

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTomARE, 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
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
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	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, Hon.	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
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>	Kirkfield Park	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to kindly take the Chair.

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

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

Welcome. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Service): I am pleased to table the Public Service Group Insurance Fund Benefits Summary, Auditor's Report and Financial Statements For the Year Ended April 30th, 2022.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Ministerial statements, and I do need to recognize advance notice was given.

World Diabetes Day

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I rise in the House today to recognize November 14th as World Diabetes Day and November as Diabetes Awareness Month.

Across the world, 451 million people are living with diabetes. Of that number, approximately 185,000 of them are Manitobans. That is 12 per cent of Manitoba's population.

Roughly 10 per cent of people living with diabetes have type 1; insulin-dependent diabetes is what it's called. Type 1 diabetes generally develops in childhood or adolescence, but can also develop in adulthood. Type 2 diabetes is a disease in which your body cannot make enough insulin or does not properly use the insulin it makes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government is doing our part to help in the fight against diabetes. Last year, our government invested \$6 million to establish two new programs that support Manitobans living with diabetes.

For the first time in Manitoba's history, advanced glucose monitors are covered by the Manitoba Pharmacare program for individuals aged 25 years and younger. Manitobans have the option of either continuous or flash glucose monitors.

Advanced glucose monitors enable individuals, their caregivers and health-care providers to identify glucose trends and adjust medications, activity and food intake. This kind of flexibility allows people with diabetes to live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives, and I'm pleased our government supports this expansion in services.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government also expanded coverage for 18 years of age to 25 years for insulin pumps. Insulin pumps play a vital role in managing and regulating diabetes. Expanding services to those aged 25 supports more young people as they manage their diabetes and ensure cost is not a barrier to accessing services.

While type 1 diabetes is a genetic condition, type 2 diabetes is preventable. Encouraging healthy lifestyles, regular testing and identifying risk factors in your family medical history can help prevent type 2 diabetes. Small changes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, can make a big difference

and can support many individuals to—who want to take those first steps to reduce their risk.

I encourage all Manitobans to know the risks and prevent diabetes. This November, let's work to end diabetes.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): November 14th was World Diabetes Day, a day when we acknowledge Manitobans living with diabetes and restate our commitment to support them. Founded in 1991, World Diabetes Day was a response to growing concerns about the escalating health threat posed by diabetes, and many of those concerns still exist today.

According to Diabetes Canada, 640 Canadians are diagnosed every day, one person every three minutes. And there is still no cure for the nearly 12 million Canadians who are living with diabetes or prediabetes.

Manitobans with diabetes face a number of challenges. Of course, there are the medical issues that accompany the condition, but there can also be stigma that comes from false information about the causes of diabetes.

One of these stigmatizing narratives is the idea that Manitobans give themselves diabetes through unhealthy eating habits. Instead, when speaking about diabetes, we need to acknowledge the other causes of the condition, such as a person's family history and background.

We also know that Indigenous Manitobans face significantly higher rates of diabetes with adverse health consequences more so than non-Indigenous Manitobans, and we are particularly concerned about the rapidly increasing levels of diabetes amongst Indigenous children. More needs to be done to support Indigenous peoples and work alongside communities dealing with the effects of diabetes.

Many Manitobans with diabetes struggle to navigate a health-care system that too often fails to offer them the support that they need. Out-of-pocket costs for Manitobans with diabetes can be as high as \$6,000 per year. The cut-off age to qualify for public coverage of an insulin pump is 25, and there are many people who, despite this government's actions last year as a direct result of the advocacy of many families and communities here in Manitoba and members on this side of the House and our entire caucus, quite frankly, they still do not have access to the pumps that they were meant to, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (13:40)

Foot care is another area of health care that is vital for people with diabetes, but the PC government recently cut the Thompson foot care clinic. This left many vulnerable people without crucial care, at a time when the number of people with diabetes in Thompson is growing.

This is unacceptable. We know that we can and must do better than this for Manitobans with diabetes, and it starts with decreasing the stigma and improving access to treatments for all Manitobans. And we'll continue to fight for Manitobans with diabetes on this side of the House.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I wish to—I ask leave to speak to the minister's statement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There leave for the member to speak to the minister's statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, November 14th, two days ago, was World Diabetes Day. For Manitoba, it has special significance because more than 1 in 10 Manitobans has either type 1 or type 2 diabetes, and many more have prediabetes.

While those up to age 25 with type 1 diabetes can access provincial coverage for continuous glucose monitors and insulin pumps, this coverage needs to be extended to those with type 2—1 diabetes of all ages.

In 1996, in Manitoba, diabetes was declared an epidemic. In the many years since then, the epidemic has not been given the attention by the Province that would be expected for such a widespread and serious condition. The result is that the number of Manitobans with diabetes has increased steadily from less than 50,000 in 1996, up to the current estimate from the minister of 180,000 currently.

Unfortunately, the Throne Speech yesterday didn't mention diabetes at all. Perhaps it was supposed to be in the section on reconciliation, which was, unfortunately, omitted from the Throne Speech.

Improving diabetes prevention and improving access to care need to be top-of-the-mind issues in Manitoba not only because of the need to act, but also because those with—the care of those with diabetes is costly and when we can reduce the number of people with diabetes, that will save considerably in health-care costs.

Secondary prevention of complications is also important. Access to excellent care can decrease complications including heart disease, strokes, kidney disease, vision problems and leg amputations. We need to do better. We need to make sure we're transferring knowledge of prevention and care from the individual to the community level. Only then will we really, properly succeed.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before proceeding to members' statements, I wish to draw the attention of all members to the gallery where we have joining us today, from Balmoral school, 23 grade 6 students under the direction of Lori Anderson. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor).

We welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature and hope you have a great afternoon here.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Community Events—Acknowledgements

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Municipal Relations): I rise in the Legislature today to speak about the great summer and fall seasons that we have had with graduations, fairs, festivals, rodeos, weddings, fall suppers and, of course, Manitoba socials. It is fantastic to see the return of community interaction and participation. This summer, I took part in many parades and neighborhood events and I believe they were all well attended.

It's great to see many services restored and especially those of our schools and classrooms in September. To have teachers and students transition back to the classroom is a positive and a welcome sign of recovery.

The re-opening of public spaces has allowed for public engagement and meetings. I have attended many of these locally and on a broader scale. I've heard many positive messages from communities and community members that although there continues to be COVID challenges, there are many good things happening on that recovery front. There is economic growth happening all across Manitoba in 'ural'—urban and rural settings.

I had the privilege of touring CentrePort and the Winnipeg Airport Authority and it's very clear that there is interest and investment in our province and

recovery is strong, and I look forward to seeing this continued growth.

Another exciting post-COVID resumption, of course, was fall suppers this past October/November. There were an abundance of suppers, some of which I got to, but not all. And now I look forward to Christmas craft sales and get-togethers, events and parades. All of this is exciting return to what we know as our province of Manitoba.

On behalf of all members of the Assembly, I want to say thank you to the many communities, businesses and volunteers who continue to work and/or volunteer to co-ordinate the many community events that bring people together again. It is through community effort, volunteerism and involvement that we all see a strong, healthy recovery, and thank you to the many Manitobans who participated, attended or volunteered to make these events a success.

I also want to wish the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and all of their very dedicated fans good luck and safe travels this weekend.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Indigenous Children in CFS Care

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): In September, the Winnipeg Free Press published an article on the damaging effects on the—of the child-welfare system's apprehension focus and lack of supports for families in need. They wrote that, and I quote: The harm caused to thousands of children a year in care, to their families and their community is profound. The full impact it has on society is almost immeasurable. End quote.

Indigenous children are apprehended at much higher rates than non-Indigenous children. Far too many end up missing or murdered, failed by the system charged with protecting them. Many of their families joined me in the House to support bill 241 to create licence plates to raise awareness for MMIWG2S and provide financial support for their children to follow their educational dreams.

The government had the chance to commit to reconciliation, to help break cycles of poverty and trauma caused by colonialism. Instead, they threw the bill out and the seven months of work by these families and communities put into the initiative.

Children deserve to be raised in healthy environments within their communities and cultures. Indigenous communities continue to struggle with the legacies of colonialism, intergenerational trauma and

discrimination. That's the reason why we should offer support and work in partnership, not to apprehend children. As members of this Legislature, we carry this sacred responsibility, and there's more that we can all be doing.

In 2018, the House passed bill 223, my bill, to ensure that poverty was not a grounds for child apprehension. That was an important step, but more needs to be done.

All members of this government need to commit themselves to real action on reconciliation, like solid policy changes for MMIWG2S crisis and Indigenous child welfare. If violence against women and girls and incidents of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls was a true priority of this government, as they said in their Throne Speech yesterday, they would show support to the families and communities and vote—

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

West St. Paul Charity Drive for Ukrainians

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): It gives me immense pleasure to recognize the RM of West St. Paul, partnered with the Seven Oaks School Division and specifically R.F. Morrison School, in helping collect items for displaced Ukrainian children.

Residents of West St. Paul showed their generosity and compassion while bringing in dozens of boxes of diapers, baby food, wipes, clothing, et cetera. I thank all who took the time to drop off items that will be sent to Ukraine and will provide these necessities to the innocent victims of the ongoing Russian invasion.

I am proud of the West St. Paul people who support their neighbours across the street, and now their demonstration of kindness, their neighbours across the globe. The municipal office, as well as the public works department, reached out to see if they could contribute to the success of the drive, helping with collections and co-ordinating the transportation of donations to the school.

I want to thank them for their contribution to the donation drive for the humanitarian aid items for R. F. Morrison School. The items collected will go directly to helping displaced and refugee families from Ukraine during this most challenging time.

Donations were prioritized, and those most needed will be shipped directly to Ukraine while others will remain in local churches to be used by refugees

arriving here in Winnipeg. The R.F. Morrison School and the West St. Paul Municipal Office have been and continue to be a hard-working, dedicated group of community volunteers. They have been visionaries and leaders in providing quality services for their community members and abroad.

Thank you to all who supported this initiative.

Please join me in acknowledging the volunteers of the R.F. Morrison School and the West St. Paul Municipal Office for their continued vision and arduous work.

* (13:50)

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. Slava [*Glory to*] Ukraine.

Lead Water Pipe Replacement

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Deputy Speaker, every Manitoban deserves safe water, and so we call it—again call on the Province to take a leadership role on replacing both municipally owned lead water pipe connections and homeowner lead water pipe connections from their homes to the shut-off valves at their property lines.

In March 2019, Health Canada announced new lead level guidelines for lead exposure. Lead concentrations in drinking water should be kept as low as reasonably achievable as lead exposures are inherently unsafe and have serious health consequences, especially for children and expectant mothers.

Since those new guidelines were announced, many Canadian municipalities launched rebates, loans, grants and incentive programs for replacement costs that can run up to \$4,000 per property. Winnipeg has not, and it needs provincial direction and help.

Winnipeg has 23,000 homes with these lead water pipe connections. The Elmwood-East Kildonan area has 2,755 of these pre-1950-built homes. With the lack of publicly accessible information, the onus remains on the homeowner to identify their family's level of risk. That's not the way to handle a public health issue.

President Biden identified lead water pipes as a clear and present danger to American public health a year and a half ago, and announced a 100 per cent replacement of lead water pipes found in 10 million US homes and 400,000 schools and child-care centres.

Over a year ago, we first called on the Province to immediately contact all home and property owners in Manitoba with this issue and work with Winnipeg and

the other Manitoba municipalities to provide financial support for lead water pipe replacement so our access to safe water is assured and exposure to lead and its health risks are brought to the lowest levels possible.

Black Bear Rescue Manitoba

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise today in the Legislature to recognize individuals from Black Bear Rescue Manitoba who've been promoting animal advocacy and conservation in our province.

Joining us in the gallery today are the organization's president, Judy Stearns; her husband and operations manager, Roger Stearns. Judy and Roger's involvement in bear rehabilitation started in 2012 when their attention was brought to an abandoned cub named Makoon. Manitoba did not have an authorized centre for the treatment and rehabilitation for bears and there weren't many options if an orphaned bear when found.

Seeing that there were no plans in the immediate future for a bear rehab in Manitoba, Judy mused on a phone call to Julie Woodyer, who is now director of the facility. The two discussed the possibility of her and Roger opening a rehab themselves that started the ball rolling.

Finally, in April of 2018, six years after their journey began, Black Bear Rescue Manitoba opened and began taking cubs. In the first year three cubs were taken, and in subsequent years, a total of 78 cubs were given a second chance at life, including 13 this past year.

Every year, they rehabilitate the cubs by feeding them to ensure that they'll be adequate weight for the winter, then tag, collar and release them back in the wild at different release points across the province.

This is accomplished by Judy and Roger and their amazing staff of volunteers. The funding is a hundred per cent donations by the public, and even Bob Barker from The Price Is Right gave a large donation when they were getting started.

Long days, sacrifices of not traveling, no camping and no weekends off are all familiar to Judy and Roger. Along with a team of Dr. Beecham and three international vets, data is compiled to benefit bears around the world.

I invite all members to recognize Judy and Roger from Stonewall, who are in the gallery today, for their amazing work in building Black Bear Rescue Manitoba.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health-Care System Privatization Concerns

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Just like Brian Pallister, the Premier is trying to bring in more cuts and to privatize health care in Manitoba. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: Brian Pallister privatized—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —occupational physiotherapy. You see, he fired the front-line health-care staff who provided outpatient physio, and then he forced Manitobans to pay for it. That's the PC record when it comes to health care.

It's wrong. It undermines our public health-care system.

We need to hear clearly from the Premier: Does she plan to privatize our public health-care system, just like Brian Pallister did with physiotherapy?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): And same old, same old NDP rhetoric, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've been listening to Manitobans, we've been taking action and we've been getting things done.

We heard loud and clear from Manitobans that they wanted to—us to further strengthen health care and put patients first in Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not ideology like the NDP.

We will continue to ensure that we get the health care for Manitobans when they need it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary.

Mr. Kinew: Same old, same old. Just like Brian Pallister. The only people who can get outpatient physio in Manitoba are those who have money. And now the Premier stands here and says she wants to pursue more of that in Manitoba, more big business involved in your health care.

We say that's wrong. We'll always stand up for public health care for everyone in this great province.

Now we know that, as Health minister, and under Brian Pallister's watch, they fired many, many nurses. In 2017 there were—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: –15,700 nurses in Manitoba. At the end of last year there were 400 fewer nurses in this province. Instead, millions of dollars being spent on private agencies—for-profit companies—instead of investing in our public health-care system.

We need to hear clearly from the Premier: Will she stop privatizing health care and giving millions of dollars to these big companies?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is very, very abundantly clear to Manitobans is that the NDP and this Leader of the Opposition would put their ideology over patient care every day.

We think that's wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's why the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) and I were out last week. We announced \$200 million for 2,000 more health-care workers in our system, and we will continue to work with stakeholders and the front line to ensure that we continue to put patients first, not ideology like the NDP.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Kinew: Just like Brian Pallister, the Premier is pushing more health-care cuts and more privatization. With her as Health minister and Brian Pallister as premier, this government privatized Lifeflight Air Ambulance services.

Flash ahead to May of 2021, after the privatization of Lifeflight, we saw ICU patients transported out of province by 'pravate' carriers—private carriers who didn't have the right equipment and didn't have the right staff to prepare for those ICU patients. Patient care suffered. It happened under their watch. It happened under this Premier as a failed Health minister.

We know that privatization is going to harm our public health-care system.

Will the Premier admit that the privatization of Lifeflight was wrong?

Mrs. Stefanson: What is wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is putting ideology ahead of patient care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even Gary Doer, in the early 2000s, saw fit to do the right thing and contract out with the Maples Surgical Centre. He saw fit to do that. What the Leader of the Opposition is saying is that Gary Doer was wrong.

Well, there's one thing that's very apparent, Mr. Deputy Speaker: this Leader of the Opposition is no Gary Doer.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

* (14:00)

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Safe Consumption Site Premier's Comments

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): It seems that the only health-care service that this Premier doesn't want to privatize are those California safe consumption sites. The reason why she doesn't want to privatize them is, of course, because they don't exist.

Now, last week, the Premier said about safe consumption sites in California, quote, I'm really concerned when I look at places like California that have had these types of sites in place for decades and they're not working and they're reversing their decision, end quote.

Quite an elaborate scenario that was constructed there by the Premier because, again, we know that California has never had a safe consumption site, not for a decade, not even for a day.

Will the Premier tell this House and all Manitobans why she's basing her decisions about safe consumption sites on statements that are patently, simply false?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we will continue to focus on is ensuring that those who are suffering from mental health and addictions challenges get the help that they need to recover from what they are facing.

That is why we have announced 1,000 new recovery spaces in the province of Manitoba that will help people get off their addictions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Kinew: Well, as if it wasn't bad enough to have a Minister of Mental Health who says that just say no is harm reduction, we have a Premier who says that she doesn't want a safe consumption site here in Manitoba because of what happened in California. Everyone knows that what she said is simply not true.

Safe consumption sites can help save lives. This is a serious issue. But the Premier is basing her government's decisions based on alternative facts. It's a disservice to Manitobans, who expect better.

We know that 80 organizations sent a letter to this government arguing that safe consumption sites should be part of a harm reduction approach, and yet this government ignores them and instead embraces fake news.

Will the Premier tell the House why she believes safe consumption sites failed in California [*phonetic*], when in fact they never existed, or will she finally acknowledge facts?

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

Mrs. Stefanson: What has been proven is that what saves lives is getting people off of their addictions. So, the focus on recovery has proven to help people in need in these circumstances, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

That is what has been proven. That is the action that we are taking. That is why we announced 1,000 more recovery spaces in the province of Manitoba that I'm sure members opposite will probably vote against.

Shame on them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Kinew: But why did the Premier make it up? Why did the Premier make up these safe consumption sites in California? Why does she come here and, day after day, assert things that are not true when it comes to addictions?

We all know that there were no safe consumption sites in California. We all know that a supervised consumption site can help save lives in Manitoba.

If they're so confident in their position, let's convene an expert panel. Bring the hundred foremost experts in Manitoba on addictions to discuss this issue, and let's hear what they have to say. They will tell you the truth: that a supervised consumption site should be part of a harm-reduction approach because it can save lives.

Will the Premier finally admit that she was wrong and tell Manitobans why she invented these California safe consumption sites?

Mrs. Stefanson: Deputy Speaker, the only individual in this House—and, actually, all members opposite, pretty much, when they get up and ask questions in this Chamber, put false information on the record day in and day out in this Manitoba Legislature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is important is that we get the help to those who need it. And that's exactly

why we're taking a recovery approach. And we've announced 1,000 new recovery spaces in the province of Manitoba.

I would suggest that members opposite not vote against that; get on board to make sure that these individuals get the care that they need.

Health-Care System Privatization Concerns

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Deputy Speaker, the college of nurses shows the PC government cut hundreds of registered nurses.

Brian Pallister did a lot of damage to our health-care system. The current Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) supported him every step of the way, including privatizing physio-outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

Those cuts have hurt health care in Manitoba, and we're seeing it every single day. The PCs have taken the wrong approach.

Will the minister reconsider and abandon their plans to privatize health in Manitoba?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I thank the member for Union Station for the question.

I want to state very clearly that what our government will not reconsider is adding \$200 million and 2,000 health professionals to the health system, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That will include physicians, nurses, paramedics, health-care aides and more.

What we will not reconsider is adding over 400 new nurse training seats to the post-secondary institutions that we have been working so closely with. And I thank them for their support of the work that our government is doing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I encourage—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

The honourable member for Union Station, on a supplementary.

MLA Asagwara: Deputy Speaker, the PC government has pursued private health care from the very beginning. In their first year, they proposed privatizing MRIs and diagnostic tests. They privatized outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

They are now spending \$40 million per year on private, for-profit agencies. This reliance on private health care has not made things better. Things have

actually gotten much, much worse. A new approach is needed.

Will the minister abandon their plans for private health in Manitoba?

Ms. Gordon: I'm pleased to rise and place some facts on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we cannot count on the member for Union Station to do it on our behalf.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, out-of-province care is used to supplement care provided in the province.

And I want to share some of the good work that the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force has been doing. The pandemic backlog for cataract surgery has now been fully eliminated. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the pandemic backlog—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: —for ultrasound scans is less than—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: —half of the backlog in February, reducing the backlog from 4,463 cases to one thousand nine hundred—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The minister's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: Mr. Deputy Speaker, absolutely no one believes this government when it comes to health care. Manitobans are not getting timely access to a doctor. There are record wait times in emergency rooms. Manitoba has lost hundreds of nurses.

The PCs cut outpatient physiotherapy and occupational therapy, and they're spending \$40 million per year on private agencies.

Things have gotten worse, Deputy Speaker, not better. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: We all know that the PCs proposal for private health care means things are only going to continue to get worse under their watch.

Will the minister change their approach, abandon their plans for private health in Manitoba and invest in public health care on the behalf of Manitobans?

Ms. Gordon: We will not change our plan to ensure Manitobans receive the care that they need.

That is why our FIT testing program continues to reduce the endoscopy wait list; 1,055 patients have so far been diverted from the waiting list and has now

exceeded the target of 1,000 cases for this program for this fiscal year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will not abandon our commitment to women in this province to ensure they receive the care they need. The Maples gynecology program has now provided care to 12 women at their clinic.

* (14:10)

I'm happy to stand in this House and thank the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force for the incredible work they're doing on behalf of Manitobans.

Manitoba Hydro Rates Request to Freeze

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the PC government just passed bill 36, and that means higher Hydro rates for Manitobans.

Last night—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Sala: While the PCs congratulate themselves, last night we learned that they're pushing for a 3.5 per cent rate increase in September 2023.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: This is tens of millions of dollars—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

The member for St. James has the floor.

Mr. Sala: This is tens of millions of dollars and more costs for Manitobans. Rates shouldn't be going up. They should be kept as low as possible, and that's exactly what we're proposing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Why won't the PCs support our call to freeze Hydro rates for Manitobans?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a little embarrassing for the member for St. James, who has stood in his place for months and months, and falsely indicated that the passage of this bill would necessitate, would evoke, would produce 5 per cent rates every year. And today he gets up and tries to shift his narrative and say, well, actually they weren't 5 per cent increases.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, he's been flip-flopping. We've been clear. Our bill is designed to keep rates low, stabilize Hydro and strengthen the role of the PUB.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. James, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Sala: Manitoba Hydro is projecting a net income of \$559 million for the current fiscal year. Meanwhile, Manitobans are struggling just to keep the lights on. Inflation hit 8.1 per cent in Manitoba last month, which is the second highest amongst provinces.

Hydro rate increases of 3.5 per cent are just not affordable and don't make sense—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: —with our circumstances. Rates should not be going up right now—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: —Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Will the minister reverse course and support a freeze on rates at Manitoba Hydro?

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, fact check for the member for St. James: Manitoba Hydro has the second lowest electrical rates in all of North America, second only to Quebec.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our bill was devised to protect that low-rate advantage; to create a speed limit, if you will. A rate—or, a level at which rates could not go above. At the same time, it recognized that NDP mismanagement had produced \$24 billion of additional debt at Hydro that must be dealt with.

That member tries to stick his head in the sand. We must face the facts. That is why we are getting advantages for Manitoba Hydro ratepayers, and—

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

The honourable member for St. James, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Sala: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's getting harder and harder for Manitobans to make ends meet. We know that gas prices are going up. Grocery prices are going up. Unfortunately, both the PCs and the Liberals voted against affordability for Manitobans.

Hydro is projecting net income of \$559 million this fiscal year. Inflation is at 8.1 per cent. Manitobans deserve a break.

Will the minister reverse his government's approach and not raise rates by 3.5 per cent—will he do so today?

Mr. Friesen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's becoming harder and harder for the member for St. James to keep his story straight. First, he said rates would go up by 5 per cent this—every year. Today, he tries to navigate into a new lane and say 3.5.

He knows that our bill is designed to get lower rates. What he refuses to do today is talk about the catastrophe of his announcement two weeks ago that made it clear that the NDP plan is to interfere with the PUB and produce, in year 5 of their plan probably, a 17.5 per cent increase to ratepayers. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for—*[interjection]* I'm just waiting for it to quiet down a moment, here.

Okay.

Lake St. Martin Outlet Channel Government Priority in Throne Speech

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in 2016, Brian Pallister stood next to Lake Manitoba and promised that the Lake Manitoba-Lake St. Martin channel would be built by 2020. Six years later, not a shovel of dirt has been moved.

It's clear that this government is just not focused and committing on getting the work—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —done. And yesterday's Throne Speech proves that. There was not one mention of this important project or any steps that this government might take to ensure that the project gets moving forward.

Why did this government fail to mention the channels project even once in their Throne Speech?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Agriculture—sorry, of Transportation and Infrastructure.

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): You know, the member—'grick' time he—good timing for the—'ashking' that question that—Mr. Deputy Speaker, because, you know, our government is continuing—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Piwniuk: —to work with First Nation communities to consult with them to—making sure that the channel actually gets done. We're working with the federal government.

And with their coalition with the federal government, you know, maybe they should be able to tell the—to Justin Trudeau that the—we need to get this channel approved now. We're waiting for a licensing from the federal government, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And our staff have been working with—consulting with First Nation communities to make sure this channel gets done as soon as possible, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Wiebe: Mr. Speaker, the outlet channel was referenced in throne speeches in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020. However, it hasn't appeared once since this current Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) was selected. It's just not a priority for them, but it should be.

It was promised over six years ago, and it's one of the most important infrastructure projects in this province's history, especially after the kind of spring that we had and the flooding. Instead, it's no longer a priority. It's not even mentioned once in this government's Throne Speech.

Why isn't the channel a top priority, and why wasn't it mentioned in this year's Throne Speech?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for—the Honourable Minister for Transportation and Infrastructure.

Mr. Piwniuk: It is a priority for our government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We actually are allocating \$600 million to this project to be successful.

The thing is, right now, we're waiting for approval from the federal government. Actually, the federal government that, actually, their NDP—when it comes to their colleagues in the—in Ottawa, they're actually—could be actually putting pressure on Justin Trudeau to make sure that this channel does actually happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We are working with ministers—Bill Blair—to make sure that this channel actually—that it does happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we're—it's our dedication to making sure that we are going to there—be there for Manitobans when it comes to our Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Concordia, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Wiebe: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Lake Manitoba-Lake St. Martin channels project should be one of the highest priorities infrastructure projects in this province's history. It's a big deal for so many communities who deserve flood protection.

Instead, this PC government's approach was to fight the federal government, ignore those local land-owners and fail to properly consult with Indigenous peoples.

Now they're not even including it as one of their top priorities in this year's Throne Speech.

The government is taking the wrong approach.

Why is this channel not mentioned in the Throne Speech and why isn't it a priority of this Premier and this government?

Mr. Piwniuk: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're going to be spending \$1.5 billion on infrastructure this—the next three years.

Our priority, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is \$600 million for the Lake Manitoba-Lake St. Martin channel. That is our dedication. I spent many meetings with First Nation communities; meeting with them to making sure that this is a priority—that this is good for Manitoba, it's good for Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin.

And we're working hard to making sure that this is actually a big success, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Safe Consumption Site Premier's Comments

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): California has the largest economy and is the most populous of the 50 US states. California hosts great surfing. It has amazing bakeries. And it hosts Disneyland Star Wars theme park.

These are facts. *[interjection]*

* (14:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: Another fact: California has never had a safe consumption site.

The Premier is citing a non-existent safe consumption site to justify her—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —government's ideological position that just—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —doesn't follow the evidence.

Why is the Premier misleading Manitobans?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): As it pertains to the question coming from the member opposite, we have

invested over \$60 million into 42 initiatives, and we are going to build upon our investments for harm reduction and recovery services for the individuals who need it.

The NDP want to distract Manitobans from the real issue in that they failed to invest in mental health and addictions services for 17 years. We will not make the same mistakes—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —the members opposite—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —have made and continue to make.

Mental Health and Community Wellness Minister Apology Request for Social Media Post

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Last week, this same minister made a shameful post on social media while visiting Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. She took pictures of herself in front of people struggling with addictions and homelessness and shared them online without their consent. She went on to advocate against safe consumption sites despite widespread evidence showing that they save lives.

People living with addictions shouldn't be used as political props. That's politics 101.

Will the minister get up in the House today and apologize to all of the folks that she offended with that post last week? *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): The member opposite complains about various Twitter posts. The truth is they're just disappointed that we didn't come to the same conclusions that they do about their approaches.

We are going to invest in true recovery. We're going to help to restore the lives of individuals who don't deserve to be living on the streets, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We are making the right decisions. Mr. Ben Fry had made a comment from AFM and Shared Health: If you are a Manitoba struggling with substance use, we want you to know that we are here for you. There is hope, and people can and do recover—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —from addictions. If the members opposite don't believe this, I ask them to state so on the record today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Johns, on a final supplementary.

Safe Consumption Site Request for Facility

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Despite the minister's little visit and calling what she saw in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside #heartbreaking, the minister refuses to do the right thing and open a safe consumption site here in Manitoba. The fact of the matter is safe consumption sites save lives, Deputy Speaker.

Manitoba is on track to break last year's record of 407 overdose deaths this year. Eighty front-line organizations have called on this government to open a safe consumption site.

Will the minister get up in the House, finally do the right thing and commit to opening a safe consumption site?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): Again, the member opposite claims that she doesn't want to make this into a political issue, and that is all the NDP have ever done, is make this a political issue.

We are dealing with people's lives, families' lives—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —who want to see the restored life of their loved ones. We are giving hope to families. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: We will continue to work with organizations who also invest in these services that Manitobans deserve and need, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And last month, the members opposite were saying, why haven't you visited Vancouver? Go to Vancouver, visit these sites. I did so, and I am more—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —I am more firm in my resolve—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time—the honourable minister's time has expired. Order.

The honourable member—sorry. Thanks. My apologies.

The honourable member for St. Boniface.

Security at St. Boniface Hospital Staff and Patient Safety Concerns

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I recently received an email about security issues at the St. Boniface Hospital and immediately wrote a letter to the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon).

They—the individual wrote—and I table the letter—quote: In the past three years, I've seen police response times dramatically increase to the point where staff yell, there is no point to contacting the police for help at all. We are often even discouraged from pressing charges after being hit, kicked, punched and spit on.

The fundamental principle of medicine is do no harm, and the first principle of management must be to keep patients and staff safe. We shouldn't be surprised that people are quitting our health-care system when nurses have to put up with this.

What is the government going to do to protect the people and patients at the St. Boniface Hospital? Because there was certainly no mention of it in the Throne Speech.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Our government recognizes and values the incredible work that our police officers do. Of course, we know that there are other individuals who can do enforcement in hospitals, whether institutional safety officers or community safety officers.

We continue to look at the different levels of policing that can help in situations like this, but I am very pleased at our government and our Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) dedication to ensuring that law enforcement has the resources that they need.

There are certainly members in this House who want to defund the police or not to have the resources in the hands of officers. That's nobody on this side of the House. All those individuals sit on that side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We'll continue to support the police to do the good work, as the member opposite suggests.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Lamont: Madam Speaker, while the Premier and PCs were defunding health care and municipal governments, Manitoba Liberals were defending them.

Here's another quote, which I table: In the most recent past, I've contacted 911 on two separate occasions where the call was placed on hold and I was listening to hold music. On October 25th, our security team encountered an 'exremely' aggressive individual, who assaulted and spit on several of our staff. The individual was detained and multiple calls were made to WPS over a period of several hours, and no one responded.

The individual was held inside the security office for almost 10 hours, while screaming at the top of his lungs for all the patients, visitors and staff members to hear. This is not an isolated incident.

No one responded to an emergency happening at a hospital. This is a multiple systems failure, and we need to act before it gets worse.

What is the Premier going to do to ensure the safety and security of patients at every health-care facility in Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: A Liberal defending health-care funding in this House, or in Ottawa, is an oxymoron, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We have a Premier, who leads the council of federations, who is actively asking for a meeting—simply a meeting—with the Prime Minister, with the federal government, to talk about health-care funding, not just in the province of Manitoba but across Canada. Every premier, regardless of political stripes, agrees with our Premier, who is leading this charge, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

If that member is—opposite is serious about what he said at the beginning of his question about defending health-care funding, he'll get on the phone, he'll call his leader in Ottawa, he'll demand that he arranges that meeting with our Premier, and all the premiers across Canada, and get a fair and equitable funding agreement for health care in Canada.

Supports for Manitoba Seniors Government Priority in Throne Speech

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I was very disappointed that yesterday's Throne Speech did not once mention home care, dental work, hearing aids or even ways in which this government is going to help seniors who would like to remain in their homes.

Basic needs for seniors in Manitoba were completely ignored for 17 years under the NDP government and continue to be completely ignored for the last six years under this PC government.

When can we expect to see tangible changes from this government that will address the valid concerns that many seniors in our province continue to face?

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): I was quite proud of the Throne Speech that was given yesterday, with all the commitments that would have been made to better the health of people in Manitoba, which include seniors.

Madam Speaker, our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has been very, very adamant in her comment in the House, as well as my comments as minister, that we are going to be tackling the challenge of home care in Manitoba.

We continue to reach out to stakeholders. We continue to have consultations. And now we're to the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where we are going to be presenting a plan which will indicate solutions to home care.

* (14:30)

Health and Human Resource Action Plan Government Announcement

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Last week, all provinces and territories in Canada met in Vancouver to discuss countrywide challenges to health human resources, and to share best practices.

The very next day, our Premier, our Health Minister, alongside CEOs of all five health regions and Shared Health as well as unions, announced Manitoba's plan to address these challenges.

Can the Minister of Health please give us some more information about this plan?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I thank the member for Radisson for the question.

The most important part of Manitoba's health-care system is the people who work within it. That is why our government worked closely with staff, leadership, unions, post-secondary institutions to create a comprehensive health human resource action plan specifically designed to support our front lines when they need it most.

This plan will move towards ending mandated overtime by adding 2,000 health-care professionals with an investment of \$200 million to retain, train and recruit health-care staff.

This is the largest single health-care announcement in the history of our province. This means more

doctors, nurses, paramedics and health-care professionals.

We are taking action here in Manitoba to strengthen our public health-care system.

Youth Suicide Rate in Indigenous Communities Addiction and Mental Health Supports

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): The Throne Speech was disappointing for many different reasons, including what it failed to mention. There was no mention of mental health and addiction services for children and youth, nor was there any plan put forward to address the suicide epidemic in Indigenous communities.

The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth said, and I quote, the PCs didn't give us any plan as to what they're going to do.

So, will the minister outline what her government plans to do, if they even have a plan?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): I would really encourage the member opposite to pay close attention during this Throne Speech, as well as to go through, carefully, the notes. Because within those notes and within the Throne Speech, it states that we are working on a suicide prevention plan.

We are making investments in mental health for all Manitobans, especially our youth and those who are living in rural and Indigenous communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Smith: Urgent action needs to happen now, not waiting for this government to develop a plan. Kids are dying in Indigenous communities while this government sits on their hands and says, we're going to develop a strategy.

A strategy is needed today. What is this strategy, if you even have one? Manitobans want to know, especially the First Nation communities.

What's the plan?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for community health—sorry, Mental Health and Community Wellness.

Mrs. Guillemard: We have made mass investments in mental health supports for all Manitobans, including youth and adolescents. We continue to have 'dialog'—dialogue with First Nations communities, and

put them in touch with the existing services available to them during crises.

We encourage the federal government come to the table and plan with us, and invest in services that are closer to home. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is incumbent on all of us, including the federal government, to respond to the responsibilities and to assist communities through these moments of crisis and hardship.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas, on a final supplementary.

Mrs. Smith: The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth has said that mental health and addiction supports for children and youth are—in Manitoba are inadequate. At the same time, Manitoba children and youth continue to suffer, with many attempted suicides every year, while this government says they're developing a plan.

Kids are dying in our province. Yet the Throne Speech provided no details on how this government will help our children and youth struggling with mental health and addictions. The minister should commit to developing a comprehensive, collaborative plan to expand mental health and addictions today, and not tomorrow.

Kids are dying; will she do so today?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the most tragic thing that can happen to a child is to be separated from their community and their family.

Under the NDP, 11,000 children were in care. They apprehended a newborn baby, one baby per day, every day that they were in office. That was their shameful record, and the legacy is being felt today.

Our government is taking a proactive stance. We're reducing the number of children in care by nearly 2,000 kids in care and we have reduced newborn apprehension by 65 per cent. We are giving families the support that they need so that they can stay together, that they can work together, that they can live together and that they can thrive together.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Lead Water Pipes

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) The US government has identified lead water pipes as a clear and present danger to American public health, and President Biden has announced a 100 per cent replacement of lead water pipes in 10 million homes and 400,000 schools and child-care centres and part of the America's job plan.

(2) Two thousand seven hundred and fifty-five homes in the Elmwood-East Kildonan area have lead water pipes connecting their basements to the City-owned water pipes at their property line. Homes built before 1950 are likely to have lead water pipes running to this connection.

(3) New lead level guidelines issued by Health Canada in 2019 are a response to findings that lead concentrations in drinking water should be kept as low as reasonably achievable, as lead exposures are inherently unsafe and have serious health consequences, especially for children and expectant mothers.

(4) Thirty one per cent of Winnipeg's 23,000 homes with lead water pipes connecting basements to the City-owned water pipes at their property line were found to have lead levels above the new Health Canada lead level guidelines.

(5) The City of Winnipeg has an inventory of which homes and public buildings, including schools and daycares, that have the lead water pipe connection to the City's water main and will only disclose this information to the homeowner or property owner. The cost of replacing the lead water pipe to individual homeowners is over \$4,000.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately contact all home and property owners in Manitoba with lead water pipes connecting to the City water main line and provide full financial support to them for lead water pipe replacement so their access to clean water is assured and exposure to lead and its health risks are eliminated.

And this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any further petitions? Seeing none, the honourable member for Borderland.

No? The Honourable Justice Minister?

The honourable member for Borderland.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS
THRONE SPEECH
(First Day of Debate)

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan), that the following address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Fifth Session of the 42nd Legislature of Manitoba.

It's an honour to be asked by the Premier—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just a moment, I have to read the motion back.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Borderland, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Whyte, that the following—that the members of the Legislative Assembly thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this Fifth Session of the 42nd Legislature of Manitoba.

The motion is in order.

* (14:40)

Mr. Guenter: I appreciate that there is an order to things.

It's an honour to be asked by the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) to move the Throne Speech, and I am pleased to be able to offer some remarks as the member representing the great constituency of Borderland.

And let me say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I am happy to have been nominated last night as the Conservative candidate for the constituency of Borderland—*[interjection]*

And I thank my colleagues for pumping my tires there a bit, but it's an honour to represent this wonderful part of our province.

The population in my constituency is the youngest in the province, and it's filled with families working hard to pay their mortgages, put their kids through

school and make a better life for themselves and their children. It's home to people who pay their taxes, play by the rules and try to do the right thing. These folks have been my inspiration, and I am proud to be their voice in this Chamber.

People are drawn to our communities because they are clean, safe, family-friendly environments founded on solid values. Values like neighbourliness, looking out for others, entrepreneurialism, hard work, honesty, the importance of marriage and family and the primacy of faith in God. Values that keep our communities together, vibrant and prosperous, and a belief that men and women know best how to make choices in their best interests and the best interests of their families without undue government interference.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I ran for the Conservative nomination in Borderland in 2019, I gave constituents my word that I would defend and promote these values. I pledged to work to safeguard our prosperity, to enable taxpayers to keep more of their paycheque by supporting lower taxes and to ensure that our rural and small town way of life is respected.

And in the last three years, I have worked to make good on these commitments, and it has been a genuine pleasure working with colleagues on this side of the House to deliver for the constituents of Borderland.

A lot has been accomplished. I think of the Plum Coulee pedestrian bridge, which received nearly \$65,000 in funding from our government for phase one. I think of the village of Schanzenfeld, which received over \$100,000 to construct a limestone pathway from Schanzenfeld to Winkler; or the Trans Canada Trail linking Altona to Gretna, which has been extensively rehabilitated with nearly \$45,000 through our government's Building Sustainable Communities fund.

Dozens of projects like these have been able to go ahead in the constituency thanks to our government matching the funds raised in the community by dedicated volunteers.

This—my area is home to many villages, particularly in the RM of Stanley and the RM of Rhineland, and many of these villages had roads that were in terrible shape. They looked like the surface of the moon with all the potholes they exhibited and today I am proud to say that these roads have been beautifully redone with new asphalt.

Our government invested one and a half million dollars to upgrade roads in the villages of Reinfeld,

Schanzenfeld, Blumenfeld, Chortitz, Hochfeld and Thornhill. For those living in these villages, this relatively small investment makes a huge difference. We have rehabilitated the main street in St. Jean and the main street in Altona will also receive new asphalt.

Highway 201 will be upgraded to the RTAC standard, the highest standard of highway in Canada, from Dominion City to Highway 59. This investment will strengthen our east-west grid and link Highway 75 and Highway 59 with an RTAC highway.

It also means the world to producers and businesses along the route that will now be able to get products to market much more quickly. Right now, they are forced to travel hundreds of kilometres out of the way to get their products delivered because of the weight restrictions on highways in the area.

I was also happy to welcome \$5 million in partnership with the federal government in upgrades to the dike in Emerson, as well as an investment of \$4 million in upgrades to 50 kilometres of priority grain roads in the RM of Rhineland.

The priority grain roads project is something the municipality had long advocated for and, while it is not done yet, the project, when finished, will enable farmers and producers to move their heavy trucks and machinery on these roads and off of the provincial highways.

Working with colleagues, our government has invested over \$3 million for the Gnadefeld, Neubergthal and Sommerfeld east pump house expansion, which builds resiliency and increased capacity into our water system.

Our government has committed \$7 million for the St. Mary's flood road in the RM of Montcalm. And I recall running into a local councillor sometime after the announcement, and he told me that, in his 26 years on council, this was the most significant thing he had seen happen for the area.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

I was also pleased to welcome over \$2 million in upgrades to Altona's downtown drainage infrastructure. And the project has now been completed and adds much more capacity to the system's ability to drain water in Altona's downtown corridor when there is a downpour.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has given me a deep sense of satisfaction to lobby for and support these projects and to see them as they are completed. There is still much more work to do.

This Throne Speech emphasizes several themes, and the one I'd like to talk about is affordability. Manitobans are facing higher interest rates, high inflation and an out-of-control, tax-and-spend NDP-Liberal coalition in Ottawa. And it has never been more critical that we have a Conservative government here in the provincial capital that stands up for Manitobans.

That's why we've called on the federal Liberal-NDP coalition to scrap their plans to triple the carbon tax on April 1st of next year.

It is shocking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the tone-deaf, out-of-touch, intransigent Liberal-NDP government in Ottawa has voted to hike the carbon tax to over 37 cents a litre by next spring. This amounts to roughly \$20 to \$30 a tank. This is just the carbon tax; don't forget that you pay GST on top of that carbon tax.

This massive tax increase will only further increase the cost of heating your home, paying for your groceries and getting to work or bringing your kids to school.

Nothing about this make sense, but then nothing about the Liberal-NDP approach to governing does. Take, for example, their views on taxation. Shortly after forming government in 2015, the federal Liberals created a new income tax bracket of 33 per cent for higher income earners in Canada.

When the numbers came in at the end of the year and all was said and done, not only did the government not collect the anticipated revenues from the new tax, but the federal government actually collected less income tax revenue from that particular bracket than it did in the previous year. In other words, they lost money; they lost revenue by instituting—by hiking taxes.

We could look at this and recognize that raising taxes on high-income earners is, among other things, ineffective, because they simply hire accountants and lawyers and move money around.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to raise taxes on those who are struggling to get by, the middle class, people full of dreams and aspirations but constantly being sold out by the left-wing politicians in this country; to raise taxes on these people, to increase their cost of living, to reduce their economic freedom, is simply unjust. The middle class cannot simply pass on these costs or get up and move or find creative ways to 'affoid'—avoid the obligations government places on them. They bear the full brunt of it.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in all of this, there is some good news, because we have chosen a different approach in Manitoba. We are reducing the tax burden on hard-working Manitoba families. We reduced the PST from 8 to 7 per cent; we indexed income tax brackets, and the Education Property Tax rebate will reach 50 per cent next spring, meaning more money in the pockets of hard-working Manitoba taxpayers.

And what's incredible about all of this is that our government revenues have not shrunk; in fact, they've grown. In 2020, right before the lockdowns, our government delivered Manitoba's first balanced budget in over a decade. All the while, we have continued to increase funding in areas such as health care, where we are spending \$7.2 billion this year, a full \$1 billion more than the NDP ever did.

To sum up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've increased funding for health care, education and infrastructure while at the same time reducing taxes and putting Manitoba back on a path to fiscal stability.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the difference between us and them is that the NDP treats the economy, in the words of Steve Horwitz, as if it were some giant machine with various dials and buttons that can be pushed to produce particular results.

We, on this side of the House, understand that the economy is not a machine; the economy is people. And when you understand the economy is made up of people who have dreams and aspirations, and you get government out of the way and allow these people to achieve those dreams and to work to build better lives for themselves, their families and their communities, then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you begin to unlock the full potential of our province. And that is exactly what our Progressive Conservative caucus is doing.

* (14:50)

In closing, I want to say that I am grateful for the support of so many people. My constituency assistants, Jen Neufeld and Deb Enns, for going above and beyond in assisting me as we serve the constituents of Borderland. And we haven't always been able to win on every issue when constituents come through those doors, but we certainly have tried and we've helped an awful lot of people and I thank my assistants for their help.

My Borderland PC association members, including Mel Klassen, Dave Carlson, Keith Giesbrecht, Edwin Guenter and June Letkeman, and I want to thank each and every one of you for everything you do.

And lastly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank my family for their support in this role over the past three and a half years: my wife and best friend Alicia, and our three children Jack, Scarlett and Olivia and the one on the way. We are truly blessed and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve.

Thank you.

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): I want to say, first of all, what an honour it is for me to stand up here today; and second, the Throne Speech given yesterday by our Lieutenant Governor.

This is my first address to a throne speech as an MLA, and what an important speech it was yesterday for the people of Manitoba, Winnipeg and the constituents of Fort Whyte.

I've had many a high moments in the last eight months of being an MLA and some of the most rewarding ones are working directly with the people in Fort Whyte. Some things I've been able to accomplish in the short period of time I've been there is a \$1-million splash pad going in at the Whyte Ridge Community Centre.

We've granted funds to Linden Woods Community Centre for \$30,000, Whyte Ridge Community Centre for \$60,000 and we've widened McGillivray Boulevard with lights at McCreary and South Landing for safety, traffic flows and businesses.

There's many more great things to come and I look forward to my ongoing role as MLA in Fort Whyte.

For many years, I was able to enjoy these areas with my son. I am grateful that our government has been able to support the growth of many organizations and beautiful areas throughout Fort Whyte.

There are a few gems in Fort Whyte that I would like to highlight right now, and my favourite is FortWhyte Alive with Liz Wilson, the president and CEO. And a lot of people don't know this, but FortWhyte Alive hosts 20 per cent of Winnipeg's green space, right in my riding. It provides seven kilometers of walking trails, two lakes and endless opportunities to connect with nature in an urban setting.

I was pleased and honoured to join our government last week to emcee an announcement there, at FortWhyte Alive, with the new water management strategy, the first of its kind in 20 years.

There is also a ton of local small businesses in my riding that I love to frequent often: Calabria Market & Fine Wines, even though I don't drink wine;

Hangar pool hall, where I love to play pool with my son; Oxygen Yoga; Clay Oven; Linden Ridge family chiro; Trans Canada Brewing, which, again, I don't drink alcohol but has the best pizza in town; Vita Health and many more; and the UPS store.

An Honourable Member: And you don't drink.

Mr. Khan: And I don't drink.

FortWhyte Alive—Fort Whyte is really built around its leaders: Kimberly O'Hara and the entire board of the Whyte Ridge Community Centre; Julie Bubnick from the Lindenwoods Community Centre; Laurie from the Simkin Centre; the seniors, which I frequent often at the Lindenwoods Retirement Living, including multiple buildings: Lindenwoods Terrace, Lindenwoods Manor, Lindenwood East; places like Parkway, Villa Nova, Sterling House; all in Fort Whyte.

Carly Lomoca [*phonetic*] and her family at the Caboto Centre; community leaders like Amarjeet Warraich, James Buhler, George Constantinides, Gary Magnat [*phonetic*], Sherry [*phonetic*] Zealand, Matt Coughlin, Yog Gupta and many more; all from different backgrounds and walks of life in Fort Whyte, making Fort Whyte better.

My apologies, Mr. Deputy Speaker—Assistant Deputy Speaker, I could go on and on and on about the great things happening in Fort Whyte.

But I'm excited today to talk about the Throne Speech from yesterday, excited to hear that our government is investing so much in community and areas all around the province to make life better, safer, more affordable for everyone in Manitoba.

In listening to yesterday's Throne Speech, I began to realize that every private member's statement I have done in my brief time here, without knowing, ties directly into the Throne Speech. Even reflecting on my election and the promises that I made during my election tie in directly to the Throne Speech.

My first private member's statement was recognizing how Pembina Active Living 55, a great network of people working in the community led by Dr. Sandra Sukhan, volunteers that help and bring seniors of all cultures, religions and life experiences together.

My next private member's statement was honouring a born and raised U of M scholar football player, who had the dream of playing for the Blue Bombers and was—got to do it for a little bit of time until the pandemic came and, unfortunately, his career was cut

short. But now he gives back and coaches the Bisons, forming the next generation of student athletes to become leaders—DJ Lalama.

Third statement was a sombering one, acknowledging the tragedy of flight PS752 that was shot down on January 8th, 2020, by the IRGC in Iran. But from a senseless act of violence, the community of Fort Whyte came together and now has planted 176 beautiful trees in a memorial for each one of those lives taken. I was honoured to attend and support this project.

Now, I'd like to take a brief moment and invite everyone in here, this weekend, Saturday, November 19th, to honour the victims of this massacre and stand in solidarity with the people of Iran that are currently sacrificing their lives for human rights.

On November 19th, 2022, at 1:30 p.m. there will be a rally at the Canadian museum of human rights and I invite everyone to join there.

On October 25th, I was pleased and honoured to pass my first resolution unanimously, calling on the federal government to take further steps to support the people of Iran.

And my last member's statement acknowledges Brenda [*phonetic*] Bain and his wife Dayna Palsson for the hard work they've done in Fort Whyte to combat the increase in crime happening in Fort Whyte and building a safer community.

Now, you might be sitting there, Mr. Deputy Assistant Speaker, saying what do all these private member's statements have to do with this Throne Speech? Well, the fact of the matter is that they all tie in to building a stronger, safer, happier, more inclusive community, which were all echoed throughout the Throne Speech. They're about building a stronger Manitoba, a stronger community and a safer, more affordable, more inclusive Manitoba.

When I ran in my by-election just eight months ago, I ran on the vision of a few things. But my main goal was to campaign to be an MLA who listens, advocates for my community's needs and works tirelessly to build a closer and stronger community, which I truly believe is what needed here in this time of divisiveness, where false accusations and misleading statements are corroding the very integrity of what we are doing here.

When I was at the door or on the phone, I heard the same thing over and over again from people in Fort Whyte, and I have not forgotten those comments.

I made a promise to them then that I would take their concerns about crime, about affordability, about health care, to government, and that is exactly what was done in the Throne Speech.

I am proud to be part of this government that is listening to Manitobans. I am very pleased to see the leadership of our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) listening to Manitobans and creating a plan that will not only make things better in the short term, but will continue to sustain and protect our services for generations to come.

The issues are the same as what I was hearing on the doorsteps a year ago, eight months ago and we hear today. I get stopped at the grocery store often and chat about the same issues. We need to make our community safer. We need to reduce the crime in our city. We need to help the homelessness—homeless and support individuals living with mental health and addictions.

Health care: we need to clear the surgical and diagnostic backlog and have better health care sooner for all Manitobans.

Affordability: with rising inflation and economic uncertainty, life is getting more expensive; and we need to help and we need to get our community back together.

I am very happy to say that the Throne Speech addressed each and every one of these issues. Our government is taking action and working hard, not only for the residents in the—in my riding of Fort Whyte, but for all Manitobans, when it comes to making our community safer.

This is not only for the downtown community like many people think. It's for all areas in Manitoba. Right now, many of us do not feel safe going to places that we used to. Times have changed from back in the day, Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker. I'm sure your—back in the day when you were a child, we used to run around and play in the streets 'til it was dark outside. We used to leave our garages open, go play in the park without a parent or any supervision and play tag.

* (15:00)

All these ideas seem a very far distance from reality now. And again, I'm not talking about downtown; I'm talking about throughout Manitoba, and even in my constituency of Fort Whyte. That's why I'm proud to say people in Fort Whyte are taking up the call for action and forming groups, and I'm happy

to support them to deal with the ongoing crime that's happening in Fort Whyte.

This very serious concern was reflected in the Throne Speech. Our government will continue to take strong action to combat and—combat crime and violence at its root cause across our province, while supporting vulnerable Manitobans.

Our government announced that we are increasing our annual funding rates to shelters, transitional housing and homeless outreach mentors to \$15.1 million from \$6.1 million. That will be a \$9-million increase in investments.

We will continue to focus on efforts on underlining issues such as homelessness, addictions and mental health by providing increased support to front-line law enforcement officers. Along with our government announced another \$3.6 million to the already—complement the \$5-million investment to the Downtown Community Safety Partnership, a collaborative community initiative aimed at creating a safer, more inviting downtown Winnipeg for businesses and residences.

We recently announced another \$3.2 million to invest in bail supervision and high-risk warrant unit to ensure the most violent criminals do not remain on our streets. Our government is and will work collaboratively with all police agencies along all levels of government to ensure communities are safe and resources are available. Winnipeggers have been asking for this. We have been listening, and we are taking action.

When it comes to our health care, we need better, faster and more consistent health care. We are working tirelessly to get this done. Through innovative partnership—through innovation, partnership, consultation with experts and our government putting our focus on patients first, not ideology.

What member opposite failed to understand and continued to simply put false statements on the record is like all other Canadian provinces, Manitoba is facing a shortage of health-trained professionals. Last year, our government committed to establishing 400 new nurse training seats within the province, but we are prepared and doing so much more for that. We recently announced we will add 2,000 more professionals to our health-care system through our aggressive \$200 million multiyear health human-resource action plan.

At the doors, I heard concerns about surgical and diagnostic backlogs. We invested \$110 million into

that. And as of yesterday's Throne Speech, it was stated that cataract surgery backlogs have dropped from 1,200 cases in February to 116 in August—that's a drop of 91 per cent—and this morning, in the House, we heard today that it's actually—the backlog is at zero.

The number of backlogged orthopedics, total hip and knee replacements, have decreased by 27 per cent. Ultrasound scans—ultrasounds and scans are down from 4,463 to 1,962. We are getting it done. Members opposite don't want to believe it. They don't want to see it. They don't want to understand that we are a government that is getting it done, no matter how painful it is for them to recognize that.

Let's not forget that under the Greg Selinger NDP, government had the long surgical backlogs and the longest ER wait times in the country. And, surprisingly, there was no worldwide pandemic, just terrible planning; no vision or understanding of what needed to get done to help Manitobans. We know that much more needs to get done, and we are prepared to tackle both steps necessary to get it done.

When it comes to affordability, our government is taking action. Earlier this year, we introduced a taxation measure as well as a \$87-million family affordability package. In recent months, our government also moved to raise the minimum wage to \$15 in October two thousand—2023.

In 2023, the education property tax rebate will provide even further assistance with an increase for residential and farm properties to 50 per cent from 37.5 in 2022, increasing the average rebate for a homeowner to \$774 from \$581. That is our government taking action to make life more affordable.

MPI has issued rebates averaging \$700 the last two years. Let's not forget that that's something the NDP voted against. Despite what the opposition says and does, we are working to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

On a topic of major discussion here in the House, we even heard it again today: Manitoba Hydro.

Manitoba Hydro has been historically mismanaged by previous governments. For 17 years, the NDP mismanaged Manitoba Hydro; so much so that Keeyask and bipole were over budget by \$4 billion—yes, \$4 billion.

That put Hydro in a really tough financial spot; so much so, Mr. Deputy Assistant Speaker, 40 cents—40 cents on every dollar earned by Manitoba Hydro is

used to service that debt incurred to Manitoba Hydro under the NDP government.

Now, the NDP might think that's okay; we don't. We believe in sustaining our public utilities to ensure it is protected and still around for Manitobans in the future.

We will protect Manitobans where the NDP did not. We will make life more affordable during these difficult times in the future. This is what our government is doing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker—Assistant Deputy Speaker, there's so many more things that I can speak to in the Throne Speech, but I know others want to speak, so I'll say a few last words. *[interjection]* You want more? More, okay. I've got four minutes. I have four minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, people ask me—and I realize I'm the new guy here, or until we win Kirkfield Park—people ask me, why did you do it, why did you get into public office?

And I tell them it's an honour. It truly is an honour to serve the people of Manitoba, more specifically the people of Fort Whyte.

Serving people is a calling, and I am honoured that I was able to answer that call. I tell them I did this because I wanted to make a difference and help people, and I wanted to make Manitoba a better place for everyone.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, I can honestly say that the Throne Speech does that. It is a step in the right direction and I am honoured to be on this side of the House, representing the people of Fort Whyte for a brighter, safer and better Manitoba.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, we will make our community safer. We will help families make ends meet. We will strengthen our health-care system and reduce wait times. We will make Manitoba more competitive. We will protect our environment, climate and parks. We will help build stronger communities.

Our government is taking action and getting things done to help Manitobans. I am honoured today to stand in the House and second the Throne Speech today, Mr. Deputy Assistant Speaker.

Thank you.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), that the debate now be adjourned.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): It's been moved by the Leader of the Official Opposition, that abate—that debate—seconded by the member from St. Johns, that the debate be adjourned.

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

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.?

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Is it the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

House is now adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 16, 2022

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