal.

Bill 9 puts some accountability and traceability into the scrap-metal business. Stolen scrap metal is difficult to identify, and there are no province-wide record-keeping requirements involving scrap metal transaction, making it difficult to trace and identify.

Bill 9 will regulate the sale of scrap metal. The new legislation requires scrap metal dealers to obtain and record identification and transaction information from sellers of scrap metal. The bill also prohibits dealers from purchasing scrap metal with cash when the value of the transaction exceeds the prescribed amount.

The legislation also lists a number of restricted items that, if purchased, a scrap metal dealer must provide records collected at the time of transaction to a law enforcement agency responsible for that area. If someone comes in with a new roll of copper wire that weighs several hundred pounds, it could be assumed that it was probably stolen and should be reported.

In this legislation, peace officers will be empowered to carry out any inspections to determine compliance with the act. This will include powers to inspect records kept by scrap-metal dealers.

This legislation is not meant to create extra work for scrap-metal dealers. There are several exemptions in this bill that make it possible for scrap-metal dealers to conduct their normal day-to-day business.

Other provinces have enacted similar legislation to help combat the theft of valuable metals and protect the property and safety of their residents. This legislation is meant to make the scrap-metal industry accountable and transparent.

I feel this is an important piece of legislation that will help reduce the amount of scrap-metal thefts. I look forward to seeing it going to committee and becoming law.

Thank you.

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** It gives me some pleasure to stand up and talk about this scrap metal act, and I guess I really have to give the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) some credit, which is not like me to really give him much credit. You know, he doesn't have many good ideas of his own, but at least he recognized when the member from Elmwood had a good idea, and he was willing to act on it.

Now, he didn't go quite as far as the member from Elmwood would have liked. He didn't really grasp the full concept of what he should have been doing with this particular piece of legislation. But it is a start.

And I guess, having talked briefly with the member from Elmwood about how his research has gone into this, and reports that, you know, in fact, once some jurisdictions implemented similar-type legislation, that the number of thefts have went way up.

So, the minister here is late to the party, but he's introduced the bare-bones basic that he could have introduced.

When we look at a jurisdiction like Alberta that recognized that, well, this didn't stop things. They've now upped the minimum first-penalty fine to a fine of up to \$10,000; \$25,000 for a second offense; and up to a year in jail for these offenses, plus it could be combined, the maximum fine and jail time.

Now, they've also updated the corporate fines, which I didn't really see in our regulation anything about corporate fines. Now, I may have missed it, so I'm sure someone will point out to me that it's there. But recognizing—*[interjection]* How much?

\* (15:50)

**An Honourable Member:** A hundred thousand.

**MLA Lindsey:** So, you know, some jurisdictions have put their fines at—*[interjection]* So, there we go. *[interjection]* Yes. So, you want to know who I consulted with; now you know who I consulted with.

So, there are jail times and stuff and corporate offences in some of these other jurisdictions, but the point of—that I was trying to make was some jurisdictions did start off down here, but we've had the opportunity to look at what other jurisdictions have already done, and we could have at least done that and possibly done something more. But, again, we've chosen to do the minimum.

And I guess we really need to look at if this passes second reading and if it gets on to third reading—and you never know with these things, whether it will pass. It may not pass today; it may not pass next week. But whenever it does, if it does, let's hope that the Minister of Justice will be amenable to making some changes to this piece of legislation to make it better legislation, to make it the best legislation, so that instead of just following what other jurisdictions have already done, we could actually lead and show people, show other jurisdictions, that we're serious about this.

Now, we talked about some of the negative consequences of getting caught. But there are some questions that perhaps, I guess, I should have asked during the question and answer period is, we have jurisdictions already—Alberta, Saskatchewan, BC—that have started these registries. And now we're going to start a registry.

So the question, then, becomes will these registries be able to link to each other so that someone who has been found to be selling materials in Saskatchewan and then they slip across the border and sell some in Manitoba and then slip across the border, sell some in Alberta.

So, we need to be able to track those because that's really where you'll find a lot of the organized crime is. They won't just commit those crimes in one jurisdiction, because they'd very quickly be able to figure out, well, if we're doing it too often here, we're going to get caught. So they'll spread it out. So those databases need to be linked so that that person, those people, become recognizable across the jurisdictions so that it becomes clear that they are part of an organized group of criminals that are doing this.

You know, there's another component to this which is part of the business that this government doesn't grasp, and that's poverty. I get the fact that there's organized groups stealing, particularly,

catalytic converters, but there's also poor people that have very limited options as to where they can get money from.

And one of the places that they can actually get money, unfortunately, is from selling scrap metal. And, I mean, you've seen all sorts of folks with their shopping carts and cans and different recyclable things. But if there's an opportunity to very quickly make some more money to help feed your kids, to pay the rent, then this government hasn't done anything to address those poverty conditions. In fact, most of the things that they've done have created more poor people, not less.

So that, then, leads into more crime, which we see the statistics, and they're going up, not down, as well. So while we're talking very specifically about this scrap metal legislation here today, we need to look at the bigger picture at some point in time, and that point in time has well passed. We need to look at how we can do things to help people get out of poverty that don't involve crime. And there has to be ways to do that through education, through proper rent controls, through proper rent assist issues, through job creation, which gets into the whole bigger picture that this government bought into shortly after they came to power with the free trade agreements that traded away our young people's jobs and our young people's opportunity to get ahead.

So we need to really look at a lot of those bigger picture items that come back to haunt us in these very specific things that this bill attempts to address, and it won't. We'll find, I'm sure, very similar to what other jurisdictions, that even though we put all this stuff in place with this particular piece of legislation, that the crime is going to continue to go up as long as we continue to create more poor people.

So we really need to get our heads wrapped around how we can help people out of poverty, which then helps prevent crime, which helps prevent a whole bunch of other things. But we're here today to talk very specifically about scrap metal and that kind of crime.

So let's hope that the government is listening and gets over some of their hyperbole about all they've done to lower taxes and help people, which really hasn't helped the people that is the focus of bills like this. It hasn't helped get people out of poverty. It's created benefits for those that aren't in poverty while hurting those that are.

One of the things that always concerns us with any piece of legislation that this government brings in is there's regulations to be developed. And we haven't seen those regulations, yet, so we don't know what is going to be in there. There has to be some serious thought put into what those regulations are going to look like, and I'm sure that the other jurisdictions have got regulations already that we can look at as the bare-bones minimum, and then expand to what makes more sense for us in Manitoba.

We've talked a lot about things like catalytic converters that are quick and easy to steal and apparently not that hard to sell. But there's other things of a bigger nature that have happened in this province. In particular I remember, some time ago, there was the theft of copper bars from the smelter in Flin Flon. Now, these copper bars are four feet square, probably weigh several thousand pounds. But somebody found a way to steal them and found somebody in the city willing to buy them, to process the copper, because there wasn't just copper; there was also gold and silver and all the rest of it.

More recently, I was reading about a theft of nickel from Vale up in Thompson, where somebody found a way, again, to steal substantial quality—quantities of processed nickel from the mine up there, and found somebody, again, that was willing to buy it. And so the court case has recently—they got caught, finally. Don't know how much—either case—how much they actually stole and sold and got processed before they got caught, but they were trying to get some of the cost back, and of course, the criminals weren't successful in that, either.

Recently, I know there was a theft of not just pieces of copper wire, but whole rolls. And I mean, these rolls are eight feet in diameter and several thousand feet of copper wire on these rolls. Somebody, obviously, that knew what they were doing and had the equipment to do it, probably an inside job of some sort, managed to walk away with several rolls of copper wire. We're not talking about just a little nickel-and-dime guys that are chopping up some wire that they find, but that's an issue as well, right?

\* (16:00)

So, sometimes, I guess the penalty really needs to look specifically at not just the crime but the level of the crime and the level of the product that has been stolen so that the punishment fits closer with the crime. So I would encourage the government to look at those kinds of things and certainly there needs to be—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

The volume of chatter is escalating, and I would like to request that it drops a few decibels before it gets out of hand. Thank you.

**MLA Lindsey:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate that. I know I was having a hard time hearing myself think over here as well.

So, you know, we've talked a little bit about some of the penalties. And so let's really sit down, if this bill passes, and look at some of the items that were in the member from Elmwood, and look at some of the things that were in his proposed legislation, add them into this legislation, look at some of the things that are already in legislation in Alberta, Saskatchewan, BC, and add them into this legislation, and let's look at, are there other things that we can do to make this legislation even better. Now, that that's the challenge that I guess we throw out for the government is to not just put legislation in but the best legislation.

So there's things in other jurisdictions about corporate directors that can actually be found guilty of an offence if they're aware or should've been aware. Very similar, I guess, to the Westray bill in workplace health and safety that said that corporations and directors could be found guilty if they didn't do things to protect workers.

Now, the same concept is applied in some jurisdictions with their legislation so that it's not just the people that are selling scrap metal but the corporations, the directors of companies that are buying it, that can be found liable, and I—someplace I read it, it was a \$100,000 fine they could be subject to on the first offence, and jail time as a director. So we need to make sure that our legislation looks at those kinds of issues as well.

Now, one of the things that the member from Elmwood and I may disagree on—which, not very often we disagree on things—but he explained to me, or attempted to explain to me, why MPI charges you a fee if somebody steals your catalytic converter, because you'll land up with a better catalytic converter or something.

And I don't think I buy into that concept, because, through no fault of my own, somebody stole my catalytic converter. This legislation should address that, that MPI needs to cover that replacement cost and not charge me a fee. So I think that maybe the member from Elmwood and I will have further discussions on this so that insurance also gets changed to be more fairer for people, particularly in this day

and age, where people are already struggling with their costs.

You know the one saving grace that may slow down the theft of catalytic converters? Is the new 'phenomenom' of the theft of gasoline, because now thieves are desperate because the price of gasoline has gone through the roof, and, again, they found a way, that, well, I can drill a hole in a gas tank and get gas really quickly. I don't know how we're going to legislate that out of existence, and I don't think we can.

But, again, it gets back to legislating the poverty out of existence, because that's not going to be the corporate or the organized crime that's stealing a pail of gas. I mean, once upon a time, when I was a kid, you used to be able to siphon gas out of a gas tank from one vehicle to—not that I ever did it, but I'm told it was pretty easy to do as long as you didn't mind the taste of gas.

So, car companies built systems that prevented that because somebody suggested, through legislation, that they had to. You know, now car companies put plastic gasoline tanks, make it easier and safer for somebody to drill a hole in and steal the gasoline. So, now we need to look at doing something different there, perhaps.

But I don't mean to get off on a tangent. I do, every now and again. But—so there's those kind of issues that are still out there, that we haven't addressed.

You know, we've talked about the safety aspect, and I remember, when I was working in health and safety, seeing some pretty horrible pictures of impoverished people in other countries that were so desperate to find some way to feed themselves and their families that they were chopping into live high-voltage electric lines to try and get that copper wire so they could sell it for scrap.

Now, I know that there's been theft of copper wire that's in use. Fortunately, I don't know that anybody has been seriously hurt or killed, but the potential is there. And the potential becomes even greater when people recognize that the bigger the copper wire, the bigger the profit they get for stealing it and trying to do something with those live copper conductors could be fatal for people.

So, we really need to look at how we can address these issues and come up with a way to put a stop to it. I mean, the price of valuable minerals, at the moment—an ounce of gold is \$2,000. So it doesn't take

long to find ways to start getting at the price of scrap copper.

One of the anomalies in the scrap industry is if you presently take copper wire in that's still got the plastic casing on it, you get less money for it than you do if you take the casing off and just take the copper wire in.

Well, of course, that presents all sorts of environmental problems, health and safety problems, because the quickest and easiest way to get that plastic casing off is to burn it off. Because it takes a lot of time and a lot of effort and proper tools to try and peel it off, particularly peeling it off large copper conductors. But it burns off, and unfortunately, who knows what all is in the fumes coming off that burning plastic.

So, that—there's so many aspects to what we're talking about here today. It's not just the scrap copper industry itself, or the scrap metal industry itself. It's the health and safety aspects. It's the environmental aspects. It's the poverty aspects. It's on and on, all these things are integrated as they so often are, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So we really need to look at the little picture, this legislation, but the bigger picture as well, to make sure we're addressing all of those kinds of things. And we're not doing very good at some of that at the present time.

I don't think I have a whole lot more to add to the conversation at this point in time, but one of the things that we need to make sure, I guess, getting back to the punishment aspect of things, is the ability to have people that have been found to be buying stolen metals, stolen products, have their licences not just suspended, but taken away. And make sure that that information is spread across jurisdictionally, so that they can't just go from this city to that city, this province to that province, and start the same business up again, and knowing full well that they had a charge here that caused them to lose their licence.

\* (16:10)

And we need to make sure that there's inspectors and sufficient number of inspectors because, as with most things, if we put things in place and depend on the goodwill of people that are already tempted to do things illegal, if we depend on their goodwill to self-report, we're never going to be successful. So we need to make sure that there's enough inspectors that are able to get out to these scrap yards and dealers and inspect the product that's being bought and sold to ensure that it's accurately being reported as to what is

there. We need to make sure that proper record keeping, which is fine, but we need to make sure that somebody's actually following up on those records and doing spot inspections to make sure that—sometimes criminals do criminal things when they don't report things properly to try and hide their own business transactions.

So I can't talk enough about the need to follow up on these types of issues, the same as with workplace health and safety inspectors, the same with building inspectors, same with fire inspectors. We need to make sure that those people are in positions sufficiently that they can actually perform their functions properly and make sure that they're doing that which we would like to think they're doing.

You know, we've heard any number—and I'm not going to go into all the recent examples of what's taken place with the number of thefts and stuff. So, I mean, what the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) has proposed here is a start. It's not really the good first start; my friend from Elmwood had a better first start proposed. So let's take the bare-bones minimum that the minister's proposed and take what the member from Elmwood has previously proposed, and let's build a better thing. Let's build legislation that can actually work for us and actually does that which we need it to do.

So I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll probably conclude my remarks there, and thank you very much.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Yes, it's a pleasure to speak to this bill. As I've discussed with the minister, this bill was—and it's been reported in the media—this bill was largely based on a bill that I introduced in 2020.

And I—it breaks my heart to have to correct the record and—for the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), although I will—he was quite right about throwing dead fish on a desk. Before I was elected, I checked into what was considered unparliamentary, and it was ruled in the House of Commons that when somebody threw a dead fish—dead salmon—I don't know that other fish may be a different story, but dead salmon in particular are not parliamentary. It is not parliamentary to throw a dead salmon on an opponent's desk.

But just to be clear, this is something that came—they came from consultations and suggestions from my own constituents in St. Boniface. In fact, it's quite funny: the individual who suggested it is a proud NDPer, Bob Gooding, who will never, ever, ever, ever



vote for me. But Bob is a good guy. Let's give Bob a hand. Bob deserves it.

Yes, but Bob—look, he was an engineer. He's got some ideas, and, frankly, this has been a huge issue in St. Boniface but elsewhere as well, because a few years ago, there was a massive increase in property crime. If you looked at the crime stats in—held by the Winnipeg Police, there was an increase of 300 per cent in property crime around Norwood, and we also have scrap metal dealers in the St. Boniface Industrial Park.

And, you know, you—I was—people were sending me photos of people sending, you know, trucks—or, not trucks but—*[interjection]*

Sorry? The—sorry, the shopping carts—that's the word I'm looking—shopping carts filled with scrap metal and so on. But we had also met with the Winnipeg Police Association, who told us stories about entire spools of copper wire being stolen, and basically you'd have an entire—the entire bed of a pickup truck filled with wire that was brand new and clean, that had had its insulation stripped off, filling an entire back of a—filling the entire back of a pickup truck that had been stolen from a Hydro yard. So we're talking about losses to Hydro. There is some really tragic situations, too, of people who were getting very sick because they were trying to burn off the insulation.

But, just to be clear, when we started working on the original legislation, this place being the place it is, it got second reading in November 24th, 2020. The government had actually started consultations and we had already finished our bill, so we introduced our bill first. And it is was actually based, not just on Alberta, but on Nova Scotia and BC as well. So we—they—a sweep across multiple jurisdictions with multiple different political parties. We required records for two years.

But this is a—there is the issue of property 'cime', which had been very frustrating for residents, but there's no question also that there's a criminal element, that it's organized. There have been people that worked, you know, at the Dominion Centre, which is a strip mall in St. Boniface. You know, they would park, and their catalytic converter would disappear.

But we also wanted to make sure, because of—that it is recognizing that there are individuals who, because we're in a situation where people are homeless, that we wanted to make sure that people were still—that there are exemptions for people who are able to

collect and submit scrap without being subject to the same sort of rules, which is highly important to us.

As my colleague from River Heights mentioned, there is a concern, especially if there is criminal involvement, the idea that we have to be careful because some corporations—just being a corporation shouldn't just be—make people exempt, that we have to keep track of who's selling, because, again, as the member from Flin Flon mentioned, there were—there have been some truly colossal theft—issues of theft and recycling in—so-called recycling in Manitoba.

And I'll just—briefly, one was in the case of Vale Canada in Thompson and the company, which purchased and resold 483,396 pounds of nickel from a compound in Thompson, Manitoba over the course of 10 months between July 2012 and 2013.

The defendant stole and sold the plaintiff's nickel for this total sum of \$2,474,991.90, which then resold it to another couple of companies for \$3.4 million. So this is not a small—this is not small business in any way; this is not small potatoes. This is something that is organized and 'ingolves' theft in the millions of dollars at huge cost to business, cost to individuals, insurance. All of it is a problem.

So the basic idea, again, to give credit to Bob Gooding, he just said, look, is—this is an issue, if it's a question of criminal activity, it's an opportunity to cut off the funds.

And I know it was driving—it was also at a time when meth was exploding and we had chop shops. So we have all sorts of people who were losing, you know, a bike from a garage or a backyard that costs hundreds of dollars or thousands of—or, over a thousand dollars, or whatever it costs, and it would be cut to pieces and sold for a few dollars in scrap. So you're seeing quite serious losses that aren't even being turned into much for scrap.

Sometimes, it's individuals who have dependency problems and it's easy for them to go and steal something, and that's—it's really quite tragic that that's the case, but there are organized—as I said, organized gangs and chop shops. We had to submit a house in St. Boniface. It was the unfortunate story, a chop shop and so-called trap house right across from a—elementary school that had to be turned in because people were—bikes were disappearing from all over and they were all being cut up in this one particular place and then being sold for scrap in order to finance criminal activity.

There are other examples of even—I think there is even a case of a manhole cover being stolen and people trying to sell it.

The other thing about it, I know that the City of Winnipeg has tried to do the same but, clearly, we can't have a situation where we're just going to pretend that the Perimeter is the limit. I will—absolutely will agree with the member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey) that we need to be harmonized with other jurisdictions, as well, because we don't want a situation where people are just putting roles of copper on the bat of a back of a truck and driving them to another province.

\* (16:20)

But this—I—we certainly hope that this will put a crimp in what's going on, because this has been a long-standing issue simply because of when you think about the things that are convenient, things of value that criminals can use, it's something that can't be traced. It's something that can be melted down, something that—a variety of, say, commodities that can be used to finance criminal activity that things like metal, oil and other materials are all things that need to be better regulated.

It's essentially and fundamentally treating scrap metal—scrap metal recyclers the way pawnshops have to operate, recognizing that there is—recognizing there's no question we've had significant criminal cases involving corporations on a large scale, as well as smaller scale gang activities. So this is overdue.

I think as—I remember when the—I believe it was the American President Harry Truman who said, it's amazing what you can get accomplished when you don't care about who gets the credit. The important thing here is that we get this bill passed.

I do think that—and I hope, I certainly hope that the government will be open to amendments, certainly after feedback from committee, but this is an important bill that I hope will reduce property crime and do what we can to make our communities and our province safer.

I know it's been something that's been long asked for from my constituency and there are constituencies across Manitoba and Winnipeg who are also frustrated with this unregulated nature of what's been happening, because it's been driving property through crime—driving theft and it's time to make it end.

So, thank you very much.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** It's a pleasure to rise and speak to this bill. And I do want to start by

congratulating the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) on this bill. And, yes, I do think that's worth a round of applause. I want to commend him on bringing this issue forward, one that I've certainly heard much about from my constituents, that I've heard from others across Winnipeg and throughout the province, and that we've seen in the media.

Now for people following along at home, you might be a bit confused because they might be going back and checking their notes and saying, well, no, wait a minute; this is Bill 9; this is coming from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), but so I guess I should maybe clarify.

And that is to say that this bill that we see here before us is almost an exact copy of a bill that was brought forward and championed and spoken about and petitions brought forward with regards to and articles written, and at every opportunity spoken about by the member for Elmwood as a champion for this issue.

And it was only after all of that pressure and all of those months, and I guess years, right, years of advocacy on this issue, that finally the government decided to move on their own bill. Now there are some shortcomings with the government's version of the bill, and I'm—do intend to speak to those shortcomings.

But I just, as I said, wanted to begin by acknowledging the work of our team on this issue, because while I say it is the member for Elmwood that's brought this forward, we know this is an issue that we've spoken about at the caucus table, that we've brought forward on behalf of our constituents because we know this is an issue that doesn't just affect one community or another.

As I said, this is something we're hearing about across the province. It doesn't matter if you live in Sage Creek or Linden Woods. It doesn't matter if you live in Elmwood or in Union Station. It doesn't matter what community you live in anywhere in the province, whether it's Steinbach or Thompson. This is an issue that is everywhere in our province and it's something that we know that if we work with industry together and if we work together as a Legislature to get this kind of legislation passed, this can be a very—can have real affects and it can have a big—make a big difference for Manitobans and the crime that they are experiencing.

Now, I'd also like to take a moment to just recognize the words of the member for Elmwood as well in that there is a precedence for being, you know,

bringing these bills forward in a bipartisan way. This didn't need to be Bill 215 versus Bill 9, right? This could have been a government bill co-sponsored by the member from Elmwood or vice versa, could have been the other way around because this—again, we captured, I think, more in our bill than they did in theirs.

But, again, if this was something that, you know, members across the way wanted to collaborate on and come together on, that could have been done. That's something that I know the member from Elmwood has experience with. He's an experienced legislator and he's willing to do that kind of work. But, you know, that's fine. We are where we are, that the government wants to bring their version.

What I do hope is that, in our system here in Manitoba, we do have an opportunity to hear from the public, and that we have an opportunity to hear about amendments and other ways that legislators—people often see us, you know, in sort of, you know, the conflict, so to speak, in the House. You know, maybe the theatrics of question period, and then even in regular debate where things do get heated. Let's take it outside of that arena, and let's look at what we can do and how we can work together.

And so maybe I'll just mention those—some of those key differences that I think the member from Elmwood, others on our team, have mentioned. But I do think it's worth just making sure that the government is listening, that there are differences, and there are ways to strengthen this bill.

We understand that the main purpose of this bill, this government bill, is to simply reduce scrap metal thefts, whereas we believe our bill would specifically target those organized crime groups by doubling the proposed fine and giving a court—the court system the option to administer prison sentences.

Now that sounds extreme, perhaps, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for, you know, what, you know, might be considered just a simple theft. However, we know that that is not the case. That's not what is happening in the real world.

In fact, what is happening is that organized crime groups have seen the value in pulling off these kind of thefts. And they aren't just going out, and this isn't a one-off, this isn't just some random person in a community who's doing the theft. It's, in fact, an organized crime syndicate that is allowing and sponsoring this kind of thing to happen in our communities.

So it's not good enough to just say we need to go after those individuals who are doing the thefts. We want to take down the infrastructure around them, the crime infrastructure, in this case, that is allowing and promoting these sorts of activities to happen.

So I believe that the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) addressed this. He talked about—I mean, this isn't—he's not coming to this Chamber without the information. He's showing us, and he's telling the government, look, this has been done in other jurisdictions; we're not the first, so let's do it right.

And one of the ways we can do that is to administer higher fines and have the option—of course, not the first option, but the option, if this is seen as part of a larger organization, to administer prison sentences for these types of crimes.

We know that the government bill stipulates that multiple transactions by the same person within a 24-hour period are deemed to be a single transaction. Ours will up this to seven days, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which will allow better tracking across the system, and to find out where there are multiple, you know, because they're going to learn, of course, criminals are going to understand how to game the system, and so we need to make sure we are pre-empting that.

So we're going to say it's up to seven days now, and that really goes after those who are sophisticated. This isn't just somebody coming in off the street with stolen goods, you know, not—maybe just in a desperate situation. These are organized criminals who are doing this, and so that's who we want to target.

You know, this is a way that we can work together to strengthen the bill. I know that, you know, the member for Elmwood is willing to do that work. So I, again, I hope that the government is open to hearing that.

I just wanted to speak very briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, this is not an issue of one neighbourhood over another. It's not, you know, sort of core Winnipeg neighbourhoods that are experiencing this. It is, in fact, everyone.

And, you know, just not too long ago, maybe—and I didn't catch everything the member for Elmwood had said, so I don't want to repeat him here. But it wasn't too long ago where reports were coming out from Kildonan Place shopping mall, you know, a suburban shopping mall servicing all of northeast Winnipeg and beyond. And there were reports of thefts, you know, in broad daylight. In the middle of a busy mall parking lot where people were going in—you

know, parking, going in and leaving their vehicles for not very long.

The thieves have become so sophisticated, they know, as the member said, which vehicles to target, which ones give the highest yields and the highest payouts in terms of the precious metals that are contained within. They are in for very short periods of time, they use the right tools to get the catalytic converters out and they're—you know, they're on the road.

And so, these are the kinds of folks that we want to target because they are the ones who are sophisticated in doing the work.

\* (16:30)

The other experience that we've had just, you know, knocking on doors in my own community, are people who are saying, you know, I have a vehicle that's parked out back and, you know, maybe it's not their daily driver, maybe it's a car that's been parked for a while and needs some repairs or just is a car that they don't use as often. And it'll be a few weeks, and all of a sudden they'll go out and they'll realize, as the member said, you fire it up, you're going to know pretty quickly if your catalytic converter is gone because it's going to make a heck of a lot of noise. They—they're saying—they hear this and they go, what is going on? They don't realize. And they can't even go to the police and say, well, this, you know, this happened yesterday, this happened overnight. They can't even narrow it down because it's happened in the last few weeks or in the last few months.

And so this is a big problem for suburban communities that maybe otherwise don't see the levels of crime that other communities do. They don't think about, you know, locking up their garages in the same way. I mean, I think they probably do, but not in the same security systems that other places have. They don't expect their vehicles to be burgled in this kind of way.

So this is the kind of thing that is affecting those people. And they—and they're sort of saying now, all of a sudden, we're victims of crime, what can we do to help? We have a solution. This is a solution that, you know, goes after the people who are really responsible, those organized criminals and those who are helping those organized criminals.

The other experience we know of—and, again, I—and I don't want to repeat what other members have said. But the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) was up on this issue. I believe this happened in his

constituency, in St. Boniface. Workers who went in to work at the Loveday mushroom plant, I believe, were all of a sudden targeted, a number of vehicles in one fell swoop. You know, these are new Canadians in many cases. These are people who are, you know, they're hard-working people, but, you know, they work hard for their money, and they don't have lots left over at the end of the month. So something like this happens, this is a big hit. These things are worth a lot of money. It's not a small item to have to replace in your vehicle. And they were hit.

I've heard that same experience in my own constituency. New Canadians, again, who are hard-working people who are just getting by and all of a sudden are victims of crime, and they are coming to me and saying, what can we do about it? We have a bill. You know, and I was able to say, we have a bill, Bill 215; this is being put forward by the member from Elmwood, and we want to get it passed. At that point they were saying, why wasn't it getting done? So I think they'll be happy to hear that they're finally listening to the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) on doing this.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to address the, you know, the companies and the scrap metal industry in our city and throughout our province.

You know, I was just telling one of my colleagues here one of my favourite things to do when my—especially when my kids were young, I still drag them along sometimes. But I'm a bit of a scrap metal collector. Like, if I have any scrap metal that—from my home or that I see on the side of the road, like, I know there's value in this, right? You know. I make sure that I—I'm only collecting that which is being thrown away, which differentiates me from these criminals. But, look, the reality is metal in general is becoming more and more valuable, and at the same time, we all understand the value in recycling. And there's not many materials as good at being recycled as metal.

So what I like to do—and, you know, this—maybe this is, you know, betrays my Mennonite tendencies, but one of my favourite activities, you know, a cheap night out, so to speak, is—was to take that scrap metal that I would collect over months or even throughout the entire year, and we'd throw it in the trailer, and we'd go down to General Scrap at—on Springfield Road in my community, or one of the other many scrap metal dealers in our city.

And, you know, the—I mean, it's a great place for a young—for young kids. They get to see the big

machines and the big claw comes over and, you know, and there's fire and there's, you know, all this, like, you know, big, big action.

But I could teach them, look, we're part of a good thing here. We're actually giving back that metal to be recycled, and at the end of the day, I'd go in and, you know, you present your driver's licence; they've got you on file. You are recognized who you are. You know, they've got the machine there, couple coins come out. Kids love that. They can grab that, would go, you know, buy an ice cream cone at McDonald's.

My point is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there are—the scrap metal industry is a legitimate one. They want to work with us to do the right thing and they want to make sure that if folks are bringing in scrap metal that it's not from stolen, and especially not from organized crime. They understand that they're part of the community and they have a role to play to make sure that our scrap metal is properly handled, that it's properly recycled.

And, you know, and at the end of the day, if you can legitimately make a few dollars, you know, people do this as a, you know, as a—you know, I don't know if I'd call it a business, but as a way of life to collect scrap metal and turn it in. We want to protect those folks and we want to protect the industry who wants to work with us. But let's get this right. Let's get this right and go after those who are really at—who are really perpetrating this kind of thing, and that's the organized criminals in our community.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this because this is the kind of issue that, you know, when you go to the doorsteps you're going to hear, you know, quite often, I would suggest, more often than some folks who maybe don't go to the doorstep as often, they might not realize how live this issue is for people out on the street in your communities. Those folks, they want something done.

So, you know, let us get together as legislators, let's not, you know, let's not waste our time bickering what number, what bill number this is. Let's—and, you know, ultimately—who gets credit. We know who brought this forward, we know the member from Elmwood did that, we know that he's been championing this and he'll continue to do that. Let's get this passed, let's support this and let's move on with getting the right regulations in place.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to put a few

words on the record on Bill 9, otherwise known as perhaps Bill 215. I, too, would also like to give a little bit of credit, or a lot of credit—most of the credit—to our colleague and the member from Elmwood—or all the credit. I believe maybe that's more appropriate for getting a lot of the—for truly going out there and listening to not only his constituents, but Manitobans in general across the entire province, across the city of Winnipeg, across the province of Manitoba.

And there's real props and real—a great thank you that has to go out to the member from Elmwood for that and for doing all the legwork to bring this piece of legislation forward and to talk it up to—at committee stages, in this Chamber, out in the community, I'm sure on countless emails, countless phone calls, to be able to bring this forth, this piece of legislation, and that he championed at being Bill 215. But I realize we're here to discuss Bill 9, which is very close to a carbon copy.

But there are some differences, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe the member from Elmwood, the bill that he had brought forth that is very similar to this, had a lot more bite to it, a lot more teeth, a lot more strength to it, and it was something that was thoroughly thought out and not just a reactionary approach. And I believe that Bill 9 was brought forth as a reaction and a—almost a competition to Bill 215, but it fails in comparison. Fines and jail time for offenders, for example, versus this bill, Bill 9, having no real consequence and no real bite to it.

Even just simple record keeping. Bill 9 we had in comparison, who called for five years, and I believe the member from Elmwood, he spoke it out and I think he said it best in his remarks: it's just a matter of a little bit of extra paperwork, you know, to keep an extra three years of records, which, in the big picture nowadays with computers and whatnot, there—you just type a few numbers in, be a little transaction, some keystrokes, and bang—you have an extra few years worth of record keeping that can go a long way as a deterrent towards the organized crime factor of this, in comparison to two years of record keeping, which Bill 9 is actually asking.

And again, a little bit—I shouldn't say a little bit—a lot less bite; a lot less effect that that would have.

\* (16:40)

Transactions being another one, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We talked about this being a deterrent towards crime—a deterrent towards organized crime—yet when we—when our colleague from Elmwood brought

forward Bill 9, you know, multiple transactions were going to be tracked. They were going to be counted as multiple transactions, rather than, you know, Bill 9 being just part of, here, there's one multiple transaction that counts as one. And that doesn't get to be a deterrent in that way.

And, as was mentioned earlier in a few different comments, this is an issue that's across the province. The member from St. Boniface talked about it being an issue in his constituency, member from Elmwood in his constituents, Concordia, it's all across Thompson, Flin Flon, even my constituent Keewatinook. This is a serious issue that needs to be dealt with, and it's—it gets to be difficult.

And sometimes when we talk about scrap metals and—in this case, you're talking about enforcement. And on a bigger scale, I mean, what are we going to do? What are we going to do with scrap metal in general?

I was up in one of my communities in Garden Hill and St. Theresa Point, and multiple, multiple, multiple piles and piles of scrap metal were there. Cars—but they're in remote communities, so they're trapped there. They're trapped there until this period of time, and then all of a sudden we're trying to rush to get this out.

So, this is—the scrap metal industry and scrap metal workers are blue collar workers that really want to do what's best. They want to make a living. They want to be able to earn a paycheque, earn an honest paycheque.

But at the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they should not be the enforcers of this. They should not be the ones that have to—all the reliance is on them. So, how is this government going to help make this piece of legislation more so where it actually helps workers, it actually helps everybody else, but still keeps that deterrent, because that is something that's a reality.

We made mention of exactly when, maybe when the general public talks about scrap metal, they think of metal. They think of fencing or scrap cars. But the reality is, I mean, you get to more valuable commodities, you know, catalytic converters, copper. In—outside of Winnipeg, if there's a Hydro site that has a major theft of copper—in Winnipeg, maybe that can be replenished fairly quickly. It's still a theft, it's still a loss, but in more isolated communities and more remote communities, when that theft occurs, that could be catastrophic. Absolutely catastrophic. So, what do we do to help that deterrent?

And I know there's a number of initiatives that Hydro has in place to be able to combat this, and it's great. But that deterrent also needs to come down here. So this bill needs to be strengthened and, I think, across all parties—and this is a non-partisan issue. But yet, this has chosen to be a partisan issue in terms of not backing it, and not co-sponsoring on Bill 215, and instead trying to take, basically, the entire blueprint of 215 and create Bill 9 for the government to be able to do is just kind of a little disheartening.

But at the same time, it's a necessary thing that needs to happen in this province, because this bill needed to be in place. This bill is something that needs to happen. And it needed to happen. And we've seen that, and the recognition initially was from the member from Elmwood who brought forth that piece of legislation saying this is an issue that's raised and arise now, today. And it's of vital importance, and it's growing. It's growing exponentially.

We've talked about various social issues that are going on: crime, addictions, poverty. There's a number of driving factors that come into that. But the main focus I think we ought to be able to focus on here is the criminal aspect of what this piece of legislation is intended, and hopefully will do to deter.

So when we come out and we have individuals, or groups of individuals, for the most part—I know the member from St. Boniface talked about homes that are across from schools and bicycles going missing and things like that, and that's a real thing. You know, let alone the social aspect of a young child being robbed, him or herself, of their bicycle, maybe their first bike, who knows? And that being sold, then, for scrap metal to feed an addiction or a criminal activity. And that's disheartening in itself.

But at the same time, that young person should, and would and should be able to feel comfortable to then grow up and come in this place, come in this building, and say you know what? I was wronged, and there was a wrong that was done to me, and this is something I want to change. And if they want to be a champion of a cause just like this, that should be great.

I think a lot of people in this Chamber and a lot of people that I know and I'm sure a lot of people everybody knows, including yourself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have known somebody that has had something stolen from them. And when that happens, that's very hurtful. It's very hard to overcome. I'm sure even members here, if you've ever had, for the example we use here, a bicycle—if you had your bicycle stolen, you'll remember that. You'll remember, you know, I came

out after school and looked at the fence and my bicycle was gone. And that's very hurtful.

So then you start getting—as you grow older, you start to wonder, okay, you know, what happened to that bicycle? So now we're sitting in here, and now, cognizant, we're thinking, that bicycle that got stolen, now I know what really could have happened to that. And if something like this was in place, and we're talking 'bout it, and we're not trying to age ourselves by any means to say, you know, I remember back 40 years ago when I was a young man and my bike got stolen. But at the same time, I do remember that, and now, realizing that if this piece of legislation was in place all that years ago, you know, would that have been a deterrent to not have that happen.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we refer exactly to Bill 9, I still—and I apologize if I'm constantly referring to it as bill 15—Bill 215 in error because they're such—they're so similar, and it's very difficult to kind of tell one from the other, other than 215 definitely having more bite than Bill 9.

But it's—there's so many different aspects now, especially today when we—we're talking about global warming, climate change and mining and all kinds of different issues and precious metals that are few and far between, the price of things escalating, the price of gas, the price of gold, the price of copper. It can't help it now, if there's no—if criminals feel there's no legitimate way to be able to do that, and they refer—and they get into this process of now being able to almost do nothing but plan as to how to take advantage of those—of gold, of copper, of scrap metal. And what increases that—now that criminal activity and that criminal aspect of this. And we—in society, I mean, we've—you know, we've talked about criminal activity and drugs and addictions and those kind of things that help drive criminal activity, but at the same time we also know that money is the basis also, and money drives that criminal activity.

So when we look at this piece of legislation and Bill 9, for example, and we talk about Bill 9 in comparison to Bill 215, fines, jail time referred to in Bill 215 in comparison to very little kind of enforcement in Bill 9, is that really a deterrent, then? Is that something that we look at? Is there a true deterrent to be able to say that Bill 9 actually has the bite and the intent to make that deterrent to now have that impact on that criminal activity, to now make a consequence for that criminal activity?

And it has potential. It absolutely has potential to do that. And perhaps at committee stage and in further

discussions and in amendments, the government will be open to being able to take all those into consideration to say, let's give this piece of legislation more bite. Let's increase it in terms of fines, in terms of jail time. Real consequence for the criminal activity that is the basis of why we're bringing—or why government is bringing Bill 9 and also why the basis for the member from Elmwood bringing forward Bill 215, to be able to say there's a true deterrent to this criminal activity. There's true consequence to this criminal activity.

As I mentioned a little while ago, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has effects overall. Maybe some people in Manitoba may wonder, you know, when they watch debates and they watch these online videos and they watch our MLAs debating these issues and they wonder, well, how does that affect me? What's the real-world consequence for me?

And the real-world consequence for some people, sometimes it doesn't take effect until it hits you personally. And I've spoken about, you know, having your bike stolen as a child, and that's one. And the other one I talked about is Hydro, is copper and Hydro.

In my constituency and up my area, there's a Hydro substation and it's protected. It was built about five, six years ago now. But there's—a large portion of that is also copper, in the grids, in the fencing, in the transformers and things like that, too, and they experienced theft. They experienced a theft out the back. The fence was cut. There was rolls and spools that were taken.

\* (16:50)

And that has a real-world consequence. If that was essential to being able to have that substation function, which serviced, basically, very close to the entire east side of the province, and that was broken, and stolen and missing, and that substation needed that piece of copper and it wasn't there? That's catastrophic.

We all know, we all experienced that in the winter storms, in the fire season, where our communities are without power. So when we talk about the copper aspect, and the copper that's used in hydro transmission, and if that went missing? That's a major issue. That's a major concern.

So, this piece of legislation, Bill 9, has to have that bite, that effect, that strong deterrent to be able to say, if you're going to do this, if you're going to go down this road, and if you're going to be stealing from

a Hydro site, if you're going to steal from a site that's vital to just having society function, then there needs to be a consequence. There needs to be a strong consequence to that.

And if there's no deterrent to that, if there's simply—let's say, for example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a fine brought forward, oh, we're going to fine you \$100 for your first offence. Well, you know what? On that first offence, this criminal just made \$1 million.

So, really, what does that do? Nothing. It allowed no deterrent at all. They'll just simply pull out, perhaps, ten rolls of copper pennies and say, here, I'm going to pay my fine. By the way, I'm going to stick all this money in my bank account, and I'm just going to keep on doing that.

And it's across the province. It's across the country.

So, the member from Flin Flon also talked about having jurisdictions share this information, so we don't have various activity going on over different geographical and regional areas. We don't have somebody coming and—coming in under an allowance, you know, if there's an allowable amount in here, to say, you know what, I've had this number of scrap-metal dealers that I want to do, and bring that forward and say this is—I reached the minimum, I reached my quota over here, I could take my quota over there, I could take my quota over there; and be able to say: No. So they had to be geographically linked.

But I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my closing comments, Bill 9 needs to have more bite. Just like Bill 15 did, the member from Elmwood brought forward, it had bite. Bill 9 needs to have more bite.

Miigwech.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, in a few minutes, I want to start by thanking the MLA for St. Boniface for bringing forward, essentially, this bill in October 4, 2020. The bill could have been passed if there'd been support then. I'm pleased that there is support now.

And it was good to see that, after the MLA for St. Boniface had brought forward this bill, that about six months later, in May 2020, the MLA for Elmwood brought forward a copy of the bill, and then brought forward another copy in November of 2021.

So this is thanks to the leadership of the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) that we are where we

are today, with a robust bill, which we will support, to try and decrease the theft of metals, of catalytic converters, and to make Manitoba a better place to be, with a more robust, and safe and better protected scrap-metal industry.

I want to also put a few comments on the record about the scrap-metal industry and its role, historically, in the pollution of lead.

Lead is a very significant neurotoxin, and lead in the environment has been significant on its impact to lower IQ, to decrease school performance, to increase the likelihood of children getting attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, to increase the rate of juvenile delinquency and to increase the rate of crime.

And just as one study, which was published March 7th, so very recently, hot off the press, 2022, estimating that in the United States, there was a population-level effect of lead going back a number of decades with, as I quote, lead is responsible for the loss of 824 million IQ points as of 2015. Quite a substantial impact on the population in the United States, and it is to be expected that there would be a similar impact here in Canada and Manitoba.

And we know that while some of the sources of lead—lead in gasoline has decreased—is now eliminated, that other sources of lead from scrap metal industries are still around. And we need to make sure that we are cleaning these up.

And we also need to be sure that we're screening children early on. There is another study that I will just quote from which is looking at the role of early intervention services; before age three, you need to test kids for their blood-lead level and then intervene.

And what they found was that children exposed to lead who received early intervention services before age 36 months did significantly better in English language arts tests than children who didn't receive these services, that children who received services were 14 and 16 per cent more likely to meet test-bank standards in math and English language arts. This was a study done in New York, in the state of New York. But it shows the importance of not only identifying these children but also of early intervention.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I will sit down. Thank you for this opportunity so we can have a vote.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?



**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 9, The Scrap Metal Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

#### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

##### Bill 12—The Peak of the Market Reorganization Act

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Agriculture, on Bill 12.

We shall—we will now consider debate and second reading for Bill 12, Peak of the Market Reorganization Act.

**Hon. Derek Johnson (Minister of Agriculture):** This legislation will deregulate the table potato and root crop industry in Manitoba. *[interjection]*

No, it's already moved. It was moved yesterday. *[interjection]* I'm good? Okay. Thanks.

From a single-desk marketing agency under The Farm Products Marketing Act into a not-for-profit corporation under The Corporations Act, this bill was developed in response to requests by both producers and Peak of the Market. The proposed new structure will facilitate the opportunity for Peak of the Market to invest, grow their business and better compete internationally and ultimately expand exports from Manitoba.

For Manitoba producers, deregulation will open up the market to any producer, providing opportunities for any producer to grow as many potatoes and root crops as they wish and to sell their produce to any buyer and to freely co-operate.

Finally, Manitoba consumers will benefit by enjoying increased access to high quality, locally 'produced'—produced food.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence—

#### Point of Order

**An Honourable Member:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, a point of order.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for Concordia.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Well, thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just wanted to take this opportunity. I know it was mentioned at the beginning of the day, but there was some flowers that were donated to the Legislature. I know that they were with regards to promoting peace in Ukraine. I think that's an important endeavour, and so I hope that all Manitobans will understand our unity on that issue at the very least.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I thank the member. That's not a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Debate for today has ended.

The hour being 5 o'clock, this—when this matter is called before the House again, question period will be open.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House stands—is adjourned and stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 10, 2022

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