

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTomARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Tuxedo	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

We acknowledge that 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

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Nursing Week

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): As Minister for Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, and as a registered psychiatric nurse, I am thrilled to acknowledge National Nursing Week and Indigenous Nurses Day.

Nurses are the backbone of our health-care system, and this week, National Nursing Week, we recognize them for the exceptional work they've taken on. This year's theme is Changing Lives. Shaping Tomorrow. And I couldn't think of a better theme.

Nurses care for us during our life's most difficult and vulnerable moments in health, and they do this work with compassion and respect. They work tirelessly to ensure our communities have the best care possible. Patients put their trust in nurses. Families

seek comfort from nurses. They are experts on the front lines of our health-care system across Manitoba. The care that they provide, their innovative research and the solutions they offer are indeed life changing.

It wouldn't be honest for me to stand here today and say that being a nurse in Manitoba the past several years hasn't been trying. Years of job insecurity, disrespect and cuts have resulted in staffing shortages, little work-life balance and exhaustion. I can't thank nurses enough for continuing to change lives despite these circumstances, and I want all nurses to know, as I've said to you at many of our listening tour stops, help is on the way.

Which brings me to the second part of this year's theme: Shaping Tomorrow. We need to change the culture in health care. I truly believe that addressing culture change is one of the most important steps toward making our health-care system an attractive place to work again.

The first step in changing culture is rebuilding trust: rebuilding trust among nurses and health-care workers. This why the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and I have been on a listening tour the past seven months. We've heard some difficult stories from folks on the front lines, and we've also heard some incredible solutions. We know that solutions are found directly at the bedside.

We also know that to reduce the burden of nurses—that nurses are carrying, we had to invest, and that's why Budget 2024 allocates \$310 million to retention, recruitment and training to address these staffing shortages. And our plan to hire 1,000 health-care workers this year, including 210 nurses, will help ease the heavy workloads that nurses consistently shoulder.

We're increasing nurse training seats across the province. We've increased funding to the nursing float pool to give nurses more flexibility. And as I told a room full of hundreds of nurses just yesterday, there is more work to do and our government is committed to doing that work together

Today, we also recognize Indigenous Nurses Day. Indigenous nurses play a central role in health care, providing culturally sensitive care and advocacy for equity, which are vital components in changing the culture in health care. Indigenous nurses save lives.

I want to take this moment to recognize Ann Thomas Callahan, one of the first Indigenous graduates of the Winnipeg General Hospital's nursing school. She unfortunately passed away last year at the age of 87, but it's important to recognize that Ann was a trail-blazer who paved the way for a more equitable, inclusive and diverse health-care system here in Manitoba.

And she paved the way for someone I want to take a moment to also recognize: Tamra Keeper, who is joining us here today in the gallery, Tamra Keeper, who the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and I stood with, just a year and a half ago in the Rotunda of this building, to advocate for barriers to be eliminated for her to practise here in Manitoba.

Congratulations, Tamra. Congratulations on achieving that accomplishment and thank you for your work, working as an off-reserve case manager for Jordan's Principle in your community. Well done, well done.

Our health-care system is not a place where all people have always seen themselves reflected or felt welcomed. But when our health-care front lines honour and reflect connection, community, tradition and culture, we can start to rebuild trust and chart a true path toward reconciliation. Representation matters, which is why we're working with Ka Ni Kanichihk; Aboriginal Health and Wellness to provide culturally appropriate health care. We're also working with colleges to remove barriers for First Nations, Métis and Inuit to join the front lines.

To the Indigenous nurses in the gallery today, I want to thank you because you are at the forefront of those efforts, and I know that it's not easy. It's why we're committed to supporting you, your colleagues so that you can provide the best care possible to Manitobans.

And to all nurses across Manitoba, thank you for choosing this calling, for continuing to provide care for our communities. I am so excited to continue working with you. I'm so excited to continue to do the work to change lives and shape the future of health care together.

Happy national nurses week. Happy Indigenous Nurses Day.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I am pleased to rise today in commemoration of National Nursing Week, and I'd also like to welcome Ms. Keeper and other Indigenous nurses to the Legislature today.

Welcome here.

And this is an important week. National Nursing Week takes place every year in the lead-up to the birthday of Florence Nightingale, who was, of course, the pioneer in the nursing profession.

And this year's theme is Changing Lives and Shaping Tomorrow, which is in recognition of all that nurses do in our communities and the impacts that they have on individuals and in our health-care system. The role nurses play in people's lives is incredibly impactful. They provide compassion in times when it is needed most and advocate for their patients to ensure they are getting quality care.

* (13:40)

I will always remember being a new mom at home, absolutely lost with a set of newborn twins, and the public health nurse coming to my home and helping me with breastfeeding and just assuring me that it was going to be okay and I was doing a good job at a time when I felt incredibly vulnerable, and I'll always be grateful for that.

Nurses are leaders, mentors and educators in our communities, and are constantly inspiring the next generation of future nurses. And during this special week, we also recognize Indigenous Nurses Day, highlighting the achievements of Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis nurses, recognizing their invaluable work in improving the health and well-being of Canadians. We also recognize International Nurses Day, which is coming up this Sunday on May 12.

Nurses have always gone above and beyond the call of the duty, putting their own health and safety on the line to care for those in need, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

And I also want to take a moment to recognize nurses' families. I know it can be hard to share your family member with Manitobans in the way that you do. It's not an easy profession for families. So I want to thank them for the sacrifices they make for all Manitobans as well.

And in closing, I want to sincerely thank each and every nurse working in Manitoba. Thank you for your dedication to Manitobans' well-being, to your communities. Thank you for taking care of us when we need it the most.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

The Speaker: Does the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) have leave? *[Agreed]*

MLA Lamoureux: I rise today to acknowledge and celebrate National Nursing Week. National Nursing Week began on Monday, May 6, with Indigenous Nurses Day and will end on May 12 with International Nurses Day.

This entire week recognizes the contributions and tremendous impact that all nurses have on individuals, communities and the future of health care.

Honourable Speaker, we know that despite the overwhelming volume of patients showing up at hospitals, the mandatory overtime, staff shortages, burn-out and lack of work-life balance, these heroic nurses remain on the front lines and continue to play a crucial role in directly impacting the lives of patients because their care, compassion and expertise, and it makes a huge difference in the health and well-being of all of their patients and our community at large.

Nurses are committed to learning and adapting at the forefront of health-care innovation, contributing to advancements in treatments and patient-care practices. Plus, they have a significant role in shaping the next generation of health-care professionals through education and mentorship.

So to all nurses and our guests here today, we want to extend our appreciation for your dedication, your passion, your knowledge and your commitment.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before we proceed, I'd like to do some guest introductions.

We have with us in the public gallery today, members—excuse me. I'd like to draw attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today Liz Bone, Karen Perch Anderson, Caroline Chartrand, Kathleen North, Tamra Keeper, Kristy Muller, who are guests of the honourable member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you.

Further, we have seated in the public gallery from Woodlawn School, 75 grade 4 students under direction of Simmy Gandhi. Honourable—and they're guests of the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

Further, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we

have with us today teachers and their grade 4 and 5 students from Tyndall Park school, who are guests of the honourable member for Tyndall Park.

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

I would also draw attention to members—we have with us again today the Honourable Philip Lee, former Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, along with his wife Anita Lee.

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

One more guest to introduce. We have, seated in the loge to the left, Marianne Cerilli, the former member for Radisson.

Welcome.

* * *

The Speaker: We will now go to members' statements.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Vietnamese Women Association

MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond): Honourable Speaker, as we celebrate Asian Heritage Month, I want to recognize a newly established women's organization, the Vietnamese Women Association in Winnipeg, who join us in the gallery today. The association celebrates diversity and the cultural identity of the Vietnamese community in Winnipeg while helping newcomers and Vietnamese Canadians find belonging in Manitoba.

I want to thank their president, Kim Le, and the whole association for uplifting Vietnamese women and providing incredible service to them. When women work for women, there is no limit to what we can accomplish together. I know women like Kim Le and the other members of the Vietnamese Women Association in Winnipeg spend innumerable hours helping women in the community address challenges, find support and form bonds that can only be described as sisterhood.

The inspirational and confident women I've invited here today are showing the next generation of East and Southeast Asian women that they, too, can be leaders for their community. The importance of women's voices and their participation in all aspects of society help Manitoba grow as a strong and inclusive province for everyone.

Thanks to organizations like the Vietnamese Women Association in Winnipeg, many women are finding

friendship, recognition and identity in Winnipeg and across Manitoba.

The Vietnamese Women Association in Winnipeg also helps push back against harmful stereotypes that we, as Asian women, face all too often, and proves that we are strong, resilient, organized and powerful women.

I wish them all the best and look forward to seeing the amazing work they accomplish in the coming years.

Cảm ơn [*Thank you*].

Please join me in thanking the association for their work in empowering women. I would like to add my guests' names to Hansard.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Renata Blaszczyńska, Quynh Do, Lan Doan, Ton That Quang Hai, Sâm Hoàng, Kim Le, Tran Thi Vu Le, Vân Lê, Phượng Nguyen, Tuyết Nguyen, Vân Nguyễn, Thu Phạm, Vi Tran, Yenny Trinh, Anna Truong, Thành Truong

Epic/Smile of St. Malo

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the opportunity to recognize an outstanding organization in La Vérendrye.

Honourable Speaker, 2024 marks the 50th anniversary for Epic/Smile of St. Malo.

Epic/Smile is a non-profit organization working with people with intellectual disabilities. Not only do they offer employment for participants across the southeast, but also provide a place for them to live.

The employment that Epic/Smile is able to provide to their participants also provides a service to southeast Manitoba. The organization produces a number of different products like marking stakes for Manitoba Hydro, but its largest contribution and service would be in their recycling facility.

The Epic/Smile facility is the only recycling facility for much of southeast corner of Manitoba, leaving communities like Buffalo Point First Nation, Sprague, Piney and Vita with no other options to accept the communities' recycling products.

Their tremendous contribution to our corner of the province is done through 58 exceptional participants. These are individuals that are truly proud of the work that they are able to do, knowing that producing recycled products contributes to a better future for

everyone. Outside of the participants Epic/Smile employs another 70 to 75 people, making it one of the largest employers in the area.

To celebrate their milestone anniversary, the organization will be hosting a day of celebration on June 14, which will include a fundraiser banquet. The goal of their fundraiser will be to purchase a van that gets participants to work reliably and safely everyday.

If anyone is interested in seeing this exceptional facility, I suggest taking a road trip to St. Malo on June 14.

Please join me in recognizing their hard work and welcoming Danyka Hunnie, Jackie Prowse and Ashley Mayner, who we have with us in the gallery today.

* (13:50)

Donwood Manor Personal-Care Home

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to honour the staff, volunteers and residents of Donwood Manor personal-care home. For decades, the vibrant community at the heart of Rossmere has worked to enrich and improve the lives of countless seniors in Manitoba.

With well over 200 residents in personal-care homes, assisted living and independent living arrangements, Donwood Manor works collaboratively with residents to find accommodations that honour each member's unique needs, routines and well-being. And that starts by truly respecting the care environment at seniors' homes.

The Donwood Manor community knows that true seniors' care extends far beyond medical health care. With a diverse array of health-care professionals, a full-time chaplain and close ties to numerous churches across Winnipeg, the Donwood Manor community works to sustain the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of every member.

In recent years, the Donwood Manor community has taken on several gardening projects, including the construction of a new hydroponics facility where fresh vegetables and herbs are grown for the manor's kitchen. Donwood Manor has established the Growing Together group, an intergenerational program between seniors and River East Collegiate students to grow plants and learn together while fostering important community connections.

Staff, volunteers and residents have not only found gardening to be an enjoyable community activity, but it

has helped catalyze conversations around sustainability, water, compositing, urban agriculture and many other environmental issues that matter to the Donwood Manor community.

Recently, Donwood Manor celebrated 50 years of service to Winnipeg's northeast community. And for half a century, they have upheld their mission statement to advance care, dignity and respect for Manitoba seniors, and we congratulate them for that.

I want to thank the Donwood Manor staff, volunteers, residents and families for all that they do to make Rossmere a wonderful community to live in and for their tireless contributions to seniors and elder care in our province.

Thank you.

Don and Brenda Piett

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I take this opportunity to highlight Don and Linda [*phonetic*] Piett, two valued members of the southeastern Manitoba community, who for 16 years owned and operated the Southeast Journal.

In 2006, Don retired from the Inco refinery in Thompson and moved to Emerson. The next year, Don and Linda [*phonetic*] bought the Southeast Journal, and for the next 16 years, they published the local paper.

In Don's words, they tried to fill the paper with stories you wouldn't necessarily see elsewhere. Don and Linda [*phonetic*] made a decision that they didn't want to repeat news you could get on television or any mainstream paper but, rather, they focused on publishing stories that didn't make it to the media.

The Southeast Journal sadly ceased distribution on—in December of 2023, a decision which Don and Linda [*phonetic*] explain was largely a financial one.

I want to thank Don and Linda [*phonetic*] Piett for your many years of attending local events, sharing local stories and perspectives and for publishing a paper that brought together the communities of Emerson, Letellier, Morris, Dominion City, Tolstoi and others.

I wish you all the best as you look forward.

Tyndall Park School

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Today I am joined by 43 grade 4s and 5s from Tyndall Park school. We just had a fun pizza lunch and came up with some thoughts and questions for this government.

Students are very interested and want to learn more about affordability, the cost of living and how taxes in our province work. One student shared how their parents keep talking about what they can and cannot afford, and this rippled into a big conversation about the importance of making financially smart decisions.

A few of the students are wondering: Why are water bills so expensive? What can be done to bring down costs? How come food and gas is becoming more expensive? Why do we have so many bills; can they not all be consolidated? And why is there so much inflation? Honourable Speaker, they also want to know if there is something they can do to help bring down costs.

Further, the students shared with me how they have been saving their money for a few fun things, like Roblox and travel, but they are mostly investing their money, donating some of it and saving up for university and college, and buying things for their basic needs like haircuts, clothes and computers. And, Honourable Speaker, a couple of them have already started saving up for their first house.

A few other topics that were raised include: Why do children have cellphones at such a young age? What is this government doing to combat violence in schools? Why is the lunch program so expensive? And what is this government doing for pollution?

Honourable Speaker, I want to thank the students and the teachers from Tyndall Park school. I look forward to asking their questions to our Premier (Mr. Kinew) later this afternoon about affordability and taxes, and I ask that my colleagues join me in welcoming the students who have joined us here today.

Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Fort Rouge Constituency Crime Rate in Premier's Riding

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Welcome to all our guests in the gallery, and I look forward to the—we're asking the same questions as the students are, to the Premier. Hopefully you'll get some answers this afternoon, Honourable Speaker.

Honourable Speaker, the other day, the Premier, the MLA for Fort Rouge, openly yelled across the Chamber, asking for a certain question be asked by me. So today's the day, so I'm sure he's ready.

A Starbucks in his constituency of Fort Rouge is closed due to escalating violence. Businesses are closing and people are afraid because of this Premier's inaction on crime not only in Manitoba, not only in the city of Winnipeg, but right in his own constituency.

Why would the Premier not stand up for businesses in his community that he represents that, due to his inaction, are being forced to close?

And I table the picture today, Honourable Speaker.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): My mother lives in Osborne Village. Nobody cares about the safety of seniors in the community more than I do. That's the Safeway that I go to.

The members opposite want to throw stones. We used to have a Tim Hortons in the constituency as well; it closed under their watch because of similar issues.

The issues which lead to safety challenges in our community are long standing and have causes that reach back through the generations. The good news is that there's a government here that's serious about taking action.

We're working with law enforcement; we're working with community. We're working with folks who live in Osborne Village, as well as people across the province, to make Manitoba a safer one and one in which every child can reach their full potential and every person can live their life safely and to their fullest potential.

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

Mr. Ewasko: Things are worse than ever, than they've ever been, and this Premier stands up and gives that type of answer.

They're getting worse, according to the Osborne Village BIZ director. And I quote: This is a case where I believe safety is the only thing, and that, to me, is why it's so alarming, and I hope it rings some alarm bells to the City and to the Province because this is a problem. End quote. She told this to CBC. I table the document today, Honourable Speaker.

Is this Premier, the MLA for Fort Rouge, hearing the alarm bell coming from his very own constituency, yes or no?

Mr. Kinew: The alarm that has been raised for years by people in Osborne Village is that the PCs, when in government, ignored the issues of addiction, ignored the issues of homelessness and ignored the issues of

intergenerational poverty, which, sadly, are all too visible in Osborne Village and many other constituencies across the province of Manitoba.

I took immediate action by running for office on a plan to fix these issues in consultation with law enforcement in the community. I'm happy to report that we defeated the government of inaction who let these issues fester, and our team is now investing in community, law enforcement, education, a universal school nutrition program accessible to every student in the province and more to come.

Of course, the SABE Peace Walkers initiative is something that I championed in opposition and was happy to help secure an extension of funding for, one among many steps we'll continue to take to keep Osborne Village safe.

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

Mr. Ewasko: So, Honourable Speaker, he's not only not listening to the alarm bells or the questions or even the experts that are actually in his constituency sounding those alarm bells, violence has been escalating in the Premier's constituency and across Manitoba.

* (14:00)

There was an attack at the Burger King in his backyard, there was a triple stabbing at Shopper's Drug Mart in his front yard and there are stores closing their doors for good all around Fort Rouge.

This is nothing new, just for Fort Rouge; it's happening in other constituencies as well under this Premier's watch. The backdrop for this public-safety crisis, of course, is reduced funding for justice initiatives in Budget 2024.

Will the Premier do anything to represent the people of the businesses of Fort Rouge, or can his constituents expect further neglect from their MIA MLA?

Mr. Kinew: The member opposite, in posing the question, illustrates that these issues are long-standing.

They were accelerated for seven and a half years because the PCs did nothing to address issues around addictions or public safety. Through their time in office, they froze funding to municipalities, which led to cuts to police forces, including the one which used to be led by the member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen).

Our government isn't here to point fingers; we're here to take action. We've taken immediate action to implement a comprehensive approach to public safety.

We're implementing a plan to end chronic homelessness in Manitoba over the next eight years. And we're investing in the future generations of this province so every child not only matters, but has a path to reaching their full potential.

Young people under their watch had a pipeline to prison. Under the NDP government, they'll have a pathway to post-secondary.

Potential for Hog Barn Moratorium Environment Legislation

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) stated that the NDP would not reinstate the hog moratorium. It would, however, put the minds of 22,000 Manitobans at ease if the member for Fort Rouge stated today that he supported the comments of the member for—of—for St. Johns and commit to never putting in legislation that amounts to a moratorium on hog barns.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Yes, there's going to be no legislation like that.

We're here to debate serious matters. We're here to bring forward a budget bill that will 'kay'—make fuel taxes more affordable for people in Manitoba. That's what the kids today asked about.

We got a budget bill here today that is going to make home ownership more affordable for people in Manitoba. We've got a budget bill that is going to put tools into the hands of working people to get a higher wage. They come up with questions which they already know the answer to, only so that they can delay their way through question period long enough to delay bill debate later on in the afternoon.

We know that they were sent to the opposition benches for a reason, but could they please do a better job in putting on a show for the people of Manitoba that they might even entertain some serious matters and bring them to the floor of the Legislature.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a supplementary question.

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, I bring these questions today from the many, many agriculture producers in the province.

When the slippery slope to the NDP hog moratorium began, it was through seemingly innocuous legislation from the minister of Conservation. Under the guise of protecting waterways, they effectively banned hog barns. The Minister of Environment and climate has

made comments about strengthening the environmental protections and protecting waterways, and in light of recent Winnipeg events, that seems to be, at least at face value, prudent.

So my question is very simple, and yes or no will suffice: Will these new environmental regulations result in a de facto hog barn moratorium?

Mr. Kinew: The answer to that question is clearly no, and I'll go a step further and I'll offer some free collegial advice to the member opposite.

If he wants to stake a—take a stand for pork producers in Manitoba, he should weigh in on the issue of country-of-origin labelling. This is a major challenge potentially on the horizon for folks in the industry. Our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) has led important initiatives on this, as well as the Minister for Economic Development.

We recently took a delegation to the United States of America where people were proud and happy to partner with the agriculture industry here in Manitoba, but there are these legitimate trade irritants which are potentially standing in the way of future economic opportunity.

If the member wants to come here and engage in substantive debate, put the ear to the ground and bring forward the real issues that pork producers are asking about.

The Speaker: The honourable—[*interjection*]

Order, please. The member has to wait until I recognize him.

Budget Implementation Legislation Request to Call Bill 37 to Committee

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. This should be the motto for this failed NDP Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine), because she was too busy travelling to New York and missed important deadlines.

This NDP government has had seven months to introduce legislation to ensure that it was debated in this Chamber, the public had a chance to present at committee and a vote would still happen. Well, today is May 8, the deadline came and went and due to this terrible planning by this failed NDP Government House Leader, the NDP government is now removing the rights of Manitobans to come speak to each bill.

When I asked the Minister of Finance if he would allow the public to come speak, he flat out said no, he would not.

Why does this Premier (Mr. Kinew) think it's okay to remove the voices of Manitobans and push through entire bills without allowing Manitobans their democratic rights?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): We will not apologize for delivering on the commitments we were sent to this Legislature to deliver on.

For years—for years—Manitobans had a government that cut health care, that cut education, that cut child care, cut in all aspects of government. They now have a government that's actually here to deliver for them, right?

This bill allows us to deliver on the elements within our budget, which will help us to fix health care, make life more affordable in Manitoba.

We will not apologize for that important work. It's going to help us to do exactly what Manitobans sent us here to do, which is to make life better after seven years of challenges under the PCs.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Whyte, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, the Premier just said that he wants to debate bills in this House, and that's why they're here. And yet, they're forcing it through in BITSA without any debate or public consultation. Another misleading statement by this Premier. Everyone just saw that.

This Premier is going down a slippery slope on becoming a smiling dictator: smile to your face, pat you on the back and then take \$148 million out of your back pocket in the largest education tax property hike in Manitoba history. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: The Finance Minister already committed he does not want Manitobans to come have a say. He's increasing hydro rates by 4 per cent, and he's got rid of the hydro freeze that they promised.

Will the Premier allow Manitobans to have their say and move these bills to public committee, yes or no?

MLA Sala: Members opposite want to obstruct, delay. We're here to get the work done, right? And they want to throw stones.

Well, I'll remind the member opposite, in BITSA 2020, they amended over 30 acts. They actually used that bill for the first time in our Province's history

to legislate a hydro rate increase of 2.9 per cent on Manitobans. That's their record.

In fact, that BITSA 2020 bill also repealed The Healthy Child Manitoba Act, removing the legal requirement of government to report on child poverty. That's their record. That's the way they use BITSA.

We're using BITSA to make life better for all Manitobans.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Whyte, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, it's proof this NDP government wants to live in the past.

Well, we live in the reality of now, and what's happening now is they are making life more unaffordable—\$148-million tax increase. And in this BITSA bill they're forcing through with no democratic process, they're also increasing hydro rates to 4 per cent, not the zero that they promised.

And it—Honourable Speaker, this is the most substantive inclusion of legislation in the Province's history, and they won't even let Manitobans come speak to it. This is a direct abuse of power. When I asked the minister if he'd let Manitobans speak, he flat out said no. When I asked for more time on the debate, he said no. This is flat out wrong.

Will the Premier stand up and—today and say that he will allow Manitobans to come speak at public committee?

MLA Sala: We're proud of the important work that this BITSA bill achieves for Manitobans.

First of all, one of the important things it achieves is working to repeal the work that the previous government did to jack up hydro rates as quickly as possible. This bill will get rid of provisions that they brought in that sought to set hydro rates at the Cabinet table. That's wrong.

* (14:10)

We know that hydro rates need to be set by the Public Utilities Board to ensure Manitobans pay the lowest rates possible. Their record: making life more expensive for Manitobans. Our record: making it as affordable as possible. We're not going to apologize for doing that important work for Manitobans. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Labour Relations Amendment Act Request to Call Bill 37 to Committee

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Yesterday, the Minister of Labour and Immigration refused to answer my questions in the House. She has had over a month to introduce labour legislation and instead stuck them into a bill that will deny Manitobans the opportunity to scrutinize these pieces of legislation at committee.

So I ask: Will she reverse course and ensure a committee will be called for the schedules she has added to BITSA?

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): Honourable Speaker, yesterday our government made an impactful announcement for 6,700 temporary workers in Manitoba, and I would like to provide Manitobans with more background on this important issue.

On February 15th, the Minister of Advanced Education and I met with the federal Immigration minister, and it was at this meeting that we initially proposed solutions for Manitoba. With full support of the Premier (Mr. Kinew), we engaged with the federal Immigration minister to implement solutions for Manitoba.

I'd like to emphasize that this is the first of its kind across Canada, and yesterday we received official confirmation that those 6,700 temporary workers can have their work permits extended for 24 months and continue working in Manitoba.

We are a government that cares about its people—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Ms. Byram: We know that organized labour has had input on these bills, but everyday Manitobans have not had that same opportunity. That is undemocratic.

Why is the minister denying the public the same courtesy and access? All Manitobans have the right to come to this building and present to a committee about legislation.

Will she do the right thing and commit to calling The Labour Relations Amendment Act to committee?

MLA Marcelino: Honourable Speaker, I have some more very important details regarding this federal agreement.

First of all, it only applies to postgraduate work permit holders whose work permits have expired or are expiring in 2024. Secondly, this applies only to postgraduate work permit holders who are currently

candidates in our Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program pool and have applied for their EOI or are waiting for their LAA.

This agreement only applies for temporary residents in Manitoba currently. And these extra 24 months will give MPNP candidates more time to upgrade their EOI scores and move into high-demand jobs like health care, construction and early childhood education.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Agassiz, on a final supplementary question.

Ms. Byram: I'm not sure why she's not answering my question. I am talking about Labour Relations Amendment Act. It is simply not a tax statute and should not have been brought forward on its own to allow Manitobans to properly scrutinize it. The minister told multiple media outlets that she would introduce her bills at first available opportunity yet she never did.

Why is this minister and the NDP government using omnibus legislation to hide bills from Manitobans?

MLA Marcelino: Honourable Speaker, our team is cleaning up the mess left behind—the PCs. PCs have caused our current MPNP backlog because they nominated way more than they could process.

For example, they issued over 16,000 nominations for only 9,500 spots. The PCs didn't even have a Labour and Immigration Department for their time in office except for the last year. But then—even then, they didn't even staff it up, so then they couldn't even process Manitoba's full federal allotment. That means we left over 2,000 nominations unfilled. That's 2,000 more newcomer families that were turned away by the PCs in 2023.

That's very, very shameful, Honourable Speaker.

Altru Health Agreement Government Intention

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Constituents in southern La Vérendrye are rightly concerned with a drop in the quality of health-care services under this NDP government. Agreements with US-based Altru health were in place to provide services closer to home for border communities in southern Manitoba.

With the nearest Manitoba ER nearly 200 kilometres away for some residents, a form of this agreement has been in place for more than 50 years. When I questioned the availability of these services, the

Minister of Health refused to meet. I'll table their response letter expressing this.

Will the minister confirm for the House that they are not cutting this program?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I thank the member for that question. I do find it a bit curious he's raising it here; we had a conversation in the Chamber two weeks ago, maybe two and a half weeks ago, about this very issue.

And if he had done his homework on this matter, and I did explain to him in the conversation, if he has concerns and questions about the changes in that agreement, he should ask the former minister of Health, Cameron Friesen, about why he made the changes when the PCs were in government.

The Speaker: The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Narth: I had a conversation with the minister, a casual conversation, without any answers and without commitment for my constituents.

So I'll quote from the letter from the Minister of Health: Your constituents may wish to contact Southern Health for information about services in the region.

What my constituents do remember is under the previous NDP government, their nearest Manitoba ER, more than 100 kilometres away in Vita, was cut, along with much of the diagnostic services. The Health Minister cannot attempt to shift blame onto health-care workers for their own political decisions.

Will the minister please confirm that the contract with Altru health services will not be cut?

MLA Asagwara: Well, I appreciate the member opposite acknowledging we had a conversation. I don't consider conversations here when we're talking about health care casual. They're serious and important conversations about health care than affects Manitobans.

As I've already stated, there were changes made to that agreement, but it was made under the previous PC government. He can call up Cameron Friesen and have that conversation and ask him what was in his mind when he was cutting health care, closing emergency rooms, firing health-care workers and cutting services to rural Manitoba. Those are all questions I'd love to know the answers to.

What was going on in the mind of the failed minister for Health when he was cutting health care in

rural Manitoba? Maybe that member opposite can finally get the answer to that question.

The Speaker: The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Narth: Unfortunately, I'm just looking for a response to the question. But we know the NDP's record on providing convenient out-of-province services for Manitobans: cut them, then fire the doctors that recommended them and let wait times get worse right here in Manitoba.

My constituents rely on accessing these services: MRI, CT, ultrasound and more. Many of the residents were born in the US, including those well into their 90s now. They are rightfully concerned that this NDP minister will cut them based entirely on their ideology and their history.

Are the services at Altru health—and I ask again—in that system, on the NDP chopping block?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, that member is part of a PC caucus that was led by Heather Stefanson that cut the very services that he and his constituents need in rural Manitoba. It is fascinating that he stands up in the House today to complain about a change in an agreement that was made by the previous PC minister for Health.

On this side of the House, we're actually investing in restoring the services that meet the needs of his own constituents. And I can reassure him again—this is a continuation of a previous conversation—those services are ongoing, and we're actually doing outreach in his constituency to make sure that his constituents understand the fullness of the agreement.

Thank you.

Patient Experience at St. Boniface Hospital Request for Critical Incident Investigation

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): What happened to Janice Thomas in the St. Boniface ER is terrible and frightening, and no Manitoban should have to experience what she did.

* (14:20)

Janice presented to the St. Boniface ER in anaphylactic shock. As she struggled to breathe and nearly died, she was left alone in the emergency room hallway.

I'd like to quote Janice herself from the media for the permanent record. Quote, I sat on that stretcher, unable to breathe, for over 20 minutes. With an anaphylactic reaction, I am considered life or death.

I can't wait for a room. During this time, not one staff member from the St. Boniface Hospital came to check on me. End quote.

Will the minister commit today to investigating what happened to Janice as a critical incident?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I thank the member opposite, my critic, for that question.

I want to thank Ms. Thomas for reaching out to our office. We had the chance to communicate with her a few weeks ago now, about this issue, and we did make sure that patient relations at St. Boniface Hospital followed up directly with her and have been in communication with her as well, as well as the region overall.

It's so important that Manitobans know when they're accessing emergency care that they get the quality of care that they count on. Our government is always making investments and improvements to ensure that Manitobans can count on that.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Roblin, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Cook: After speaking with Janice again this morning I was surprised to learn that the Minister of Health himself has yet to reach out to take action and speak to Janice. Janice has been waiting for over two weeks now.

Publicly the minister said that it's feedback from people like Janice who give us the feedback to help us improve health care, but the minister didn't take the time to get that feedback in person. And Janice asked that I pass along this message to the minister: The minister said they are listening. My question is, to whom? Apologies will not cut it; the minister needs to take action.

Will the minister reach out to Janice today and commit to taking action before this happens to someone else?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I welcome that question from the member opposite.

As I stated in my previous response, our office has been in contact with Ms. Thomas. We were first in contact with her a few weeks ago, and we continue to be in contact with her. We've made sure that patient relations at St. Boniface Hospital and the WRHA are following up with her consistently as well.

I'm always happy to connect directly with Manitobans who bring concerns forward about their

experiences in health care, more than happy to give Ms. Thomas a call to discuss these issues directly.

We're going to continue to work with her and the WRHA and St. Boniface to make sure that no matter where you access health care in emergency situations, you get the care that you need.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Roblin, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Cook: I will tell Ms. Thomas to expect a phone call. I'll table the Free Press column published today covering Janice's story, in case the minister missed it.

ER wait times are up across the board in Winnipeg under the NDP compared to March of last year. This is what happens with an NDP government that breaks their campaign promises and does not provide an actionable plan to bring in the staff needed to address ER wait times. Patients like Janice pay the price all while the NDP and this Health Minister continue to dodge accountability. To quote from today's column: The statistics show the health-care system is getting worse.

Will the minister do the right thing and immediately investigate Janice's case as a critical incident?

MLA Asagwara: That case and that situation is currently being reviewed by the WRHA and we'll await what comes out of that review, and they've been in constant-consistent contact, rather, with Ms. Thomas.

I do want to point out the challenges we're facing in emergency care in Manitoba right now didn't happen overnight. It was seven and a half years of cuts and closures by the previous Heather Stefanson government, including the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that led to where we are in health care. They cut hundreds of beds across the system. On this side of the House we're investing in adding back beds, adding back people, adding back respect and strengthening health care in Manitoba.

In case the member opposite has forgotten that, I'll table the article that shows not only did they cut and close the ER at Victoria Hospital, leading to the wait times, but they fired 40 ER nurses.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Tyndall Park School Questions from Students

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): The students from Tyndall Park school understand that every person in Canada pays taxes, but they want to

have a better understanding of why Manitobans specifically pay 7 per cent in provincial sales tax, and will this number ever go higher or lower? *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): That amount will never go higher under my watch.

I've got to say that one of the things that I hope that the great young students and young—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —minds at Tyndall Park school learn, in addition to learning how to be able to maintain your composure while you're being heckled, is to practice good public speaking skills. But, importantly, to look at our government as an example for how you can help average, everyday people.

One of the first things we did is we cut the provincial fuel tax in Manitoba. That helped to make sure that the average person up there can go to the gas station, fill up their vehicle and then have enough money to go to McHappy Day and buy a couple meals for their family.

So again, we can't eat at McDonald's every day, but we can save you money each and every day, and that's what our government is doing.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a supplementary question.

MLA Lamoureux: The students in grade 4 and 5 have already started to plan for their financial futures. They talked about buying a few fun things like Roblox, but are mostly concerned about investing their money, donating some of it, saving up for university and college and buying a house one day.

Because of the high costs associated with living nowadays, what does the Premier advise young people do so that they can afford a house one day?

The Speaker: The honourable—*[interjection]*

Order. Order.

Mr. Kinew: I want to commend the young people from Tyndall Park school for being so wise at such an early age when it comes to their financial planning.

It's two pieces of advice that I can't take credit for, but I think that they might want to bear in mind. One comes from Warren Buffett, and he was talking about the nature of compound interest. That even if we are starting with a snowball that's very small, if you start rolling it at an early age and keep rolling it over time,

eventually that small snowball can become a huge amount. And that's how you build wealth for an individual.

The second piece of advice that I want to share with the people from Tyndall Park school is that the secret to taking \$100 and turning it into \$1,000 is taking that \$100, gassing up your vehicle and going to work.

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

MLA Lamoureux: The students from Tyndall Park school expressed concerns about everyday items being more expensive, like groceries and water bills. This has created some concerns about their future.

Does the Premier feel that groceries in Manitoba are getting too expensive and, if so, what is he going to do about it?

Mr. Kinew: Well, first and foremost, I want to say that yes, groceries are getting way too expensive. Every time I go to the Walmart on Taylor, kind of shake my head at some of the prices that have gone up even since my last visit, and I know that many other families out there are feeling the same way.

So we took action by cutting the gas tax; that's putting more money into the pockets of your parents, and really everybody across the province of Manitoba.

But when it comes to the young person, the young mind that's not only hungry for knowledge but hungry for a brighter future, we're ensuring that no child will go to school hungry, because in this year's budget we've invested in a province-wide meal program for every kid in Manitoba.

Carman Wellness Connections Funding Support Announcement

MLA Nellie Kennedy (Assiniboia): The tragedy in Carman three months ago that took the lives of one adult and four children was devastating for all Manitobans. What happened that day was nothing short of horrific. We are working together to protect the most vulnerable in our province.

Can the Premier please share with the House about the work being done to help the community of Carman continue to heal?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I thank my colleague from Assiniboia for this important question.

You know, it was Mr. Rogers who said that when he used to see something scary on the news, his mom

would tell him, look for the helpers. And after this terrible tragedy took place in our province, that's what we did.

And when we turned to Carman, we found that the helpers there were the group called Carman Wellness Connections, helping to fight poverty and to support people with mental health, and to support some of the people very directly impacted with this.

* (14:30)

And so we're showing up to support that organization with \$100,000 in annual funding so that they can continue their good work. We're also committing the resources to ensure that the victims of this terrible tragedy will be memorialized.

I want to acknowledge the member for Midland (Mrs. Stone), whose constituency this took place in, as well as the member for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert), who is present at many of these community events.

And I have to say, I found some measure of solace from the people of Carman, who could have, perhaps, said that's not my family, that's someone else, but instead did the exact opposite. Instead of turning away from one another, the people of—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Regulated Community Colleges Revenue Sharing Concerns

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Two days ago, I asked the minister a question and yet, again, she said she was confused with what I asked.

So, for the record, they are two distinct types of advanced education institutions: one is funded with public dollars and the other is regulated by the government but funded independently.

Why has this minister taken the majority of foreign student revenue from the regulated institutions to keep the public institutions whole, causing millions of dollars of lost revenue?

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): I thank the member opposite for the question.

Our government is investing in post-secondary. Budget 2024 includes a 6 per cent increase overall to Advanced Education and Training. It includes a 2 per cent increase to the operating grant for each of our public post-secondary institutions.

And Manitobans have invested in public post-secondary institutions and our government is

committed to keeping them strong so that students get high-quality education. We're committed to ensuring this education is accessible and affordable.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Selkirk, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Perchotte: Maybe I'm not being clear, Honourable Speaker. I'm talking about the independently funded, regulated institutions, not public institutions.

Reducing the foreign students each by 90 per cent and the regulated colleges to ensure publicly funded schools only have a minimal loss or even an increase, as was given to the University of Winnipeg, creates huge financial losses for the regulated colleges.

What is this minister doing to offset these losses that she, herself, has imposed?

MLA Cable: Honourable Speaker, Manitobans elected our government to work for them, and that's just what we did.

We worked with the federal government and fought for our fair share of provincial attestation letters so that international students can continue to come to study in Manitoba. We increased our allotment letters from 15,232 to 18,652. That's a 23 per cent increase.

And our focus, to be clear, is to ensure that our public universities and colleges continue to welcome international students and that international students know that they're valuable and welcome here in Manitoba. I won't apologize for that.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Selkirk, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Perchotte: Honourable Speaker, it's very clear this minister is only focused on the public institutions.

There's more than the public institutions. We count on every day for the tradespeople to come out of the other colleges, for people of North Dakota to come up to schools like Providence, to people that come to Robertson career college, Herzing career college. Their funding has been cut directly by this minister, and she's refusing to take responsibility.

When will she find the funds to give back to them?

MLA Cable: To address the question, it is just simply untrue that we have cut funding.

Do you know what is true? That year over year over year, the folks over there cut funding to post-secondary institutions. They cut and froze funding for seven and a half years. They pushed post-secondary institutions

into a situation where they came to depend on revenue from international students.

If the PCs had properly funded advanced education, post-secondary institutions would be less vulnerable overall to these changes from Ottawa.

Our government will always work on behalf of Manitobans. I will never apologize for doing that.

Electric Vehicle Rebate Government Intention

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Fewer and fewer Canadians and fewer and fewer Manitobans are interested in electric vehicles. In fact, according to AutoTrader, less than half of all Canadians are interested in buying or driving an EV.

They don't like the high costs. They don't trust the range in performance. And they know there will never be enough charging infrastructure to support them. That's why three out of four Canadians refuse to give up their gas-powered cars and trucks.

So I ask this minister: How does she plan to sell the NDP's EV rebate lottery? Does she plan to ban gas-powered cars to force Manitobans to drive electric?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): I thank my critic, the member opposite, for the opportunity to brag about our announcement in Budget 2024 that we are going to be introducing electric vehicle rebates finally here in Manitoba, an opportunity that the previous government slept on.

Manitobans, I have to tell you, it's one of the announcements in our budget that I'm getting the most excitement about out in the community. I encourage all Manitobans to visit their dealer on their way home and look at how to take advantage of \$4,000 off a new electric vehicle, or \$2,500 off a used electric vehicle.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: The—order. Order. Order. Order. Order.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Assuming—yes.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable First Minister, on a point of order.

Mr. Kinew: I just wanted to conclude my remarks about the people of Carman, because this matter does mean a lot to me, for the benefit of Hansard.

Just wanted to say that the people of Carman didn't turn away from each other. Rather, they did the exact opposite. They turned toward one another, and they helped themselves through a difficult time the way Manitobans always have: by doing it together.

The Speaker: I would advise that it's not a point of order, but I do appreciate the First Minister finishing his comments, and I'm sure the people of Carman appreciate it as well.

PETITIONS

Provincial Trunk Highway 2

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

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

(1) Provincial Trunk Highway 2, PTH 2, is a 315-kilometre, 196-mile highway that runs from the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border to Winnipeg's Perimeter Highway.

(2) A significant portion of PTH 2 runs through the constituency of Spruce Woods, from the border of the rural municipality of Pipestone and the rural municipality of Sifton to the border of the rural municipality of Victoria and the rural municipality of Norfolk-Treherne.

(3) This route is historically significant, as it follows the original path taken in 1874 by the North West Mounted Police in their march west from Fort Dufferin to Fort Whoop-Up.

(4) PTH 2 is a significant commuting route for Westman families and is also utilized by those in the trade, commerce, tourism, agriculture and agrifood industries.

(5) The condition of PTH 2, from the east side of the town of Souris straight through to the hamlet of Deleau, is in an unacceptable state of disrepair.

(6) The newly appointed Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure has confirmed the department has no plan to refurbish this stretch of road until the 2028-2029 construction season.

(7) The minister outlined that the current 2028-2029 construction plan does—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

If I could ask members if they're having conversations to take them to the loge. It's getting awfully

loud. I'm having a hard time hearing the member who is speaking.

* (14:40)

Mr. Jackson: (7) The minister outlined that the current 2028-2029 construction plan does not include the stretch of PTH 2 that runs through the town of Souris, but instead starts on the west side of town.

(8) The communities in the area have been clear that any reconstruction of PTH 2 must include the stretch that runs through the town of Souris.

(9) The minister and the Premier have a duty to respond to infrastructure needs identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier and the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to immediately prioritize the reconstruction of Provincial Trunk Highway 2 in the upcoming construction season, and

(2) To urge the provincial government to include the stretch of Provincial Trunk Highway 2 that runs through the town of Souris in its reconstruction plans.

This petition is signed by Kim Eissner, Alex Martel, Rick Janzen and many, many, many Manitobans.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing

suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition.

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

This is signed by Scott Harder, Anna Friesen, Victoria Freund and many, many, many Manitobans.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic

provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

Manitoba Hydro indicates—

(5) But Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them much-needed relief.

Honourable Speaker, this petition is signed by Kayla Turner, Kaidence Pilon, Raymond Popple and many other fine Manitobans.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly

The background to this petition is as follows:

The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with old furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic

provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

* (14:50)

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them much needed relief.

This petition is signed by Patricia Pellard [*phonetic*], Joel Tourond and Greg Bugeira [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Beginning March 17, 2024, persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the leading—suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illnesses.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition.

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

This is signed by Libbi [*phonetic*] Charles Fillian, James Kautz, Monique Jeanson and many, many other Manitobans.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

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

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans. It can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

* (15:00)

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them much-needed relief.

This has been signed by many Manitobans: Sherry Francis, Danielle Carefoot, Jenna Lowry and many, many, many more Manitobans.

The Speaker: No further petitions?

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the

average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them with much-needed relief.

This petition is signed by Mike Leech [*phonetic*], Linda Newton, Lisa Hogg and many, many, many Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the ages of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition.

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

And this petition is signed by Gloria Boychuk, Linda Zazuliak and Doreen Lloyd and many, many other Manitobans.

Louise Bridge

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) Over 25,000 vehicles per day cross the Louise Bridge, which has served as a vital link for vehicular traffic between northeast Winnipeg and the downtown for the last 113 years.

(2) The current structure will undoubtedly be declared unsafe in a few years as it has deteriorated extensively, is now functionally obsolete, and therefore more subject to more frequent unplanned repairs and cannot be widened to accommodate future traffic capacity.

(3) As far back as 2008, the City of Winnipeg, City, has studied where the new replacement bridge should be situated.

* (15:10)

(4) After including the bridge replacement in the City's five-year capital budget forecast in 2009, the new bridge became a short-term construction priority in the City's transportation master plan of 2011.

(5) City capital and budget plans identified replacement of the Louise Bridge on a site just east of the bridge and expropriated homes there on the south side of Nairn Avenue in anticipation of a 2015 start.

(6) In 2014, the new City administration did not make use of available federal infrastructure funds.

(7) The new Louise Bridge Committee began its campaign to demand a new bridge and its surveys confirmed residents wanted a new bridge beside the current bridge, with the old bridge kept open for local traffic.

(8) The City tethered the Louise Bridge replacement issue to its new transportation master plan and eastern corridor project. Its recommendations have now identified the location of the new Louise bridge to be placed just to the west of the current bridge, not to the east as originally proposed.

(9) The City's expropriation process has begun. The \$6.35-million street upgrade of Nairn Avenue from Watt Street to 100 and to the 113-year-old bridge is complete. The new—

(10) The new City administration has delayed the decision on the Louise Bridge for a minimum of one year, and possibly up to 10 years, unless the Province steps in on behalf of northeast Winnipeg residents and completes the overdue link.

(11) The Premier has a duty to direct the provincial government to provide financial assistance to the City so it can complete this long overdue vital link to northeast Winnipeg and Transcona.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier to financially assist the City of Winnipeg on building this three-lane bridge in each direction to maintain this vital link between northeast Winnipeg, Transcona and the downtown.

(2) To urge the provincial government to recommend that the City of Winnipeg keep the old bridge fully open to traffic—the new bridge is under construction.

(3) To urge the provincial government to consider the feasibility of keeping the old bridge open for active transportation in the future.

This petition was signed by Sajjad Hashm, Dill Krenedy [*phonetic*] and Rudrar [*phonetic*] Patel and many, many, many Manitobans.

The Speaker: There are no further petitions? Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Acting Government House Leader):

Can you please call the continuation of second reading of debate of Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, criminal property forfeiture act and corporations act amendment—mended, followed by second reading of Bill 31, The Captured Carbon Storage Act, and following that, the second reading of Bill 29, The Body Armour and Fortified Vehicle Control Amendment Act.

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will resume debate on second reading of Bill 30, the unexplained wealth criminal property forfeiture act, corporations act amended, followed by second reading of Bill 31, The Captured Carbon Storage Act, followed by Bill 29, the armour and fortified vehicle control amendment act.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 30—The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended)

The Speaker: We will now resume debate on the reasoned amendment of Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, criminal forfeiture act and corporations act amended, standing in the name of the member for Selkirk, who has 23 minutes remaining.

Just for clarification purposes, we are on the reasoned amendment to the second debate—second reading motion.

* (15:20)

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Yesterday, I had an opportunity to get up and put a few words on the record about the reasoned amendment for Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, the Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended.

Yesterday, I spoke briefly—I believe it was seven minutes—about why we felt that Bill 30 didn't bring anything substantively new in front of this House for us to debate. We talked about the number of hours we spent going over that bill and how there was no significant difference.

And I had to reflect again, yet, last night as to why we are here. Why do we have a bill in front of us that we had to bring forward by the member from Interlake-Gimli to say, we have to have a reasoned amendment to this bill? Why?

And again, it's what I teach my children. It's, life isn't easy. You have to put in the work. You have to put in the work to get things done right. And I know the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) would like us to sit down and just pass this bill, but that's not how life works. Life doesn't say, you get a pass just because you're a minister. Because you're elected, you get a pass. You have to put in the work.

And when we went through this bill, Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, and we compared it to legislation that we currently had, we found very little difference.

And, yesterday, I mentioned how the PC government have given many gifts, and this was a gift that was given in 2021. This gift was put in a box, it was wrapped, it was put on some beautiful blue paper and then it was passed through legislation and everybody loved what was presented in 2021.

And the minister got elected, and he was high-fiving himself in the parking lot, and he didn't get down to business. And he had to scramble to try to bring something forward as a new bill. And he looked around at what was available, and he found this box, this beautiful box that was presented by the PC government, that had, already, legislation in there from 2021, which was also amended a little bit in 2022.

And he says, I'm going to take that box, I'm going to put on some cautionary orange wrapping paper, I'm going to throw a little bit of fluff pieces in there and we're going to add some verbiage. And whenever I sit down with my lawyer, putting up contracts for the business I used to be involved in, we called them weasel words.

But it's verbiage that goes in there, and it's very important in some cases, and some cases, it's filler material that really doesn't go very far. So he's added this fluff and these weasel words in here to try to make himself look better.

But unfortunately, sometimes people are in a position, not because of their knowledge, just because nobody else was available, and I think we've got that here. And I would recommend to the minister opposite that, perhaps, do your homework to get down and find real substantive changes to legislation that is going to move forward.

So after I left here yesterday, I contacted several people, again, who I originally talked about Bill 30 on, to say, am I missing something on this bill? Am I missing something that's going to change the—where is the oh wow moment that I'm going to have on this bill? And there is none.

And yet again, they—we are sitting here talking, and the minister opposite, again, wants to talk over. He thinks it's his time. Again, he's not prepared to do the work, and when he's called on it, he just can't help—that mouth just keeps going and going.

And, Honourable Speaker, you and I will agree. You sent out a letter to the members of this Chamber and decorum and how we should behave. And yet again, we have the childish behaviour of people yelling across the aisle.

He had his time yesterday to talk about it. He brought out and he took a look at all those little weasel words and brought them forward. And, again, we said, I had an opportunity to look back, and I looked at that and said, again, it was nothing different.

When we sit back and take a look at what people are supposed to do in this Chamber, what we're duly elected to do is to make sure that we represent the people that have us here. *[interjection]*

And here he is again. Would you like to stand up and talk for a couple minutes? Do you have something to say?

The Speaker: Order, please.

We can quit hollering back and forth. And the member who has the floor can keep his comments relevant to what he's supposed to.

Mr. Perchotte: What I was speaking to is the fact that there was no substantive changes to this. And how after I went back last night, we sent out information throughout my core group that I spoke with. And I

talked to members of the RCMP, members of the Winnipeg police, including those that are undercover. We talked to federal prosecutors. I talked to provincial prosecutors and I talked to my own personal lawyers.

An Honourable Member: You said this yesterday.

Mr. Perchotte: So the member says I talked about this yesterday, and matter of fact, I did, Honourable Speaker.

And—but also, in turning to that, another member from across the aisle got up and he had a list of different items that were supposedly the big ooh-hoo moment that we're supposed to look for.

So I took from Hansard the information that was there, and I sent that out along. And—*[interjection]* Yes, sir. I sent that information to these people. And once again, they took a look at that, and they said, there's nothing more than meets the eye.

Once again, you take a look at what the government has done—and it was proven again today—I'm very concerned that the people opposite in the positions of the ministries that they have do not have the qualifications to do the job. That was proven today in question period when we answered questions, and nobody could answer.

So they grab legislation that was produced in the past, they repackage it under a different name, and they bring it forward. We've seen where we've had members on our side present their bills that are on the Order Paper only to find out a few days later that the current government has taken those ideas and presenting them as their own bills, as I'm certain the member from Midland can attest to. Somebody takes your idea and presents it as a new one.

Or, in other case, the—in the bills I've brought forward for *caisse populaire*, the—showed up again—recycled from somebody else's bill. Halfway done through presentation and writing, it comes again.

So I'm very concerned that the government is only using bills that either are presented by the PC government or bills that have been already introduced by the PC government and bringing them back as their own.

We've seen them recycle different announcements. We've had personal daycares, okay, taken away then brought back. We've had also the personal-care homes, okay, taken off of the table that were announced by the PC government and put back on the table in the riding of Lac du Bonnet, trying to show it as a new thing. Nobody knows better than us on this side of the House; it was our idea.

And, again, when I sat down and I talked to the members from—the MLA from Steinbach, the MLA from Brandon West, I talked to the other colleagues in the room, and we talked about what new tools this bill will give to the forfeiture act, and there is no new tools. It's a reverbage of stuff that's already in there. We talked about many different things, and there's several different pages here.

* (15:30)

But an example of how things get recycled in their own Bill 30, they talk about in section 14(2), by repealing the definitions of after-market compartment and trafficking and adding after-market hidden compartment.

But yet, this shows up again in another bill. We have another bill that references exactly the same thing. The body armour and forfeiture vehicle controls amendment act addresses this very section that they're bringing forward. I'm very concerned that we have a government, that we have a minister, that is just incapable of doing their own work.

I've taught my children that sometimes it's a hard road to go down, but you have to do your own work. You have to struggle, and sometimes you fail along the way and the minister has clearly failed to demonstrate to the PC caucus that his bill is any different than the legislation it's had. And failure isn't always a bad thing; we learn from failure. Our children learn from failure and as adults, we learn from failure. And as from government, sometimes we learn from failure.

So I would plead with my colleague across the way, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) to please learn from his failures and perhaps address his role in a more mature manner than yelling and screaming across the aisle, but actually take a look at what the people that elected him to do and get down to the business at hand.

When you take a look at changing minor words to try to present something different, changing dollar amounts of \$75,000 to \$125,000—that's not a substantive change that has happened. And again, I have to really thank the member from Interlake-Gimli for finally saying, it's enough. We can't keep debating Bill 30 without this reasoned amendment because we're going around in circles.

We have simply garbage that was brought forward because there's nothing new. *[interjection]* Absolutely, when you can't do your job and you take somebody else's work, it is garbage. When you want to copy from somebody and you want to present bills that are

not related to today's new bills, when you're trying to recapture the thoughts of another party and try to present them as your own, that is garbage. It's absolute garbage.

If you want to present some new bills, something that captures our attention—especially, my attention—I believe that there is going to be some good bills brought forward from that side of the House. And I don't think we should be looking at bills at a partisan way. I believe we need to look at bills at what it does for our communities and to make sure that the bills presented reflect not only this day and age that we're in, but the wishes of the people who elected us to get here.

To look over the shoulder of the person sitting next to you, or to recycle bills that were already introduced and bring them forward as your look-what-I've-done moment; that's ridiculous. It's not what we're elected to be here for.

If you want to bring something forward to protect people, take a look at protecting women that are of sexualized violence. Let's get those perpetrators off the street. If you want to really have something substantive in organized crime, create task force, have more funding going to those government institutions that can handle that. I mean major funding.

One of the biggest problems that the member probably doesn't know, when people of organized crime are doing their illegal, illicit activities, it's often after the hours that the police are working. And they're not allowed to work overtime, so the criminals lay low during the day and then at nighttime they go forward and they start committing crimes.

So if that was in this bill, that they would put more funding towards surveillance and capturing the drug dealers and the organized criminals; if they put that information forward, I would be a hundred per cent supportive of this. But it's not; it's the same bill.

And the bill is good because it's our bill. It's really good because it's our bill, and it's really good because BC copied our bill.

Now, when BC took a look at it, they broke it down to components, and they talked about all the different things that we had talked about in 2021. And when you take a look at each of those components, and we can go through them here if the member opposite would like me to. We could take a look.

Basically, in 2021, the PC government introduced the exact same legislation, and it was made as legislative changes to the legislation to strengthen the ability of the Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit to quickly act on securing money that was believed to be used for money laundering.

That's a great idea. We want to take the money out of the criminals' hands. That bill, then, is the same bill now. There's no substantive difference. There is an inflationary difference where the volume dollar value goes from \$75,000 to \$125,000, but that's not much of a difference.

If you want to go after the criminals, why is there a limit? So you tell a criminal, well, don't buy—don't worry about your assets \$125,000 and under, but you're safe at 250, half a million and million-dollar ones.

We need something substantive to go after these criminals. Recycling a bill, adding in fluff, adding in weasel words just to make it your new bill doesn't help anybody.

When you take a look in 2022, the PC government expanded the Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit to combat money laundering by hiring two investigators and a financial analyst. This bill doesn't refer to any of that. It doesn't talk about hiring more people. It doesn't talk about putting any more money in the hands of those people that were hired. There's no difference again on that bill.

In 2022 BC released its financial report of the commission of the inquiry into money laundering. So they talked about all different things, Honourable Speaker, things that was addressed in 2021 in the Conservative Party's bill that was adopted and brought forward in the House.

They talked about the changes that happened in 2022 that were adopted in this House. They liked those. They thought Manitoba was leading edge on what we had coming forward.

And I caution the members on the opposite side. I—there's several of them I admire. I have a lot of respect for them, and there's a few of them I think need to do more work. I don't want to say anything derogatory. Everybody was elected here on their due will. I believe everybody that is here deserves to be here because if the people that elected them—got them here. They're here to represent.

But there are members here that are not doing the work they're supposed to. When you ask them a question, they're confused. They don't know what's

going on. And it shows in this legislation brought forward. When someone doesn't know what's going on, they're going to copy somebody.

I, myself, was prepared to, you know, to take a look at some of the legislation that was done in the past and to move forward. And when I felt there was things I wanted to bring forward, I talked to members of my caucus and members of our staff to find out on the bills that I would bring forward how they related to today.

I found out on a couple of the ideas that I wanted to bring forward that already existed. And they said unless I wanted to change it or amend it a little bit, I couldn't bring that—forward the same bill.

When I took a look at the bills—were there, I was satisfied that that already was there. I just wasn't aware of it. And I'm afraid that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) didn't do that little bit of homework to look to see if this has already existed, because he certainly would have found almost word for word for word, section after section after section, the bill is there.

And by changing words to include assets now include cryptocurrency assets, it's still an asset. You don't have to say that. What are we going to break it down to, you know, cash assets, hard assets, property assets, cryptocurrency assets, money-in-the-bank assets, foreign investment assets. We don't have to break it down. An asset is an asset. If you ask an accountant what is an asset, it's a very distinct definition.

* (15:40)

You need to make sure that if you're going to bring something forward in this Chamber, that it can get the support that it needs. We have seen several bills brought forward that we have supported or had passed on division. But when somebody brings forward somebody else's work, somebody else's hundreds and thousands of hours of work, and comes and says, oh, here it is; it's mine now; I'm going to put it forward as mine, we're going to have a good look at it and we're going to determine if that is right or wrong.

And we all have a sense of right or wrong, Honourable Speaker. And I would never tolerate my children taking from somebody else's work. That's stealing. And over my life, I've had people offer me things at a great deal, and you know stuff has been stolen, and I have no part of that. My integrity is not for sale. I am not going to be putting anybody at risk by allowing people to steal from them, by encouraging that by buying property from them. I would never do

that. The value of my integrity is much, much higher than that, and I'm not for sale.

But when somebody reaches across the aisle and steals the work that has been done here previously, you have to wonder, what is the integrity of that person? What is the value that person puts on themselves? To sit here in the Chamber to openly produce legislation that they know they haven't produced themselves. They have taken from somebody else and added a little bit into it.

Honourable Speaker, I read your note that you sent to the MLAs in this Chamber, and I couldn't agree more. I've said many times here that we need to have a better sense of decorum in here. The way we behave—I tell people when they come for a tour, said, don't come to question period. It is absolutely ridiculous. You ask a question, nobody wants to answer it. The people in here, they jump up and down, they pound on desks, they yell across for no reason whatsoever. I mean, it's ridiculous. Okay?

And then we sit back and we go, what have we become? We need to have a better decorum. I would agree with you, Honourable Speaker, a hundred per cent. Let's be adults. Let's be mature. Let's be respectful.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): I would like to put some words on the record in regards to this most recent amendment. I just want to say to the Manitoba Legislature that is going to be very hard act to follow, the act from the—the speech from the member from Selkirk. Even those who didn't put their volume on on their TV heard it. So that I won't be able to do.

This is a recent amendment. For those of the Legislature who have had the opportunity to read it, they know how reasonable it's laid out. Comments have been made by members of this Legislature about the fact that this seems to be a retread piece of legislation, and there is a vernacular out there that says imitation is the greatest form of flattery.

And we know the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) has hero-worship issues when it comes to the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), and I would say maybe in the realm of love-hate relationship, but I think he hates—the member for Concordia hates the fact that he loves to emulate the member from Steinbach. And that's what he has done with Bill 30, which we've already debated. Now we're debating the reasonable and pre-eminently good amendment.

And I listened with intent when the Minister of Justice, the member—NDP member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe)—gave his speech, and I thought I might take the opportunity to rebut some of the things he said, but there was nothing memorable in it so I actually won't be able to do that.

There—it's—there's nothing about his 30 minutes that stands out, other than he was angry. I would say to the member for Concordia, why are you so angry all the time? Just—it's your legislation that's being debated, why are you so angry? Why do you keep heckling so loud?

And so I would say that I, again, I would like to counter some of the arguments that the NDP member for Concordia put forward. He just didn't really put any forward. I'd like to rebut some of the things he said but he said nothing memorable.

So I do want to talk about the importance of the spirit and the intent of legislation dealing with wealth that was accumulated illegally. And my good former Cabinet colleague, member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), had dealt with this.

And when this first came up, I had the opportunity to reflect on some of my political experiences, and again, I will be very cautious to this Legislature and not divulge exact addresses. But I was canvassing in my community and I came upon a home, a lot of very nice vehicles in the driveway; very nice, in fact, and a very beautiful home.

And I went to the door and the door was ajar. And I'm very much an activist politician. If there's, you know—clearly, the current NDP Premier (Mr. Kinew), he likes to emulate my style; if there's somebody on the side of the road, I pull over, see if I can give assistance.

So I happened—I—you know, there's a question that was posed: How many tires have I changed? *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'm pretty sure the member's been around here for enough years to know that he has to keep his comments somewhat relevant to what's being discussed here. We're discussing the reasoned amendment, so if the member could keep his comments focused on that, it would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. Schuler: You know, I have to take that—those words and take them very seriously. I should not be getting off my topic by, for instance, one of my colleagues from Waverley. No, it's not Waverley. Wait—Whyte Ridge.

An Honourable Member: St. Vital.

Mr. Schuler: And I—yes, St. Vital. I should not be listening to the words coming from the member from Whyte Ridge and I will endeavour to get back on topic. I take your words seriously.

An Honourable Member: Fort Whyte.

Mr. Schuler: So—what did I say? Yes, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan). Yes, I've got to stop listening to the member for Fort Whyte. There we go. You know, least—at least I got it within the city.

So back to the reasoned amendment and why it's important that we be dealing with whole issue. So I walked up the driveway to go knock on the door and the door was ajar. And right away, that's a sign. I mean, sometimes people leave doors open, and I live in the community. One of the reasons why it is so safe is we do look out for each other.

And, for instance, if I'm walking—going for a walk and I see the keys in the door, not that we haven't all done that, you know, I go and knock on the door and say, by the way, you left the keys in the door and people say thank you. Or you see late at night, garage door open, you go and you say, by the way, you left the garage door open.

And anyway, the door was ajar and I knocked on the door, knocked on the door, rang the doorbell. Nobody came. Whatever possessed me, I kind of pushed the door open and I yelled in, hello, hello. And I walked in and I was in the lobby of the house and an individual runs toward me and he says, what are you doing in the house?

* (15:50)

I said, well your door was ajar and I'm canvassing. I'm the—that was at that time the constituency of Springfield and on and on. And she took the brochure and said, would you please leave?

Anyway, the next election, I happened to be canvassing with a police officer who was retired but was still involved. And he said to me, when you go on that driveway—pointed to that house with all the vehicles again, same kind of scenario—could you get some of the licence plates for me? That is the head of the Hell's Angels for Manitoba.

You know, that was probably not the best choice in walking into that house four years earlier, and I don't think there was any danger of anybody breaking into that house.

That house ended up being seized, as were a lot of those vehicles, as proceeds of crime at a later time. That house was one of those items that had been seized, and it becomes very real when you see that.

In fact, I was at another home in my community—this was still Springfield—and you couldn't get close to the home. It was very guarded and very—a lot of security, electronic fences and the like. And I remember reading about that, maybe after I'd canvassed, that it was—again, I don't want to identify where the house was; that's not fair—and I—it was another home that was seized. And there were nice vehicles—very nice vehicles—on the driveway, and all of that was seized as avails of crime.

And it sends a message, sends a very important message to criminals, that you might accumulate wealth, you might accumulate assets, but when you're caught, and you will be caught—and the member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen), my colleague who spent many, many years as a police officer and then ended up being police chief of the Brandon police force would know more than anybody that when it comes to organized crime, they're being watched—and when they are caught, their assets will be seized. And that money or those assets will be sold, and they will then be used for good purposes.

I know under our government, many organizations—the Bear Clan organization; The Joy Smith Foundation, which I know we've talked about here before, which deals with human trafficking—the most vile crime you can have in a society, where you take children, basically, and you traffic them for sex for money. And for anybody who's been at a Joy Smith Foundation event or participated—and I know many of my colleagues, even on the NDP benches, have been at some of those events—it is very, very troubling.

So the fact that we take assets and money that was accumulated by criminals for horrible reasons, is then sold and then is given to organizations that basically fight them and help to get the victims of crime out of those situations and help them. And it is costly. It takes very little to get a person into—to be human traffic, but it takes so much to get them—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I cautioned the member earlier about keeping his comments relevant to the reasoned amendment. We're not discussing the bill itself; we're discussing the reasoned amendment. So I'm going to read this whole statement that you all heard yesterday, just to remind everyone of what they're supposed to be doing here.

So I've been listening carefully, and I'm not sure how the member's current comments are relevant to the reasoned amendment we are currently debating. To be clear, we are not debating Bill 30 right now. We are debating the reasoned amendment to the bill as listed on the Order Paper, because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill is different to the existing legislation that was brought forward and passed by this House in 2021.

So I would ask the member to please share how his remarks relate to the amendment.

Mr. Schuler: Yes, and thank you for making that clear, and I will continue to try and speak accordingly that I fall within that framework. I should probably frame it out a little bit better in that, and I did get a little bit—and that one particular topic is particularly painful for me. I happen to know Joy Smith personally and the kind of work she does. So I take those comments absolutely.

The amendment basically is saying that this legislation isn't necessary in the sense that it's legislation that was passed already. And the legislation, which then takes on—and I was—and I did get myself a little lost on one of those topics.

But it really does take on individuals who have acquired wealth, who have acquired even stature, who have acquired power, if you will, that that is taken away from you. And what the reasoned amendment then says is that, but that legislation already exists.

And I want to be clear that we are clearly in support of the legislation that was brought forward by our pre-eminent and esteemed colleague, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), who had already brought this forward. And in our discussions, we had discussed a not just do you want to bring down individuals who use crime. And I—primary motivation would always be wealth and accumulation of the things that wealth buys. It's also standard of living, of course. But it is stature for them, and it is also power. And the legislation that was brought in covers that.

So the amendment is very clear, is that if that legislation already exists, why is it that Bill 30 was introduced? And I guess that's why so many of us struggle with this, is we get the me too, and the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) looks up to the member for Steinbach. Probably wouldn't admit it right now, but looks up to him, wants to emulate his esteemed career.

But there has to be a moment of pause on that because that legislation already exists. So why just

duplicate it again? Why just put, again, legislation in that is already there, that deals with it, that the house with all the security and all the fortifications and all the big fancy cars and all of that. If that exists already, why would the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe)—other than perhaps trying to flatter the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), and it's really not for us to speculate why the member—the NDP member for Concordia, why he would've put in the same legislation.

And so the amendment asks that. The amendment asks: Why, in fact, would you do something like that?

* (16:00)

And it—the amendment—and maybe there's a little flaw in the amendment. The amendment actually doesn't give any answers to why that is. It just poses basically the question: Why would a minister of the Crown, someone who's been here for a while—in fact, he replaced Premier Gary Doer after Premier Gary Doer left. He used to be a—the member for Concordia, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), used to be a staffer—staff person—constituency person, I believe, for Premier Doer, then took over as MLA. So it's not like this is new or anything like that. He would have been here when that legislation was passed.

So the reasoned amendment then asks: Why is it necessary to have another piece of legislation that does already what the member for Steinbach, when he was minister of Justice, had brought in?

And we're not doubting—at no point in time would we ever question how necessary that legislation was. In fact, I was part of a government—I was a minister of a government that brought the original legislation in. And I would suggest to members that it is communities like Springfield, because of its remoteness and proximity to the city of Winnipeg, that lend itself for organized crime to try to be outside the city and still have access to the city. So for me, the original legislation was very important because it had an impact, and I could explain other situations where I was out in rural areas and saw it, and those were all seized, actually, as well. And all of those monies went to help organizations.

I guess the criticism, then, is to the NDP member for Concordia, the Minister of Justice, is, in all the time that he had in opposition, and he had some; fact, he was a backbench MLA in government; he was a backbench MLA in the Selinger government. So he had time to come up with legislation. Why would he

have come up with legislation that mirrored something that he, himself, had debated?

Now, I have no idea, because I don't remember exactly if the member for Concordia actually voted for the original legislation. The amendment doesn't speak to that. The amendment doesn't ask why—how the member for Concordia, the Minister of Justice—how he voted on the original legislation. What it does is question why is it necessary. Why is it necessary to have duplicated something that existed?

And the reasoned amendment doesn't reflect on the fact that the member for Concordia would have been here when the original legislation was introduced, debated, spoken to, passed and given royal assent. So it's not like the member for Concordia wouldn't have known that it was passed.

So the reasoned amendment doesn't reflect on those things, and—but the member for Concordia would have been—fact, there are many members of this Chamber—a few, anyway—who would have been here when the original legislation was brought in, would have been part of it, would have seen it, would have—I suspect the members on the NDP benches probably voted against it.

So the question is—and this is the point that the reasoned amendment is trying to make—why is it that if there was already legislation that mirrors that deterrent, and Bill 30 mirrors it, the reasoned amendment then asks: If members of the Legislature had the opportunity to have it introduced, debated, went to committee, debated, there was opportunity for amendments and then royal assent, why is it that we would need to have the same legislation introduced a second time?

And that is really the crux of the debate that we're having here today. Why is it that if we went through all that work, all that effort, and yes, there is an expense to it; there is an expense to legislation being brought forward. The reasoned amendment doesn't actually reflect on the expense of just doing it a second time.

What the reasoned amendment does reflect on is that it's not a necessity. Why, in fact, are we actually doing this, when it's something that exists already? Is it, perhaps—and maybe the NDP member for Concordia, some point in time; I guess he can't speak to this again, but—could answer some of these questions, and could answer some of the questions that the reasoned amendment raises.

Perhaps it was to raise awareness, give it even more importance, highlight it, give it more focus. But none of that seems to be the words that the NDP member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) put on the record. So the reasoned amendment goes on and asks, why are we spending resources on something that's basically just a carbon copy? And I would suggest to this House, is none of those questions were ever answered. None of those questions were ever fully explained.

And maybe the reasoned amendment wouldn't have come forward, perhaps it wouldn't even have been necessary, had the member—the NDP member for Concordia—gotten up and explained what the thinking was behind it. Because there's—there doesn't seem to be a rationale behind it. There doesn't seem to be thinking behind it. And the reasoned amendment speaks to that concern, that we have before us a second bill that copies the first bill.

And the reasoned amendment also goes further. If you look at the amendment, it cautions all legislators, we are here to legislate issues that are—that may have been missed, because times change; things change. We used to, at one point in time, legislate horse and buggies; now, we legislate vehicles. So with this legislation, it's just a carbon copy of what was.

That what we should be doing is putting forward legislation that is topical, that deals with an issue that's out in society. That deals with issues that are current. And this reasoned amendment highlights the fact that government shouldn't just be there to just put anything forward as legislation, or maybe in the case of the member for Concordia, something. I—you know, you have to come up with something.

Well, you know, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) had this idea, put legislation through. Perhaps the member for Concordia also wanted to put something through. The reasoned amendment speaks to that, if you read carefully. And it basically warns all elected officials, when legislation is written, it should be written for something that isn't covered, that's something that needs to be covered, that's something that needs proper debate, that needs a proper discussion, that needs public input.

And not just—because the reasoned amendment also reflects that—and these are, now, paraphrasing—we don't always want, like, in the theatres now, in some movies there's part 4 and part 5 and part 6, and it's just basically a repeat of the first one. Like, we don't want that kind of legislation.

Now, if you're trying to correct something—and we've seen that before, where a piece of legislation kind of mirrors what was done, but it corrects something—we try not to do that in this place. We try to spend enough time and debate and all the rest of it, which is a warning about putting bills in BITSA. And it is important that we get it right.

* (16:10)

And the reasoned amendment makes it—I think—makes it clear that this Bill 30 doesn't exactly correct something. It doesn't cover something, glaringly missing, that it's a mere copy. And the reasoned amendment is a clear warning that that's not good use of legislative time, that we have to do better, that we—if we're just trying to fill space and if a government is at loss for new ideas and just wants to recycle legislation, that's not a good thing, and that's exactly what the reasoned amendment cautions.

Don't just put legislation forward for the sake of not having anything else to do, but legislate where it's necessary. Legislate where you need something done and not just go back into the last few years and try to copy legislation and just say, well, look, we're going after criminals and their assets and their money and their status and their power. And that's already covered.

Again, to be very clear, very important that we do those things. We're doing those things. That's being done. That's been legislated. The reasoned amendment makes it very clear that we should shy away from repeat legislation.

And it is a simple message. It's a good message. It's a strong message that we not make these kinds of mistakes. And I would say to this House that the reasoned amendment lays bare that Bill 30 is a mistake. There's other pieces of legislation which are necessary. We see the kind of criminal activity in the Premier of Manitoba's (Mr. Kinew) own constituency. Stores are closing, some temporarily, some permanently.

And, by the way, that's under the almost eight years of their MLA, the current Premier. He's been the elected official for that area, and the longer he's the MLA the worse it gets.

The Speaker: Order, please.

If the member would keep his comments relevant to the reasoned amendment, that would be appreciated.

Mr. Schuler: The reasoned amendment speaks to—thank you.

The Speaker: Order please.

The member's time has expired.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I'm not as seasoned to speaking to amendments like my colleague from Springfield-Ritchot, but I will do my best.

And I welcome a little leniency and guidance on this as I embrace the opportunity to stand in this House as an elected representative for Agassiz, and the opportunity to speak to Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, and our amendment that this House declines to give second reading to Bill 30, because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill is difference-different to the existing legislation that was brought forward and passed in this House in 2021.

The unexplained wealth orders are currently being used in over 100 different jurisdictions. The current legislation allows law enforcement, criminal property forfeitures office and regular enforcement agencies stronger tools to build cases against assets used in organized crime, drug trafficking and money laundering.

The Unexplained Wealth Act is the issue of individuals acquiring assets or wealth that cannot be reasonably explained by their own sources of income. It provides authorities with the necessary tools to investigate, seize assets that are suspected to be the result of illegal activities such as money laundering, corruption or organized crime.

I do not feel satisfied that this bill, in its original introduction, illustrates any significant difference than what already exists in legislation and on the books, deputy-or, Honourable Speaker.

You know, having key people, dedicated unit within law enforcement agencies to investigate cases of unexplained wealth is imperative to capturing and holding criminals accountable. This gives proper authority opportunity to gather the evidence, trace financial transactions, as well as to collaborate with international counterparts to identify, seize assets that are connected to these criminal activities.

Again, it's important that we look at this legislation and its aim to combat illicit financial activities, the corruption of organized crime and the money laundering, and the differences between what exists and what the original bill contains.

By targeting unexplained wealth and combatting financial crime ensures that our province is not a safe haven for those who seek to hide their ill-gotten gains. It serves as a deterrent for individuals involved in

illegal activities and helps to protect the integrity of our financial system and the protection of all Manitobans.

Again, Honourable Deputy Speaker, the-presently The Unexplained Wealth Act enhances the ability of law enforcement agencies to recover proceeds of crime and redirect them towards programs and initiatives that benefit our communities. This can include investments in education, health care, infrastructure, social services, ultimately improving the quality of life for all Manitobans.

In Manitoba, it's important to note that money seized under this forfeiture act is subject to court order and controlled by the director of Criminal Property Forfeiture.

Under the success of the legislation presently and the former PC government, funds from the forfeiture program were distributed to a variety of initiatives throughout the province. Again, that is no different than what is already put there in bill 58.

Organizations like Bear Clan patrols, combatting cybercrime, reducing catalytic converter theft, providing Internet in the northern areas. I would also like to acknowledge the great work of those volunteers and contribute to Bear Clan. This organization does a lot of great work on the front lines and provides conflict resolutions and resources for many in communities and may prevent further criminal activity.

The PC government, when in power, took great steps to combat money laundering and was among the leaders in the country who took an initiative and action on this front. British Columbia looked at what Manitoba had done and then adopted a similar model in their province.

So why do we need this legislation that mirrors what we already do here in Manitoba? It's clear, and we can all agree, no matter what side of the House we are on.

* (16:20)

And the property and monetary assets obtained from crime should be and needs to be addressed. Community safety is key importance in all our communities right across our province.

Crime is growing in many-growing concern for many Manitobans, and it leaves many feeling vulnerable and unsafe in their own homes. This bill-this current bill-does not take into account or strengthen what's already being done, Honourable Speaker. The former PC government took steps to combat money laundering, and was among the leaders-

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'm trying to be very lenient; I recognize the member's probably doing this for the first time, and it's hard to focus on just the amendment, but that is what the focus of this debate has to be. It has to be on the amendment itself, not on the actual bill.

So if the member could draw her comments back to the amendment, it would be appreciated.

Ms. Byram: Where I'm going with this is back to the amendment, where I would like to point out again that nothing memorable or nothing stands out different of what exists currently in legislation, then what exists. There's nothing different, like we've said; it mirrors.

I want to go back to what the previous government did. In 2021 they passed legislative changes that strengthened the ability for the Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit to quickly act on securing money that investigators believed to be illegally acquired, and could be subjected to money laundering.

In 2022 the previous government expanded staffing capacity with the Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit, which I've already mentioned, hiring investigators and financial analysts to target organized crime.

The previous government distributed millions of dollars from the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund to various initiatives and agencies, like those that I mentioned previous. And BC, again, took on what our Province of Manitoba had brought forward, as well.

You know, just sharing a little bit of a personal story in how this is affecting communities right across our province, in my rural riding and area there's been—we've been subject to break-ins and theft, and unfortunately this isn't new for any of us. It does, however, seem to be growing in boldness and time of day, like we've seen recently in Fort Rouge.

Along with this, there's a growing number of thefts that are just as—and drug seizures, and increased trafficking in our crime. There's been weapon seizures in my own rural community. Last year, the RCMP responded to reports of stolen vehicles in parking lots. Officers arrested three adults and a youth, found a vehicle linked to suspects, and during the search of the vehicles they seized firearms, 64 grams of hard narcotics, cocaine, bear spray, weapons. They all face multiple drug and weapon-related charges.

Again, Honourable Speaker, why is it that we're trying to fix something that's already there? This legislation exists, it is there, and again, it's redundant. In Bill 30 there is no changes made.

You know, another situation in February, RCMP conducted a traffic stop in a municipality close to mine, and they noticed a Ziploc bag containing cannabis. The occupants were placed under arrest and were requested to exit the vehicle. As officers were securing the suspects, one of the males fled and the RCMP officers from detachments were contacted and responded to the situation. The suspect was arrested. The search of the vehicle and the suspects led to the seizure again of illicit drugs. Officers again seized weapons, bear spray and other paraphernalia. One of these individuals was, again, found to have outstanding warrants.

And this is great work of the officers and related supports on the ground doing a great job keeping drugs off the street, weapons out of the hands of criminals, and working to keep our communities and our province safe from the acts of criminals and crime.

These successes right there show that the present legislation that our government put in when we were in government, it explains how that legislation that exists now already works. The new legislation as introduced is not significantly different than what is there, that what our government put in.

Again, it's important to note in rural communities many of these criminal activities happen, as they do in urban centres, as we've seen recently and quite routinely. I'd like to say again just a shout-out to the RCMP officers who work every day to keep our community safe. Living in rural Manitoba, our nights are quiet and, you know, I find that spending more time in Winnipeg here that nights may not seem to be as quiet. And we can—I've witnessed some other antics and behaviours that may be more prevalent in the urban centres here.

Again, the current bill does not take into account or strengthen what is already there, so there is the—*[interjection]* I'll have a drink of water, sure, I'll just have a drink of water here.

An Honourable Member: It's late in the day.

Ms. Byram: It is late in the day.

So getting back to the relevance here and the—speaking to the amendment, Honourable Speaker. If members opposite have the opportunity or, you know, took the time to consult with communities and even those in rural communities, perhaps there could have been significant change included in the proposed Bill 30.

I do just want to go back and say, you know, thank you to those who respond to the emergency calls and go out in the middle of the night and often risk their own lives.

It's a reality, you know, that some individuals get involved unknowingly. Perhaps they get involved in illegal activities to support habits of some nature. Some get involved because of family ties and they may be—succumb to illegal activity, but, again, like I said, unknowingly. And again, this could be contributing factors: home life, poverty. Regardless, they find themselves in a dark underground world of crime.

And crime affects everyone, we know that. And it is essential that we come together to understand the root causes of this problem and work together to find effective solutions.

You know, many prey on the most vulnerable and take full advantage of those that are seeking a sense of belonging. They get misguided and possibly promised great things and a high level of comfort, and before they know it, they realize they're living in a life of crime.

* (16:30)

I understand The Unexplained Wealth Act is not specific to petty crimes that exist, but crime starts at different levels.

I had one—someone reach out to me to ask if a text message was a real message or a scam, you know, and that can, you know, as some—it's scary to think how many have opened up some of these links on their phone and found them, you know, in harm or put them in harm or open them up to fraud activity.

I will say it again, Honourable Speaker, that this legislation is redundant. Again, there is nothing new that has been put in there.

A number of years ago, while working with a senior, it was brought to my attention that they would receive calls from CRA—again, this goes back to fraudulent activity—and I don't see anything in this bill that would change what is already there to prevent someone from being vulnerable to that and, again, that's going back to being redundant, so nothing has changed in that for—in terms of protecting the public.

You know, a report from the province of British Columbia provides details and a wide list of avenues where you find criminal activity. Some of those I've already mentioned fall into mass marketing fraud. It's daunting and concerning, the corruption, bribery, counterfeiting, piracy, drug trafficking, you know, some of

these I've already spoke to. Obviously, these crimes are conducted and operated in a much higher level of sophistication, and others involve significant amounts of money, and these are the operations where this bill can play an important part in crime.

But again, is it redundant in what it's proposed? I—we believe yes, this is redundant. There's no significant change in what they've put forward in this. And it—there is no compelling evidence demonstrating the difference between Bill 30 and, like I said, what's—what the existing legislation that was passed in 2021 that our government did. And as opposition, we can be champions of transparency, accountability and make informed—do informed decision making.

The reasoned amendment advocating for clarity and evidence in support of Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act. Manitoba is grounded in the principles of transparency, accountability and evidence-based policy making by scrutinizing—excuse me—by scrutinizing the necessity and distinctiveness of the proposed legislation, laws passed in 2021. Legislators hold up—uphold their responsibility to enact laws that are effective, efficient and responsive to the evolving challenges of combatting illicit financial activities and as well as the—preserving the integrity of the financial system.

I want to mention the great work my colleague from Steinbach did in relation to making the changes and bringing in legislation when we were in government while he was working on the Justice file.

I would also like to thank my colleague from Brandon West for his years of service at the Brandon Police Service. His dedication and contributions to the safety of Manitobans has been significant, and his knowledge in the field—in the justice field—continues to benefit us all here in this Chamber. And the member of Brandon West can provide great insights to this bill based on his work experiences in the justice system, and give us insight as to how redundant it is again, and how it just simply mirrors what we already put into legislation in 2021.

You know, the general objective is to empower law enforcement agencies, and individuals cannot explain or sometimes explain their—how they acquired assets—that might be subject to confiscation. The act is—hmm.

In conclusion, The Unexplained Wealth Act, also known as Bill 30, is significant in the fight against financial crime. It's no different than Bill 58.

It would be nice to get clarity or further explanation on what this bill does or how it is different from what already exists within this—or what already exists. I don't see how this bill is significantly different than what is presently law.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): And I just want to thank you, all my fellow caucus members for all the work that they've done to—about this bill and this reasonable amendment. I want to put a few words about the reasonable amendment for Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, criminal property forfeiture act and corporations act amendments.

And, very interesting. You know, I know the minister. He basically was here since I think Gary Doer basically gave up his seat to become an ambassador to the United States. So since the member from Concordia has been here in the Chamber since probably, I would say, 2009 or 2010 he might have come in here, he had lots of opportunity to basically see how this Legislature works. And I know that in government he was there during the Selinger government, and then also when it came to opposition he sat in the front row the whole time.

I know—Honourable Speaker, I—you remember. And I believe that the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) also actually had—was a critic for Justice. I know he probably challenged our Justice ministers over the years, and had the opportunity to come up with some—his own ideas.

And the thing was, funny that he now he becomes a Minister for Justice, the opportunity to become critic, and he emulates what we actually put in legislation in 2021 and going in '22 that actually the province of BC has put—has copied off of and basically put in their own legislation when it comes to forfeitures of property that might have been illegally, like, money that has been—money laundering, that the criminals who have actually prospered and bought things worth that money, or trying to clean the money by—from the money laundering.

So we put all that in place. We worked with the justice industry. We talked to our, probably member for, my—like the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen), who was the chief of police in Brandon.

* (16:40)

We've had a really good connection with a lot of police—policing in—over the years, and—when we were

here for seven and a half years—and had a great relationship with our police services. And I believe that during that whole time, where the members who are now in government want to defund the police. And I'm sure the member—Minister of Justice also wanted to do that at that time when everybody sort of got on the bandwagon of defunding the police back in 2020.

But the importance is that how much crime has actually escalated. So I'm wondering why the minister could not come up with some other great ideas, especially when there's such an increase in crime. The focus on actually getting rid of, like, the crime in our streets and actually have a different legislation than—the fact is, when it comes to the forfeiture act, that basically has not set anything differently, what—than we first put in in 2022.

So, I'm wondering why the minister is actually wanting to move this forward when he had so much time in opposition to come up with his own ideas and how he can—like, he sat in, I believe, in one of these seats right here and criticized and yelled at our Justice ministers over the years to do something different and to make sure that, you know, as a critic, he had great opportunities to actually come up with some good legislation.

But then he just emulates what we have actually already put on there so, I'm wondering why the Premier (Mr. Kinew) didn't actually appoint the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv), who is a lawyer, who could probably bring better ideas than the Minister of Justice that we have right now, and I think that would have been a better choice.

And so, when—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would remind the member to keep his comments relevant to the reasoned amendment, not to talk to the bill or anything else, but keep them relevant to what we're supposed to be talking about.

Mr. Piwniuk: I apologize, Honourable Speaker, but at the same time, I was trying to get to where I wanted to go to, was that they needed, like, with this legislation that we put a reasonable amendment on here is because, the fact is, there's nothing really changed here.

I believe that the minister should have come up with some better ideas, especially when we have a crisis of crime happening on our streets where a lot of—we're seeing that right now in San Francisco, Honourable Speaker, where actually malls—the Westfield mall is actually closing its operations in downtown

San Francisco because of the policies that have been set—liberal policies that have been set in the city of San Francisco, where now crime has actually escalated. And, actually, everybody's actually going to Oakland, which is kind of a joke, that people are going to Oakland to actually do business because there's so much danger in the—actually, downtown San Francisco.

So, Honourable Speaker, the reason I'm going this route—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Piwniuk: —is because there's a lot more to focus on than to actually just bring in this legislation on bill 58 that we actually put into place—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Piwniuk: —to copy it word for verb, basically. Put a little bit of fluff in there, Honourable Speaker, and say that this is a new bill that we want to pass.

Basically, there's no new ideas here, Honourable Speaker. It is the bill—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Piwniuk: —that we put forward in 2022.

So, I'm just saying here, Honourable Speaker, that when it comes to the reasonable amendment that we put forward here, is that there hasn't been any changes here. And I think there is more of an opportunity here to really look at another bill that could actually benefit Manitobans when it comes to safety out there.

And we see that right now, like, the announcement down in Osborne Village, where the member—the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) own home constituency is, they're shutting down Starbucks. They're shutting down a number of businesses in the Osborne Village area, and I think it's important that we address those issues instead of actually just bringing forward ideas that we brought forward, that was so important to make sure that when the illegal operations happen, that we—basically, policing actually has a raid and there is actually legalized crime that's proven, there's drugs.

We saw that right now with—when it came to the border crossing in Boissevain. So the Boissevain on the Peace Garden border, where there was a lot of drugs—that was crystal meth—that they confiscated and basically really shut down probably a lot of trade that was going to happen here in Winnipeg.

And these are the kind of areas that we should be focusing on, and this is why our—the opposition here—our opposition team here has put forward here,

because the fact is, this is exactly what we had before, that we put forward—the PC Party of Manitoba government had put forward in 2021, passed it, had royal assent and implemented back in 2022.

And, Honourable Speaker, when it came to BC, seeing that haul—what we've actually accomplished here, they take—took the same type of bill and moved it forward through this province of BC. So this is why I feel that the minister who brought this forward, this bill, had had opportunities to really focus on—and he had time, sitting in opposition, to come up with some better ideas.

And this is why we want to feel that we are putting this amendment in, because we feel that there could be all of—things that could be done to make sure that Manitoba streets are safer, our cities are safer, our rural areas are safer, because it's happening everywhere. Crime is actually increasing from criminals, organized crime.

And so we want to make sure that this reasonable amendment is going to be—as a message that we're sending to the opposite—to the government right now, the NDP government, that there's a lot more stuff that we could be focusing on than having this Bill 30 that has come forward to us, and basically does not change much out there, Honourable Speaker. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

If members wish to have conversations, I'd appreciate if they took them to the loge or out in the hall instead of back and forth across the Chamber when another member has the floor and is trying to speak.

Mr. Piwniuk: Yes, well, thank you. And I'm, like, I appreciate the—making sure that my voice gets heard when it comes to being in this Chamber, and I appreciate that. And I value what you've—sitting in that Chair; I know I've been there myself, and I—and it's—we have, lot of same experiences.

So—but when it comes back to the reasonable amendment, that—and again, this is why I believe that all of our members here really believe seriously that we have a lot of crime. We have a lot of crime in our areas. We really want to focus on new legislation, important legislation, and not coming back to immolate everything that we've already done. And not changing anything, but coming up with putting a bill in for the sake of putting a bill in from the Justice Minister, and saying that we want this passed, we want this to be changed, and there's not much changes to be done on this bill.

So that's why I'm saying right now, Honourable Speaker, that the member for Concordia, Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), had great opportunities being in opposition to really come back and saying that, hey, you know, I'd like to see some changes. I've seen—been the critic for many years; now I have a vision where I want to go to. But he hasn't done that. He hasn't proven that.

And that's why we're here today to debate this, to put a reasonable amendment on this Bill 30, to say that, you know what, there is so much more that can be done to make sure that we protect our residents, our Manitoba residents, and making sure that every constituency is safe, prospering, and making sure that we keep criminals out of our communities, our—next door.

I know, I have friends in British Columbia; he was also a minister of—with the Gordon Campbell Cabinet. And I know he's on a street in Coquitlam, and just the other day there was a raid to one of the houses, a prominent neighbourhood in Coquitlam, BC.

And I know they copied off this bill that we did, in bill 58. And basically, they—every so often, and even prominent neighbourhoods, there's raids going on because there's such organized crime, and there's lot of fuss that—actually proven that drugs are being sold in every neighbourhood.

So this is why it's so important that we create legislation in this Legislature to make sure that we can change what's going on right now, Honourable Speaker, especially in this province, because don't forget, as technology increases, so does crime. And the crime that's happening right now is very sophisticated. It's getting more harder to trace, but it's happening right now.

And I think right now, when it comes to putting legislation out there, we got to change with the times. We got to be relevant. Like, putting back legislation from the past, which we created, does not make a lot of sense here, Honourable Speaker.

And I'm really concerned that, like, if the member from Concordia, who's now the Justice Minister, has been sitting as a critic for so many years, I thought that he would be able to bring a lot of big ideas here to—in his role, but he hasn't. He's just emulating what we've done already, Honourable Speaker.

* (16:50)

And, like I said, there's probably better people that have more qualifications to be Minister of Justice—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'm sure the member should appreciate the spot that the Speaker is in, as he has previously served as the Deputy Speaker. So he will understand that he needs to keep his comments relevant to the reasoned amendment, not vector off and please not be repetitive, because you've said the same thing several times over now.

So if you have some new comments to make, please make them.

Mr. Piwniuk: Like I said, Honourable Speaker, when it comes to this reasonable amendment, it's very important that, you know—going through the bill, and when we first put the bill at 2021, there was a lot of things that needed to be done, especially when it came to organized crime. Criminals that would actually benefit and basically sell illegal drugs earn a lot of money, especially when we have a seizure in Westman that was one of the biggest ones in Manitoba history. That's a lot of money, and how do you clean that money?

So the fact is now, Honourable Speaker, when we came up with this first bill, the original bill, it did actually address those issues when it came to making plans to making sure that, hey, if there's organized crime and they created this, you know, to help pay for our justice system, it's getting costlier all the time. And it's important that we came up with this bill that allowed—when it came to getting any money. That's any money—that's any assets that were purchased, probably used for cleaning the money or to purchase for—personal items for criminals. We basically forfeited them, caught them and were able to sell them as a government and be able to earn the money to have the money for other programs out there.

We put this forward back in 2021. It was an absolutely incredible way to, you know, to fight organized crime, Honourable Speaker. And so this is why we wanted to make sure that this bill that came forward, Bill 30, basically is the same bill. It is replicated the same—what we've introduced back in 2021. It was enforced in 2022.

And like I said, British Columbia has emulated this, and this gives us the opportunity to say: Look, there's other pressing matters that we can be looking at. Well, again, there's a lot of crime going on and a lot of illegal drugs, and when it comes to what we see on our streets right now and the money—the amount of drugs that are going to our youth right now, it's really impacting our society. It's costing our society a lot of not only money, but lives.

And so this is why it's so important to address all the changes that are happening right now, and that's why we bring forward the reasonable amendment.

Because there's so much more to do out there to making sure that the criminals do not get to get—become more wealthier, to do—trade more drugs—to create, and when it comes to even legalizing some hard drugs that we don't want to see that happen. Because the fact is, we want to make sure that our youth grow up to be—prosper, to be—to contribute to society, to making sure that they actually are educated, that we make sure that they have good lives, they have a great future.

But when we see a lot of drugs out there right now in schools, it really concerns me. And that's why I believe that this reasonable amendment that we're putting forward here is that—this is type of legislation that we should be—you know, why copy off of something that we already had, that we are doing well with? And we should be focusing right now, Honourable Speaker, on looking at how do we stop drugs in high schools; how do we stop drugs everywhere?

And how do we stop the criminals from getting more wealthier? And making sure that our policing services—like, I commend our member from Brandon West for all the work he has done and making sure that, you know, we go forward.

And this is why this reasonable amendment is put forward by our team here, because we feel that we need to make sure that we are looking and moving forward on any other legislation when it comes to justice, because it is the important—of making sure that we empower our law enforcement, making sure that they have the resources, the revenue to come in to make sure that if they have to do some undercover policing.

This is where we should be focusing a lot of our legislation, to making sure that we move forward on making sure how do we move with the times, making sure that we are one step ahead of the criminals.

And that's why we put in this reasonable amendment in force right now—we want to look at, because we're looking at legislation that has already been established and we really need to really focus on creating new legislation to stop the combat of organized crime, organized criminals in our society.

And basically when it comes to our youth—is it's a deplorable—what they're doing right now with our youth when it comes to selling of drugs.

You know, I talk to my kids and how many kids out there are hooked on drugs and how many had to go for rehab. These are the lucky ones. There are many of them, my—some of my kids that—my son, my daughter had gone to school with that are either in jail because of their lifestyle with drugs, or they're going through rehab.

And it's very important in our society that we look at other legislation to make sure that that's taken care of. Again, why implement another bill that basically has just a little bit more fluff to it, that doesn't change what we've actually set up back in 2021. And this is why I say that, you know, there is so much, our society—that we need to make sure that they're protected.

And right now, I remember saying one of my good friends had to go to just visit a friend because he'd just lost his son. He had a—his—the father had to put—shut off the life support of his son because his son was in a home—like, he was at home and there was a home invasion that actually happened and he was actually beat up so badly by the enforce—the criminals, that he went in a—into a coma and basically was brain-dead. And they had to shut off the life support.

And this is what we're seeing more and more, Honourable Speaker. So this is why I would say with this reasonable amendment, we got to focus on something that's bigger out there and not to emulate the stuff that we have here because there are so many more stories like that in our society. And we want to make sure that this NDP government is accountable for all the crime that's happening out there.

You know, we were in that spot before. We had the Justice Minister as a critic. I want to thank my colleague, you know, the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) for the work that he'd done. The—Heather Stefanson, who was also a Justice minister. Honourable Cliff Cullen, who was a minister of Justice, too.

The Speaker: Order please.

I remind the member yet again to keep his comments relevant to the reasoned amendment.

Mr. Piwniuk: I apologize, but I just want to put a few words in there to thank my colleagues who had done a lot of work by putting these bills forward.

So, anyways, I just want to go back to the reasonable amendment and it is so important that again, we want to make sure that we are focusing on the right stuff here.

Our team here, our PC team, is always looking at—we want to see stronger legislation that this minister can bring forward, not this stuff that put a little bit of fluff in and rebrand it. That's what he's basically doing with this Bill 30.

We have bill 58, it's basically identical and, like I said, he had many years to come up with some ideas and move forward and now he has his opportunity to be minister for Justice and he should be coming up with some great ideas that he probably would have solved in the behind the scenes. And this is why, again, we want to say that, you know, we're going to move this forward at this reasonable amendment to making sure that we can see better legislation out there. This is what we're wanting.

We want to see that this—the criminals are going to be prosecuted, that there are going to be, being, you know, making sure they're accountable and making sure that anything that gets seized goes to our society, goes into programs like the Bear Clan. But this is why it's so important that we're here today with my colleagues to talk about the—this amendment and making sure that we do the right thing here. And that's why we're always in this legislature right now.

The Speaker: When this matter is next before the House, the honourable member will have eight minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 o'clock, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

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