

Fifth 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

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
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	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLEIN, Kevin E., Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	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, Hon.	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, Hon.	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>	Morden-Winkler	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 15, 2023

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 please 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 and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 243—The Human Rights Code
Amendment Act**

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park, that Bill 243, The Human Rights Code Amendment Act; la Loi modifiant le Code des droits de la personne, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: This bill makes a small change. Learning disabilities have been too often forgotten, and people with learning disabilities have too often been neglected.

This puts a small change in The Human Rights Code to make sure that when it refers to somebody with a mental illness, The Human Rights Code would apply to an individual with a learning disability.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In accordance with section 32(1) of The Elections Act and subsection 107(1) of The Election Financing Act, I am tabling the Elections Manitoba 2022 Annual Report, including the conduct of the Fort Whyte, Thompson and Kirkfield Park by-elections.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage—and I would indicate to the House that in accordance with rule 27(2) the required notice was provided.

Polish Heritage Month

Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Dzień dobry. *[Good afternoon.]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the first time in Manitoba's history, I am honoured to stand and recognize the month of May as Polish Heritage Month.

Polish settlers arrived in the Red River region in the early 19th century. Within this very Legislative Building, there is a plaque to commemorate 200 years of immigration of Polish people to Manitoba from 1817 to 2017, installed in honour of the long history of the Polish heritage of these lands.

Like so many of the communities in Manitoba—cultural mosaic, the Polish community has made significant cultural, social and economic contributions to our province.

Manitoba is home to the largest per capita population of people with Polish heritage in Canada, which, as of last census, makes up about 6 per cent of Manitoba's total population. We value and appreciate the contributions of the Polish community to Manitoba's cultural and economic landscape.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the preservation and promotion of Manitoba's cultural heritage contributes to our province's diversity while strengthening our communities. Due to these efforts of the community organizations such as Canadian Polish Congress and the Polish Combatants' Association, and of performing art groups such as S.P.K. Iskry and many others, the Polish community's stories, arts, dance, language and culinary traditions remain active and shared for the benefit of all Manitobans to enjoy.

As the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage, this past Saturday I had the pleasure of attending the 55th anniversary of S.P.K. Iskry Footsteps Through Poland gala and the 75th anniversary of the Polish Combatants' Association, Branch 13, where I, myself, enjoyed Polish hospitality, food, drinks and even learned how to waltz.

Madam Speaker, this May, I would like to encourage many colleagues—all my colleagues and all Manitobans to learn more about the many important contributions made by those Polish heritage within our province. There are a number of excellent events and activities planned throughout the province, and I encourage everyone to enjoy.

Through supporting and celebrating our diverse heritage, we make a stronger and welcoming Manitoba for all. Our diversity is our strength. *Dziękuję. [Thank you.]*

I would like to recognize the lovely people in our gallery today: the Polish Scouts, Harcerstwa; Polish Saturday school; S.P.K. Iskry; Polish School of Dance Sokol school, St. Boniface and so many others, and I'll also ask leave, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to include the names of all the lovely kids in attendance today.

Thank you very much. And now I ask my colleagues to stand and recognize Polish Heritage Month.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And is there leave for the names of the children who were referenced by the minister to be included in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Janel Bem, Jaxon Bem, Julia Biel, Livia Biel, Colton Gronowski, Jayden Gronowski, Kaja Pecold, Gabrysia Stasica, Matylda Stasica, Patrycja Stasica

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): May is Polish Heritage Month, an annual celebration of the Polish community coming together and sharing Polish culture and heritage with others.

May 3rd is celebrated by many Polish people around the world to commemorate the 1791 Constitution, was a—which is a symbol of Poland's aspiration for freedom,

democracy and independence. As such the month of May is chosen to celebrate Polish heritage.

* (13:40)

Manitoba also has a large and vibrant Polish community with a rich history dating back to the early days of our province. The community has long made significant contributions to the development of Manitoba, the Prairies and across Canada in areas such as agriculture, industry, culture. Polish foods has—always been staples in our province.

Polish Heritage Month includes events and activities that are held to showcase the vibrant and diverse culture of the Polish and Polish Canadian communities. These events can include music and dance performances, art exhibits, food festivals and cultural workshops and much more. These activities not only allow the Polish community to celebrate and share their heritage, but also to provide an opportunity for all Manitobans to learn more about Polish culture and history.

It is important to recognize and celebrate the contributions of all communities in our society, and Polish Heritage Month is a wonderful example of this. By celebrating the rich history and contributions of the Polish community, we can promote greater understanding and appreciation of our shared cultural heritage and the history of our province.

Ekosi.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for the member for Tyndall Park to respond to the minister's statement? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Lamoureux: I rise today to commemorate Polish Heritage Month.

It was in 1817 that people from Poland first arrived in Manitoba. At the time, Poland was experiencing political turmoil which is why many sought new places to build their lives, and we are lucky to have many Polish settlers choose Manitoba to call home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with time, these new immigrants became well established, and today we are proud of the big role they have played in building up our country and our very own communities.

I know right here in Manitoba, I have a dear friend who has joined us here today, Margaret von Lau. Many members of this House know her as well, and

she herself is a Polish immigrant who created the Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services, also known as NEEDS, in 1999.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this was based on her own challenges as a new Canadian, and she channelled these challenges by creating a program tailored to the needs of newcomers. Last fiscal year alone, NEEDS served 4,600 children and youth, and over 2,000 of them were from Ukraine.

We have seen by both those with Polish heritage living here in Manitoba and those living in Poland, how they have led by example in helping those from Ukraine and have inspired many other countries and individuals to do the same.

Currently, Manitoba is home to over 80,000 people of Polish heritage and, here at the Legislature, there's a plaque to commemorate 200 years of immigration of Poles to Manitoba from 1817 to 2017. The initiator of this project was the Manitoba district of the Canadian Polish Congress.

In wrapping up, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by recognizing Polish Heritage Month, the province of Manitoba pays tribute to the enduring spirit and remarkable contributions of the Polish community here in Manitoba. We're very glad Polish Heritage Month has officially been proclaimed here in Manitoba and I'd like to thank all of those who have joined us in the galleries here today for coming out and being able to be part of this proclamation, and for the minister for bringing forward today's statement.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Bo Huang and Mingdi Zhao

Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I am delighted today to share with you the fascinating story of Waverley constituents Bo Huang and Mingdi Zhao.

On April 17th, 2023, the duo represented Winnipeg, Canada and participated in the world-famous Boston Marathon. The Boston Marathon is one of the most prestigious road races in the world, attracting elite athletes from around the globe.

Bo and Mingdi finished with a flourish in that race, with Bo clinching a personal best time of three hours and 13 minutes and 41 seconds, and both of them ranking in the top half of 30,000 fast runners from all over the world.

Bo and Mingdi started to put their passion into running about eight years ago and have maintained a strong momentum since then. Bo has now run six full marathons and Mingdi has run 11. Accomplishments like this come from dedication, discipline and determination. They trained very hard for the Boston Marathon for several months; early morning long runs, late-night speed workouts, and all this hard work finally paid off. In addition, this duo has been accepted to run in the New York City Marathon in November this year. Their consistency and commitment to running has inspired many people in the Winnipeg running community.

Bo is a senior design engineer at New Flyer Industries, and Mingdi is a teacher at Sisler High School. Apart from their dedication to their jobs, they are also highly involved in community services. They gave back to the running community by volunteering in multiple running events. They also use their passion for running to raise funds for the community. In May this year, they are participating in the Million Reasons Run to raise funds for Winnipeg's Children's Hospital, and also, in July this year, they'll participate in RunThePeg100 to raise funds for the unsheltered community, End Homelessness Winnipeg, by running 100 kilometres around Winnipeg in one day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bo and Mingdi are perfect examples of the Manitobans we can truly be proud of. I ask my colleagues to celebrate this duo with me for being such pacesetters with an unending passion for running for a cause.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hat Phan

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): It is with great pleasure that I recognize the years of dedication and exceptional service provided by Hat Phan, Winnipeg's best tailor. For the past 25 years, Hat has been an integral part of Winnipeg's fashion industry, bringing her unique skills and style to our community of Union Station.

After immigrating from Vietnam 38 years ago, Hat eventually started her tailoring business in the basement of the old Hudson Bay building. She then moved to her current location at 120 Donald in 2001.

Hat has worked in her trade for so long that day-to-day tasks have become secondary to the customers who make her so happy. She loves the people in our neighbourhood. Much of her clientele were people at The Bay and those nearby who lived nearby, and they've since retired. Her customer base has shifted to

include much younger people, and Hat says she really likes that. She enjoys the energy they bring to her shop.

As one of her loyal customers, I can attest to Hat's exceptional skills as a tailor. She always makes the experience fun, affirming and flexible. She truly cares about her customers, going above and beyond to ensure that they are satisfied with her work and leave her store feeling confident.

Hat is a community staple, and people always light up when they talk about her. She is a shining example of what can be achieved with dedication, community-mindedness and a love for one's craft.

All of her hard work is also reflected in her beautiful family. Hat has four children and three grandchildren and, like her, they exemplify the values of hard work, dedication and perseverance.

It is an honour to recognize Hat Phan's 25 years of success as a business owner in Union Station. I invite everyone to join me in celebrating Hat's achievements as she joins us in the gallery today with her husband, Ha Tran.

Congratulations, Hat, and thank you for being such a vibrant and important part of our Union Station community.

Curtis Charison

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): It gives me great pride to stand today and recognize the recipient of the prestigious Lions Club award, Curtis Charison.

Mr. Charison is the recipient of the Melvin Jones Fellowship award. This award is a worldwide honour presented to those who showed tremendous care and compassion for their communities. It is putting the needs of our neighbours and our communities first. It requires taking action to serve others.

Mr. Charison has lived in the entire—his entire life in the Gunton area. Here he runs Charison's Turkey Hatchery, which has been a staple in Teulon and Gunton areas. The hatchery has been running since 1952, supports many local events and projects with their generous donations. Each and every year, Curtis consistently steps up with his donations in support of the local community, which he considers an honour to be able to help out.

Giving of one's time and energy to others is a great way to help your community. Mr. Charison truly cares about the people and the community. He is compassionate and generous beyond any expectations.

He has certainly made the community better, has led by example, building relationships and improving the world through kindness. Curtis made a lasting impact and changed many lives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope the members of this House will join me in wishing Curtis Charison congratulations on his outstanding achievement. He truly deserves this honour and something to be proud of.

Thank you.

* (13:50)

Susie Erjavec Parker and Allan Pineda

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Local entrepreneurs and community organizers are an important part of what makes our communities in Manitoba so vibrant. It's my honour to highlight two of these today: Susie Erjavec Parker and Allan Pineda, two Filipino entrepreneurs from St. James who founded Winnipeg's Fried Chicken Fest.

Fried Chicken Fest began in 2018 as a way to support local chicken farmers and our robust agricultural scene. Since then, it's become the food festival that kicks off the year and a celebration of the fantastic restaurateurs of the province. It takes place for 10 days during January, which is typically a slow month for the restaurant scene. During Fried Chicken Fest, Winnipeggers can try out fried chicken dishes from participating restaurants and vote on their favourite.

For Susie and Allan, the work they do for Fried Chicken Fest is all about promoting the local businesses and organizations that make Manitoba a great place to live and work. This has become especially important as we recover from COVID.

We know the pandemic hit the restaurant industry especially hard. And because of this, Susie also created the save Manitoba restaurants campaign. It was an effort to encourage folks to order from restaurants directly whenever possible. This allows them to keep more of their profits and reinvest in their businesses by paying staff and suppliers. It's especially important for small and independent restaurants, who often have thin profit margins.

The efforts of Susie and Allan have made a difference. The save Manitoba restaurants campaign spread coast to coast in support of the restaurant industry. And they heard from many restaurants who said Fried Chicken Fest has helped keep their businesses afloat.

In the future, they hope to bring Fried Chicken Fest to other Canadian cities.

I'm so proud that these incredible entrepreneurs are from my community in St. James. Susie is here with us today, along with her daughter, Steffi. I invite them to stand up. And I want to sincerely thank both Susie and Allan for their contributions to our economy and quality of life here in Manitoba.

Polish School of Dance "Sokol"

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): It gives me great pleasure to recognize the Polish School of Dance "Sokol" Winnipeg on celebrating their 50th anniversary on June 17th.

The Polish School of Dance was founded in 1973 by Mrs. Gladys Kulas, under the Polish Gymnastic Association "Sokol" Winnipeg. The school of dance was supported by many Polish Canadians who felt there was a need to pass on ancestral culture. They wanted to return to their roots by giving their children an opportunity to learn about the Polish culture through song and dance, and this has continued for the past 50 years. Today, it continues to be home to over 70 proud dancers ranging in ages from three to 17.

Throughout the years, "Sokol" has always taken pride in its leadership and choreographers. Over the past 50 years, the school has had almost 40 dedicated and passionate instructors that have worked with children, passing on their love of Polish culture, dance and tradition.

Over the decades, the Polish School of Dance in Winnipeg has had the privilege and honour of sharing traditional Polish folk dance, attire and language at many events, both within and outside of our province of Manitoba; some including Folklorama, Polish Fest, year-end concerts, Christmas concerts, dance camps, senior citizens' homes, hospitals, community centres and countless special and commemorative concerts for various organizations.

These children have travelled to out-of-town performances at Cooks Creek, Beausejour, Brandon, Selkirk, Kenora, Thunder Bay and have performed during two tours through Ontario and Alberta.

The Polish School of Dance has also travelled to the International Folk Festival in Poland on two separate occasions. They have participated and represented our province among thousands of other Polish folk dancers and singers around the world.

To all the dancers, past and present, congratulations on your great achievements. Your talent and love

for Polish culture is inspiring to your own community and to our province's—as a whole. We wish the Polish School of Dance a wonderful 50th anniversary, and we wish nothing but success for the next 50.

Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Death of Jason Butchart Condolences to Family

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable official leader—or, Leader of the Official Opposition.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want to start today by paying tribute to a Manitoban who left us far too soon. Jason Butchart was a volunteer firefighter with the Fisher Fire Department. He was a father, a trauma nurse and a veteran of our Armed Forces. Before he passed away, Jason helped survivors of an accident on Highway 68, that included a 10-month-old child.

He's an absolute hero, and he will be deeply missed.

I do have a question that I would like to pose to the First Minister, but I wanted to put those words on the record first.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Our hearts go out to Jason and his family and—on the tragic loss.

We—our thoughts go out to all volunteer firefighters in the community who do incredible work to save lives each and every single day.

We thank them for the incredible work that they do.

School Libraries Containing LGBTQ2S Content Government Position on Call for Book Ban

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): On this side of the House, we think that books shouldn't be banned in this province.

We also think that it's important to call out anti-2SLGBTQ+ rhetoric. When that happens, we should send a clear message to kids and families across Manitoba that we support them.

Now, we called on this provincial government to make 2SLGBTQ+ training available to all trustees and elected leaders in 2016. Recent events have made it clear that this training is still needed in Manitoba. It's important that we send a clear and united message to people across the province on this issue.

I would ask the First Minister: Will she clearly and unequivocally state that books should not be banned in our province?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): We support our 2SLGBT community, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And when it comes to this situation, I know that, certainly, school divisions have been involved, and we know that we've left certain things and decisions up to those school divisions.

But I will say that we do support the community. We want to ensure that there is no—that nobody is being discriminated against when it comes to information that is being out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: You well know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all kids in our province should be supported, and that's why it's important for leaders on this issue to speak very clearly.

We also know that the provincial government has an important role to play when it comes to the K-to-12 education system. It can send a powerful and important message of support to 2SLGBTQ+ children, families and everyone in the community, that we see them and that we support them.

That means ensuring that books that reflect their lives and the lives of their families are not banned, particularly not in public schools.

The Premier has the ability to ensure that no books will be banned simply because they feature 2SLGBTQ people within their pages.

Will she commit to taking action today?

Mrs. Stefanson: I just said that we do support our 2SLGBTQ community in Manitoba, children—and children right across the board who are being taught through our public school system and all school systems in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

Obviously, that's—the situation is being dealt with at the school division level, and we'll continue to support those in our L-G-D-P community, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But, again, this will take place at that level.

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

Winnipeg Hospitals Nurse Staffing Levels

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I just want to say, for the record, that the Premier should unequivocally state that these sorts of things should

not be happening at the school division level, and it's the role of provincial government to intervene.

We know that the Premier has also refused to tell us just how many people are leaving the front lines of our health-care system. However, we now have the facts. I'll table the information that shows just how many nurses have left the bedside.

In 2016, there were 8,014 nurses working in Winnipeg hospitals. Seven years later, there are 300 fewer nurses. Those are the facts.

Will the Premier tell the House why her government cut the number of nurses working in Winnipeg by 300?

* (14:00)

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): The Leader of the Opposition and all Manitobans will know that we are investing \$200 million more in—to ensure that our—there's more health human resources in the province of Manitoba, Madam—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is including more than \$125 million specifically for nursing in Manitoba.

We'll continue to make those investments in health human resources as needed in the province of Manitoba.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, what the facts show is that there are actually fewer resources. There are fewer nurses working in Winnipeg hospitals today than when this PC government took office.

Every day, we hear about the impact of the cuts that began under Brian Pallister and have continued under the Stefanson government: cancelled surgeries, nurses being forced to work mandatory overtime, being run off their feet and more nurses than ever leaving the profession.

The Premier should be accountable for the decisions she made as Health minister and implements today as the Premier.

So, will she tell Manitobans why there are 300 fewer nurses in Winnipeg hospitals than there were in 2016?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do know that, as a result of our health human resource action plan, that we've added more than 259 nurses to the system as a result of those investments that are being made.

The Leader of the Opposition will know, as well, that since 2016, there—we had a worldwide pandemic that was a significant challenge, not just here in Manitoba, when it comes to health human resources. It's right across the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We're taking action, and we're getting results.

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

Mr. Kinew: Actually, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the numbers that I just shared with the public show is that the amount of nurses working at the bedside in Winnipeg hospitals decreased each and every year that the PCs have been in office.

That means that they began their program of cutting the number of nurses working at the bedside many years before the pandemic. And, unfortunately, it continued right through the pandemic.

And so, today, here we are in an election year that the PCs are promising to change, but we see that what their actions have been since they've taken office has been to cut the number of nurses working and caring for you, the people of Manitoba.

So I'll ask again: Can the Premier explain to the House, why did she cut the number of nurses working in Winnipeg hospitals by 300?

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, as part of our health human resource action plan, investment of more than \$200 million into that, into recruitment, retention and training of all health-care professionals, including nurses. We have added 400 additional nursing beds in the province of Manitoba. That has resulted in us retaining more—there's been a number of initiatives that we've taken to retain nurses, as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we've added 259 more nurses in the way of recruitments.

We'll continue to take action on behalf of Manitobans.

Health-Care System Nurse Staffing Levels

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Deputy Speaker, Manitobans across the province are suffering thanks to the PCs' health-care cuts. These cuts have led to reduced services and less care by the bedside.

Instead of stopping their cuts, the PCs are desperately trying to mislead Manitobans by pretending that they've added hundreds of health-care workers to the system, yet they won't say how many workers have left.

We have a FIPPA, which I'll table, which shows the reality after seven years of the PCs. There are 50 less nurses working in the Southern Health region since—sorry, since 2016.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) explain why she cut 50 nurses from Southern Health?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I was so pleased to be out in Southern Health this morning making another great announcement on behalf of the doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and support staff in that area, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I thank all the workers in the Southern Health region for the incredible work you've been doing to support Manitobans and make care available closer to home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, nearly 900 new health professionals have been 'hadded' to the health system.

MLA Asagwara: Deputy Speaker, when the PCs aren't spending millions of dollars on private for-profit agency nurses, they're firing public sector nurses. There are less—there are 50 less nurses working in Southern Health today, compared to when the PCs took office in 2016, yet the PCs are trying to mislead Manitobans—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —by saying they've added hundreds of health-care workers.

Manitobans won't be fooled so easily by these PCs. They don't trust them when it comes to—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —health care, given their terrible track record on the issue. It's time for the Premier to do the right thing and end her cuts to health care.

Will the Premier commit today to stop firing nurses and stop cutting health care?

Ms. Gordon: Mr. Deputy Speaker, our commitment is to add more nurses to the health system. That is why our government is committed to adding 400 additional nurse training seats.

Just last week, I was at the college of nursing, welcoming 120 students to the inaugural summer program. For the first time in the province of—in the history of this province, we will have three intakes at the college of nursing; 259 nurses have been added through the health human resource action plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will continue to answer the call for nurses to be added to the Manitoba health system.

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

MLA Asagwara: Deputy Speaker, 50 fewer nurses in Southern Health, cuts and less care by the bedside. That is the record of seven years under this PC government.

Less nurses means less care for those Manitobans in their time of need. Instead of investing in public nurses, the PCs are instead sending millions of dollars to private, for-profit agencies for nurses across our province. That's the wrong approach.

The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) should do the right thing: stop cutting nurses and invest today in strengthening our public health-care system.

Will she commit to doing so?

Ms. Gordon: When I had the privilege of meeting at the front line with nurses, they said, Minister, these are the incentives we propose that your government launch to retain, train and recruit nurses to the province.

And out of that came the health human resource action plan, Mr. Deputy Speaker: \$123 million for nine incentives. Adding more individuals to the college of nursing inaugural summer program; 400 additional nurse training seats.

You know what the nurses told me when I met with them? In the 17 years they were in office, no one ever went to speak with nurses, and they did nothing for nurses.

But we're standing—

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

Manitoba Hydro Rate Increase Request

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Deputy Speaker, Manitobans are facing—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: —a cost of living crisis. Families are struggling to make ends meet and can't afford any more surprises.

But instead of helping regular Manitobans, this PC government is going to hike up their hydro rates again. They're now asking the Public Utilities Board to approve a residential rate hike of 2.4 per cent for

September, and then another 2.4 per cent in April next year.

That's nearly 5 per cent, after this PC government has already increased hydro rates by over 20 per cent since 2016. Enough is enough.

Will the Premier stop hiking up hydro rates on Manitoba families?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): I hope you will see the irony in the NDP coming forward and talking about affordability when it comes to Manitoba Hydro.

Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know what happened under the NDP: the biggest capital boondoggle in the history of Manitoba. They created a \$24 billion of debt; they were \$4 billion over target on that.

That has created increased rates to Manitobans. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Sala: Deputy Speaker, we know the PC government's playbook. They didn't like the PUB's independent oversight of hydro rates, so they rewrote the law to let them hike up rates 5 per cent every year.

Now they can set rates at the Cabinet table, costing families hundreds of dollars. We believe, on this side of the House, that that's wrong.

Will the Premier stand up and commit to stopping her hydro rate hikes today?

* (14:10)

Mr. Cullen: Well, part of the \$4-billion overrun on behalf of the NDP was because they chose to ignore the Public Utilities Board process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have taken steps to make sure to stabilize Manitoba Hydro and we've also taken steps to make sure the Public Utilities Board is stronger than ever—before, by adding \$2 million to the PUB budget. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Sala: Hydro rates have increased by over 20 per cent under this PC government. That's hundred of dollars more out of the pockets of Manitoba

families. And now this PC government wants to raise rates another 5 per cent while Manitobans are already struggling with rising costs.

On this side of the House, we believe that hydro rates should be set through independent oversight, not behind closed doors at the Cabinet table, as we're seeing with this PC government.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) stop raising hydro rates today, yes or no?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, under their watch, what happened was they increased the water rental rates and the debt guarantee rates to Manitoba Hydro by twofold.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we took it upon ourselves as government to reduce that in half this past year. That will save Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba Hydro rate-payers \$185 million. That's why it's gone from a 3.5 per cent increase down to a 2 per cent increase.

That is progress.

Allied Health Professionals Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's allied health-care professionals week but workers are still waiting for a fair deal from this government after having had their wages frozen for over five years. This includes rural paramedics, pharmacy and MRI techs, radiation therapists and 190 other allied health professionals. Some mental health and addictions counsellors have been waiting for over six years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government committed in their 2022 budget to completing all wage contract settlements by the end of the 2022-2023 fiscal year, but allied health-care workers are still waiting.

Will the minister give them a fair deal today?

Hon. James Teitsma (Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services): Not surprising, I suppose, that the NDP continue this consistently irresponsible approach as espoused by their leader.

I'll remind the member that government is not the employer. The parties that are involved are involved in active bargaining—aided, in fact, by a mediator at this time.

What the Leader of the Opposition and this member is doing is inflaming the situation. They need to stop.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, with a supplementary question.

Ms. Naylor: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the PC government promised Manitobans in their budget last year that they would complete all wage contract settlements by the end of the fiscal year. That date has come and gone, forcing allied health-care workers to vote 99 per cent in favour of a strike mandate.

This is an unprecedented mandate and it's clear that thousands of front-line health-care professionals feel disrespected by the Stefanson government, including addictions and mental health workers during an addictions crisis.

Will the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) stand up during allied health-care professionals week and finally say she can give allied health-care workers a fair deal?

Mr. Teitsma: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on this side of the House, we have nothing but respect for the amazing work of Manitoba's allied health-care professionals.

The member doesn't seem to want to listen to our members, though, so perhaps she'll listen to former NDP Cabinet minister Jennifer Howard, who said, I believe and I know that collective bargaining can be a delicate process and I don't think any of this—anyone in this House would want to interfere with this process—except for, apparently, this member and her leader—or would want to see that process go off of the rails because they want to take political advantage of a situation.

I think that's what the member is doing. Sadly, this—I tell you, Jennifer Howard, as a Cabinet minister, had more credentials, more capability and more courage than the entire front bench of the NDP.

Shame on them.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order

The honourable member for Wolseley, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Naylor: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this PC government's seven years have—of cuts have thrown our health-care system into chaos. Allied health-care workers have had enough.

The PC government promised to complete all wage contract settlements by the end of 2022-2023 fiscal year. The deadline has come and gone, and allied health-care workers are no closer to a fair deal.

A five-year wage freeze during a cost-of-living crisis is unacceptable, Mr. Deputy Speaker. On this

side of the House, we believe in respecting health-care workers who care for us and our families.

Will the minister give allied health-care workers a fair deal today?

Mr. Teitsma: I think the member knows that we shouldn't be commenting publicly on the specifics of active negotiation and that we should be respecting the bargaining process. I hope that she will take at least that information from this question period. Given that this is—I don't know how many times that she's come back to the same question, though, I kind of doubt it.

I would just say to that member that we have actually arrived at a number of successful contracts within the health bargaining units, and in every single one of those cases, there has been retroactive pay available, there has been compounding increases available.

I expect that will happen here again.

Assiniboine Community College Funding for Nurse Diploma Program

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, the—in February, the PC government promised Assiniboine Community College additional funds to establish a one-time nursing diploma program.

Yet after making this promise, the PC government backtracked, saying the funding for the nursing diploma program would have to come out of ACC's base funding. That left ACC on the hook for over \$300,000 in additional costs. That's another broken promise by this PC government.

Can the minister explain why she's forcing ACC to pick up the tab for this nursing diploma program?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): First, I want to thank Mr. Mark Frison, who is the president of ACC, for all his hard work in leading ACC and their programming. And he and I have been in constant communication and contact, and this was an unfortunate situation that we are actively working on a solution for.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for St. Vital, on a follow-up question.

Mr. Moses: As it stands right now, Assiniboine Community College is projecting a \$750,000 deficit this year, and that's thanks in large part to the PC government.

And they've resulted in thirty—\$300,000 in a broken promise. And that money should have been gone to nursing students in the diploma nursing program.

And for years, the PC government has underfunded universities and colleges, including ACC, and failing to provide adequate funding, and specifically for this nursing program. The funding for ACC this year is below inflation, and it's below other Manitoba post-secondary institutions.

Can the minister explain why she's leaving ACC behind?

Mrs. Guillemard: There is no risk to the nursing diploma program. It will go ahead as planned. There is no risk to the funding for this program.

The president of ACC understands that this nursing program will go forward and is committed to helping the province meet their 400-additional-nursing-seat commitment, and he is actively coming up with solutions that we are working towards addressing that goal.

The member opposite does not have all of his facts straight, but I do acknowledge that the situation was unfortunate and we are actively working for a resolution.

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

Mr. Moses: The fact is, the PC government broke their promise. They broke their promise to fund the one-time nursing diploma program at Assiniboine Community College.

They went against their word. They should have funded it. Instead, they told them to fund it out of their base funding; another example of why Manitobans can't trust PC announcements because they break their promises immediately. And it's another example of the sheer incompetence of this PC government.

* (14:20)

ACC is being forced to pick up the tab for this program. Despite inflation and inadequate funding by this—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —government, they've already 'folced' to cut—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —at least one industrial mechanical program.

So, will the minister do the right thing today? Will she fund the nursing diploma program at ACC fully?

And will she commit to that right now, right next—right here? *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: The president of ACC does not characterize this as a broken promise; only members opposite are characterizing this way. Again, another example of the members opposite putting misinformation on the record.

They owe Manitobans an apology.

Funding for Nurse Training Programs Budget Clawback Concerns

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): We all know there's a massive shortage of nurses in this province. And despite what the government may claim, everyone predicted it coming for decades.

Both the NDP and the PCs froze education budgets for years, which meant we had fewer nurses, and it's still happening. The Brandon Sun is reporting, as I table, that despite promising new funding in February, the PC government reversed itself and, at the last minute, pulled—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —nursing funding 'lead-to-ing' to a \$300,000 deficit for the college and cuts to another needed program in industrial mechanics course, quote, all because of some miscommunication within the government's ranks. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: Now, Brandon University only got an increase of 3.9 per cent this year while ACC had to make to—do with only a 2 per cent increase.

Is this blunder a one-off mistake, or is it because this government has no intention of keeping their health-care promises?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable leader—or, the honourable Minister for Advanced Education and Training.

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Once again, I'll reiterate that we are in close contact with our post-secondary institutes and leadership, working on resolution of a number of different issues.

Every post-secondary institute did receive an increase this year. There is over \$100 million more added to our post-secondary institutes that is creating more programs, including nursing seat expansions.

We are committed to our 400-seat expansion in the nursing training seats. We will meet those goals.

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

Mr. Lamont: You know, year after year, we've asked this government for something pretty simple, which is an honest accounting for the budget.

Because when the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) stands to talk about all the extra money that's supposed to be going to health care, when—year after year, the PCs put one number in the budget, and then immediately turned around and demanded 15 per cent cuts, imposed wage freezes through legislation and forced reorganizations that resulted in hundreds of staff deletions and thousands of resignations.

They did that year after year, and we're still in a health-care crisis. And I don't want to hear how much more money they're spending than the NDP, because that's exactly what Brian Pallister said when he was cutting.

We've heard that people are being told that if they go over their health-care budgets this year, it will be clawed back next year.

Is that why the government is cutting funding to nurse training programs now?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reality is, under this Premier and this year's budget, we've increased assistance—financial assistance—to health care to the tune of a 9.2 per cent increase.

And also to that, we've committed to additional seats in our post-secondary institutions for health-care professionals. We've committed additional money to post-secondary to the tune of \$60 million. We've also committed, to health care in particular, \$200 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to support and attract 2,000 more people to health care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're on the right track.

Work Permit Holders Health-Care Coverage

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): A couple of weeks ago, I asked the Health Minister what she's going to do to make sure those on work permits here in Manitoba are provided health coverage, as they are entitled to.

I have three open cases. These are people who live and work in Manitoba, one who is pregnant and due

in October. I've been working with the federal government on the technicality that their work permits are a few days shy of a year.

However, this is not just a federal issue. The Minister of Health in Manitoba has a big responsibility, as it is her job to ensure those in Manitoba on work permits are, in fact, receiving the health coverage they are entitled to. Health is a provincial topic.

Will the minister responsible provide assurance today that these three Manitobans will, in fact, receive health-care coverage?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I thank the member for bringing this forward. This is an issue that Manitoba Health was actually leading the way in discussing with the federal government in terms of their work permits and when they expire and how it impacts on our ability to provide health-care coverage to individuals whose work permits are expiring.

This is a very live issue that I encourage the member to continue to work with their federal colleagues on, as Manitoba Health is also continuing those discussions.

Portage Place Shopping Centre Redevelopment Announcement

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): Mr. Speaker, sustainable and lasting economic development requires a government and community stakeholders to work towards a common goal.

I understand that last week, the Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade joined the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) for a historic announcement that follows this principle.

Can the minister elaborate on this announcement and how it will help Manitobans and our downtown?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade): I want to thank my colleague from McPhillips for that question and the opportunity to speak on this exciting, unprecedented announcement last Friday.

I was pleased to join the Premier last Friday, along with representatives from True North, leaders in our health-care sector and also Grand Chief Jerry Daniels, as well, at Portage Place shopping centre.

At the heart of this incredible announcement, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$500-million investment in our downtown core and the creation of a comprehensive health-care centre with the Pan Am Clinic expanding to become the anchor tenant; truly remarkable.

Our government is committed to growing the economy, healing our health care and creating safer streets, unlike the NDP, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who have a track record of broken promises and failed projects.

I'd like to thank everyone who made this project a reality and—

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

Silica Mine Project and Drinking Water Safety Municipal Board Zoning Rules

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Environment and Climate has so far failed to stand up in this House and commit to protecting drinking water for Manitobans.

Residents near Vivian in southeast Manitoba fear that the Sio Silica mining project would permanently damage the freshwater aquifer they drink from every day.

The local RM rejected zoning changes for this project, a decision that was recently overturned by this PC-government-appointed municipal board.

Can the minister tell us why the PC government is not listening to elected local officials?

Hon. Kevin E. Klein (Minister of Environment and Climate): I would hope that the members opposite begin their statements with once upon a time, because they're filled with fictitious points and comments. They're not talking about the facts.

The member opposite is obviously very busy in court and doesn't understand that, in fact, we are listening to Manitobans and we will continue to listen to Manitobans. That's why we sent it to the Clean Environment Commission so that they could listen to hundreds and hundreds of Manitobans, unlike the NDP when they ignored the Clean Environment Commission year after year, not replacing the North End treatment plant.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Wasyliv: Not only is this minister not listening to the people of southeastern Manitoba, he is overturning the decisions of democratically elected local councils in that area.

The proposed Sio Silica project will drill thousands of wells across the region, and if the mine is approved, wells will extend deep past the limestone aquifer

where many residents draw their water and into the sandstone below.

It should not be difficult for this minister to stand up in this House and commit to protecting drinking water for all Manitobans.

Why won't he do that today?

MLA Klein: Yet again, we have more election propaganda and misleading statements being made on the record. It's embarrassing for the members opposite.

I can tell you that we are, indeed, listening to the residents of Manitoba. Every statement that member made is fictitious; it's made up. It is nothing more than election propaganda.

* (14:30)

If that's the way they're going to win an election and try to get back into office and destroy our environment—as noted in a Winnipeg Free Press article—or a Winnipeg Sun article that said their fraudulent climate change plan was fraudulent and driven mostly by spin and propaganda.

We will take no lessons from the members opposite.

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

Mr. Wasyliw: You know, I would suggest the minister take this lesson: perhaps he can start listening to the people of Dawson Trail and Springfield-Ritchot, because on this side of the House, we certainly do.

The Manitoba Auditor General shows us that the PC government has failed to fully implement 90 per cent of recommendations from the past several years, including recommendations on drinking water safety.

The local RM has concerns about zoning implications for the Sio Silica project, but now that decision has been overturned by this PC government-appointed municipal board.

Will the minister respect the concerns of local decision makers and commit to protecting drinking water for all Manitobans?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the minister, just a caution around language about fictitious when referring to what is spoken by another member in this House.

MLA Klein: I guess if I can't use that term to properly identify what is being said on the public record, it is

nothing more than misleading. And I can tell you as somebody who has spent over 26 years in the media, it is absolutely misleading.

So, let's instead of answering these false claims and stories that are being made up at this particular point in time, let's talk about the facts. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Klein: Are you—do you want to listen to this or no? *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Klein: Kids, kids.

Let's look at the fact. The fact is that during the NDP's time, Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipegosis fisheries—

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

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I—order. Order.

Comments need to go through the Chair, and let's behave like adults.

Lynn Lake Hospital Staffing Levels Return to Community for Transferred Patients

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Let's talk about misleading statements. Residents of Lynn Lake and the Marcel Colomb Cree Nation were told that their family members had to get shipped hundreds of kilometres away because of staffing levels at the Lynn Lake hospital.

We now know that those staffing levels are back to where they need to be, and yet those people have not been repatriated to their home community.

Will the minister tell the people of Lynn Lake and Marcel Colomb Cree Nation when their family members will return to Lynn Lake, or will she continue to ignore them?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I'd like to thank the member for Flin Flon for thanking our government for fixing the staffing issue in Lynn Lake.

We will be working very closely with the communities in—around Lynn Lake on their needs. We continue to bring individuals to the table of solutions to address the specific needs of communities, and Lynn Lake is a priority for us as well.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a supplementary.

MLA Lindsey: Quite frankly, the people of Lynn Lake and Marcel Colomb Cree Nation are tired of that minister's spin and refusing to answer the primary question: When will their family members be allowed to return to the hospital in Lynn Lake?

Can the minister answer that question because the staffing levels are back where they need to be, or did she always plan to shut down the hospital in Lynn Lake?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Ms. Gordon: Mr. Deputy Speaker, members opposite will continue to rely on fear mongering as their narrative. But, do you know what fear is? It's fake evidence appearing real. That is what they rely on every day that they come into this Chamber.

The members on this side of the House care about the North. We care about the residents of Lynn Lake and the surrounding communities, and we'll continue to work with the leadership of those communities to address their needs.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege.

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

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And I did understand that that member was rising on another matter, so I will recognize him again.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I rise on a matter of privilege.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for a matter to be ruled in order as a prima facie matter of privilege: first, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity, and second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that a prima facie matter of privilege has occurred in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

On the question of the first opportunity, this matter concerns remarks that were made in the House on Thursday, May 11th, after oral questions. Therefore, this is my first opportunity to raise the issue.

On that day, I asked the current policy—about the current policy in Manitoba that has taxpayers directly

financing second homes for MLAs, something that, at the federal government level, is prohibited for members of Parliament. I did not suggest that anyone was breaking the rules. I didn't accuse anyone of anything. I was asking why the rules in Manitoba are so lax.

On the question of a prima facie case of privilege, after oral questions, the NDP member from Elmwood and the PC Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) approached my colleague in this Chamber and asked them to tell me to stop asking questions about it. The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) said it was dangerous and the PC Government House Leader said to warn me that if I continued my line of questioning, they would retaliate.

The NDP member from Elmwood said I was walking a dangerous line, and the PC House leader and MLA for Steinbach said if I continued to bring it up, the PCs would respond by raising the issues of office—of travel expenses by the former Manitoba MLA for Keewatinook, who had a home in Steinbach and also drove to her home community of St. Theresa Point in Island Lake, to which there's only winter-road access, a community of 15,000 people with no rail, boat or all-weather roads, so you can imagine she had some mileage claims.

The member of Steinbach also wanted—from Steinbach also wanted to bring up my office expenses, including a dinner and the fact that we'd bought laptops, which remain government of Manitoba property. Those are my office expenses, and we bought laptops so my staff and I would have the tools to do our jobs. I know that there's a lot that this government does that's on paper or on fax or with technology that's decades out of date, but my staff and I actually use modern technology to do our work.

And I'm talking about the one issue—personal expenses and the use of public money to help MLAs pay for their mortgages on a second home that they get to keep and sell. For another member to approach my colleague and convey to me that I will face retaliation and that I should not ask questions on this subject is a prima facie violation of my privilege and my freedom of speech as a member in this House.

The single most important right we have as legislators is parliamentary privilege and the freedom of speech to be able to speak truth without fear of reprisal. It's in the bill of rights, dating back to 1688; it's in the British North America Act of 1867; it is in the Constitution Act of 1982. And it's something that's

personally important to me. It's reflected in the legislation I've brought forward.

And, to be clear, I know what it's like to be silenced in this Chamber, because as an independent MLA, we can be silenced all the time. When I asked for leave from the House on a ministerial statement on International Women's Day, the House leader and the NDP said no. So, I could not pay tribute to my aunt, who was the—one of the first ever all-women—member of the first ever all-women law firms in Manitoba, along with her friend and law partner Marion Meadmore, who was the first First Nations woman ever called to the bar in Canada.

When I asked for leave for speak on international day of la Francophonie, I was denied it by the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen). I represent St. Boniface, where the founder of this province is buried after being murdered for having temerity to—able to speak his own language in his own land. And I was silenced, as so many French speakers have been throughout this province's history. That's because, by legislation, independent MLAs are treated as second-class members of this Legislature, and this Legislature denies us the right to speak and vote that other members can take for granted.

You may not want to hear the questions we ask, but we were chosen by the people of our constituencies to represent them, so it's our constituents and Manitobans who are being denied representation and denied a say in this House. And more than our constituents, because we have to cover all of the ministries, and we may help people anywhere in Manitoba.

We are democratically elected members of this House, elected to represent our communities and all Manitobans as best we can, and yet, we are denied the basic democratic right to speak and vote in this House that other parties can take for granted and have gone out of their way to knowingly suppress. That is contempt for democracy, it's contempt for freedom of speech and contempt of this Legislature.

* (14:40)

I don't know how it works with other provincial and federal parties, but—and the—are—the NDP or the Conservatives, but nobody in any other party ever gets to tell any Leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party what questions they get to ask in this House—not the NDP, not the PCs, not the federal Liberals, for that matter.

I presented evidence, in the form the member's own expenses, from this government's own public disclosures. I showed them what they did and I asked

them how they could justify it. What was the response? Not, you know what, your leader is right, we should do something about this; not, look, it's clear we can't defend this, this needs to change. It was a threat that if I brought it up again, I'd get muck thrown at me, and my former caucus colleague, a First Nations woman who is no longer in politics, would get muck thrown at her.

So I'm being threatened by the members of both the NDP and the PCs that, unless I stay quiet, they'll smear me—everything wrong with Manitoba politics right in a nutshell.

So, Madam Speaker—so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as matter of privilege, it is fundamental as—to our jobs as MLAs that we cannot be threatened to dissuade us from asking questions in this House.

I cite House of Commons Procedure and Practice, 3, Privileges and immunities: Members are entitled to go about their parliamentary business undisturbed. Menacing any member on the floor of the House, when they are coming or going to the House, or on account of their behaviour during a proceeding of Parliament, is a violation of the rights of Parliament. Any form of intimidation of a person, for or on account of his behaviour, during a proceeding of Parliament could amount to contempt. That's Maingot, second edition, 230 to one.

Now, the fact that my colleague was approached, and not me personally, doesn't change the fact that they were asked by two members to tell me not to ask questions.

And I want add, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a matter of the utmost seriousness. The offence is not just against me but the Legislature as a whole, because as the Speaker knows, what people at home or even in this gallery do not realize the truly terrible things that are continually said as part of heckling in this House.

Now, to be threatened with being smeared for acting—asking completely legitimate questions is a violation of the right—violation of the rights of Parliament, not just a violation of my rights as a member. Unless it is made absolutely clear that this behaviour is unacceptable, it will continue, because we will not be silenced and we will not be denied.

I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that the members for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) be asked to apologize to the House for the violation of privilege and that it be referred to an all-party committee for immediate consideration.

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

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): It seems that the member opposite has two particular issues that he's raised in one matter of privilege.

The first seems to deal with the fact that he doesn't like that our rules require the member opposite, as an independent member, to ask for a leave on certain matters of the House. That is, as he asked—or cited as an example, for responding to ministerial statements.

That's just one example. There'd be numerous examples where independent members do have to ask for leave. Those are rules that are established by the House. In fact, the House has long had the rule that a party has to achieve four seats in this House to be able to be recognized as a political—*[interjection]*

It is—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The member for Steinbach has the floor and will be respected as such.

Mr. Goertzen: It is slightly ironic that the member opposite, who raised as part of his matter of privilege a concern about heckling, now heckles from his seat. So perhaps he can take his own advice.

He raised the issue about being silenced in this House and he gave several examples. Each one of those examples, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are related to the rules of this House, and they require that to be recognized as an official political party one has to achieve four seats.

Now, briefly, in the last 20 years, the Liberal caucus has achieved four seats until they lost the fourth seat and went back down to three seats. He will remember, because it was during his time as leader, that during that time where they had four seats, he didn't have to ask for leave to respond to ministerial statements or other things because they briefly achieved those four seats.

The remedy for that, if he's concerned about having to ask for leave, isn't coming with a matter of privilege to the House, it's either changing the legislation and the rules of this House—and they brought forward a private member's bill in the past on that—it didn't pass, but they could do so again—or trying to find a fourth seat in the next election. Or maybe they'll

even aspire higher; I have no idea what their aspirations are. But if they actually achieve party status after the next election, then this isn't an issue. It in no way forms a matter of privilege.

When it comes to accusations in the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I said it in my response to my question last week, the rules as it relates to expenses for individual members of this House are set by an independent commission and they're agreed that it should be an independent commission.

There are some legislatures in Canada that have MLAs or their equivalent, MPPs, in some cases, setting their own expenses. That is not the way it's done in Manitoba. That's not the way it should be done in Manitoba.

And I'll repeat to the member, as I repeated to others, that accusations that rules are being broken should not be brought to the floor of the House without evidence, which the member did not present.
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): I'm going to keep my comments very, very short.

I know that the member is emotional in respect of what may or may not have been said to his colleague or to him in respect of what he perceives his roles and privileges are in the House. I will let that for the deputy—for yourself, Deputy Speaker—to attest to its truth and its validity.

I will say only this: it is incredibly rich, coming from the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), to talk about being silenced or attacked or however he emotionally attempted to construct, again, whatever he feels may or may not have happened, when we have given that member ample opportunity to get up in this House and apologize to a female member of the Legislative Assembly for his interaction and his threatening and his yelling in the face of a female member of this Legislative Assembly in October of 2020, outside these legislative doors.

He still has not done so. Him, as a male member of this Manitoba Legislative Assembly, has still doubled down and refused to apologize to a female member of this Legislative Assembly, of whom we are all equal here. He has still not apologized for getting in her face and yelling and screaming and swearing at her.

I will leave that on the record.

Miigwech.

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

We will now move on to petitions.

PETITIONS

Drug Overdose Reporting

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Across the province, many Manitobans continue to struggle with addictions, and the pandemic has led to even more death and worsened the ongoing public health crisis of opioid overdoses.

(2) Three hundred and seventy-two Manitobans died from an overdose in 2020, and that's over one a day, and 87 per cent higher than in 2019.

(3) Manitoba is expected to exceed over 400 overdose deaths in 2021, but that data is not publicly available since the last public reporting of opioid deaths was published in 2019.

(4) The data for drug overdose deaths from 2020 and 2021 was compiled through media inquiries, and this needs to change.

(5) Access to timely data on the harms of drugs helps to inform both government and stakeholders on where to take action and target resources needed in various communities.

(6) Manitoba is the only province not providing regular, timely data to the federal government opioid information portal.

(7) Manitobans deserve a government that takes the growing drug crisis seriously and will report the data publicly in a timely manner to target actions and allow for accountability.

* (14:50)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to enact Bill 217, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act (Overdose Death Reporting), to require the Province to publish the number of drug overdose deaths, as well as the type of drug, on a government website in a timely fashion.

And this has been signed by Hilda McKay Canard, Flora McKay, Brenda Catcheway and many other Manitobans.

Security System Incentive Program

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Cities across Canada and the United States, including Chicago; Washington, DC; Salinas, California; and Orillia, Ontario, are offering home security rebate programs that enhance public safety and allow for more efficient use of their policing resources.

(2) Home security surveillance systems protect homes and businesses by potentially deterring burglaries.

(3) Whole neighbourhoods benefit when more homes and businesses have these security systems.

(4) A 2022 Angus Reid Institute poll found 70 per cent of Winnipeggers surveyed believed crime had increased over the last five years, the highest percentage found among cities in Canada.

(5) The same survey reported half of Winnipeggers polled do not feel safe walking alone at night, and almost 20 per cent of them said they were a victim of a police-reported crime in the last two years.

(6) Although the public understands that the—what the criminologists and community advocates point to as the main drivers of crime, namely the larger issues of lack of food, addictions and poverty, they support rebate programs and—as these help to—the most vulnerable in our community by moving—removing financial barriers for personal protection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to work with municipalities to establish a province-wide tax rebate or other incentive program to encourage residents and businesses to purchase approved home and business security protection systems.

Petition's been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): 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) According to census 2021, Punjabi is the fourth most spoken language in Canada and there are 33,315 people in Manitoba whose native language is Punjabi.

(2) Thousands of Punjabi newcomers are coming to Manitoba as students and as immigrants, looking to

call this province home. People of Punjabi origin contribute a great deal to the social and economic development of Canada and Manitoba in fields such as education, science, health, business and politics.

(3) In coming to Manitoba, Punjabi newcomers make sacrifices, including distance from their cultural roots and language. Many Punjabi parents and families want their children to retain their language and keep a continued cultural appreciation.

(4) Manitoba has many good bilingual programs in public schools for children and teens available in other languages, including French, Ukrainian, Ojibwe, Filipino, Cree, Hebrew and Spanish. Punjabi bilingual programs for children and teens as well as Punjabi language instruction at a college and university level could similarly teach and maintain Punjabi language and culture.

(5) Punjabi bilingual instruction would help cross-cultural friendships, relationships and marriages and prepare young people to be multilingual professionals.

We therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to take steps to implement Punjabi bilingual programs in public schools similar to existing bilingual programs and take steps to implement Punjabi language instruction in other levels of education in Manitoba.

This petition, Deputy Speaker, is signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Prior to announcing the business for this afternoon, I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, May 17th, 2023, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 230, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment Act; Bill 231, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2); and Bill 235, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, May 17th, 2023, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 230, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment Act; Bill 231, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2); Bill 235, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act.

* * *

Mr. Goertzen: Could you please call for third reading this afternoon: Bill 2, Bill 6, Bill 11, Bill 12, Bill 15, Bill 18, Bill 19, Bill 26, Bill 34, Bill 38, Bill 17.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that this afternoon we will consider concurrence and third readings on bills 2, 6, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19, 26, 34, 38 and 17.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 2—The Official Time Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now commence, as previously announced, with Bill 2, The Official Time Amendment Act.

Hon. Andrew Smith (Minister of Municipal Relations): I move, seconded by the infrastructure—the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Piwniuk), that Bill 2, The Official Time Amendment Act, be now read a third time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Municipal Relations, seconded by the honourable Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation, that Bill 2, The Official Time Amendment Act, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed. *[interjection]*

We're going to get the minister to read that again. It's important that it gets done right.

Mr. Smith: I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, that The Official Time Amendment Act, be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I'm going to ask the minister to try that one more time.

Mr. Smith: Okay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation, that The Official Time Amendment Act be—reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister for Municipal Relations, seconded by the honourable Minister for Infrastructure and Transportation, that Bill 2, The Official Time Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Smith: I thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on the record with respect to this—with Bill 2.

* (15:00)

The Official Time Amendment Act will allow Manitoba to consider adopting permanent daylight saving time.

We know that that's something that's been discussed, not only here in our jurisdiction, across the country and of course, in the United States. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to make sure that Manitoba is aligned properly with other jurisdictions, particularly our largest trading partner, the United States.

So this bill will essentially allow, if the will of Manitobans, through consultation, and of course if the United States goes through with their time change, that we would follow suit and make sure that Manitoba is able to align itself with permanent daylight saving time with our partners, colleagues, and of course, our good allies to the south of the border, the United States of America.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we all can appreciate the importance of having that alignment, not only for convenience sake when folks travel across the border, as many of us do. We have quite a strong working relationship and a very good relationship with the United States.

It certainly would also help in matters of trade. We know that our largest trading partner, by far, is the United States, and Manitoba has a tremendous amount of exports that go to the United States, agriculture being one of them.

So we do thank that—ask that the House considers this, passes it and makes sure that Manitoba aligns

ourselves with the United States, should they choose that path as well.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other speakers wishing to speak to Bill 2?

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Why did the government decide that now was the right time to put forward this bill? *[interjection]*

Mr. Brad Michaleski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The honourable member for Wolseley.

Ms. Naylor: Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, this bill amends The Official Time Act to discontinue the seasonal time change for daylight saving time.

We know, as has already been discussed in this House, that daylight saving time is a divisive issue in Manitoba. Even this bill is conflicted over whether we should move away from daylight saving time.

It doesn't even fully commit to ending time changes and establishing permanent daylight saving time, instead leaving the decision up to the United States, where the bill is currently stalled in Congress.

Thoughts on what should happen to daylight saving time in Manitoba are mixed. Some Manitobans prefer permanent daylight time, which is what the government is sort of proposing, and this would keep the time as it is during the summer after the clocks are switched for daylight saving time, meaning that sunsets and sunrises would be later in winter and stay as they currently are in summer.

Longer nights in winter is an obvious benefit of this system. One negative result of permanent daylight time, however, would be that some children and workers would have to make their morning commute in the dark during part of winter.

However, other people prefer permanent standard time. This would mean that the sunrises and sunsets in summer would be earlier and remain as they currently are in winter.

Some sleep experts favour this, claiming that it's healthier for people and is more in line with the body's circadian rhythm.

In Canada, daylight saving time is the practice of turning clocks ahead one hour on the second Sunday

in March, and back one hour on the first Sunday in November.

Canada has six standard time zones that may be abbreviated as: PST for Pacific Standard Time; MST for Mountain Standard Time, etc. However, during the daylight saving period between March and November, they may be abbreviated as PTD and MDT. Sorry, PT–PDT and MDT, et cetera.

The boundaries of the standard time zones are not necessarily the same as those of the corresponding daylight saving time zones. For example, the Mountain Time zones include a portion of northeastern British Columbia in the summer, but not during the winter; boundary shift because some municipalities choose not to participate in daylight savings time.

It's up to each province to decide whether to use daylight time and not all do. Most, but not all jurisdictions in Canada and US, have been moving their clocks ahead by one hour on the second Sunday in March and back by one hour on the first Sunday in November.

The majority of Saskatchewan has followed Central Standard Time year-round since 1966. However, some towns along the Manitoba and Alberta border have chosen to follow the time scheme of the province beside them, rather than staying with the rest of Saskatchewan.

In 2020, Yukon Territory switched to observing Yukon Standard Time year-round. In Canada, areas of Quebec do not change to daylight time and remain on Atlantic Standard Time year-round. Pockets of Ontario and British Columbia do not use daylight time.

The bill in the US Congress to make daylight saving time permanent, which would trigger Manitoba at doing the same if Bill 2 is passed, has been stalled in the House of Representatives since November 2022. The US Senate passed the bill in March. Supporters of the bill in the US claim that the change will be to brighter afternoons and increased economic activity.

Because it is now a new year, supporters of the bill in the Senate will need to introduce it if they want the bill to eventually be passed. Supporters argue that if approved, the so-called sunshine protection act, would allow children to play outdoors later and would reduce seasonal depression.

Critics, including the National Association of Convenience Stores, say it will force many children to walk to school in darkness during the winter since the

measure would delay sunrise by an hour in some places.

US President Biden has not said that he supports the bill to making daylight saving time permanent in the US. While this bill is currently stalled, since 2015 about 30 states have introduced or passed legislation to end the twice-yearly changing of clocks, with some states proposing to do it only if neighbouring states do the same.

Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, it's commonly assumed that daylight saving time was put in place as a way to give farmers more time to work in the fields in the spring and the summer. However, the purpose of having it be lighter later in the day was actually about reducing electricity consumption.

Although first instituted in 1915, the idea of daylight time have been battled around for more than a century. Benjamin Franklin suggested the idea more than once in the 1770s while he was an emissary to France.

In 1784 he sent a letter to the editor of the Journal of Paris suggesting that Parisians could save money by getting up earlier during the summer because it would allow them to light fewer candles in the evening.

But it wasn't until more than a century later that the idea of daylight time was taken seriously. William Willett, an English builder, revived the idea in 1907, and eight years later Germany was the first nation to adopt to daylight time.

Daylight time was first enacted in Germany in 1915, then quickly adopted by Britain and much of Europe and Canada. The Canadian government introduced daylight saving time in 1918 as a measure for increasing production during the First World War.

The idea was that during months when the sun stays visible for longer, a pre-breakfast hour of daylight could be saved for use after supper. Countries did this by turning the clocks ahead by one hour in the spring to start the day earlier and back by one hour in the fall.

It was reasoned that people would expend less energy trying to light their homes, for instance, if time were adjusted to suit their daily patterns.

When the days started getting shorter in the fall and people awoke to increasing darkness, the clocks were turned back an hour to get more light in the morning.

During the First World War, daylight saving time was used in parts of Europe, the US and Canada. Great Britain, for example, put the clocks ahead one hour during the winter months and two hours during the summer. However, in most cases, observance of daylight time ended with armistice.

In Canada, federal government regulation of daylight saving time lapsed with the end of the First World War but resumed during the Second World War.

Canada and the United States both used a form of daylight saving time all year round during the Second World War.

* (15:10)

During the Second World War, a different form of daylight time was also reinstated by Britain, and clocks were set two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time during the summer. It was known as double summertime. The time shift didn't end with the summer, as clocks were rolled back to be one hour ahead of GMT through the winter.

The Uniform Time Act enacted by US Congress in 1966 established a system of uniform—within each time zone—uniform daylight time throughout most of US, exempting only those states in which the legislatures voted to keep the entire state on standard time. However, in 1973, the US adopted year-round daylight saving time again in an attempt to reduce energy use because of an oil embargo.

They repealed the use of year-round daylight saving times the next year, allegedly because of its unpopularity with the public.

Municipalities in Canada came to regulate DST to reduce the confusion present when different businesses on the same street used different times. The provinces became involved, passing different sorts of time legislation.

Since 1987, official time zones and DST have been regulated by the provincial, territorial and municipal governments.

Other countries have also done away with time changes. For example, Russia experimented with a permanent daylight time in 2011, but three years later, opted to implement a permanent standard time. In November 2022, Mexico rolled back its clocks one last time after the passage of a law last week to abolish daylight saving time. Some northern towns will continue to practice the time change come spring, however, likely due to their ties with US cities across the border. The move, long sought by President Andrés Manuel

López Obrador was based on backing by voters as well as negligible energy savings and negative health effects from the time change, officials said.

Some parts of Australia have adopted daylight time. Of course, it's done a little differently than in the northern hemisphere, where seasons are opposite. So when daylight time starts in Canada, it comes to an end in Australia and vice versa.

I know that was one of the most fascinating speeches ever delivered in this Legislature and potentially one of the most controversial. But on that note, I don't want to take up any more time, as I'm absolutely certain that members across the House want their opportunity to speak on this issue as well.

So, on that note, Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, I will thank the House for their time and this opportunity, and take my seat.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to comment and little bit on this bill. We support this bill because we, in fact, need to standardize with the United States in terms of time, but, of course, things are still up in the air in the United States and we don't know exactly where they're going to finally end up. So this is a bill which is there in case, and it may not necessarily happen. So, we'll see.

I think it's important to mention and to remember that Canada had a very important role in the establishment of international standard time. In fact, it was Sir Sandford Fleming who was credited with being the father of international standard time. He apparently spent an uncomfortable night in a railway station because of time confusion and, in part, as a result of that, became a strong advocate for 24 time zones around the world, each equal to 15 degrees of longitude, and with each time zone representing one hour difference; of course, beginning at Greenwich meridian.

The introduction of standard time happened in North America in 1883 to begin with, at least for railways. And that was led by Sir Sandford Fleming.

And it was not only a matter of convenience to passengers to avoid people having overnight stays when they shouldn't have because there was time confusion; it was also pretty important in terms of safety. It wasn't desirable to have two trains using two different time references, ending up going in opposite directions on the same train—same tracks at the same time. Obviously one needed for safety's sake to do something.

There were in North America at one point 144 official time zones. Thank goodness we don't have that many now. In Sir Sanford Fleming's role, he was very important in convening an international prime 'meridium' conference in Washington, DC, in 1884. And there were many countries from around the world represented, and out of that meeting came the international standard time development.

So here we are, many decades later, and we are debating time and how we allocate it, and how we set it up and how we set our clocks. It is a much better position from which we are starting from, but, of course, there's still a lot of debate as to whether we should have daylight saving time or not; and we will leave it—in this case, the decision will be up to our neighbours to the south, and we will see what they decide and then we will do—follow along.

It is important that we, on this day as we're debating this bill, remember the importance of time, the importance of standard time and the important role Canadian Sir Sandford Flaning [*phonetic*]-Fleming played in having this arrive internationally and globally.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Is there any further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 2, The Official Time Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 6—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): We will now move on to Bill 6, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 6, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: I put on significant comments on the record on second reading, so I won't repeat all of those. We heard—we brought this to committee; it's passed that stage.

Just in brief, then, this will either expand or enhance the benefits for the personal injury and protection plan, or allow MPI to collect back funds from an individual who should not have been provided funds because of inaccurate or false information.

Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Appreciate the opportunity, put a few words on the record at third reading of Bill 6.

This bill makes several amendments to The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act. The corporation is not required to pay benefits to a resident of jurisdiction other than Manitoba, if there is an inter-jurisdictional agreement that exempts the corporation from providing benefits to residents of that jurisdiction. Currently, an accident victim 65 years or older is entitled to an income replacement indemnity only if they are employed at the time of the accident. This—the entitlement is broadened to also apply if the victim has a job offer or a history of seasonal, casual or temporary employment.

* (15:20)

The corporation is authorized to pay funds in trust to a person to manage on their behalf of a victim with impaired cognitive functioning, even if no formal committee or substitute decision maker has been appointed by or for the victim, and the corporation's ability to recover overpayments is strengthened.

This bill brings forward three main changes: it expands the ability to reclaim funds from people who have made fraudulent claims, as I mentioned; it changes the criteria for qualifying income replacement due to an accident; and it allows to pay funds in trust to a person on behalf of someone with an impaired cognitive functioning.

We have a number of concerns, of course, as you may know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with regard to how this government has managed or mismanaged, in this case, MPI.

Manitobans value their public insurer. They see the value in having a public insurance corporation in this province. And, in fact, it was, of course, an NDP government which brought forward MPI as a solution to keep those rates low.

Manitobans want to see their Autopac bills stay low as one of the items of affordability that we can implement here in this province, especially at a time when inflationary pressures are making everything more expensive. That is the goal, or should be the goal, of MPI.

But, of course, we've seen under this government, as we've seen with so many other elements of public life and public purview that this government has control over, they don't see it that way. They see this as a way to continually pressure the cost to average Manitobans.

We've, of course, seen that with Manitoba Hydro. We've seen just this week where this government has gone, once again, to the PUB, saying, we want to max out the amount that we can increase our Manitobans' hydro bills by applying for a rate increase at the PUB.

And now we've seen it again with MPI just this spring with Autopac rates going up at a time when even the insurer says they should be going down. PUB says they should be going down. Rates should be going down because people drove less during the pandemic; there were less claims; there was an opportunity to pass some of those savings along to the average Manitoban.

But why are rates going up? Well, we know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're going up because this government has mismanaged MPI, specifically when it comes to the IT upgrade, known as Project Nova.

This government, you know, stepped in early on in the process and said, we know better; we know how to manage this project. In fact, it was the minister himself who said, I will step in; I will be the one to tell you how to upgrade this project. And it's been an absolute boondoggle ever since. And now Manitobans are paying more every month when it comes to their Autopac bills because of the mismanagement that this government has. *[interjection]*

Now, I hear the minister being quite loud, and it's quite actually strange that he's not out answering questions in the hallway right now with reporters because we know for a fact that the mismanagement and the boondoggle continues at MPI as the board and as the hand-picked CEO continue to mismanage the project, and rates are going up because of it.

So, you know, my question, I guess, if we had an opportunity to ask questions—I know the member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor) was eager to ask questions even at third reading. I would like to do the same because I'd like to know how the minister expects that

this bill can be implemented at a Crown corporation that is so mismanaged that they're having trouble even delivering to Manitobans the most basic elements of the cheap rates that they expect. That is—has become an issue, and it will continue to be an issue as long as this government is in power.

The buck stops with this government. They have the responsibility to manage these on behalf of Manitobans, to manage our Crown corporations in a responsible way, and they have failed over and over and over again.

It's time that—for them to be held accountable. We will do so at the next election, at the ballot box. I look forward to that happening.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words about this bill. And I want to particularly comment on the changes which relate to who would be eligible for income replacement indemnity. And currently, the situation is that an accident victim, 65 years or older, is entitled to an income replacement indemnity only if they're employed at the time of the accident.

In this bill, it is broadened to apply to a victim who has a reasonable expectation of employment at the time of the accident, and it falls into one or two categories: that they have received a written offer of employment and the offer has not been declined; (b) they have a history of seasonal, casual or temporary employment that would have continued but for the accident.

This is a useful and helpful extension. I thank the government for making those changes.

I personally think that there should be a broader look and a broader eligibility for those who are victims. Remember, these are people who are victims in a car accident and who can be severely, badly affected. Why are we limiting it to people who have employment? Certainly, it seems to me that a case can be made that we should not base this on whether somebody is employed or not. This is somebody who is a victim, and maybe we should start to look at whether there should be more equivalent indemnification for individuals.

Certainly, in my experience, I've come across a number of individuals who were excluded from such—having such an indemnity because they didn't quite fall under the condition of being currently employed, and they felt that this was very unfair. And some of

these would be captured in these new changes, but not all of them.

And so I think that at some point in the future, we should actually look at a broader—opening it up to those who are victims of an accident, because I think all 'vixtims' of an accident should be looked at and not be discriminated against for one reason or another.

With those comments, I will sit down and look forward to this law passing third reading and becoming implemented.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Are there any further speakers?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 6, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 11—The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2023

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): We will now move on to Bill 11, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2023.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Seniors, that Bill 11, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2023, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: As noted at second reading, this bill has a number of different provisions regarding acts that are responsible under a number of different ministries.

A couple that I would quickly highlight is the ability to allow for the City of Winnipeg to permit planning notices to be sent electronically, that would be a convenience to many residents of the city of Winnipeg; and also to allow paramedics to respond and to direct traffic, as they are often first on scene, especially in rural areas. That's an important provision.

* (15:30)

The other provisions I spoke to at second reading and at committee, and I don't need to put any further words on the record.

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): It is my honour to rise in the House today to put a few comments on Bill 11, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2023. This bill amends several acts to reduce or eliminate regulatory requirements or prohibitions to improve services and to streamline government operations.

The Amusements Act is amended to eliminate the prohibition on reselling tickets at a markup price. The City of Winnipeg Charter and the city of Winnipeg—sorry—The City of Winnipeg Charter and The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment and Planning Amendment Act are amended to permit planning notices to be sent electronically.

The Highway Traffic Act is amended to give paramedics and emergency medical responders the same authority as firefighters to direct traffic and to eliminate an exemption that allowed vehicles other than emergency vehicles to disregard speed limits, stops, signals and other traffic control devices if carrying first aid or rescue equipment.

The Teachers' Pensions Act is amended to allow the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund to set its own board procedures and adapt forms to reduce the administration of the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've already spoken to this bill earlier on the second reading, but I'd still like to put a few comments. This is where we had a chance to sit down with True North and Ticketmaster to see what their position is, especially regarding The Amusements Act, which is eliminated—you know, they can—anybody can sell—resell those tickets.

And what they were thinking is that the government will bring in a bill which—well, actually, they have given the name to—Manitoba ticket sales act—and to have a protection for the consumers.

So, I will put on the record what they were talking about or what they were saying, how can this government or people in the—all the MLAs who can maybe vote on this and to protect the consumers.

So, they were asking to ban the use of software bots, which are designed to circumvent online security measures, cut to the front of the line and steal tickets; prohibit—sorry—tickets posting, which deceive fans

into paying higher prices for tickets not even on sale yet; bring ticket reselling out of the black market with a strong and new consumer protection such as mandatory money background keeper of the sold tickets, disclosure of exact seat location and information, transactions in Canadian dollars only, transparency in pricing through prompt pricing outlet fees and taxes, display of the tickets' refund policies in the event of event cancellation; ban deceptive marketing like the unsanctioned use of name, logo or teams, artists and venues on reselling websites to confuse consumers; consider it a requirement for resellers to register with the provincial consumer protection authority to certify that they do not use deceptive practices, software bots and require payment of local taxes.

So this was—but the True North and Ticketmaster were thinking that the government might bring another bill for the consumers' protection. I guess the government was busy with other stuff, so maybe instead of trying to get themselves re-elected and not paying really attention what the consumer protection is.

So I'll leave with this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I'll give the chance to other people to speak on this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): And I'm happy to be able to rise this afternoon and just put on a few more words on the record here about Bill 11, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill actually amends several acts. There's four parts to it, and The Amusement Act, which is the first on the bill, eliminates prohibition on reselling tickets at a markup. And I'm very weary with respect to this piece of the legislation. I think that there's a lot we're going to have to do to be proactive on this piece of the legislation.

And I also think it's worthy of having its own piece of legislation being early debated by all MLAs and be introduced on its own. We see so much fraud happening, and it's not just in Manitoba, but it's all over Canada, all over the world, and I can reflect to just a few weeks ago with the Whiteout parties happening here in Winnipeg when the Winnipeg Jets were still in our Stanley Cup here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And it was unfortunate because we were here and we were so excited about these Whiteout parties, and within two days of tickets going on sale, we heard people trying to sell fake tickets; we heard people trying to upsell the tickets from what they originally paid for them.

And we just—we want to make sure that we're setting a tone here in Manitoba that it is creating an atmosphere for all Manitobans to be able to participate in different forms of entertainment, for example. It's a big part of our social atmosphere, and I'm weary with this piece of legislation that that might impact that a little bit.

We want to ensure that everyone is able to attend what they would like to attend and that people are not going to buy in bulk just to then resell what they have bought, going into it with that intention.

Another part of the legislation is the City of Winnipeg Charter and the City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment and Planning Amendment Act. They're amended to permit planning notices to be sent electronically. It's fairly straightforward and makes sense.

The Highway Traffic Act gives paramedics and emergency medical responders the same authority as firefighters to direct traffic and eliminate an exception that allowed vehicles, other than emergency vehicles, to disregard speed limits, stop signals, and other traffic control devices if carrying first aid or rescue equipment, and fairly straightforward.

And the last piece, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is The Teachers' Pension Act that allows TRAF—the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund board—to set its own board procedures and adopt forms to be used for administration of the Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund.

As many members of this House know, over the last year, we've actually all done a lot of work for the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba, specifically with respect to the TRAF board, and I want to thank all of my colleagues in—with—for the unanimous support in the legislation that was brought forward.

So, we want to make sure that, with this legislation, we are properly equipping TRAF; therefore, properly equipping the entire teachers association to have the resources they need, to have the discussions that need to be had at the board level.

So, there's definitely some merits to this piece of legislation. I don't like how they've lumped together several different pieces into one. I think they should be different pieces of legislation, all individually debated and voted upon. But overall, I think it's good legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Any further speakers?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 11, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2023.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 12—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2023

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): We'll now move on to Bill 12.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), that Bill 12, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2023, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

* (15:40)

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Acting Speaker, this is an annual bill and, as the name would suggest, it contains minor amendments and corrections.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): That'll certainly bring up anyone's spirits to know that I have the support of my colleagues as I rise to debate Bill 12. And it is important to be part of a strong team here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is fighting for Manitobans every single day on every single bill, including Bill 12.

Now, I, you know, I'd be remiss if I didn't make the joke that this is an omnibus bill, as the minister said, not an ominous bill. But I'm always leery, of course, of this minister and this government because we know that, in the past, they have used bills that address number of different legislative acts to hide their cuts. And we know that that has been their modus operandi now for seven years.

So, it was important that we went through this bill and we made sure that, as far as we can tell, and I'm not—don't take my word for it, Mr. Deputy Speaker,

because we—one might have slipped past us, as it does sometimes. But there are certainly always cuts coming from this government, so we're always very leery when we see thick bills that the government says don't worry about, don't pay attention to.

We do, of course, pay attention to them because Manitobans have seen the impact that this government's austerity and cuts have had, and that's been, of course, under the Pallister government, under Brian Pallister as the premier. That was—you know, he proudly said that.

But, of course, we know, under the Stefanson government, this current Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) continues to do the same thing, but maybe just doesn't say it quite as loudly or as boastfully. But we know for a fact that she has continued on this—the former premier's cuts and austerity, and that has been their only offering to Manitobans.

What has been the impact? We know, in the health-care system, there have been severe impacts, there have been severe consequences and we know that that carries across the board, whether it be in education—as I hear my friend from Transcona nodding along and agreeing with me on, he has seen and we have seen, in all of our constituencies, the impact that education cuts have had.

And we have seen this every single budget year, but this one maybe even more so, more acutely, because, while the government has gone out and said, just trust us in an election year, we're going to spend more than ever on education, we have actually seen school divisions cutting programs that impact students, not least of which, of course, in River East Transcona School Division; we've seen library techs cut, we've seen the International Baccalaureate program cut.

So, we have seen firsthand, we know what the government is saying is not true. And, of course, we know that while they're sending cheques to billionaires, the school divisions are saying, we don't have what we need to offer the programming that our students and our families are asking for.

So, again, that's just one example, and I could go through the minor corrections and amendments act, and, of course, this touches on a number of very important acts in this province. And, you know, as the minister correctly noted, it—usually spelling errors and very minor stuff.

But the impact that is—every department and every element of public service and government has been impacted by this government's, you know, single-minded focus on simply cutting rather than finding solutions, rather than listening to those at the front lines and rather than making a real difference.

Manitobans are suffering. They want a change. We are here to offer that to them, and I look forward to offering in—that to them, on the doorsteps, as we go to the next election.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm happy to rise and speak to Bill 12 here this afternoon. And, you know, I've had the opportunity to speak to Bill 12 in the past, so I'm going to keep my remarks short here. I did just want to clarify something that the last member just shared on record here.

It was actually the NDP who first cut funding for education. For them to then come into the House and say switch direction, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to be very clear that they were the ones who first cut education. PCs didn't help, but they were the ones who first cut it.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Is there any further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 12, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2023.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 15—The Court of King's Bench Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): We'll now move on to Bill 15, The Court of King's Bench Amendment Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Johnson), that Bill 15, the court of queen's bench amendment act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, that Bill 15, The Court of King's Bench Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Goertzen: This bill deals with a relatively small classification of individuals currently known as masters in the court—that might change at some point in the near future, in terms of their name, but that's what they're currently known as.

The senior masters, when they move back into a position of a regular master after seven years, it has to do with equalizing their pay, as is done with others in the judiciary or the court system.

And this was recommended by the Judicial Compensation Committee, which meets on a statutory basis to make recommendations when it comes to the pay of those in our justice system, as it's an independent system, and so their pay is set independently.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I appreciate the opportunity to address Bill 15, The Court of King's Bench Amendment Act. And I am very much interested in putting some words, once again, on the record with regards to this important bill.

This bill amends The Court of King's Bench Act to establish a salary for a person who resigns as the senior master but continues to act as a master.

Now, I just wanted to pause very quickly before I put any more words on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I do know that there is a bill before the Legislature, brought forward by my very, very learned and exceptional colleague, the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine), who has—[interjection]

I'm hearing that there's leave that I can continue on, on this line of comments. We could continue on all afternoon on this.

But I just wanted to say, that—on a very serious note—that she has brought forward a bill that does address this very outdated and archaic language that's being used in this bill, and is currently used in the justice system.

But I just wanted to address that, because I do hope that that bill finds unanimous support and is passed.

However, just in terms of my comments today, I do—will continue to use the current language, just for

clarity's sake. But that is just a note for those paying attention to the debate here this afternoon.

We do support the measures in this bill to make salary scales align with seniority. This change will, hopefully, help with retention of existing staff.

We're also concerned that this government has failed to support our justice system, as we are seeing just right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, incredibly high vacancy rates among prosecutors and challenges in retaining them here in this province. We know that we're seeing burnout across our prosecutors, and they are being offered incentives and higher pay elsewhere in the country, even within western Canada.

This has caused major, major issues within our justice system, and continues to pressure our justice system in a way that we least need right now, as public safety is No. 1 concern—or, one of the high concerns of municipalities and many throughout our province.

In March 2023, CBC reported that court delays were causing many cases to be thrown out before the accused even stood trial. Lawyers say this is a sign that the system just isn't working.

* (15:50)

In 2016, the Supreme Court ruled that cases for lesser charges must be heard within 18 months, or 30 months for more serious charges. Data obtained by CBC News from Manitoba prosecutors show delay motions were filed for 53 cases in this province over the past two years. The Crown stayed 13 of them, and another five were dropped because of the lengthy delays, meaning 18 cases, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were tossed—have been tossed, and the accuser went free because of delays in the system.

But we also know that the actual number of cases being thrown out every year is estimated to be much higher than that because some charges are stayed before a delay motion is even needed. According to the Winnipeg defence lawyer, these delays have a corrosive effect across the criminal justice system as people who claim that they're innocent—who claim—sorry, claim their innocence don't have an opportunity to clear their name in court. The accused are often looking—looked at as guilty if they're let go on a delay motion because they were freed on a technicality even though they were looking for their day in court and wanted to have that—their due process.

Additionally, some of the cases that are dropped or have been dropped are due to delays of serious

charges, including at least one case of child pornography charges. Having cases heard as quickly as possible, we know, of course, is, quote, best for victims, the accused and for society as a whole, end quote. And that's from Scott Newman, a Winnipeg criminal defence lawyer.

However, this past year, more than 3,000 cases took longer than 18 months to be heard by a judge, according to last year's Provincial Court annual report, which is an increase of nearly 5 and a half per cent. That's despite fewer cases in the system, the report said, which have taken longer to conclude than in previous years, mainly because of suspensions of court proceedings during the pandemic.

The report also found that 40 per cent of the Provincial Court's workload involved the administration of justice offences, which includes bail breaches and people moving around without court approval. Experts say the system is being clogged by these minor offences.

More Internet accessibility has exemplified the problem for those in rural and northern parts of Manitoba, he said, leaving those in Indigenous and northern Manitoba communities particularly vulnerable. There simply aren't—quote, there are simply aren't enough court dates to deal with the volume of cases there. I think we're falling down in our efforts at reconciliation if we're not putting appropriate resources into those communities. And, again—end quote. Again, that was Scott Newman, the Winnipeg criminal defence lawyer I quoted earlier.

We also know, though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that another contributing factor to these delays is an increase in prosecution and judge vacancies across Manitoba, and this was pointed out, once again, by CBC, March 17th, 2023.

In October 2022, Winnipeg Free Press also reported that, quote, burnout, unimaginable workloads and stagnant pay, end quote, were draining the Manitoba justice system of seasoned prosecutors by forcing them to move out of province, to the private sector or into early retirement. As of October 2022, 17 of the province's 175 full-time Crown prosecutor positions remained unfilled. We know that number continues to be high.

In the past two years, the department has lost 26 prosecutors, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 16 of whom have left work for Crown—for the Crown in another province—

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Order, order.

I just want to raise a point with the member.

The bill amends a Court of King's Bench amendment, and it's—the subject matter that you're wandering out is not dealing directly with the bill, so I just remind the member to come back to the matter of the bill.

Mr. Wiebe: I appreciate the guidance and will continue to do that, and make sure that we are relevant talking about Bill 15.

What I will note, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that when I was going on about the—how great our member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) was, nobody called relevance. So, I—you know, I could go back to talking about that, and I'd be happy to do that, I'm sure.

Everybody across the way is certainly all of a sudden paying attention and wants to hear more about the amazing work of our House leader and member for St. Johns. But I do take your caution. I do appreciate the guidance.

No calls for relevance there.

So, what I do want to just quickly note, Mr. Deputy Speaker—and, again, I appreciate your guidance—is that it is important that our justice system is functioning in a way that gives people confidence that those issues that are happening with regards to safety in community are being addressed within our justice system.

Of course, we know that within Bill 15, it is important that seniority is held up as a—one of the elements most important for us to pay attention to in terms of assigning the designation. However, we know that for the justice system as a whole, many Crown attorneys are being recruited across the country because of the dysfunction specifically within the justice system here in Manitoba. This is a specific and direct result of this PC government's failure to act.

Now, I will give the government some—maybe some leeway here to say that maybe, you know, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), the new and current Justice Minister, has brought forward a plethora of bills, just a few of which I've had a chance to speak to today, but I look forward to speaking to many more as we go through this legislative process. And so, I wouldn't want to blame him directly.

In fact, I might point the direction of blame more specifically at the former minister of Justice. And who was that? Of course, our current Premier (Mrs. Stefanson).

And many forget that, because we know of her time as a failed Health minister in this province,

especially during a time of acute need within the health-care system. But many forget that she was also our Justice minister when many of the shortcomings and failures we see in the justice system began to take root.

This bill is a bill that we will support, but we certainly don't support a government and a former Justice minister who has made such a mess of public safety across our province. We look forward to bringing that message forward to the people of Manitoba in the next election.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): We need to recognize that compensation for justices of the court is important for discussion for the reason that we need to ensure that competitive salaries are being paid to retain high-quality legal minds who serve as effective, impartial justices here in the province of Manitoba. It's good to be diligent and to ensure the process for judicial compensation be maintained, specifically for its deep, politicizing process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have the Judicial Compensation Committee, with the purpose to provide nonpartisan advice to the government to depoliticize the compensation of judges. And the government is then to make its proposals to this independent committee, which will, in turn, provide the government advice on the appropriate compensation of justices of the court.

And you know, again—just, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in theory of this debate here—I think we need to correct the record once again. The NDP, they love to come out and just play the high role, when really it's not flattering to them in any form. The NDP love to blame. They blame this government—this provincial government, they blame the federal government, they blame anyone and everyone that they can.

But we need to remember that, here in Manitoba, the NDP were very detrimental to our justice system. The NDP—under the NDP, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our incarceration rates went up. Under the NDP, they under-resourced all of our halfway houses, and we no longer have them here.

Under the NDP, they actually got rid of youth justice committees. Youth justice committees were a tremendously important part, here in Manitoba, for youth to have made—whether it's an accident, as long as they are remorseful, it provided them the opportunity to come forward and give back to the community.

And the NDP cut the youth justice committees. They hurt our justice system here in the province of Manitoba. And I think that it's really important that they learn to recognize and acknowledge their own mistakes, rather than blame, blame and blame others.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Is there any further questions? Or, speakers, sorry.

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 15, The Court of King's Bench Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 18—The Legislative Security Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): We'll now move on to Bill 18, The Legislative Security Amendment Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 18, The Legislative Security Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

* (16:00)

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Acting Speaker, I put significant comments on the record at second reading regarding this bill.

The one portion of those comments that I would reiterate briefly is that the changes that we make, when it comes to security in this building, while often the media or the public might focus on the fact that there are MLAs, elected officials, in this building, really, we make changes in this circumstance, both on the grounds but across the street, what's commonly known as Memorial Park, at a portion of Memorial Park.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

The changes are not really about us as MLAs, but it is about protecting everyone who comes to the grounds of the Legislature. That would include tourists; that would include students, who often come to visit, particularly at this time of the school year. That would

certainly include those who are being recognized in the gallery, as we often see during members' statements. That would include visiting dignitaries who come to the Assembly for a variety of reasons. That would include constituents who come here to meet with their MLAs for business. That would also include protesters who come to the grounds to lawfully and peacefully protest.

So, the changes that are made to The Legislative Security Act and security, in general, in this building are really as much, and some would say more, about protecting all of those individuals who access the seat of government, recognizing that this House, that this building, must always be the people's House and always be accessible for individuals. But accessibility also includes security and to ensure that those who are coming here, who have a level of expectation when it comes to their personal protection, that that level of expectation is met.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I see my—oh, there, okay. I know that my audience is—

An Honourable Member: Fading fast.

Mr. Wiebe: —is fading fast, maybe, according to some, but I hope that we're going to build throughout the afternoon because I do appreciate the chance we get to put a few more words on the record.

I did just want to pick up where the minister left off because I do think he makes an important point and one that I made at committee and I believe at second reading as well—I'll continue to make—is that we, as legislators, certainly are—it is important that we protect our safety. And we know that the circumstances of our interactions with the public have changed over time, and I could certainly spend some time talking about that and the impacts that have had—has had on many in this Chamber.

But, first and foremost, I do think it is important that we assure the public that we will protect them when they come to the people's building, when they come to this place to, you know, witness democracy in action on a daily basis. Whether that's school-children who come as part of a school trip, whether it's seniors who come, want to participate, when it's average people, tourists, of course, from all over the world, when it's average people who want to come and just spend some time learning more about their democracy and, again, seeing us in action here, whether we're in session or not, I think it's important that we offer to them the highest levels of assurance that their

safety and security is paramount. I think that's one of the most important things that we can do as legislators.

I also want to take the opportunity, again, as I've done at every opportunity, to thank our security personnel in the building, our security personnel throughout the Legislative precinct and grounds. Whether that be law enforcement, whether that be protective services, whether it be here in the Chamber with our wonderful staff, who have specific training to make sure that things are safe here in this place, I want to thank them for the work that they do because it is important that we see them as partners in any changes that we make.

And that's why making changes that are suggested under Bill 18, I think, are an important step and can help us to extend that envelope of security beyond just the specific grounds of the Legislature to Memorial Park—and, you know, I would suggest to the minister should have really been beyond just that one space.

Now, I understand the thinking behind this bill and the intent of the bill is to eliminate some of that friction or some of that bureaucratic overlap, if I can call it that, whereby Memorial Park, as a provincial park, is actually administered and—security is administered by conservation officers, which, as we saw during this past, I guess, you know, two years or so, when there have been more—there's been increased activity on the Legislative grounds, that we've also seen our conservation officers who have joined the effort to keep our precinct safe.

That being said—and I want to thank them for the work that they do—they did during that time, to offer that service. That being said, we all—I think all understood that that really isn't the role that they would have or should have in this place, and I—can be better administered and delivered by the existing security and others, in co-ordination with the City of Winnipeg.

But I will mention, though, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that during the question and answer period during our debate at second reading, our debate at committee, that that is one of the questions that we remain—that remains outstanding, is that interaction between the Winnipeg police—and RCMP, as the case should be—and our security services here in the building.

Of course, we know, by expanding their reach and expanding their responsibilities, that this adds added pressure to the work that they are already doing and certainly might give them more difficulty in delivering that safe environment that we all expect.

As I said, I also believe that this envelope probably could have been extended beyond just Memorial Park. We know that memorial avenue is used quite extensively—I'm not sure, memorial street—anyway, the mall just in front of the Legislature is used extensively during protests. And we've seen that over the last while, that that also could be an element that could be co-ordinated better, I think, with the Legislative security services.

All this to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, as I referenced earlier, I think that there has been a noticeable shift in tone and in decorum, if I can call it that, between the public and elected officials. And, you know, I mean, it's easy to blame this or to look southward. I often mention or talk about how, you know, the state of discourse in the United States has certainly degenerated and, I think, has somewhat impacted how we conduct ourselves here in Canada and in this province.

But I do think that there is an element of home-grown discontent that is being fostered by certain people here directly in this province that is permeating throughout certain groups that are then feeling more emboldened to come to this Legislature and be disruptive in a way that we haven't seen before. Or to come to our constituency offices, as we've heard from not just members on our side of the House, but members all over this Chamber, who have talked about interactions with the public that have felt—that left them feeling unsafe.

This is a serious, serious concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I do think that we need to ensure that we allow for access, we give access to the public in every way that we can, we open up the barriers in the front of the Legislature to allow people to be in their building more freely and openly.

There's no reason why we need to keep this place locked down, you know, when we have great security who are already offering an amazing service for us. But—I think it gives an atmosphere of distance that I think we shouldn't have, and we certainly carry that along as individual legislature—legislators, I know, in every public interaction that we have. All of us want to be seen as being accessible and feel that we can be—have the kind of discourse with our constituents and with others that we need.

However, you know, what we've seen over time is that this government hasn't taken this as seriously as it should have.

In a time of national crisis, in a time when we saw a convoy travelling across this country that, in many ways, was—you know, was part of a normal part of discourse and political discourse, there were, of course, so many times across the country where we saw it turn to violence or disruption in a way that we have never seen before. We saw what happen in Ottawa, but—and that's easy for us to hold up as an example. Here, in Manitoba, at the Emerson border, we saw folks holding up the border and closing down our international border, at a time when we needed that traffic to be moving.

* (16:10)

And then we saw the protest that happened here at this building, in Memorial Park specifically, that Bill 18 is trying to address. And we all saw that, at that time, we needed decisive action by this government to make sure that people felt safe; not just the people who live downtown, the people who were trying to access this building, but the protesters themselves, some of whom maybe were just trying to get a point across.

Others were disruptive and they had ulterior motives. They were violent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And because of the problems presented by this jurisdictional issue—caused by the Memorial Park being considered a provincial park, and there being no ability for protective services, and where the City of Winnipeg still had some jurisdiction, but protective services specifically didn't have the ability to impact those people who were setting up in Memorial Park—there were major, major safety concerns that were being felt across our city.

And why, why wouldn't a government who, again, had all the political capital in the world to make this change, to come in in a very decisive and very specific way, why wouldn't they make this change and come forward with legislation like this earlier?

Well, I think we know the answer to that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because there was members opposite who were joining in with these disruptive protests. We had the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) at the Emerson border handing out coffee and saying, you know, good work, way to go, this is what we should be doing.

We don't agree with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think that most Manitobans would say we should have been stronger here in this province. Where, you know, other places looked for some kind of, you know, legislative tool much earlier than this, this government sat on its hands, because I'm sure at the

caucus table this was in debate—and still is, right? There's still members opposite who, you know, speak out openly against vaccine 'mandiday'—mandates and such.

So, we know that for members who represent some of those communities where these convoy protests were most vibrant, those members have been silent or have spoken out in favour of them, and I'm sure behind closed doors, they're very vocal about their support of that.

So, next time the Memorial Park has protesters in it, and we need a strong legislation, we will hope that this will be the legislation that enables it; but I do think that it could've gone further, and it—there could've been stronger steps by this government to ensure that people felt safe and that they felt protected whether they're on this ground specifically, or just across the street in Memorial Park. Course, that's not really a relevant distinction when it comes to the safety that we're trying to provide for Manitobans.

So, you know, this is a government who continues to listen to their convoy base rather than what—doing what's right to protect the public and to protect safety in this province. We're going to show Manitobans a different path; we're going to show them how we can open this building, we can make it accessible, we can make it a welcoming place and we can assure them that their safety will be respected. We can reassure all members—or, all people that live downtown that we will continue to make their—the place that they live and work safe, and we will do so starting here in this building.

I look forward to bringing that message to the people of Manitoba in the next election.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I just—I echo a lot of the thoughts that have been shared with respect to the building.

And it's really important, and it's something we should be very proud of here in Manitoba, that our Legislative Assembly, our Legislative Building is, in fact, the people's building. It is a public building, and we want anyone who comes to visit, whether as an invited guest or someone who is touring Winnipeg, just travelling through the province, we want anyone and everyone to feel welcome in our building as well as safe in the building, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And something more we could be doing, too, is ensuring that people are aware of all the wonderful

services that the Legislative Assembly actually offers. Whether that be through the Speaker's office, whether that be through tourism—we actually have a lot of different tours that go through the Manitoba Legislature, and I think we could do a better job at promoting a lot of them.

We truly do have a beautiful Legislature, and I recognize I'm very biased, being a politician here in Manitoba. But, of all the legislatures within Canada—even Parliament Hill, Mr. Deputy Speaker—the Manitoba Legislature is, by far, the most beautiful legislature, and I think that's something we should very much value and cherish here in the province.

Now, I recognize times are changing and, therefore, changes do need to be made. And I think that's why it's good that this piece of legislation is coming forward and it's allowing all of us MLAs the opportunity to speak a little bit to it.

I know security has been a big issue, especially over the last few years. My colleagues have spoken in the House about experiences within their own constituency offices, and I know I've had my own, as well, where staff aren't always feeling safe because of people who are choosing to enter the offices and the actions that they are taking and what they are sharing with the staff members, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so, if there are more things we can be doing, even to extend outside of the Legislature into the constituency offices, again, I think we should be doing so. We need to continue to work towards political engagement and involvement and legislation such as this, that is making it safer and more comfortable for people to access the public building. I think it's a positive step towards that.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 18, The Legislative Security Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 19—The Provincial Offences Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now move to Bill 19, The Provincial Offences Amendment Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Smith), that Bill 19, The Provincial Offences Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: At second reading, I gave detailed explanation in terms of this bill, outlining that it provides clarification of tickets and when tickets can be quashed and when they needn't be quashed. Also, what can be attached to a ticket and considered as evidence, as well as interlocutory matters in a court proceeding, and whether or not and where they can be appealed and when they shouldn't be allowed to be appealed.

At committee, I believe that there was a presenter who came forward who, I think, rightfully cautioned about ensuring that, while efficiency within the court system is important, that expediency can sometimes come at the cost of fairness.

And, I believe, at committee, not—in addition to answering questions that came at the Q & A portion of second reading, I indicated to that presenter that this bill was not about making the court system faster in and of itself, but providing clarity and an assurance of when and how tickets get dealt with and how interlocutory matters are dealt with.

However, I wanted to put those comments on the record regarding the presenter who came at committee, thank them for their presentation and that their point was heard and respected.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I want to thank my colleagues for the warm encouragement that they continue to give me as we move through these important pieces of legislation.

I am eager to talk—put some words on the record with regards to Bill 19. And, once again, I wanted to start by echoing the words of the minister and acknowledging that he heard some of the caution of the presenter at committee.

But, more broadly, of course, we've heard this from others in the community as we've done outreach around this particular bill, that there is concern that this will be too prescriptive with regards to how this legislation will be interpreted.

* (16:20)

I know I've had assurances from the minister and from others that that is not the case, but I do know that there are many situations where, you know, as I've said now just a few times, you know, anecdotally, it's been shared with me that these, you know, former loopholes or ways of getting out of a ticket have been utilized by folks—by real folks.

This isn't a rare occurrence, is what I'm trying to say here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And—you know, and while we understand that administrative errors shouldn't be the reason why somebody who, you know, has been clearly convicted or has received a ticket and is justifiably being fined for that, why they wouldn't be held accountable.

I think most understand that beyond that, they want to ensure that the system is treating them fairly, each case individually, and it's not just a sort of rubber stamp; well, we can change this, we can alter that and, you know, and off to the next person at the justice.

It is an important issue. It is something that impacts regular people all the time. You know, again, whether they're rightly accused of something or whether they have actually done the offence, point is is that they want to make sure that their due process is fulsome and is complete.

And, you know, most Manitobans understand their responsibilities under the law in the same way that the law understands their responsibility to ensure that they are giving those folks that due process.

So, while we support Bill 19, we do think that it is something that, as I said, we've heard it from—caution from many others. We want to continue to listen to them to ensure that this is being implemented in a way that doesn't impact people negatively when they are trying to be good adherents to the law.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Just want to stand and speak a little bit to Bill 19.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few comments on the last provision of the bill dealing with the no appeals of decisions made on motions or other preliminary matters and proceedings under The Provincial Offences Act.

The bottom line is it's absolutely a defendant's rights to go to court to contest a ticket or a fine they receive under The Provincial Offences Act, and it's important that the court must have the capacity to handle such cases to deliver appeals in a timely fashion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, referring to the provincial court's recent annual report, and I actually tabled this during second reading of this legislation, Winnipeg continues to have more appearances per case than other regional court centres, which is attributable to a higher volume of charges and greater frequency of court sittings.

I think that this is very evident and in part why we need to be doing more to work on our justice system here in the province of Manitoba, and I think there's a lot more we can be doing and hope to have more debate on that.

Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 19, The Provincial Offences Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 26—The Limitations Amendment and Public Officers Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now move, as previously announced, to Bill 26, The Limitations Amendment and Public Officers Amendment Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Mr. Reyes), that Bill 26, The Limitations Amendment and Public Officers Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: At second reading I put on significant comments on the record regarding what exactly this bill does. Members will know that The Limitations Act and limitations in—generally are sometimes an overly complex area of law when they shouldn't be.

So there has been work done by our government previously to make it more consistent in terms of limitations and, in general—although not specifically, for every case—but, in general—The Limitations Act has been changed so that the limitation period when

an individual can bring forward a proceeding the clock starts ticking, as it were, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the individual becomes aware of the situation that they might want to take action upon. In many cases, under provincial legislation previously, the limit—the clock would start ticking when the action happened, but if an individual, of course, didn't become aware of the situation for a few years, they might not have been able to take action because the limitation period had already expired.

So, in general, there's a common limitation period. However, there was an oversight, I believe, in the drafting of legislation where The Public Officers Act was improperly or not included in this particular situation. And I know that the member opposite, the member for Concordia, had some questions regarding where the act could apply, for example, in the environment situation. He didn't ask specific examples, but I tried to answer at committee in a general sense of the act. So where an act has a different provision than that general—or that specific provision would take effect, but the general Limitations Act now, for most cases, puts in place that two-year window from when an individual becomes aware of the situation on which they might want to take some sort of a legal action upon.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member for Concordia.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): All right, all right; now, we're talking. I know that the members on this side of the House are very concerned about this government's record when it comes to the justice system, public safety and they're certainly eager to get out on the streets and talk to Manitobans about the failures of this Stefanson government when it comes to public safety across the province. And that's why they're so interested in hearing me put a few words this afternoon on the record with regard to Bill 26.

We know that Bill 26 is an important step in making sure that Manitobans have the ability to access the justice system in a way that keeps their community safe. We know that limitation periods create a maximum length of time that a claim can be brought forward against someone. It's important that enough time is allowed for a claim to be brought forward, especially when the effects may not be noticed for some time. It's also crucial that consultation is done to ensure that limitation periods are not preventing the legitimate

claims from being brought forward, and so that's why we look forward to seeing this bill move forward.

We know, though, that this was, of course, a further bill built, or, you know, evolved out of bill 51. And, of course, I mentioned to the minister during second reading, during question period, during committee stage, I believe, and every opportunity that I could, that we are concerns—concerned about First Nations consultation because when bill 51, The Limitations Act, was brought forward, we raised those concerns about the lack of consultations with First Nations.

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs at that time published a press release vehemently disapproving of bill 51, calling it, quote, an example of an abject failure to meet the principles of reconciliation and the honour of the Crown, end quote. This was because in drafting bill 51, the Manitoba Crown failed to consult with any First Nations. And AMC says, the bill fails to meet the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action, specifically Call to Action 26, which calls upon the federal, provincial and territorial governments to review and amend their respective statutes of limitations to ensure that they conform to the principle that governments and other entities cannot rely on limitation defenses to defend legal actions of historical abuse brought by Aboriginal people.

AMC—and that's a—sorry—that was a quote with regards to that particular language. AMC noted that bill 51 imposed an ultimate 30-year limitation period for proceeding to respect existing Indigenous and treaty rights that are recognized and affirmed by the Constitution Act, 1982 or an equitable form—claim by an Indigenous people against the Crown.

It also barred any claim from proceeding under bill 51 where the limitation period expired under formal limitations period legislation. This means that for First Nations, for most First Nations, historical claims arising prior to coming into force in bill 51 would've expired due to the six-year limitation period in former legislation. This was a major concern by AMC then, and we continue to hope that the government continues to consult with them now with regards to Bill 26.

* (16:30)

With regards, as well, and some of the concerns that we had at that time with bill 51, the environmental concerns on bill—March 9th, 2021, the then-minister of Justice made the claim in a media scrum that bill 51 does not affect claims involving the environment. He

said, quote: This bill is careful to determine that these changes do not apply in ways—to areas of law like sexual assault; there is unlimited time to claim. And also when an issue is environmental in nature, there is no cap.

However, nowhere in bill 51 was there mention of the word environment. Specifically under no—under the, quote, no-limitation-period section, again, the word environment does not appear.

The following is what was excluded from the limitation period: (a) a claim relating to a sexual assault in nature—assault of a sexual nature, my apologies; a claim—(b) a claim relating to an assault if, at the time of assault, the claimant (i) had an intimate relationship with the person alleged to have committed the assault, or (ii) was financially, emotionally, physically or otherwise dependent on the person alleged to have committed the assault; (c) to—a claim to recover possession of land, except as provided in section 19; (d) a claim by a debtor in possession of collateral, that is, personal property to redeem it; (e) a claim by a creditor in possession of collateral that is personal property to realize on it; (f) a claim to recover money owing to the Crown respecting taxes, finance penalties or interest on any of them; (g)—or, (g) a claim brought by the Crown relating to (i) the administration of social, health, education or economic programs, or (ii) the provision of direct or indirect support of members of the public in connection with social, health, educational or economic policies.

This is the concerns that we brought forward at that time. We continue to be concerned about Bill 26 in its current form; however, we do see this as a step in the right direction, and we look forward to bringing forward, you know, more comprehensive legislation and we'll address the safety of Manitobans across this province. That will be certainly one of the messages that we bring forward at the doorstep.

We look forward to going to the next election with that positive message for Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm happy to rise and just be able to share a few thoughts on Bill 26, The Limitations Amendment and Public Officers Amendment Act, here at third reading.

This act allows claimants to start a claim two years after discovery, rather than at the occurrence of the event, and it also brings Manitoba up to speed with other provinces here in Canada right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It allows for individuals who may have a claim to bring forward to have a little bit more time on their side, and I think it is very—there's unanimous support on that, that we want to be able to provide that time for individuals not to be forced to make decisions or disclosures right off the bat if there has been an experience or a situation that they are going through.

An experience of this nature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not a one-time thought process; it is often something that will resonate with a person and stay with a person, oftentimes for their entire life. And I think it—that's why it's really important we aren't forcing people in any way to disclose what may have happened, what—a feeling that they may have had as well, if they are not ready to do so.

Every person handles and copes and processes differently. Some want to be able to talk about it right off the bat, and that's great as long as there's a safe opportunity for them to do that. Some want to sit on something that may have happened for years.

And we need to provide safety for individuals in that some individuals might never want to disclose something. And no one should be shamed if they don't want to disclose something either, Mr. Deputy Speaker; but the best thing we can be doing as legislators are providing opportunities to speak to what they are comfortable sharing, when they are comfortable sharing, in a safe way.

And I think that this is also why it's really important that we work towards regulating psychotherapy here in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker. By regulating psychotherapy, it allows: (1) people to be able to access therapeutic services, whether it be at the costs, whether it be at the—we need more psychotherapists here in Manitoba; it would—by regulating it, it would ensure that anyone who wants to access it can, in fact, afford to do so and access one.

The second thing that regulating psychotherapy would actually do is it would ensure that those who are practising and providing these services are properly trained and equipped to do so.

I like to think about mental health the way physical health is treated. Right now, if you go into the hospital and you've broken your arm, the person who works on your arm is a trained person. They know what they're doing; they are equipped to handle the broken arm in this case.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, right now in Manitoba, people don't have to be trained to be practising as a therapist. You could be a high school dropout and

open up your own private practice and make business cards. And this is extremely alarming, that people who are providing these essential services to work with mental health of others within the province are not properly trained and equipped to do so.

And that's why I think, by regulating psychotherapy, it would actually be an addition to this legislation, always ensuring that people are equipped with the resources they need, in this case to disclose when they are ready to disclose.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 26, The Limitations Amendment and Public Officers Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 34—The Police Services Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously announced, we will now move to Bill 34, The Police Services Amendment Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade (Mr. Wharton), that Bill 34, The Police Services Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Certainly significant comments placed on the record at second reading. Also significant public comment on this bill in the media and otherwise.

It's a bill that is supported by the City of Winnipeg as they look to deal with some of the safety concerns that they have on City of Winnipeg transit buses, something that Mayor Gillingham ran on during his election campaign last fall.

More recently, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities came forward to support the legislation. There's also been support from other leaders in Manitoba as they look to use community safety officers

in a way that will alleviate some of the burdens that exist on other police officers currently in the province of Manitoba and provide them with additional options when it comes to community safety.

This form of layered policing, as one example in this bill, hasn't always come easily. There've been opposition to different types of individuals being given peace officer status in the province of Manitoba over the last 20 years. I've seen and sometimes participated in those debates.

But I'm pleased to see that we see significant support from police entities across the province, municipal entities, rural and urban. And I look forward to this bill passing and the training continuing to happen and benefitting both the city of Winnipeg and communities outside the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): You know, cuts have consequences. You might have heard me mention that phrase a few times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it couldn't be more obvious than when we're dealing with bills like Bill 34.

We have seen, now, seven years of freezes and cuts to community safety and to the municipalities that, in many cases, deliver them, by this PC government. And now we are seeing some of the impacts and some of the effects. In the city of Winnipeg, we see it. We see it throughout our downtown core. We see it out in the suburbs. We see it out in communities like Concordia, where I live and where my kids go to school and where my parents live. And when we see the kinds of violence that's happening there, we know that it's because of decisions made by this government that we're seeing things get worse.

They can't run from that record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and they can't now say, well, just trust us. We're going to come up with a new type of program that will help community, when, at the same time, they have done nothing to actually implement this program or allow it to be rolled out successfully across the province.

* (16:40)

We know that municipalities have been shouting from the rooftops now for seven years, saying that things are getting worse across this province because of these cuts that this government has implemented.

And I'm not just talking about cuts to justice and cuts to policing, because we've seen that kind of defunding from this government year over year over year, but what I'm talking about is also cuts to mental health supports. I'm talking about cuts to addictions

supports. I'm talking about cuts to health care. I'm talking about cuts to education. All of these cuts add up and they make a difference, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And now, for this government to say, oh, well, we need to do something about it. Well, you're darn rights we need to do something about it, and that's why we need a change in government. We need a new government that'll start listening to Manitobans.

Well, thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I apologize. I do get a little fired up on this issue and I look forward to the opportunity to bring this to the doorsteps. Because Manitobans have seen through this government who now wants to talk tough, and they want to say we're going to clean things up when, at the same time, they can't even implement their own institutional safety officer program, which, we've mentioned many times in this House, was—been brought forward in the media.

We've heard from nurses directly at the Health Sciences Centre who are saying, why can't we be safe in our health-care facilities when the government was given the green light four years ago? Was given an opportunity to start developing and implementing a program. They did nothing. They sat on their hands. It was all talk and no action from this government.

Well, now they're saying again, well, don't worry, we're going to implement the community safety officer. They said, well, the mayor ran on this as an issue. Why wasn't it this government that was pushing this issue forward? Why did they sit on their hands and wait for municipalities to come storming the Legislature to say, time after time, to say we need a—some help and some assistance. Why did they wait for the mayor to push this at the city level? Why couldn't this government acknowledge their own failures and mistakes and start stepping up and a—being accountable for the cuts that they have made? Why couldn't they do that?

Well, we know why, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Because they had one singular focus, and that was to cut everywhere that they could. All of these cuts have an impact. They all add up to a situation where Manitobans are feeling less safe.

We need to restore our mental health and addictions services in this province. Full stop. We need to give people who are—the most vulnerable place in their life opportunities to have safe injection and safe consumption sites so that they can be on a path to getting better.

We need to ensure that our health-care system is fully funded and is looking after those who are most

vulnerable, who aren't even showing up at our ERs anymore because they know that the wait times are through the roof.

We need an education system that looks after all students in this province; a nutrition program that helps them get a good start.

These are all interrelated and they all come down to the issues that people are feeling when it comes to public safety.

So, people have a chance this fall to make a real change. A real change; not just words, not just don't look at the, you know, the government that we've been for seven years and pretend that we're someone else, just trust us. You know, that's what this government continues to say, just trust us, as if they're going to be the ones to fix the problems that they created.

No; Manitobans have a real opportunity to actually vote in a government that's going to make a change at the fundamental level that is going to make their communities safer. That is what we want to bring forward as a message.

We know that the AMM has pointed out that this legislation, while giving opportunity for communities to establish a community safety officer, it does nothing to actually support that program being implemented in a municipality. No financial—additional funding being offered with this bill.

It's simply just more words, Mr. Deputy Speaker. More words by this government, and no action, once again, to actually make our communities more safe.

And, you know, Kam Blight, president of AMM, was very clear when he came to committee to say that AMM has been urging this provincial government for more than 10 years to have some ability to address some of these issues in their communities and was given no support. No support by this government for seven years as they cut and froze those municipal budgets.

And now, the Minister for Municipal Relations says, oh, don't worry, it's going to be different, just trust us. Nobody trust this government. They see right through this facade and this desperate election-year stance that they're taking now.

There is no substance when it comes to these kind of programs. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: We've seen it with the institutional safety officers. And maybe the member wants to stand up

and defend his government for four years doing nothing to keep our health-care workers safe, for making no changes, no actual changes in our community.

But he can't do that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He will remain silent because he knows the record of his government; he knows the shameful outcomes of their cuts over those seven years, and he sits at the Cabinet table and he supports every time that this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), whether she was under Brian Pallister or now as Premier, as she stands up and she supports these cuts as well.

This is deplorable stuff, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, you know, Manitobans aren't fooled by it. They see right through this government. They see right through this election-time grandiose positioning, the negative attacks on personalities on one side, the over-promising and just trust us on the other side. They see right through this government. They know that records matter. They know that past behaviour determines future outcomes.

This is the record of this government, and they will be held accountable for it. I look forward to delivering that message on the doorsteps as we go into the next provincial election.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): And I'm happy to rise and just put a few words on record about Bill 34, The Police Services Amendment Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the AMM, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, has long called on our province to review the distribution of policing costs, and I'm glad. You know, it was a pledge made by Mayor Scott Gillingham. I'm glad that he made this pledge because it seems to be creating some traction here in the province.

And it's very nice to see the various levels of government actually come together and work together. It shows you, through this experience, that various levels of government can, in fact, work together. We need more of that here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Just in 2022, there were 130 assaults reported on transit workers and many who work within Winnipeg Transit reported feeling unsafe. Many of them are in very different situations as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, different departments within Winnipeg Transit.

And, you know, I do—I want to correct the record because the member from Concordia just—the hypocrisy is so real, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Crime got worse here in the province of Manitoba under the NDP government.

I hear the member from Concordia saying that's false, but it actually is true. It is very, very true, and the reason I share this—he talks about—he just stood up two minutes ago and he was speaking to restoring programs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is the NDP who got rid of programs within justice system here in Manitoba. They got rid of the youth justice committees. Youth justice committees was a wonderful resource we used here in the province of Manitoba. It allowed for opportunities and second chances and ways to give back to the community. And the NDP cut it.

They love to stand here in the Legislature and act all mighty, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But the truth of the matter is: NDP, they were the ones who really hurt our province. They were the ones that tore down justice within the province of Manitoba. And don't get me wrong—PCs have not done any better—but it started under the NDP.

So it really does bother many of the members of this House when an NDP member who was in government at the time when all of this happened, he has the audacity to stand here and speak to the justice system getting worse. The hypocrisy—it's so real. It's so hard to watch, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, with those few words, I'll allow debate to continue. I can hear the member from Point Douglas, she has a few words she'd like to put on record, and I'd encourage her to do so.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 34, The Police Services Amendment Act.

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

We will now move, as previously announced, to Bill 38, The Builders' Liens Amendment Act (Prompt Payment).

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Deputy Speaker—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Bill 38—The Builders' Liens Amendment Act (Prompt Payment)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Now, we will move to Bill 38, The Builders' Liens Amendment Act (Prompt Payment), and I recognize the honourable Minister of Justice.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Mr. Reyes), that Bill 38, The Builders' Liens Amendment Act (Prompt Payment), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read a third time and passed.

* (16:50)

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: I want to—I know that significant words have been put on the record by the minister responsible for the bill at second reading, but I want to, at this stage, recognize the work of the member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer), who has brought forward legislation on prompt payment in a number of different forms and fashions.

I believe it began in opposition—so, more than seven years ago—that he brought forward this bill after hearing from concerns in the industry. And then, of course, when we came into government, he started to work on the legislation and, like a lot of things, you then realize that things are more complicated and difficult sometimes to bring forward in terms of legislation because there's various different viewpoints and things are more complex.

This, of course, relates to The Builders' Liens Act, which is also a very complex piece of legislation and—which our government has committed to embarking on, reforming and changing. But that's a very long process. It might take a couple of years to ensure that that's done well.

Even though there's been studies on it from the Law Reform Commission and from unified law reform commission, I believe, but we'll—we've committed to that work, even though in the Department of Justice we know that it'll take significant time, but we didn't want to leave this particular piece of business unfinished.

And so, together with the current minister, and certainly spearheaded by the former minister, the member for Brandon West, they brought together the industry players and found a path forward that everybody could agree upon, which wasn't easy, but they did find a way forward. There's agreement on this particular piece of legislation as it related to prompt payment.

And I want to particularly note—I know my friend from Brandon West isn't running again in the next

election, and there'll be many of things that he'll reflect upon as being an important part of his work here. Certainly, part of that will be of the work that he's done when it comes to organ donation. I know that, as the former minister of Health, he very much spearheaded much of the work on organ donation here in Manitoba.

But this particular piece of legislation, I know, has been a passion of his, and it'll be part of the legacy of the great work that he's done in the Legislature. I want to commend my friend from Brandon West.

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): It's an honour to rise in the House today to put a few comments on Bill 38, The Builders' Liens Amendment Act (Prompt Payment).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I spoke during the second reading, that we are in support of this bill. And the construction industry accounts for approximately 8 per cent of Manitoba's employment and is a 'significant' contributor to the economy—economic stability of Manitoba.

Construction workers provide essential services to our province that allow us to have safe roads and buildings, helping us create a productive and 'presipous' province for all.

With the start of construction seasons as the weather gets warm, it is important that we ensure that those working in the industry are getting paid for their long hours of work.

Bill 38 amends The Builders' Liens Act to establish a prompt payment scheme. Making sure the construction and subcontractors are paid on time is in all of our best interests. It's good for business and its—that means workers can bring home rightful earned money on time to their families.

Most Manitoba construction contractors are small- and medium-sized companies with a limited cash flow and limited extra credit. Delayed payment limits the ability of these contractors to invest in their business. Because of this, getting paid on time is essential for all those small businesses.

So, as I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are in—Manitoba NDP is—support of this bill and we are looking forward to passing it.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I—just some very quick words on the record for this, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I was at committee for this. It was very clear that there was unanimous support, both across the parties but also that it was extremely important that this legislation be passed as quickly as possible as far as contractors in the industry were concerned. So we look forward to speedy passage of this bill.

Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 38, The Builders' Liens Amendment Act (Prompt Payment).

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

I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, can you canvass the House and see if it's the will of members to call it 5 p.m.?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of members to call it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 a.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 15, 2023

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The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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