

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

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AL TOMARE, 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

Thursday, May 16, 2024

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

The Speaker: Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 216—The Manitoba Small Business Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): I move, seconded by the Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources (Mr. Moses), that Bill 216, The Manitoba Small Business Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

MLA Cross: Today, I rise to introduce Bill 216, The Manitoba Small Business Month Act. Manitoba small businesses are the backbone of the Manitoba economy, representing 95 per cent of all businesses in our province.

These small-business owners and entrepreneurs not only contribute to our local economy but are our community and cultural leaders.

Small businesses face many challenges. During difficult economic times, they experience hardships. Some experience discrimination, like sexism, racism, homophobia, as a few examples.

But despite these challenges, they overcome and thrive through their hard work and resilience. To celebrate these folks, Bill 216 designates every May to be Manitoba small business month.

As the daughter, wife, sister and mother to small-business owners, I'm incredibly honoured to bring this legislation forward.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Committee reports? *[interjection]*

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

National Police Week

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am pleased to rise today to recognize National Police Week and to share the appreciation of all members of this House for the dedication, the commitment and the sacrifices of police officers across Manitoba. This week, we pay tribute to those who have devoted their lives to keeping the peace and protecting the most vulnerable.

Manitoba's police services are facing new and unprecedented challenges, as organized crime continues to get more and more sophisticated, as police officers face increased scrutiny and as gaps in housing, addictions, health care, education and mental health create challenges for officers every single day.

And so I want to recognize all the police officers in Manitoba and their work to respond to these challenges with compassion, with professionalism and with integrity. From the Winnipeg and Brandon police services to the Manitoba First Nations Police Service to the RCMP and to the many other police services across Manitoba, officers have truly embraced our all-hands-on-deck approach to public safety.

And so it is fitting that the theme of the 2024 National Police Week is Committed To Serve Together, to recognize those important partnerships between law enforcement, between community organizations and with other first responders, along with all Manitobans, to keep us safe.

It is a message we heard loud and clear from the WPS superintendents Bonnie Emerson and Dave Dalal at the public safety summit: that by working together across all sectors in our society, we will begin to turn the tide of public safety and make sure that communities are safe, healthy places to go to school, to raise a family and to retire in peace.

I also want to mention that in my conversations with law enforcement it is immediately apparent that they are firmly committed to building true partnerships with Indigenous peoples, with Indigenous leadership and community organizations in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

Honourable Speaker, as we observe National Police Week, our government renews our commitment to support police, improve public safety and to be tough on crime as well as tough on the causes of crime.

Officers in Manitoba can be confident that our government will never waver in our steadfast commitment to ensure that we give them the resources they need to fight crime but also that we support them as people who are doing this essential work.

We are committed to doing more to help those who help us. We need to ensure that their mental health and well-being is cared for, after time in law enforcement and beyond. We've committing—we're committing to adding new mental health workers specifically for service members, and we look forward to doing more as we move forward.

Following a successful public safety summit two weeks ago, we've already begun the work of developing a comprehensive public safety strategy, and we will ensure that law enforcement will be central to the process.

Honourable Speaker, in closing, I want to extend our government's deepest gratitude once again to Manitoba's outstanding police officers. Thank you for your service, for your sacrifice and for your commitment to keeping everyone safe.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward this ministerial statement.

Today, we gather to honour and celebrate the brave Canadians who serve and protect our communities with unwavering dedication. National Police Week is a time to recognize the sacrifices and contributions of our law enforcement officers and their families, who work tirelessly to ensure our safety and uphold the rule of law.

National Police Week began in 1970 as a way for the police to connect with their communities and to increase awareness about the services they provide. We want to celebrate community partnerships between all of us—police, communities, government, businesses and ordinary citizens. We must work together when it comes to public safety, crime prevention and community engagement.

Every day, police officers put their lives on the line, facing unknown dangers with courage and resilience. They are the first responders in our times of need, the guardians of our neighbourhoods and the

embodiment of commitment to justice and public service. Their work often goes unnoticed and un- or underappreciated, yet it is essential for the well-being of our society.

The Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police has named the theme of this week Committed to Serve Together.

The community wants and expects the police to keep themselves safe. They do not differentiate between patches or names but simply want one thing: for police to keep them safe and well. Police services across the country are joined in achieving this goal. They have committed to serve in communities across the country.

This is an opportunity to strengthen the bond between police and community. By fostering open dialogue, understanding and mutual respect, we can build safer, more inclusive neighbourhoods where everyone feels valued and protected. Our police services have an unwavering commitment to serve and protect the public, ensuring a brighter, safer future for generations to come.

In my previous role working under a previous minister of Justice, I was privileged to get to know many chiefs of police from across the province—they are upstanding individuals—and get to know their services and the everyday officers who put their lives on the line. It was an absolute privilege. It's a privilege to continue to get to know them in this new role and represent an area that has services provided by the RCMP, the Brandon Police Service, the Rivers Police Service.

And I thank them, on behalf of Spruce Woods constituents, for the excellent work that they do in our community as well as the other police services that serve other regions of this great province. Thank you to every police officer for your service, sacrifice and steadfast dedication to protecting our communities.

Thank you.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, I seek leave to respond to the minister's statement.

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

MLA Lamoureux: The week of May 12 to May 18 is recognized as police week.

National Police Week began in 1970 as a way for the police to connect with their communities and to

increase awareness about the services they provide. This year's police services across the country are united under the theme of Committed to Serve Together.

* (13:40)

People in our community look towards their police to keep them safe. Rising crime and violent crime escalated by mental health struggles and drug addictions have made many Manitobans afraid. We recognize that when crime happens, civilians call on our dedicated police officers. They are running towards crime and often unknown and unimaginable dangers on a daily basis to keep us safe.

That is why police week is a time for us to appreciate the dedicated police and peace officers who work towards keeping our community safe 24-7, 365 days a year. We also pay tribute to the police officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. I want to honour and remember our fallen officers who paid the ultimate sacrifice to keep us safe, for their commitment and for their dedication every day to serve our communities.

Being a police officer or any first responder is not as simple as some people may think. In today's world, it requires many supports and collaboration with other first responders, citizens and social and community organizations.

In closing, Honourable Speaker, this week we honour them and pay tribute to their commitment to work with everyone towards a stronger, safer and brighter future for all.

Thank you.

Vyshyvanka Day

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I rise today to recognize and celebrate International Vyshyvanka Day, also known as Ukrainian Embroidered Shirt Day, which is observed on the third Thursday of May each year.

Today marks an important event within the Ukrainian community, where Manitoba joins other nations globally in celebrating this festive occasion. Donning this distinctive attire honours the significant role Ukrainian immigrants have played in fostering Canada's diverse cultural landscape and identity. Additionally, Manitobans of all backgrounds, including some of us legislators in the House today, stand proudly in our vyshyvankas.

Vyshyvanka Day is celebrated across the globe by Ukrainians and friends of the Ukraine. The embroidery on vyshyvanka clothing, with its deep-rooted traditions, historical significance and symbolic patterns and colours, has been preserved throughout the ages. Despite its ancient origins, the detailed needlework on these garments continues to be fashionable, elegant and prestigious, representing a cherished heritage for Ukrainians everywhere.

Honourable Speaker, as a friend to the Ukrainian community, I am happy to highlight Ukrainian culture and pay tribute to the contributions that Ukrainian immigrants have made to the development of our multicultural province. In Manitoba, the arrival and settlement of Ukrainian immigrants holds a prominent place in our province's history.

The initial group of Ukrainian settlers reached Manitoba in 1895, marking the beginning of a significant migration. Over time, Manitoba has become a welcoming home for numerous Ukrainian immigrants, whose contributions have been instrumental in the province's economic prosperity and rich cultural tapestry.

Manitoba is home to more than 160,000 people of Ukrainian descent, making our province home to one of the largest populations in the country. As legislators, artists, activists, educators and business owners, Ukrainian Manitobans continue to make great contributions to the economic success and cultural vibrancy of our province.

Vyshyvankas are worn as an outward symbol of pride, resilience and beauty. I am proud to show support for this symbolic gesture that raises awareness of the tremendous pride Ukrainians have in their community and culture.

Honourable Speaker, although Vyshyvanka Day is typically a festive occasion, it is important to acknowledge Ukraine's present struggle to preserve its independence, self-determination and sovereignty. Manitoba continues to extend its solidarity to those impacted by the conflict in Ukraine.

I would like to thank the many organizations that have continued to support the welcoming and resettlement of Ukrainian newcomers to our province. Together, we have shown that we can overcome challenges when we work as a community.

On this important day, I extend my best wishes along with the people of Manitoba for a happy Vyshyvanka Day. During these trying times, it is my

hope that peace, prosperity and security will soon return to Ukraine.

Thank you.

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Today, I rise in recognition in recognition of Vyshyvanka Day, otherwise known as the Ukrainian Embroidered Shirt Day. It is a yearly international holiday that was established in 2006. Vyshyvanka Day falls on May 16, 2024 this year.

The holiday is celebrated by Ukrainians around the world, who can be seen dressed up in their traditional embroidered garments. The goal of Vyshyvanka Day is to celebrate and preserve the Ukrainian folk tradition of creating and wearing ethnic embroidered clothes. The vyshyvankas are handcrafted and are beautifully made, representing a primary symbol of the Ukraine.

Each region of the Ukraine has its own embroidery technique, theme and ornamentation and traditional colours that they use. As such, there are approximately 200 different types of embroidery techniques and more than 100 different styles of stitches in the Ukraine.

Historically, vyshyvankas served as a talisman to protect Ukrainians from evil and to tell a story. They were thought to carry spiritual wealth and wisdom and provide a connection to previous generations. I encourage all Manitobans to reach out to those in the Ukrainian community to learn more about Vyshyvanka Day and to celebrate this vibrant display of Ukrainian culture.

I wish all Ukrainians in Manitoba of Ukrainian descent a very happy Vyshyvanka Day.

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

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

MLA Lamoureux: I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward today's ministerial statement. I rise this afternoon to speak to Vyshyvanka Day.

Traditionally, a vyshyvanka is a handmade blouse sewn of natural materials and embroidered with threads of various colours and various patterns, techniques and methods of dyeing threads. This knowledge has been passed on to each generation since ancient times. Different regions of the country have different patterns, styles and colours, many of which

are sacred and show respect and gratitude to nature, and there are special designs for all special life events, like weddings and funerals.

Now, Honourable Speaker, the vyshyvanka can symbolize many different things to Ukrainians everywhere in the world. It displays as a power to protect and a form of symbolism to bring good luck.

It is important we recognize this protection now with all Ukraine has faced since the illegal Russian invasion and the many Ukrainians who have sought refuge here in Manitoba.

So Honourable Speaker, however one wears a vyshyvanka and for whatever reason you wear it—especially today on Vyshyvanka Day—wear it with style and wear it with pride for your heritage.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and happy Vyshyvanka Day.

International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): Tomorrow is International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia, a day to stand against bigotry and hate against the 2SLGBTQIA community.

This year has been a difficult one for our Manitoba 2SLGBTQIA relatives. Family-friendly drag queen storytime was targeted by aggressive counter-protesters. Proposed book bans in Brandon threatened to erase queer families from school libraries. National organizations pushed misinformation events like the million march for kids in cities across Canada, including here in Winnipeg.

The former PC government not only tolerated this hate; they encouraged it.

Heather Stefanson broke her promise to walk alongside the 2SLGBTQIA Manitobans and used her first Pride as premier for a photo op.

Members opposite tried to create a narrative about the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham), that he was a danger to children when he ran to become the first trans man elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

The member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) repeatedly called community concerns about book bans fear mongering, while at the same time he was the face of fear-mongering ads endangering 2SLGBTQI youth.

* (13:50)

For years, the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) has routinely refused to clap or stand for 2SLGBTQIA Manitobans honoured in this very Chamber. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: Their federal leader, Pierre Poilievre, continues to spread disinformation and ally himself with people who want to harm the 2SLGBTQI community.

And that entire side of the House made targeting transgender kids a core part of their failed election campaign. Who targets children? Each and every one of them.

But Manitobans have shown there is no—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order.

You may not like what you hear, but I expect respect in this Chamber.

MLA Fontaine: But Manitobans have shown there is no space for hate in our beautiful province.

Manitobans showed up with signs at school board meetings and drag queen storytimes. They attended Brandon school board meetings in the hundreds. Thousands of people even gathered on the steps of this very building to stand up against homophobic, transphobic so-called parental rights movement, fighting hate and fear with love and joy and support.

And when this former cold and callous PC government spoke at last year's Winnipeg Pride parade, Manitobans turned their backs on them and rejected their hate, discrimination and division.

Manitobans have shown we believe in a better future, together.

To our 2SLGBTQIA relatives, know we continue and will always stand with you and will always fight against anyone who tries to target, devalue, bully or harm you. That includes holding members opposite accountable for what their failed PC government tried to do to you.

So when the member opposite gets up to speak in a couple of seconds, don't believe what they tell you; believe what they've shown you and continue to show you. Because today, the only thing they should be doing is getting up in the House and—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: —apologizing.

Miigwech.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Where she goes low, I will go high. Rather than using this opportunity to score political points, I will use this opportunity to talk about the many contributions of the 2SLGBTQ community to Manitoba.

Tomorrow, Friday, May 17 is International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia. This year's theme is No one left behind: equality, freedom and justice for all.

And, indeed, every Manitoban regardless of political stripe, sexuality, gender, race or religion deserves to be treated fairly, justly and enjoy the freedom our great country was founded on.

And contrary to the comments put on the record by the member opposite, I want to say something about the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham). He is often recognized as being Manitoba's first transgender MLA, and that is true and worthy of note. But in all of my interactions with him, I have found him to be kind and thoughtful, and I certainly appreciate what he brings to this Assembly.

Last weekend, I attended the Doctors Manitoba gala that was honouring a number of outstanding physicians and raising money for the Rainbow Resource Centre and our own health centre.

The humanitarian award was presented posthumously to Dr. Dick Smith, who was Manitoba's first openly gay physician and devoted his entire 52-year career to the understanding, advocacy, prevention and care of people living with HIV.

It was very powerful and moving to be in that room and to see the reverence and respect that everyone there held for him, and it was a beautiful tribute to his legacy.

And on a personal note, I want to thank the people who are close to me who are part of the 2SLGBTQ community for taking the time to educate me and sharing their lived experiences and welcoming me into their spaces. I'm grateful to them.

I encourage Manitobans to take this opportunity to educate themselves about the hard-fought advances of the 2SLGBTQ community in Canada, and I want to take—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cook: —this opportunity to recognize the many organizations that work every day to support and advocate, such as Rainbow Resource Centre, Klinik

community health, the Sexuality Education Resource Centre and others.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I ask for leave to respond—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

We can stop hollering back and forth across right now.

MLA Lamoureux: I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

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

MLA Lamoureux: Tomorrow, May 17, 2024 marks the 20th annual International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.

It was created in 2004 to draw attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersex people and all of those with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions and sex characteristics around the world.

This year's theme is No one left behind: equality, freedom and justice for all.

Over the past two decades since its inception, many places in the world have had opportunities to recognize that the world was seeing hard-won progress in protecting the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and asexual people. But in recent years, we have been forced to see that the rights of 2SLGBTQIA+ people have once again come under attack from ill-informed, angry and vindictive people, reminding us all that there is still a long road ahead.

Honourable Speaker, I ask everyone here to recognize that by allowing hatred, violence and discrimination to continue, and by allowing people to spread hate and misinformation through actions like book banning, it harms our society as a whole.

2SLGBTQIA+ people are not criminals, deviants or threats. They are human beings worthy of acceptance and inclusion in today's world and our unified future.

And, Honourable Speaker, bashing each other here in this House does not help that cause.

Thank you.

Speaker's Statement

The Speaker: Before calling the next item of business, I—*[interjection]*

Do you see the Speaker standing?

Before calling the next item of business, I would like to inform members that on April 22, 2024, the House agreed that the official opposition would waive their members' statements on that day, with the understanding that they could choose to—could use those two statements sometime later this session.

The official opposition informed me yesterday that they would like to use one of those two statements today. And accordingly, the official opposition will have one additional member's statement today.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Bison Regional Science Fair Finalists

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge some of Manitoba's brightest scientists. These five students are finalists from the Bison Regional Science Fair, a fantastic organization that has inspired hundreds of young scientific minds throughout Manitoba.

* (14:00)

The BRSF was founded in 2018 by Dr. Anju Bajaj, STEM adviser for Manitoba Catholic Schools, and has become one of the largest regional science fairs in Canada. Fueled by the dedication of volunteers, the generosity of sponsors and donors and the unwavering support of the Manitoba community, the fair welcomes participation from students across the province.

At its core, BRSF aims to increase youth participation in science, technology, engineering and math, and provides hands-on experience in research and experimentation. The fair cultivates essential skills and offers a diverse array of challenges for its participants, encompassing all the unique disciplines included in STEM. This broad focus ensures that students can explore their interests and contribute to numerous disciplines.

This year, the fair accommodated well over 300 students from schools across the province, fostering a love for science and supporting young scientific minds. BRSF serves as a stepping stone for aspiring scientists and sends their top competitors to prestigious events like the Canada-Wide Science Fair.

Representing Manitoba at the Canada-Wide Science Fair we have: Sneh Vyas, with his research on streamlined cancer detection using deep learning; Ayshani Mukerji, with her research on putting the Earth before fashion; Ella Agpalza, with her research on solar powered water desalination; Miles Girardin, with his research on changing street lights for emergency vehicles and Baljot Rai, with his research on the development of a carpet mussel shell-based biosorbent for phosphorus.

Please join me in congratulating these talented students, all of whom will be travelling to Ottawa later this month to showcase the incredible scientific work being done right here in Manitoba.

We all wish you the best of luck in the competition ahead and in your future scientific endeavours.

Morris District Handi-Van Service

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize the Morris District Handi-Van Service who, in 2023, provided over 2,000 individual rides and serves over 150 clients.

In 2006, the Morris women's institute initiated a community handi-van service should be created to ensure it could be available to anyone who needed it. A volunteer committee was formed, comprised of representatives from the women's institute, the RM, local farmers and community advocates. The volunteer board now consists of eight members.

Originally, the organization operated only a single 12-passenger, two-wheelchair bus. Then in 2009, a Dodge Caravan was purchased; 2020, a third vehicle, a Ford Escape, added to the fleet as demand for the service continues to increase.

The vehicles transport residents in Morris and the surrounding region across the province, including shopping trips to Winnipeg, Assiniboine Park, Rainbow Stage, fall suppers and transporting patients and residents to hospitals and doctors' appointments.

The service is still very much in use and critical to the quality of life for Morris residents.

This would not be possible without the passion and dedication of the volunteers and the volunteer board. I am pleased we have members of the board in attendance today in the gallery. And I wish to have their names added to Hansard at the end of this statement.

Thank you for what you do for the community of Morris, and I know thanks to your commitment, passion and dedication, the Morris District Handi-Van Service strives to make the lives of residents a little bit better.

Thank you.

Bill Ginter, Joyce Ginter, Dale Hoffman, Allen Recksiedler, Ellayn Ridalen, Larry Skoglund

Honouring the Templeton Family

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Volunteers are what make a community thrive, and today I want to recognize the Templeton family who have been volunteering in our community, specifically at the Bourkevale Community Centre, for generations.

Their involvement is all thanks to the matriarch, Joan, who sadly passed away in the fall of last year. Joan began volunteering at the centre in the 1960s and was the club's longest serving volunteer.

Bourkevale Community Centre relies on the dedication and commitment of volunteers who run the day-to-day operations of the centre. Volunteers are essential to the club's operations because they allow for Bourkevale's resources to be used for programming and services for the community.

Joan served in many roles over the years including being a member of the ladies' auxiliary, the social committee and part of the canteen's staff. She also served on the centre's board for 48 years. Joan connected the whole family through her volunteerism.

Inspired by his wife's involvement, Ron began volunteering as well, especially after retirement from his career as a small business owner and firefighter. Known as the handyman of the centre, Ron did a lot of general maintenance. He helped Joan with events at the hall and was the icemaker for almost 20 years.

Their two kids, Mike and Cindy, didn't escape the volunteer bug and practically grew up at the community centre. As kids, they were signed up for pretty much every activity the centre offered, and now as adults, they both have taken on different roles with the centre.

Mike coached hockey, soccer and helped his dad with the ice, while Cindy followed her mom's footsteps and joined the board in 2000 as the special events co-ordinator. She later held roles as the canteen supervisor, general manager and then halls manager.

Volunteering, taking action for the good of others, helps build thriving communities. Giving back to our

friends, family and neighbors has a profound and lasting impact on lives that are touched and enriched.

Today we honour the Templeton family, who built connections and a stronger community with selfless dedication. They gave their most precious resource, their time, to make life better and the community is forever grateful for their generosity.

Thank you.

Recognizing Interlake-Gimli Organizations

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): I rise today to highlight three wonderful organizations that call Interlake-Gimli home: Riverdale Place Workshop located in Arborg, the new Icelandic heritage museum in Gimli and Camp Massad, just north of Winnipeg Beach.

Riverdale Place Workshop provides recycling services to the town of Arborg. What makes Riverdale Place Workshop so special is that it employs Manitobans living with intellectual disabilities, providing them with opportunities for skill development, personal growth and a sense of community.

The new Icelandic heritage museum has been telling the story of Manitoba's Icelandic settlers and the surrounding area since 1972. From their arrival in 1875 to Manitoba, the Icelandic community has been woven into our shared history and the story must continue to be told.

The new Icelandic heritage museum is held in such high regard, it was designated as a Manitoba Signature Museum and is promoted by Tourism Manitoba.

Last but not least, Camp Massad, which has been enriching the lives of young Manitobans, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, since 1953. As North America's only Hebrew immersion summer camp, they play a unique role in Manitoba's camping community. Camp Massad strives to provide a camping experience to as many children as possible regardless of financial means.

Ordinarily, I'd speak of how these organizations enrich our community, as they do, but today I'd like to talk about the challenges they face. These three hold something in common: their Green Team funding has been slashed under this NDP government.

As MLA for Interlake-Gimli, I will be right alongside them every step of the way, advocating for them and providing support in any way that I can, and

will continue to call on this failing government to restore Green Team funding.

Some of these organizers were able to join us in the gallery today.

Special Olympics Winter Games Athletes

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): Honourable Speaker, today I would like to recognize some amazing athletes in northern Manitoba: Mervin Linklater, Aimee Chubb, Michael Harrison, Fate Frank and Cory Beardy.

The group made history earlier this year when they participated in the 2024 Special Olympics Canada Winter Games in Calgary. It was the largest number of athletes from the Norman region to ever participate in the National Games.

Mervin represented the region in bowling, Aimee and Michael in snowshoeing, and Fate and Cory in cross-country skiing. I'm sure the group had the experience of a lifetime.

The Norman region Special Olympics club started three years ago with about 20 members and has now grown to 54 members. Thanks to the dedicated staff, coaches, volunteers and participants, the club was able to sponsor all five athletes and two coaches to participate in the National Games.

* (14:10)

Special Olympics Manitoba is a great organization that enriches the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities through sports. They provide programs to seven regions throughout our province. The Norman region's Special Olympics club teaches snowshoeing, cross-country skiing and alpine skiing.

The organizations like the club, alongside the leadership of the athletes who participate, are crucial in creating a more inclusive community that empowers individuals to live their life to their full potential. I am so proud that our region was represented by these amazing individuals.

I want to congratulate all five athletes on their participation in the 2024 National Games. You have achieved so much and did incredibly well in the games. I look forward to seeing what you all accomplish in the future.

Thank you.

Green Team Funding

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to speak to the invaluable benefits that

'equitaby'—equitably distributed Green Team funding has—our entire province, but also to reflect on some of the challenges.

Green Team provides employment and work experience opportunities to young Manitobans. This experience is invaluable. It is more than just a line on a resumé; it is a foundational element of personal growth and skill development. Through work experience, young individuals learn discipline, time management and the importance of teamwork. They acquire practical skills that classroom education alone cannot provide.

Maximizing the scope of employment opportunities across the largest portion of the population should be the aim of Green Team funding decisions. Supporting community groups is of equal importance. These groups are the backbone of our society, fostering social cohesion and providing essential services to those in need.

Green Team support of these groups not only helps others but also enriches our own lives by connecting us to the broader purpose and fostering a sense of belonging. With the challenges faced by community groups due to the reduction in their other funding sources, now is the time for Green Team to really come through.

The way Green Team and other government programs are administered does raise some issues. Intake periods are postponed, and postponed unnecessarily without explanation. Information is sparse, and arbitrary funding decisions came too late. We need to correct this; we need to show those who depend on Green Team courtesy and respect by giving them sufficient time to plan their budgets and activities.

If I might digress a moment, it is just polite to let someone know in advance if you cannot 'fumill'—fulfill an obligation or commitment that you have made to them. It's a matter of respect and courtesy. It allows others to adjust their plans and expectations accordingly. This communication shows that we value their time and commitments, fostering mutual respect and understanding. It is a small yet significant gesture that underscores our dependability and consideration for others.

Honourable Speaker, I hope that all members of the House take a moment to reflect on my observations and take tangible action towards a better Manitoba.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before we move on, I'd like to take a moment to introduce some guests in the public gallery.

I'd like to draw attention of all honourable members—*[interjection]* I would like to draw—*[interjection]* Order, please.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members—*[interjection]* Order.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, Tyler Slobogian, SeoRhin Yoo and Hayley Bassett, who are the guests of the honourable member for Seine River (MLA Cross).

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

* * *

Further, before we move into oral questions, I'd like us to try a little experiment today. I'd like us to try teaching—or, treating each other with respect, with the dignity that each one of us deserves as being elected representatives in this Chamber. I'd like us to show people that are watching in the world that we can disagree but still treat each other respectfully.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Green Team Program Community Organization Funding

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for that guidance as usual.

The minister responsible for Green Team recently told my colleague, the MLA for Lakeside, that there had been no change to the criteria for Green Team funding this year.

But our PC team have received and been inundated with calls from groups and organizations all across this great province of ours that were previously funded, but this year had their funding cut: youth sports organizations, youth camps, museums, day-cares, faith groups.

Now I expect that someone on that side of the Chamber will get up, pat themselves on the back and tell us what they did fund. While they're at it, maybe they can explain, if the criteria didn't change, how exactly they picked the winners and losers.

My question for the Premier (Mr. Kinew): Did he sign off at the Cabinet table for all of those cuts to Green Team funding this year, Honourable Speaker?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, first I want to acknowledge that we have a lot of guests with us today in the gallery, and we want to acknowledge the folks who are here.

I think it's important that you know that this is the people's building and it's important that you took the time out of your schedules to be here. So I do want to thank them for making the time to come down to the Legislature and have their concerns brought to the floor of the Chamber today [*inaudible*].

Our government is committing—committed to listening to Manitobans. We've been listening and we're going to continue to listen. I can reassure the folks who are in the gallery here today that we're also going to listen to them and hear their voices on this issue and others if they want to bring them forward.

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

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, Justin Trudeau swung into Manitoba to bail out the Premier for the cuts that he made to the wildfire funding. I wonder if the Premier will be asking him to bail him out for his cuts to the Green Teams across Manitoba.

But we heard from groups that were funded in 2020, we heard from groups that were funded in 2021, we heard from groups that were funded in 2022 and we heard from groups that were funded in 2023. And what of those same groups in 2024? Applied and denied, Honourable Speaker.

My only question for the Premier or anyone else that would like to get up to answer this question: Why?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, first I'll acknowledge that the wildfire situation that is ongoing is still very, very serious. It was a part of the Leader of the Opposition's question, so I'll acknowledge it because it is a serious situation facing and impacting hundreds of Manitobans.

I want to reassure folks that no cuts were made by our government. That, in fact, any and all resources will be provided to make sure Manitobans are safe and they have the services that they count on.

You'll notice in the Leader of the Opposition's question, he didn't talk about 2019, when the previous

PC government cut summer camps across the province.

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

Green Team Program Funding Tuxedo Community Organizations

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Yes, thank you for saying that this is a new question, because we knew of the hissy fit that the government threw last week when I asked a new question.

Let's look at some of the Green Team projects that have historically been funded for the constituency of Tuxedo: On the Move daycare, Carpathia child-care centre, Saint Demetrios church, Camp Massad, Explore and Discover learning centre, Mennonite Church Manitoba.

Honourable Speaker, these organizations previously received Green Team funding. This year, applied and denied.

My question for the Premier and, again, anyone over there that's going to stop dodging and deflecting on this question: Why would they do that for all these wonderful organizations, not only in Tuxedo but across Manitoba?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): That co-ordinated little action there was interesting. And I do hope that they can practice a co-ordinated apology to Manitobans that they hurt during their 2023 electoral campaign. Manitobans are still waiting for that.

* (14:20)

What I want—I failed to do this, actually, in my first response, and I wanted to extend an invitation to the folks who are here to meet with government officials, if they have the time, to talk about the concerns they're bringing forward.

Our government is committed to making sure that we understand the issues Manitobans are bringing forward. We want to meet with, directly, those who are saying they're impacted. We want to learn exactly what those impacts are. We want to have a conversation with them to make sure that we have a full understanding of what the issues are that they're bringing forward. And so I extend that invitation. We are more than happy and willing to meet with these folks.

And I also want to make clear—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Mr. Ewasko: What does this Premier (Mr. Kinew) have to say to the good people of Tuxedo? What does he have to say to the families who need child-care programming, to the kids looking forward to summer camps, to the faith organizations that have had so much good planned for their communities?

Why did he defund the hard-working volunteers and non-profit organizations in Tuxedo? I know why: he wanted to double the taxpayer-funded political subsidy to the NDP—shameful.

So now I have to ask: Will he do the right thing for the constituents of Tuxedo and the great province of Manitoba and reinstate the funding that he cut, yes or no?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, our government has been working very hard from day one to clean up the mess made by the previous PC government. They left a massive fiscal mess in Manitoba.

Now, I want to be clear. Our government is committed to supporting summer camps: \$6 million for 250 projects that will see 1,450 youth hired this summer alone.

I also want to recognize and acknowledge that the previous PC government, including the Leader of the Opposition, was directly at the table when they cut over \$800,000 from summer camps here in Manitoba. They reduced the Manitoba Camping Association budget by over 56 per cent. And so that member—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Municipalities, Grants and Programs Request to Restore Funding

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, the Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations (Mr. Bushie) has been trying to convince Manitobans that less is more. The Minister of Education is saying that a small funding increase is enough to compensate for nearly \$17 million in cuts to BSC and Green Team

Any way you spin it, 12 and a half million is less than \$25 million, and \$5.9 million is less than \$10 million.

Will the minister please do the right thing and restore full funding to the camps, non-profits, community groups and municipalities that are bearing the brunt of poor leadership decisions?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Acting Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): I just wanted to take the opportunity, as well, to echo the words of the Deputy Premier (MLA Asagwara), to thank organizations throughout our province who do incredible work in providing our youth great experiences, providing job training and providing just a great atmosphere for Manitoba families every single year.

And that's why we're a listening government, as the Deputy Premier said. We're also a government that is going to work with all organizations to ensure that we championing—champion the work that they're doing and that we work together with them to accomplish that.

As the Deputy Premier said, we're happy to meet. We're going to continue that work. I know the minister responsible has also got a meeting coming up. We're happy to do that work, and we're going to do that work—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Lakeside, on a supplementary question.

Green Team Program Request to Restore Funding

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): The minister says that applications are up this year. I would expect that to be the case. When the intake was open in January, we all believed that the total funding would be \$10 million. The minister even said, we're looking to fund as many projects as possible.

Logically you cannot fund more projects on less money. It wasn't until recently that the minister admitted that the Green Team was only funded to the tune of \$5.9 million.

Honourable Speaker, in 2023, 744 projects were approved.

How many groups have applied and been denied because of your \$4.1-million cut?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Acting Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): Well, the minister—or, the member opposite is correct that there's more projects being funded this year than ever before: 539 projects, which will see four–1,450 youth across our province employed.

We know that there were over 800 applications that came in to the program, and we know that it's a priority to continue this.

But I think it's telling, Honourable Speaker, that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Ewasko) gets up, he talks about Tuxedo, because maybe he thinks there's a by-election coming imminently, so that's where his focus is on a political level.

We're not being political about this funding. We're funding summer camps in—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —Dauphin, in Brandon, in Swan River—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order. Order.

The experiment didn't last long. So please restrain yourselves.

Mr. Wiebe: We don't pick and choose, Honourable Speaker, where these funds go—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Green Team Program Funding La Vérendrye Community Organizations

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Camps in Manitoba play such a crucial role in the social development of many youth across our province. Most people you ask will tell you how camp has had a positive impact on them or someone they know.

In my corner of the province, camps like the St. Malo Catholic Camp and Roseau River Bible Camp have relied on Green Team funding, just to find out that this NDP government doesn't value them and has cut their funding completely. This money goes to support their programming while providing quality jobs for our youth.

Can this minister tell all the camp directors from across the province in the gallery today that he has made a mistake and will reinstate their well-deserved funding?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Again, Honourable Speaker, I want to call out the great work that's being done by the Manitoba Camping Association. Just so happens that the office is in northeast Winnipeg, and I know that members on this side of the House have a great relationship with the association. We've been working with them.

And the minister responsible, Minister for Municipal Relations, has a meeting scheduled and will continue that work. But to reiterate the offer that was put on the table by the minister—by the leader of the—sorry, the Deputy Premier (MLA Asagwara), that

we are willing to continue this conversation here and now, today. We're going to set up a meeting, we're—be happy to talk today with the group that's here to continue the partnership.

Because it's one—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a final supplementary question. *[interjection]*

Mr. Narth: What? Oh—thank you, Honourable Speaker. The Green Team funding provides summer jobs for many of our youth across this province. These jobs that show them pride in community while earning a wage to advance their education. In my constituency, each of the schools and municipalities apply and are accepted every year, this year being different under the NDP government.

Each of the schools has been denied, and municipalities have been cut on average more than two thirds of their funding.

Will the minister responsible do the right thing and tell Manitoba communities that their Green Team funding will be reinstated?

Mr. Wiebe: Again, Honourable Speaker, I was cut off earlier, so I'll go through some of the parts of this province where we are funding summer camps. Dauphin, Brandon, Swan River, Pilot Mount, Killarney, Carman, Warren, Beausejour, FortWhyte Alive and dozens of others across the province.

Despite what the Leader of the Official Opposition wants to try to put on the record, this is not a political exercise. In fact, this is about partnerships, about true partnerships with great organizations across this province that are doing important work.

There are great projects that we're going to continue to fund. Budget 2024 has more funding for this Green Team initiative, so we're going to continue to build on the success that we've had.

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

Mr. Narth: Just last week I recognized the amazing organization Epic/Smile in this House. They add to the long list of those who applied and were denied. Along with them, I'm proud of the great organizations across my constituency.

The problem is, this NDP government isn't proud of hard-working Manitobans and has no issue

watching them struggle to fulfill political ideological promises.

* (14:30)

These are organizations like St. Malo Chalet, Hanover Ag, Menno Home, Métis St. Malo, Roseau River Park, St. Pierre Manor, Rat River Recreation, Parc Carillon, Vida Daycare, Vassar Pool and many, many more.

Will this government tell our community organizations that he will do the right thing and reinstate—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Mr. Wiebe: The reality is, Honourable Speaker, members opposite don't have a leg to stand on when it comes to support for summer camps.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: In last year's budget, the PCs cut almost \$800,000 from the Manitoba Camping Association. As a result, their revenue was reduced by 56 per cent, Honourable Speaker, and I'll table the financial statements that show just how devastating their actions were.

But that's not the only example of PCs hurting our summer camps. Manitoba summer camps used to get Community Places grant before the program was cut in 2019 by the members opposite. They should be ashamed of their actions.

Green Team Program Funding Faith-Based Organizations

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): It would be great if the Minister of Municipal Relations, the minister responsible for these terrible NDP cuts, actually stood up and defended his terrible decisions. He made cuts right across Manitoba, and Fort Whyte is no different. He's cut funding to the Whyte Ridge Community Centre and the Linden Woods Community Centre.

And when you think this NDP can't go any lower, they surprise you and go lower. They have now cut funding entirely from Saul & Claribel Simkin Centre, a Jewish faith-based community personal-care home and a youth summer camp program held by Soul Sanctuary—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Khan: —both of these organizations received funding in the past.

Will the minister responsible stand up and explain why he has targeted faith-based community organizations?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order. Order.

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Acting Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): That is absolutely disgusting—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Wiebe: And from the member who still hasn't apologized for his role in the 2023 election and the hateful language that he put out on the doorsteps across Manitoba. I say shame on him, and I call on him to retract his statement, because that is absolutely beyond the pale.

We won't play politics with this important program. We support this program, and we support it in a sustainable way that the members opposite never took seriously and never—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please. Order.

The member for Fort Whyte will come to order.

The honourable Minister of Justice—okay. The member's time is expired.

Green Team Program Funding Circle Square Ranch

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): Circle Square Ranch is a home away from home for summer campers and an adventurous getaway for schools and groups year-round. Located in Spruce Woods constituency on a 480-acre ranch amongst the Assiniboine River valley, the camp was created in 1988 with the goal of helping children and youth grow mentally, socially and physically in a fun-filled and safe place of adventure and challenge.

After years of receiving steady, consistent funding from the Green Team program to support the services they provide to youth, this year they received a 42 per cent cut to their grant.

Why is this Kinew government cutting these important camps for Manitoba youth?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Acting Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): Again, Honourable Speaker, 820 applications received; 539 applications for Green Team positions across the province, a over 40 per cent increase to those levels from pre-pandemic amounts.

I think the members opposite want to decide on the floor of the Legislature which groups should be getting funding and which shouldn't. We don't want to go that route, Honourable Speaker. In fact, what we want to do is we want to meet with incredible partners like the Manitoba Camping Association, like many organizations across the province to find out how this government can improve the work that they're doing, support and enhance that work and so ultimately support youth across this province.

It's not a political exercise and it's not—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Jackson: With approximately 500 youth per summer attending Circle Square, they have provided exceptional programming for over 25,000 Manitobans since they opened in 1988. And I count myself as lucky to be one of that number.

Last year, Green Team funding was used to bolster camp staff to 50 individuals, many of whom were university students who, this year, due to the minister's cuts at the eleventh hour, will be out of luck and out of work. A 42 per cent budget cut when all other summer jobs are filled and staff have already been hired is completely unacceptable and is an act of bad faith from this minister and this government.

Executive director, Dan Ingram, joins us in the gallery today. Will the—

The Speaker: The member's time is expired.

Mr. Wiebe: As we—as I said, Honourable Speaker, happy to meet with Dan, happy to meet with all our guests here in the Manitoba Legislature—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Wiebe: And if I could just editorialize for a minute here, Honourable Speaker, I don't think the guests present would appreciate the tone and the heckling that's coming from members opposite.

It's a serious issue; that's why we've committed to meeting with folks here. We've already set up a meeting with the Manitoba Camping Association.

And just to put a fine point on who we're supporting, I've already led—read out the lists of camps across this province. We are also meeting with the boys—we are also funding the Boys and Girls Club of Winnipeg, Art City drop-in in Wolseley, Harvest Moon Society in Turtle Mountain. The city of

Steinbach, we are—city of Teulon, the town of Teulon, their beautification. And the list goes on.

I'd be happy to share more in the next question, Honourable Speaker. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would caution the Leader of the Opposition about trying to engage members in the public gallery in the discussion that's taking place on the floor.

Postgraduate Work Permit Holders Timeline for Nomination Letters

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Over 6,700 Manitoban postgrad work permit holders are optimistic that the federal minister of immigration has made a commitment to extend their status.

However, many concerns remain about when these individuals will receive their nomination letters from our province.

Can the minister clarify when exactly individuals whose permits have expired, are about to expire or are here on implied status will—can anticipate receiving their nomination letters?

The Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe)—sorry, the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration.

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'd like to thank the member opposite for that question.

It was with a lot of relief that many postgraduate work permit holders across our province, over 6,700 of them, were able to get that notice that they would have their work permits extended for an additional 24 months. It's been a very, very stressful time for many of these folks, their families and their employers, and we were really able to work collaboratively with the federal government in order to produce this result for them.

For those that are eligible, their applications are continuing to be processed. For those that have already received their letter of advice to apply—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

MLA Lamoureux: We know that there are many postgraduates currently in the assessment pool, waiting to receive their invitation to apply for the program. Every stage of this application process creates

stress, and people are incredibly anxious to find out what the next step is.

Is it safe to assume that anyone who is in the pool and their working visas are about to expire or have expired will, in fact, receive a letter by the end of the month?

* (14:40)

MLA Marcelino: I would invite the member to set up an appointment with me to discuss this issue further. I'm not exactly sure what type of applicants she's referring to because we have 24,000 applicants currently with MPNP. And obviously not everybody is going to be able to get to get their nomination approved when we have only 9,500 spots.

But if she has certain types of people with different kinds of work permits that she's referring to, I would invite her to set up an appointment so that we could discuss this off-line.

Just in general, Budget 2024 has—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

And I would just caution the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) about the use of props. Even when he's not answering questions, he shouldn't be waving papers around and pointing to them.

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, I have been very clear. These are for applicants whose work permits have expired, are about to expire or are on an implied status.

The minister can say what she will, but the bottom line is this is about people. Postgraduates are people who have been living and contributing to our economy, whether it be through construction, health care or the restaurant industry, and they have been here for us in an incredibly real and tangible way.

So will this minister be here for them and commit today to getting these nomination letters into their hands by the end of the month?

MLA Marcelino: I'm just so happy to say that, with Budget 2024, we now have the resources at our disposal to be able to hire almost 30 per cent more folks in the department to help us with the processing of this.

We had to build from the ground up again when our government came into office because there was a 30 per cent reduction of human resources. And we are going to be doing that because immigration is an important priority for our government. We know that it's

important to grow our communities. We know that it's important to grow our economy. And we will continue to be working with employers and with folks and newcomers who are serious about settling in Manitoba. And we're going to be—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Purchase of Wildfire Firefighting Equipment Federal-Provincial Partnership Announcement

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): Honourable Speaker, the PCs crippled our front-line services, including our forest firefighting services, like when they sold off our water bombers—three single-Otter aircraft dedicated to wildfire suppression.

But it's a new day in Manitoba, and a new announcement has just been made about fixing the PCs' failures when it comes to wildfire fighting and prevention.

Can the Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources tell us more about what this announcement with the federal government entails?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources): Thank my colleague for that really important question.

Right now, over 650 Manitobans have been evacuated from their homes due to one of the worst wildfires in a long time. Our thoughts are with those Manitobans.

This morning, I was pleased to be joined by our federal counterparts to announce an additional \$38.4 million over the next four years to fight wildfires in Manitoba.

These—this funding is going to go to support an enhancement of firefighting equipment, ensure that we have the right staff training, investment in prevention and mitigation capacity and modernizing our information technology.

We thank the Wildfire Service and the front-line workers. This funding means that they'll get more support, and it's on the way. It's time right now to—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired. *[interjection]*
Member's time is expired.

Green Team Program Funding Minor Baseball Organizations

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Minor baseball organizations across Manitoba are reeling falling—

following a wave of surprise rejection letters from this NDP government that arrived two weeks into baseball season.

Charleswood Minor Baseball, denied. St. James Assiniboia Minor Baseball, denied. Transcona minor baseball, denied. Winnipeg South Minor Baseball, denied. Red River Valley Baseball, denied. Buhler Recreation Park, denied. Elmwood Giants baseball, denied. Seine River baseball, denied.

Green Team funds are critical to keeping these baseball facilities running all season long, and the NDP has left them high and dry.

Will the minister do the right thing for the representatives of Baseball Manitoba and Winnipeg Minor Baseball, who join us in the gallery today, and restore their Green Team funding?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, and again, Honourable Speaker, I welcome the attendants from community organizations and groups that have taken time out of their busy schedules to come down to the Manitoba Legislature. As I said, we have officials ready to meet with them. We are meeting with folks this afternoon and happy to take their individual concerns and continue to talk about it.

The—ultimately the Green Team program is one that our government supports, and that's why we've increased the funding by over 40 per cent beyond pre-pandemic levels.

This is an important, sustainable investment that our government has made and will continue to make, and we'll continue to work with community partners because we are one Manitoba and we work together with all Manitobans.

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

Faith-Based Organizations

Mrs. Cook: The NDP's cuts to Green Team funding will have a direct impact on kids and families across our province.

Both Oasis Church in Charleswood and Grace Community Church in Headingley have received Green Team funding for years, spanning multiple governments. They have used their funding to employ youth in leadership positions who were essential in planning and delivering safe and engaging programming for children in our community.

Most of those youth leaders enjoyed it so much and learned so many valuable skills that they've stayed involved in long-term paid and volunteer positions with these churches.

Can the minister explain to the representatives of these churches, who are with us in the gallery today, why his NDP government is cutting funding for youth jobs and children's programming with no warning and no explanation?

Mr. Wiebe: Again, Honourable Speaker, we have an incredible 540 organizations across the province that have successfully applied and are going to be receiving funding for important programs. That's almost 1,500 young people that are going to be getting job experience and are going to be doing important work in their communities throughout the summer.

But, again, it's not a decision that the—as the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Ewasko) wants to make it political. This is a decision that supports people across the province: Boys and Girls Club of Winnipeg, the Allard library in Lac du Bonnet, the St. George community club in Lac du Bonnet, the town of Stonewall's trail system, the town of Stonewall's parks—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Green Team Program Funding Midland Constituency Organizations

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, this minister has failed Manitoba communities. Not only has he cut Green Team funding, but he refuses to take accountability for it.

Groups like the Miami railway museum has—have received and relied on Green Team funding for years. In towns like Miami, there are not a lot of jobs for young people, and aging populations cannot take on the strenuous activities of upkeep.

I table a message I received from their board chair, and I quote: Our board consists of volunteers, and only one is under the age of 65. We are deeply disappointed. Do we have to scrap plans and only open for three hours on a Saturday and Sunday as we did in the past? Representatives of that volunteer board join us in the gallery today.

So I ask this minister: Can he look them in the eye and explain to them why their Green Team funding has been cut?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Okay, Honourable Speaker, I wish we had more time and more questions from the

members opposite so I could get through all the great places that we're supporting: the town of Alexander, Alonsa, Arborg, Austin, Baldur, Beausejour, Birch River, Birtle, Boissevain, East St. Paul, Ellice, Elm Creek, Gimli, Glenboro, Miami, Miniota, Niverville. Honestly, the list goes on and on. Stanley, Ste. Rose, Ste. Rose du Lac, Steinbach, Stonewall, St. Pierre Jolys. There are more and more. Treherne; honestly, the list goes on and on.

* (14:50)

Members opposite should know that we're working with community groups. We'll continue—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Midland, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, this minister continues to put misinformation on the record. The former PC government funded 744 applications. This NDP government has funded less than 500.

Last fall, Youth for Christ in Carman opened an expanded drop-in space for vulnerable youth who are struggling. Now the minister has decided he doesn't care about vulnerable youth, as Green Team funding has been cut from both YFC Morris and YFC Carman. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Environment will come to order.

Mrs. Stone: This minister has broken the trust of communities throughout my riding. Volunteer museum boards, faith-based organizations and vulnerable youth programming, all cut by this NDP government.

This minister needs to take accountability and explain to these incredible organizations why their funding was cut. They're here in the gallery with us today.

Will this minister—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Mr. Wiebe: The answer remains the same, that we're continuing to work with organizations. Happy to work with folks that have taken the time to be in the people's building. We are a listening government.

But, again, across this province we are supporting programs for the Green Team, like Canadian Multicultural Disability Centre, Ma Mawi, the Vassar

community recreational centre in La Vérendrye, the Dauphin Friendship Centre, the Enterprise Machine Intelligence and Learning Initiative in Oak Bluff, the Hanover Agricultural Society in Grunthal, the Vélosity bike co-op in St. Boniface and even the RM of Alexander and Lac du Bonnet, for their trails and public works.

Honestly, Honourable Speaker, we're willing to work with community groups. It's only members opposite that want to divide Manitobans.

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Organized Crime in Manitoba Legislation to Combat

MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips): Honourable Speaker, last year during the elections, Manitobans were clear they wanted action against organized crime. For seven and a half years, members opposite did absolutely nothing. Our government is taking concrete action.

So can the Minister of Justice tell the House how our government is cracking down on organized crime?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): National Police Week—I'm so impressed every single day by the incredible work being done by law enforcement, and we look forward to partnering with them going forward.

What frustrates me, Honourable Speaker, is our job in here is to support their work that they're doing out on the front lines. And we, as legislators, can pass an important piece of legislation, Bill 30, that will actually make a difference to organized crime and to cracking down on toxic drugs coming into our community.

Members opposite have been delaying, have been talking out, have been putting rhetoric on the record that honestly doesn't stand up to scrutiny, that members opposite—that the members of the law enforcement community are asking from us. This in an unserious party, and they should start taking this issue seriously—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Green Team Program Funding Swan Valley Historical Museum

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Honourable Speaker, the Minister of Municipal Relations has cut long-running Green Team funding in my community without notice. This will have a dramatic impact on

the programming they can deliver and the jobs they can offer our youth.

The Swan Valley Historical Museum applied and received funding in 2021, 2022, 2023. In fact, the museum has received funding every year after year that they have applied; 2024, applied and denied. For the first time ever, our local museum was shut out.

So I ask the minister: Why was this funding cut, and will he meet with my constituents who join us virtually today to explain how their application was insufficient after years of receiving funding?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, I want to be explicitly clear. We are committed to listening to Manitobans and hearing their concerns.

We respect and deeply appreciate, and I say this as someone who benefitted from being able to access free camps as a—someone whose family could not afford camps as a kid growing up in Manitoba.

We respect the work that you do and value what you bring to Manitobans, and we are going to meet with you and hear your concerns. We are making that commitment to all of you who are here and those who are watching online.

And I also want to be clear that some of this divisive rhetoric we've heard from members opposite today does nothing but hurt Manitobans, nothing but divide Manitobans, and that is—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

I would caution the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) that during question period, he shouldn't be yelling across the way.

The time for oral questions has ended.

An Honourable Member: Point of order, Mr. Honourable Speaker.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable leader of the—no, the honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): On a point of order.

During QP, the Leader of the Official Opposition yelled across the way here, in respect of the leader of

the federal NDP, and I quote: Your leader can't even get back into his home country.

There is no room in this Chamber for xenophobic, racist, offensive comments towards anyone.

Jagmeet Singh, for the information of the official opposition, was born in Canada. He is a Canadian citizen, and he is a kind and compassionate and caring and brilliant and respectful Canadian citizen.

I cannot just stand by while the Leader of the Official Opposition just spouts off disgusting rhetoric to the leader of the federal NDP.

I would ask that the Leader of the Official Opposition stand in his place and apologize not only to everyone in this Chamber, but to Jagmeet Singh himself.

The Speaker: I would point out to the member that she does not have a point of order.

But I would caution all members about the language that we use in here, out on the street and everywhere, to make sure that we are not being racist and everything else. So I just want to make sure that everybody understands that words are important and we need to be very careful about what we say.

* * *

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The Leader of the Official Opposition, on a point of order.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Once again, day in and day out, I'm going to be speaking to the hundreds and thousands of Manitobans that speak—and, of course, I'm speaking through you, Honourable Speaker—hundreds and thousands of Manitobans that watch the camera, watch proceedings here at this great, wonderful building, the Manitoba Legislature, on a day-to-day basis. I invite Manitobans, I invite the media, to come back into the media gallery and actually report on the divisive conduct and all the information that the government continues to put on the record.

And, once again, as you've said, Honourable Speaker, what the Government House Leader put on the record, once again, she stands up to put misinformation on the record, uses this time to do this. And this is—goes on day in and day out.

So I invite Manitobans to come join us here in the gallery, Manitoba Legislature. I invite the media to

come back into the media gallery and watch what happens when the cameras aren't on.

The government side, many of the members on the government side, Honourable Speaker, know that this is true, and they are fearful because they know that their leader, the Premier (Mr. Kinew), the MLA for Fort Rouge, is very punitive. So they won't speak up, and that's why on a day-to-day basis, Honourable Speaker—

* (15:00)

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would ask the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Ewasko) to wrap up very quickly and to stick to what he thinks is a point of order, and not just carry on rambling about everything.

Mr. Ewasko: On a day-to-day basis on this point of order, it is unfortunate that once again the leader, and—the House leader, the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine), has once again put on the record some very toxic and divisive comments multiple times today, just today alone.

And again, I invite Manitobans and the media to come into the Chamber and see what actually happens behind—when the cameras are off.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for allowing me to get up on this point of order.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would point out to the member that he does not have a point of order, that he's trying to create a debate or carry on a debate. Did not have point of order, and I would appreciate that if we were going to raise on a point of order, to make sure that we stick to what that point is and not try and have a debate.

* * *

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): I do have a point of order, Honourable Speaker.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

Mr. Johnson: Very simple, very short. I just ask that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) table the documents that he was reading from. He was not reading from public documents, and I ask that those be tabled.

The Speaker: If the Minister of Justice was quoting from private documents, then he should table them, so

I would ask him what exactly was it that he was quoting from.

Mr. Wiebe: There's publicly available documents from the website. Be happy to show the members opposite where to find and access that information.

The Speaker: On that point of order, then, the Minister of Justice does not have to table them if they're publicly available documents.

House Business

Mr. Johnson: Honourable Speaker, on House business.

The Speaker: The Official Opposition House Leader, on House business.

Mr. Johnson: Yes, I have a long request to set out the business of the House for the remainder of the spring sitting, which I will table now, and please have patience with me because it needs to be read accurately.

So is there leave for the following provisions to apply from today until June 3, 2024:

General Provisions

1. In the event of a discrepancy between the contents of this leave request and the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceeding of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the provisions of this leave request are to apply.
2. The provisions of this leave request can be amended by unanimous consent.
3. Recorded divisions may not be deferred except during private members' business in accordance with subrule 24(7).
4. With the exception of Monday, June 3, 2024, the bells shall ring for a maximum of five minutes on any request for a recorded division.
5. Matters of privilege and points of order cannot be raised during orders of the day, private members' business; or orders of the day, government business.
6. If routine proceedings has not concluded 90 minutes prior to the usual adjournment hour, the Speaker must terminate routine proceedings and proceed to orders of the day.

House Business

1. On May 16, May 21 and June 3, 2024 the Speaker shall not call petitions or grievances during routine proceedings.
 2. On May 16 and May 21 during orders of the day, government business, the House shall consider second reading of government bills under the limited debate provisions for specified bills contained in subrules 2(10)(d) and (e), with the question to be put at the end of the debate for each bill.
 3. On May 16, 2024:
 - (a) at the beginning of orders of the day, government business, Bill 209 will be referred to the previously scheduled meeting of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 6 p.m.; and
 - (b) the House shall then consider second reading of Bill 30, including the reasoned amendment and main motion, followed by bills 31 and 29.
 4. On Tuesday, May 21, 2024:
 - (a) during the first hour of orders of the day, private members' business, the House shall consider second reading of Bill 212, with the Speaker to immediately interrupt the debate to put the question;
 - (b) once the question has been put, Bill 212 will be referred to the previously scheduled meeting of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 6 p.m.;
 - (c) the House shall then consider another eligible bill that has not been listed in this leave request, to be announced by the Government House Leader or their designate;
 - (d) at the beginning of orders of the day, government business, the House shall consider second reading of bills 33, 34 and 36;
 - (e) once all questions have been put, bills 29, 30, 31, 33, 34 and 36 shall be referred to the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development that will meet on Monday, May 27, 2024 at 6 p.m.; and
 - (f) the House is not to see the clock until all questions have been put and the committee announcement has been made.
 5. On the following days, the House is to resolve into Committee of Supply at the beginning of orders of the day, government business, for the consideration of departmental Estimates:
 - (a) May 22, 2024;
 - (b) May 23, 2024;
 - (c) May 27, 2024; and
 - (d) May 28, 2024.
 6. On Thursday, May 23, 2024:
 - (a) during the first hour of orders of the day, private members' business, the House shall consider second reading of Bill 201 followed by Bill 203, with the Speaker to immediately interrupt the debate on each bill to put the question;
 - (b) the House shall then consider another eligible bill that has not been listed in this leave request, to be announced by the Official Opposition House Leader or their designate;
 - (c) despite the provision in part 5(b), at the beginning of orders of the day, government business bills 201 and 203 will be referred to the previously scheduled meeting of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development meeting on Monday, May 27, 2024 at 6 p.m.
- * (15:10)
7. On Tuesday, May 28, 2024:
 - (a) during the first hour of orders of the day, private members' business, the House shall consider concurrence and third reading of Bills 207, 208 and 212, with the debate to proceed as follows:
 - (i) the bill sponsor may speak for up to five minutes;
 - (ii) a member from another recognized party may speak for up to five minutes;
 - (iii) the independent member may speak for up to five minutes; and
 - (iv) the Speaker shall then put the question.
 - (b) if consideration of the bills identified in (a) is not completed by 10:55 a.m., the Speaker shall interrupt debate to put the concurrence and third reading question on any remaining bills.

8. On Wednesday, May 29, 2024:
- (a) at the beginning of orders of the day, government business, the House shall consider the report stage amendment to Bill 10, The Advanced Education Administration Amendment Act, under the following debate provisions:
 - (i) the sponsor may speak for up to 10 minutes;
 - (ii) a member from the official opposition may speak for up to 10 minutes;
 - (iii) the independent member may speak for up to 10 minutes; and
 - (iv) the Speaker shall then put the question.
 - (b) the House shall then consider second reading of Bill 37, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2024.
9. On Thursday, May 30, 2024:
- (a) during the first hour of orders of the day, private members' business, the House shall consider concurrence and third reading of bills 201, 202, 203 and 209 with the debate to proceed as follows:
 - (i) the bill sponsor may speak for up to five minutes;
 - (ii) a member from another recognized party may speak for up to five minutes;
 - (iii) the independent member may speak for up to five minutes, unless the bill sponsor is the independent member, in which case a member from another recognized party may speak for up to five minutes instead; and
 - (iv) the Speaker shall then put the question;
 - (b) if consideration of the bills identified in (a) is not completed by 10:55 a.m., the Speaker shall interrupt debate and put the concurrence and third reading question on any remaining bills;
 - (c) at the beginning of orders of the day, government business, the House shall resume consideration of second reading of Bill 37, the budget implementation and tax statutes act—amendment act, sorry. I'll repeat that whole phrase again: The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2024

10. On Monday, June 3, 2024:

- (a) at the beginning of orders of the day, government business, the House shall consider concurrence and third reading of all government specified bills, as well as bills 29, 30, 31, 33, 34 and 36, under the provisions for the concurrence and third reading completion day for specified bills in subrule 2(14), in an order to be announced by the Government House Leader, or in the order listed on the Order Paper; and
- (b) in addition to the bills identified in (a), the House cannot rise until royal assent has also been granted to bills 201, 202, 203, 207, 208, 209 and 212.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Before putting the question to the House on the leave request made by the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Johnson), is there leave to have the tabled version of the leave request appear in Hansard as written? Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Is there leave for the House to be bound by the provisions as set out by the opposition official House leader? Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: Leave has been denied.

PETITIONS

The Speaker: The honourable—no petitions today?

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): 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—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

The honourable minister of health, seniors and active living will come to order.

Mr. Ewasko: 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 much-needed relief.

Honourable Speaker, this petition is signed by Leanne Kanellis, Devin Anderson, Robbie Wirth and many, many more fine Manitobans.

The Speaker: Further petitions? Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): I appreciate you recognizing me.

* (15:20)

Could you please call the continuation of second reading debate of Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended), and should that pass second reading, can you call second reading of Bill 31, The Captured Carbon Storage Act, and should that pass, could you please call second reading of Bill 29, The Body Armour and Fortified Vehicle Control Amendment Act. [*interjection*]

The Speaker: Order, please.

It has been announced that we will resume debate on second reading of Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, criminal forfeiture act and corporations act amended, and resume debate on the reasoned amendment. Following that, we would resume debate on bill—following the debate on the reasoned amendment, we would then resume debate on—let's just do this again.

We'll resume debate on second reading of Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, Corporations Act amended, debate on the reasoned amendment. If the reasoned amendment passes, then we would start debate on Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended), debate on the main motion resumed.

Then, if we conclude that, we would move on to Bill 31, The Captured Carbon Storage Act. If that was to conclude, then we would go to Bill 29, The Body Armour and Fortified Vehicle Control Amendment Act, second reading. And that would be today.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

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

The Speaker: All right. So now we will resume debate on the reasoned amendment to Bill 30, standing in the name of the honourable member for Spruce Woods, who has four minutes remaining.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): Only having four minutes left is very sad, indeed, not nearly enough time to defend why this reasoned amendment is absolutely necessary.

And so just getting back to where we left off last night, I mean, it is unfortunate, certainly, that this reasoned amendment is necessary. This should have been a situation where the Minister of Justice could have used the experience from members on our side, particularly the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), to write and introduce a bill that had something in it that was substantially different in some way.

However, he didn't do that. He didn't consult with anybody, I'm sure, but certainly didn't consult with anybody on this side. He has no justification for how Bill 30 is different from the current statutes that are in effect: bill 58, brought in by the previous PC government.

And worse than that, he won't get up and use time in this debate, time that we've given him by moving this reasoned amendment, to answer these questions. He could get up right after I'm done here, Honourable Speaker, and walk us through a side by side. *[interjection]* No; you can get—he could get up. He certainly could get up and put some words on the record.

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

Point of Order

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

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Honourable Speaker, there's some confusion. New members in the House don't understand how things work. I have spoken to the reasoned amendment. It was 30 minutes of clear information that obviously allays any concerns that members have. He could spend the time to go back through Hansard.

I don't have an opportunity to speak again, but I guess if he was going to give me leave, I'd—maybe I—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The member clearly does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Jackson: It's clear we've touched a nerve today with the Justice Minister. That's unfortunate for him. But, our opposition will continue to do our job, holding him to account, asking him to bring forward better legislation that actually makes a difference—actually makes a difference.

So alas, we know that there are no substantial differences between Bill 30, and bill 58, the current statutes that are in effect. And so therefore we have asked that, based on the reasoned amendment, this bill be withdrawn and go back to the drawing board so that the Minister of Justice can have a re-think, give it some more time.

We'd be happy to help him out with some suggestions about how the bill could be enhanced to enhance the current statutes, but as it stands it is not in any way, shape, or form, substantially different than what is currently in effect.

And so, I'll just remind the House, as I'm wrapping up here and my time was divided between two days, the reasoned amendment reads that the House declines to give second reading to Bill 30 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 in this House in 2021.

The minister got up on a not a point of order. He has some thoughts on why he thinks he has answered questions—he hasn't. We don't feel he has. So perhaps, in 20 seconds when I'm finished, Honourable Speaker, another member could get his speaking notes that he so clearly wants to share with this Chamber, pass them along to another member and they could get up and deliver them on his behalf.

Let's see whether he has done his homework and has that information to provide to this Chamber.

Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): It gives me great pleasure to stand up and to be able to speak to the reasoned amendment brought forward by our side, so—of course, by the MLA for Gimli.

Honourable Speaker, it seems to me that the Justice Minister continues to want to put information on the record, and I know that he will be given time sometime in the future, sometime between today and the future, to be able to put more words on the record.

I know he doesn't seem like he's tired today after the long diatribe that he put on of disinformation on

the record in QP today trying to defend his actions and the inactions of his government. But, today, Honourable Speaker, The Unexplained Wealth Act, the Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, and the Corporations Act amended; Loi sur le riche 'inexplicité', modification de la—la soi la confiscation de biens obtenus ou utilisant criminellement et de la Loi sur les corporations.

And the proposed motion by, as I said, my colleague, in the amendment thereto, as follows: That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that", and substituting the following: The House declines to give second reading to Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, and Corporations Act Amended); Loi sur le riche 'inexplicité', modification de la Loi sur la confiscation de biens obtenus ou utilisés criminellement et de la Loi sur les corporations, because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill is different to the existing legislation and was brought forward and passed, in this House, in 2021.

I know, Honourable Speaker, that we have embarked and, speaking to the reasoned amendment, we've been debating not only Bill 30 but, of course, the reasoned amendment for a few days now.

* (15:30)

And part of that problem, Honourable Speaker, we heard today another prime example of the NDP government failing to want to negotiate and come to an agreement, all because they are trying to dodge and deflect the fact that their House Leader and their entire government failed to bring forward their legislation, which, of course, we're debating, Bill 30.

And I know that the Justice Minister again, Honourable Speaker—and this is why I said earlier that, to all Manitobans and to the media, what they should do is come in, sit in the media gallery and witness the toxic environment that comes from—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I would remind the member that he's speaking very specifically to the reasoned amendment, and he needs to keep his comments relevant to the reasoned amendment.

Mr. Ewasko: Just know that I was being heckled by the Justice Minister and figured I would just put a couple extra words on the record there.

But I appreciate your guidance and, of course, speaking to the reasoned amendment that my good

friend and colleague, the Opposition House Leader brought forward a few days ago.

So issues with the repeated legislation—and I know that I have quite, you know, even though you didn't announce that, Honourable Speaker, but I actually have unlimited time, so we'll see, you know, how the next little while goes, and we'll see if we can convince the government to then come forward with information that actually shows why they brought forward this legislation.

And it's not that we're against this legislation, Honourable Speaker, and that's why we're bringing forward the reasoned amendment. Because, I mean, we feel, and it says in the reasoned amendment, again, that the House declines to give second reading to Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, 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 in the House back in 2021.

A big problem with Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, is that it doesn't make any relevant or distinct changes to the legislation already in place within Manitoba as in 2021. There are amendments made within this Legislature by the Progressive Conservatives that allowed for unexplained wealth orders. These amendments allow the criminal property forfeiture director and the mechanism within that area of government to explore an individual's finances to see if there's—if there is an explanation for their wealth.

Now, Honourable Speaker, you know, I was going to talk about some of the inappropriate behaviour of the Justice Minister during Bill 30 debate, and I know that you ruled on that, so I'm not going to touch base on too much of that.

But, again, we hear some heckling coming from the government side, and I don't quite understand why they don't get up and speak to the reasoned amendment. But, you know what, that's their prerogative.

So the bill that I'm talking about that was brought forward back in, well, specifically May 20, 2021. So we had a bit of a—we had a voice vote on bill 58, and, you know, Honourable Speaker, you know who voted against bill 58 back in May—on May 20, 2021?

An Honourable Member: Tell us.

Mr. Ewasko: I will tell you.

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) and whoever was still sitting as an opposition member on the NDP side, Honourable Speaker.

So for them to be disingenuous and stand in their place, only a couple of them, including the Justice Minister—matter of fact, it was the Justice Minister was one of the individuals that absolutely voted against bill 58 back in 2021.

And so it is funny—to repeat something that the Premier, the MLA for Fort Rouge, has said multiple times since he's now formed government, is the fact that there's many things that he said, wanted to do, wanted to say in opposition that he's unable to fulfill now that he's in government. And we've seen that. We've seen that time and time again, many promises broken.

So I want to get to some of those amendments and that explanation of Bill 30 and, of course, speaking to the reasoned amendment, the additional information for the House. Because I think it's very important, not only for Manitobans, not only for you, Honourable Speaker, but I'd say more so educating the Justice Minister. Because we on this side of the House really strongly feel that he's out of his realm.

We know that, you know, back in the day he was fortunate enough to be answering the phones for then-premier Doer and then he went on to run as the candidate there and he was fortunate enough so he, you know, he's trying to sort of continue along those manners. And unfortunately, as you had ruled on, many days in this Chamber, he yells across the Chamber and he was yelling at Heather Stefanson when she was still an MLA in here.

But some of the things that I'd like to mention about the reasoned amendment—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order.

I would remind the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Ewasko), again, that he needs to keep his comments relevant to the reasoned amendment. So if he would stick to the topic at hand, that would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, Honourable Speaker, again for your wisdom and guidance. Was just pointing out some of the information that had been brought forward previous on why it's so important on why I'm bringing forward and putting a few words on the record in regards to Bill 30's reasoned amendment brought forward by our wonderful Opposition House Leader.

So this piece of legislation is important and appears to be non-partisan, but we must understand today how this is any different from already existing legislation. If not different, it begs the question that the NDP are taking the approach of, I quote, we have to look like we are doing something even though we are not taking any steps toward the issue of public safety. End quote.

You know, Honourable Speaker, this is another example. On the news last night, just to inform the Minister of Advanced Education over there, something I'm talking about is the fact that we have yet another large business closing down in the province of Manitoba, taking out hundreds of jobs because of the inaction by this NDP government. It's unfortunate, Honourable Speaker.

So that's why it's very important to be talking about Bill 30 and of course, reasoned amendment. So, I know the other day, last week, matter of fact, the Justice Minister decided to table some letters from our various police services, one from the National Police Federation, one from the Winnipeg Police Association and one from Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police.

And so, as anything that gets tabled, whether it's by the Premier or a minister of the Crown, I read those documents, Honourable Speaker, because anything that's ever tabled, you know, it's important information to be brought forward.

And I'm looking at this—these documents, and then what ends up happening is we get the Justice Minister, he stands up and he basically, some of the things that he decided to put on the record, and he pretended like he was quoting these individuals. And let me just tell you, Honourable Speaker, that the letters that he tabled according to not only the Bill 30 but also the reasoned amendment, they were addressed to him, the Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Mr. Wiebe).

And in these letters, Brian Sauvé, the president and CEO of the National Police Federation, explains how Bill 30 is important to Manitoba and to police officers.

* (15:40)

Winnipeg Police Association—again, that letter was tabled and written to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and again, Mr. Cory Wiles, President of the Winnipeg Police Association, also said that on behalf of the 2,000 members they support Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act.

The next letter, which was by the Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police, signed by Mr. Scot Halley, president, Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police, he also said that they're looking forward to Bill 30 moving forward.

Now, this is something where it's very interesting because then the Attorney General, the person who is the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), that we look to, to stand up in this Chamber and put factual information on the record, stands up and absolutely misquotes the letters.

I'm not going to repeat what the minister said, but this is another example of a minister of the Crown—and again, you know, about the reasoned amendment on Bill 30—another example of the minister of the Crown who was then reprimanded by you, Honourable Speaker, for some of his behaviour in here. He goes to—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would caution the member about reflecting on rulings made by the Speaker, and I would also ask him to keep his comments relevant to the reasoned amendment.

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and I was sort of giving you a bit of shout-out there. I was saying that I agreed with you on your ruling.

But that's okay. I'll move on with the, again, Bill 30 reasoned amendments and how this pertains. But part of that, again, on this side of the House, it's the opposition's role to ensure that any legislation that comes forward in this House is different from legislation that currently exists.

And we already know. We compared, you know, we talked about—I don't know, I know that there's only been a few words on the record in regards to Bill 30, and of course the reasoned amendment, and maybe there'll be more in the future; I don't know. But we talk about how we look to see that this legislation is actually different than legislation before.

And we already talked about bill 58 where many members on the government side of the House had actually voted down bill 58, which is absolutely unfortunate, because we fast-forward and what ends up happening is that the British Columbia government decides to go and take our legislation, and now the NDP are coming back and—*[interjection]* You know what, Honourable Speaker? I appreciate that—I don't know who's talking on the government side about various different things over there, but they will have

their opportunity and they can stand up any time after I'm done speaking and speak to the reasoned amendment.

So if the reasoned amendment, again, as I'm speaking to that, if this legislation is actually enhancing something, well, just let us know what it is. We've asked the Minister of Justice multiple times to stand up and say anything, but unfortunately he, on most days, whether it's question period or whenever he's getting up to speak, is seen ruffling through his papers trying to find answers, and I think most of the time he's probably waiting for that red light to go on, much like what he witnessed in the Selinger government, that the answers would actually come in to the Cabinet ministers.

So he watched that, and he thought that now that he's Attorney General that he could just wait for that little red light and the pages would bring him the answers to questions.

So that's the way I think the Kinew government is working, Honourable Speaker.

So, again, the question is—really is, you know, why is this legislation coming forward from the legislation currently exists already in the Province of Manitoba?

But I think, unfortunately, it was a campaign promise that was made, Honourable Speaker. It was a campaign promise that was made by the NDP in a desperate attempt to try to—try and tell Manitobans that they are tough on crime when, in fact, those laws already exist.

Honourable Speaker, with those few words, I am so proud of our PC team on this side. I'm proud of our Opposition House Leader for bringing forward this reasoned amendment. I look forward to this reasoned amendment. I know that some members, they're still chirping from the government side that they want to get up and they'd like to speak to this reasoned amendment.

So I'm going to give the floor over to them, and then if they don't stand up and speak to the reasoned amendment, I guess let's put it up and let's vote on the reasoned amendment, because it is a very reasonable amendment, and I applaud each and every one of my—of our PC team on this side of the House for standing up for Manitobans, for standing up for public safety. Whereas the government's failing, we are the government-in-waiting for 2027 if not sooner.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: Question before the House is the reasoned amendment to Bill 30, because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that the bill is different from the existing legislation that was brought forward and passed in this House in 2021.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

The Speaker: All those in favour in the House, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, I think that was very close. I'd like a recorded vote on that, please.

The Speaker: A recorded vote has been called. Call in the members.

* (16:40)

Order, please.

The one-hour time provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm directing that the bells be turned off and the House proceed with the vote.

The question before the House is the reasoned amendment: because this House has not received satisfactory evidence of—*[interjection]*

The question before the House is the proposed motion, and it reads,

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after "that" and substituting the following:

this House declines to give second reading to Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended), because this House has not received satisfactory

evidence or assurance that this bill is different to the existing legislation that's brought forward and passed by this House in 2021.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Ayes

Bereza, Byram, Cook, Ewasko, Guenter, Jackson, Johnson, Khan, Lagassé, Narth, Nesbitt, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Schuler, Stone, Wharton, Wowchuk.

Nays

Altomare, Asagwara, Blashko, Brar, Cable, Chen, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Fontaine, Kennedy, Maloway, Marcelino, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Oxenham, Pankratz, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Smith, Wasyliv, Wiebe.

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 17, Nays 26.

The Speaker: I declare the motion accordingly defeated.

* (16:50)

* * *

The Speaker: We will now resume debate on Bill 30, second reading of the main motion.

Mr. Jackson: And I appreciate that we only have a few minutes left today, so I will just put a few very brief words on the record.

As we know Bill 30, and we've had a lengthy, robust debate about Bill 30 and the fact that it's not different in any way, shape or form from the current legislation in effect in the province.

And we know that it was the former PC government that created this legislation as it exists because we took steps to combat money laundering, and we were among the leaders in the country taking action against organized crime.

I was privileged to help draft this legislation in my previous role, and in 2021 our previous Progressive Conservative government passed these legislative changes that strengthened the ability for the Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit to act quickly on securing money that investigators believed to be illegally acquired and could be subjected to money laundering.

In 2022, our previous Progressive Conservative government expanded staffing capacity within the Criminal Property Forfeiture Unit to combat money

laundering, hiring two new investigators and a financial analyst to target organized crime.

And I just want to take this opportunity to thank Melinda and her team and the previous director of that unit, Gord Schumacher, for the incredible work that they have done and continue to do on a day-to-day basis in finding these—this illegally acquired wealth, in seizing it and making sure that that is returned to police forces across the province, who I know view it as a lifeline to ensure that they have the up—most up-to-date technology and tools at their disposal to be able to hold criminals accountable for their actions. Melinda and her team are doing excellent work.

The PC government distributed millions of dollars through the existing statutes in bill 58 from the 'cripital' property forfeiture fund to various initiatives and agencies including, you know, new devices for Brandon police, Morden-Winkler, their—an ongoing SWAT team, their K-9 units, protective armour for the K-9 units, et cetera, you know.

And so this is a fund that was working. This is a set of statutes that was working, and instead of addressing the many problems that we face as a province, here we are with a bill from this minister who is presenting a solution to a problem that doesn't exist.

And many of these dollars also went to organizations like the Bear Clan, community safety groups like Crime Stoppers, victim services organizations like Candace House, and many, many others. And so it's unfortunate. And, we got credit, by the way, from the BC NDP; I just want to make sure that that, Honourable Speaker, remains on the record.

And so the minister had ample opportunity to explain who he consulted on this bill; he didn't answer. He had 'ample' opportunity to explain examples of other jurisdictions that may have a bill similar to Bill 30. The only one he could provide was BC, which, of course, we know that they're on the public record having modelled their legislation on ours, the statutes that are already existing and in effect.

He could provide no other examples of where he had pulled any new ideas from. The minister had ample opportunity to explain how this bill differs from different legislation in other jurisdictions, and he was unable to do so.

So, unfortunately, the minister and his colleagues across the way have had ample time, but they have decided not to respond.

And so, therefore, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler),

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting—it for—the following:

Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended), be now—be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day, six months hence.

The Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson), seconded by the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot,

THAT the motion be amended by deleting all the words after—"that" and substituting the following:

Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended), be now read a second time—be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

The motion is in order, the floor is open for debate.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity here today to speak on what we shall call a hoist motion. And, what that is, is the hoist motion amendment dates—the hoist motion amendment dates back to the 18th century where it originated in British practice. While a hoist motion is not common, it has been used in the Manitoba Legislature, as the federal level in Parliament, and it can be used for a variety of reasons.

We can point to many examples of when it has been used—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The hour now being 5 o'clock, when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 29 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 16, 2024

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Green Team Program Funding	
Bill 216—The Manitoba Small Business Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)		Ewasko	1934
Cross	1925	Asagwara	1934
Ministerial Statements		Municipalities, Grants and Programs	
National Police Week		King	1935
Wiebe	1925	Wiebe	1935
Jackson	1926	Green Team Program Funding	
Lamoureux	1926	Narth	1936
Vyshyvanka Day		Wiebe	1936
Sala	1927	Green Team Program Funding	
Lagassé	1928	Khan	1937
Lamoureux	1928	Wiebe	1937
International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia		Green Team Program Funding	
Fontaine	1928	Jackson	1937
Cook	1929	Wiebe	1937
Lamoureux	1930	Postgraduate Work Permit Holders	
Speaker's Statement		Lamoureux	1938
Lindsey	1930	Marcelino	1938
Members' Statements		Purchase of Wildfire Firefighting Equipment	
Bison Regional Science Fair Finalists		Redhead	1939
Blashko	1930	Moses	1939
Morris District Handi-Van Service		Green Team Program Funding	
Stone	1931	Cook	1939
Honouring the Templeton Family		Wiebe	1940
Sala	1931	Green Team Program Funding	
Recognizing Interlake-Gimli Organizations		Stone	1940
Johnson	1932	Wiebe	1940
Special Olympics Winter Games Athletes		Organized Crime in Manitoba	
Redhead	1932	Devgan	1941
Green Team Funding		Wiebe	1941
King	1932	Green Team Program Funding	
Oral Questions		Wowchuk	1941
Green Team Program		Asagwara	1942
Ewasko	1933	Petitions	
Asagwara	1934	Removal of Federal Carbon Tax	
		Ewasko	1945

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Debate on Second Readings

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

Jackson	1947
Ewasko	1947
Bereza	1952

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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