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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 30, 2023

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable First Minister, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes' notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 27(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Children's Hospital Champion Children

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize three Children's Hospital champions: Brady Bobrowich, Keira Davlut and Pacey Wall.

Every year, the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba identifies a remarkable child who has shared their story to demonstrate the life-changing health advances that have been made and the personal journey they and their families take to overcome illness and injury.

Over the past three years, the Children's Hospital Foundation has identified three outstanding children as champion children.

The first is Brady Bobrowich, the 2020 and 2021 champion child. At five months old, he was diagnosed with type 1 neurofibromatosis, a genetic disorder that causes tumours to form on nerve tissue. Brady has been to multiple different specialists, countless MRIs and three spine surgeries. Now, at age 12, Brady is persevering, never letting the rods in his spine or his condition stop him from the activities that he loves.

The 2022 champion child, Keira Davlut, was diagnosed with craniosynostosis, when the plates in a baby's skull fuse too early, before the brain is fully formed. Keira has had several surgeries and 12 specialists over the years at Health Sciences Centre Children's Hospital to support her progress. Now, at 12 years old, Keira is full of energy and living life to the fullest.

The 2023 champion child, Pacey Wall, who is only nine years old, has had over 30 surgeries at HSC Children's Hospital due to his intestinal failure. He has been in and out of the emergency department since complications started at age three, even spending Christmases and birthdays in hospital. No matter how challenging things get, Pacey always sees the positive. As an example, I recently received Pacey's personalized trading card. On the back, it includes his favourite saying: believe in yourself.

Madam Speaker, these three remarkable children are an inspiration to all, as they have been triumphant, despite the many difficulties they have faced throughout their lives.

Madam Speaker, I ask that all members join me in celebrating the Children's Hospital champion children: Brady Bobrowich, Keira Davlut and Pacey Wall, and their families, who are joining us here in the gallery.

Thank you.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, it is an honour to put a few words on the record to pay tribute to the Children's Hospital Foundation champion children, who join us here today in the gallery.

I was very happy to have the opportunity to meet these three remarkable young Manitobans at the recent Winnipeg Police Association ball, and I took advantage of this evening to introduce myself. And I have to say, they were very gracious about putting up with a politician like me coming over and interrupting their dinner, and I want to thank them for the opportunity to do so.

But more than anything, I think I want to thank them for having the courage to share their personal stories to inspire other people here in Manitoba to step up and help kids in our province.

On that evening, we were shared with a video and a testimonial from Pacey, talking about his experience and the praise that he had for those who work at the Children's Hospital. And as we were watching this video, I was really moved to see how Pacey and his family stay together with love and courage and faith, and how even some of the simple things, like getting ready to go for a swim, or playing outside, require so

much dedication and preparation to be order—in order to be able to accomplish.

And yet, for all of these additional challenges and all the additional asks that this life has placed on Pacey, you go up and talk to him, he's a great young person. Big smile. Within a few seconds, hey, do you want to have one of my trading cards? As a matter of fact, let me sign it for you.

What a remarkable spirit. And so, too, can we praise Brady, who cuts a fine figure in that sports coat, I would add, and had many remarkable messages of inspiration of his own to share.

And of course, to Kiera, who I had an opportunity to take a photo with and talk to her family on that evening as well.

Each of these young people testify to the importance of perseverance, of resilience and charity. They are giving back through sweat equity, through the courage of their personal testimonials, to gain further investments and donations and contributions of the heart, shall we say, to the Children's Hospital, which other young people in Manitoba will benefit from.

I should note, of course, that the Winnipeg Police Association had a very successful fundraising drive that evening, which contributes to the overall efforts of the Children's Hospital Foundation, and I see a few foundation staffers in the gallery today.

So, I want to thank the Winnipeg Police Association and the Children's Hospital Foundation, but most of all, I want to thank Pacey, Brady and Kiera for inspiring all of us Manitobans to live up to their shining example.

Miigwech, merci and thank you very much.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I ask leave to speak to the minister's—the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the member have leave to respond to the statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: I speak today to acknowledge three remarkable children's champions, children who have triumphed despite severe medical challenges and who share their story, which speaks to the incredible advances that have been made in child health, and to the personal journey that these three children and their families have been on to overcome their illness or injury.

I'm going to say a few words particularly, about the children's champion for this year: Pacey Wall.

He's nine years old. He has intestinal failure. With more than 30 surgeries and with the failure of his intestine, he can't eat solid foods, but has to rely on total parenteral nutrition given intravenously.

Pacey's mother Kim says, even though it sounds like it's hopeless, it's not. We have an amazing team here. We trust them and we have a great relationship with them. When he's feeling good, he's unstoppable. His mother says then you wouldn't know he was sick. He always looks amazing and he's chatting up with everyone he passes in the hall, waving to everybody who walks.

And he knows his surgeons so well, he'll sometimes play pranks on them, like taping a 'fike'—fake spider to his belly right before they begin a procedure. As a pediatrician, I spent many years at the Children's Hospital in Winnipeg, and served for a term as the vice-president, medical, on the foundation from about '85 to '92. It was an incredible time, working for improvements in the health of children.

I want to thank all those on the board of the Children's Hospital Foundation, the foundation staff and the volunteers, including the guild members, who support the foundation.

* (13:40)

I also want to thank all the doctors, nurses and other staff, including child-life specialists, who work at the Children's Hospital and make such a difference for all the children in our province.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Greendell Park Community Centre

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I'm pleased to rise today with great pride to recognize Greendell Park Community Centre, their board of directors, staff and their many volunteers, and to wish them congratulations on 75 years in our community.

The mission statement for Greendell Park Community Centre is to welcome, include and engage our diverse community through participation in recreational activities. And for over 75 years, they have been overwhelmingly successful in fulfilling this mandate.

Named after the nearby Greendell Avenue subdivision, where over 70 war veterans and their families settled under the Veterans' Land Act, the community centre and outdoor skating rink was built in October of 1947 and the facility officially opened

its doors with a neighborhood social on November the 8th, 1947.

Ever since then, Greendell Park Community Centre has been an important gathering place for sports and recreation. The annual Winter Carnival and Jam Can Curling Tournament is something the community looks forward to all year long, and I'm always pleased to host my annual summer MLA barbecue on the beautiful grounds on Woodlawn Avenue.

This community centre is an integral part of our neighbourhood and part of many families' pastimes and histories, including mine, where my husband still reminisces about the times he wore a jersey and played for the Greendell Falcons.

I ask my colleagues to help me honour Perry Gilmour, the president of the board, who is here today, and to also congratulate all the members of the board, the staff and the volunteers of Greendell Park Community Centre for their contributions that they make to our community and to wish them another successful 75 years.

Thank you very much for everything you do.

Connor Dewar

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): Today, we come together to celebrate a hometown hero who has made us all proud, Connor Dewar. As some of you may know, Connor's from The Pas, lived in Dauphin and—for many years, and is a member of the proud Red River Métis family.

Connor's journey to the NHL has been nothing short of remarkable. After honing his skills on the ice for his hometown, he went on to play for the Everett Silvertips in the Western Hockey League. It was there that he caught the attention of the Minnesota Wild, who drafted him in the third round of the 2018 NHL entry draft.

Since joining the Wild, Connor has proven to be a force to be reckoned with. His speed, skill and tenacity on the ice have made him a fan favourite and a valuable member of the team. He has also become a role model for young hockey players in Manitoba, inspiring them to pursue their dreams and work hard to achieve their goals.

But Connor's impact extends far beyond the rink. He has been an outspoken member of the Métis community, giving back in numerous ways, being a vocal advocate for Indigenous kids in sports and serving as a positive example for all young people. His dedication to the sport and his commitment is—

to making a difference in the lives of others are truly inspiring.

So today we salute Connor Dewar, a talented athlete, a dedicated community member, an ambassador for northern Manitoba and a truly inspiring young Indigenous athlete. We are honored to call him one of our own and look forward to watching him continue to shine on and off the ice.

I would like everyone to join me in thanking Connor for making the trip here to be in the gallery today. Thank you, Connor, for representing our community with such grace and excellence. We wish you all the best in your future endeavors and we all know you will continue to make us proud.

Ekosi.

Swan Valley Sport Fishing Enhancement

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I rise today to recognize all the volunteers and board members of the Swan Valley sport fish enhancement organization.

At their recent annual banquet, the group celebrated 37 years of enhancing Manitoba's world-class fishery. This has earned the group a reputation of professional excellence.

Our exceptional fisheries staff, invaluable work of our conservation officers, our commercial and recreational fisheries, our rural communities and our First Nations, all working together, will continue to make Manitoba's world-class fishery sustainable and viable for generations to come.

Budget 2023 reflects this importance, and our government is again delivering. The \$20-million endowment fund to the Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund in 2020 will continue to support critical fish and wildlife projects every year. Over three quarters of a million dollars was granted this year alone to 16 organizations for 21 fish and wildlife enhancement projects. This is a testament to the success.

Madam Speaker, I want to finish by recognizing two individuals of the Swan Valley fish enhancement group, Brock Koutecky and Holly Urban. These two conservation-minded enthusiasts worked countless hours to create Manitoba's newest and most exciting fishery, West Watjask Lake.

After evaluation with fisheries staff, they found this lake to be a feasible muskie lake. In 2017 and 2019, muskie were stocked, and a success it has been, producing 48 master angler muskie so far. Holly and Brock's work are the reason this lake is a master angler

fishery. Hard work by a group like Swan Valley sport fish enhancement and fisheries staff working collaboratively with the public is the recipe for success.

Swan Valley sport fishing can be proud of their many accomplishments. And I invite you next May to their 38th annual banquet. We'll see you there.

Thank you.

Premier's Leadership Record

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): It's become a tradition at the end of each sitting for me to highlight the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) greatest hits. Fingers crossed this is the last time I have to get up in the House and do this.

She refuses to make Orange Shirt Day—*[interjection]*

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: —a statutory holiday. *[interjection]*

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: She forgot to disclose \$31 million—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: —in property sales, breaking the conflict of interest rules in the process. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: She can't name a single MMIWG2S national inquiry's calls to justice.

She attacked community organizations providing harm reduction services.

She's let MPI get to \$200 million-plus over budget and years behind schedule on the Project Nova.

Continues to take millions of our dollars out of our schools and send cheques to billionaires. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: She's actually worried that Loblaw's is going to go out of business if she doesn't—get help from them.

Tried to hide her secret plan to cut millions of dollars from school divisions.

Skipped out on walking on Pride.

Awarded a residential school denier multiple government appointments.

Stands by her Health Minister's repeated failures, including the mass resignation of nurses from the SANE program.

Repeatedly misleads Manitobans on health-care staffing numbers.

Her diagnostic and surgical task force working group doesn't even include any doctors.

Refuses to give allied health workers a fair deal after five years still.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans deserve a government who shares their priorities: a strong health-care system, quality education for our kids, an affordable standard of living and a province where human rights are respected and people can live freely and authentically.

Fortunately for Manitobans, they can show this Premier and her PC caucus how they feel about her repeated failures—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

* (13:50)

Canada Day Pickleball Tournament

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Have you ever played pickleball? And did you know that pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports here in Canada?

Well, every year, my father and I host an event for Canada Day, behind Tyndall Park school, with Tyndall Park Community Centre, and this year we will be adding a pickleball tournament to our agenda.

Throughout the day there will be lots of games, entertainment, face painting. We'll have captain Canada challenges and, of course, our fireworks.

But Madam Speaker, what I really want to highlight is the new addition of pickleball and extend the invitation that if you've played before, and want to enter and register for the tournament on Canada Day, please let my office know by Monday, June 12th and we'll make sure to get you signed up.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: There are a number of guests that I would like to introduce to you this afternoon, if I could have everybody's attention.

I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today: Mr. Amit Bindra of Winnipeg; Mr. Harbans Singh, Winnipeg; and Shamsheer Sandhu, visiting, Chandigarh, India, who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration (Mr. Reyes). And—behalf of all members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

Also, in the public gallery, we have the daughter of the honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin), Natanis Pascal, who is in the gallery.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And it is time to say farewell to three more pages.

The first one is Bhavika Sandhu: I am beyond grateful to have been chosen as a legislative page this past year. I will be graduating from St. Mary's Academy in June and will be attending Western University to pursue an education in political science. I will always be grateful for the opportunity that I had to learn about the legislative process here in Manitoba. This past year has been unforgettable and I had made memories that will last a lifetime. Through this experience, I have found a greater appreciation for all the hard work that is put into improving Manitoba. I would like to thank all the MLAs, clerks, journals and Chamber branch members for making this past year memorable. Finally, I would like to say thank you to my teachers, parents and friends for supporting me this past year.

And Bhavika is joined by her mother, Inderjit, and her grandparents and, of course, her father, the MLA for The Maples.

The next page is Oscar Lavitt: Working at the legislature as a page this year has been an incredible experience. Whether it was getting beverages for members, taking in question period, getting to know the members, or trying not to laugh at some of the more clever heckling, there was never a dull moment, except perhaps some of the committee meetings. I've learned a great deal about the government this year. I've seen how hard each of you work and your commitment to improving our great province.

This June, I will be graduating from St. Paul's High School. I will be attending the University of Ottawa

next year, where I plan on pursuing a degree in political science and economics. I enjoyed being a page so much, in fact, that I will be doing it again next year, but this time at the federal level. I will be working in the House of Commons in Ottawa, and I hope it's just as good as an experience that I've had here in Manitoba's Legislature.

I wish all of you the best, and thank you very much for the opportunity to work in this great Chamber.

And Oscar is joined by his parents, Fran and Russ, who are in the public gallery.

And Tunteya Stoller: Being a legislative page has been an experience of a lifetime that I will never, ever forget. I learned so much. I had the chance to meet so many amazing people, and I have so much respect for the individuals that make this place run smoothly. This incredible opportunity has given me a new perspective and so much knowledge on the legislative process. And because of this, I am now considering pursuing law and politics after I graduate from high school next year.

I will forever be grateful for this experience because I know that this is not something that everyone gets this chance to do. I have been inspired by all of you here, working to make our province a better place. So, thank you so much.

And on behalf of all members, we wish the three of you the very best in your future endeavours, and congratulations on your successful year here and all the best.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Rural Paramedics and Nurses Staffing Level Concerns

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): There is a crisis in health care in Manitoba. We've learned that this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) cut the number of paramedics working in rural Manitoba by 87 positions.

The same Premier cut the number of nurses working in the city of Winnipeg by 300–300 fewer nurses working in the capital of our province since the PCs took office.

There's a crisis in health care, and the PC government's cuts are the reason why.

Can the Premier explain to the people of Manitoba why there are nearly 100 fewer rural paramedics and 300 fewer nurses working in our province since when she took office?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to put false information on the record in this Chamber.

Almost \$8 billion in our health-care system that we're investing, \$668 million more than last year, Madam Speaker. A 9.2 per cent increase to our health-care budget.

And when it comes to paramedics, in our Budget 2022, we hired 35 additional primary-care paramedics, making an \$8-million investment that, I will remind Manitobans, the Leader of the Opposition and all members opposite voted against it.

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

Mr. Kinew: Just want to point out for careful observers that the Premier is always trying to distract from the cuts that they've made to health care.

And I guess it makes sense because nobody in Manitoba wants to see cuts made to our health-care system. Nobody in Manitoba asked for the PC government to cut 300—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —nursing positions from the city of Winnipeg. Certainly no one in rural Manitoba who's been raising the alarm about longer rural EMS wait times asked for this government to cut the number of rural paramedics by 87.

And yet, in spite of the fact that the people of Manitoba want more health care and not less, this PC government only expands the health-care bureaucracy while cutting the front lines of the people who actually deliver care to patients in need in our province. These are the shocking truths that we're revealing for all members here in the Chamber today.

I would just want to ask the Premier: Why did she cut 300 nurses and 87 rural paramedics from our province? [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, let's put some facts on the record.

In fact, we are making historic investments in our health-care system: almost \$8 billion, a 9.2 per cent increase over last year. Members opposite voted against that. They voted against all of our budgets that had an increase to health care by some 22 per cent, Madam Speaker.

So, we will take no lessons from the members opposite.

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

Mr. Kinew: The cavalier dismissal of the true facts on health care is unbecoming of a premier, and she should address the fact that she reduced the number of nurses working in Winnipeg by 300. She should address the fact that there are 87 fewer paramedics working in rural Manitoba today.

Now, Madam Speaker, we know that there is a reason that 7,000 members of MAHCP voted 99 per cent in favour of a strike. It's because there's a crisis in health care, and it was caused by this Premier's cuts, continuing on the health-care agenda of Brian Pallister, which was to put profits ahead of the patients.

We say that's wrong, and I'll ask the Premier again just to explain to the people of Manitoba why she cut 300 nurses and 87 rural paramedics.

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, it's unbecoming of someone who wants to be the premier of this province to, day in and day out, get up in this Manitoba Legislature and put false information on the record.

* (14:00)

Record investments—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —in health care, Madam Speaker, 9.2 per cent increase over last year. Members opposite had a chance. They could have voted in favour of that. What did they do? They voted against those increases to our health-care system. [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Education System Government Funding Plan

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): In November 2021, this Premier announced that she was going to change the education funding model in this province. But now she's flip-flopped and tried to change tack by saying she's going to conceal this new education funding model from the people of Manitoba until after they vote in this year's election.

However, the enterprising and loyal opposition have unveiled the truth of their plan, and it's not good.

It means millions of dollars cut from school divisions across the province while the PCs keep handing out cheques to out-of-province billionaires.

Pembina Trails, St. James, Louis Riel School Division, Seven Oaks, Lord Selkirk—and the list goes on—will all see cuts to the tune of millions of dollars.

Will the Premier tell the House why she's hiding her plan to cut school funding for Manitobans?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Madam Speaker, it's not hiding a plan when we tabled it in the very Chamber, in the way of a budget: a \$100-million increase to the education budget alone; a 6.1 per cent increase to education funding in the province of Manitoba just last year alone; 6.1 per cent increase, and a 23 per cent increase since we came into office.

We'll take no lessons from members opposite.

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

Mr. Kinew: Manitobans are rightly concerned that the PC government, the Stefanson government, is trying to do to our schools what they've already done to our hospitals.

We, as the Manitoba NDP, will not let them. We're going to stand up for health care. We're going to stand up for education too.

Now, we know that the only way that the Premier can pay for all of the announcements and press releases that she puts out day after day is by making cuts to education funding. That's why we shared the documents that show that some school divisions would see cuts of more than \$10 million. We're talking \$11 million in annual school funding cut under the plan for the PCs.

So we know, in their operation desperation, the election year Hail Mary that they're rolling out, they're trying to be all things to all people. But we still know who the PCs are: the same party that cut health care, that's now trying to come for our schools. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: Why is the Premier hiding her plan to cut education funding in Manitoba?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, on the topic of desperation, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is so desperate to get into government that he'll just say anything in this Chamber, and he continues to put false information on the record.

Manitobans know, more than a \$100-million increase to our education budget over last year, a 6.1 per cent increase. Every single school division across the province of Manitoba saw an increase.

And Manitobans should all know that those investments that were made were voted against by the NDP.

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

Mr. Kinew: In 2016, Brian Pallister said there would be no cuts to health care.

But then what happened? What happened to the Victoria General emergency room? What happened to the Seven Oaks emergency room? What happened to the Concordia emergency room? What happened to the CancerCare headquarters? What happened to the CancerCare community care clinics? What happened to the special drugs program?

All of these health-care programs were cut by Brian Pallister, with this Premier acting as his Health minister.

With that record on health care, we know that that's what they have planned for the education system next. We've shared documents that show that Louis Riel, Seven Oaks, Pembina Trails would all be cut to the tune of millions of dollars a year. That's the only way the PCs can try to pay for their press releases.

We say it's wrong. We'll stand again their—against their cuts every day.

The only question remaining for the Premier is to explain to Manitobans why she's hiding these plans for cuts from the people of Manitoba.

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, Manitobans know that we can't hide something that is tabled in the Chamber. It's free for everyone to see and to look at.

And the fact of the matter is in that budget, Madam Speaker, a \$100-million increase to education alone. Not one single school division—every single school division saw an increase to their budget.

Health-care increase since we took office, a 22 per cent increase; education, 23 per cent increase; social services, a 25 per cent increase.

And every single time, the NDP voted against it. Shame on them.

Education System Government Funding Plan

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): We know what this PC government's agenda is: it's more cuts to schools.

Their plan, which they tried to keep secret, cuts millions of dollars from divisions around the province in their new funding formula. The Louis Riel School Division in particular will have a cut of \$10 million with the PC government's plans.

That's a lot of flashy promises and announcements that the PCs make in an election year, but we all know that they'll pay for it with cuts in the classroom. That's why they tried to hide the new funding formula from Manitobans until after the election.

So will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) stand up today and will she explain why she insists on continuing to cut education in Manitoba?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I'm not sure if there was a news release out today or what, but it looks like there's been a shuffle in the opposition benches there, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, this member knows that we have increased funding to the tune of \$100 million, a 6.1 per cent increase. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: And this member is very much aware that for 20-plus years all our education partners are screaming, saying that they wanted a change in the funding formula.

Madam Speaker, we're doing what they couldn't do, didn't do, didn't want to do.

They're running a campaign of fear, Madam Speaker. That's what they're going to do. Nobody wants to go back to the dark days of the NDP.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

I'm going to caution all members, there is—heckling is becoming an issue at the moment and since we started oral questions, and it is becoming difficult to hear. So, I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation.

The honourable member for St. Vital, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Moses: Madam Speaker, Manitobans don't want more cuts to education. They've already seen seven

years of cuts from this PC government, and it's had a real impact on schools.

Fewer teachers in the classrooms mean less one-on-one time for students. Fewer supports means if your child needs help, they might not be able to get it. That hurts kids, and it's simply the wrong approach.

The PC plan to cut another \$10 million from the Louis Riel School Division is devastating for kids. Manitobans know that this PC government's empty election promises will come at the cost of supports in the classroom.

So, will the Premier come clean with Manitobans today and will she tell us that her real plan is to cut education in schools? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: Madam Speaker, the member is just completely incorrect and running again on his leader's fear-mongering tactics.

So, Louis Riel School Division, under our Premier—the Premier and the MLA for Tuxedo—Louis Riel School Division, couple years ago, 11.8 per cent increase—that's 2021-22; '22-23, 6.1 per cent increase; '23-24, Madam Speaker, an 8.4 per cent increase.

* (14:10)

Madam Speaker, that's more than less. I strongly recommend the NDP to get on the board for some numeracy lessons. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Moses: Well, Madam Speaker, let me just table the facts for the minister, if he's so unsure, so that he can actually educate himself on the reality of their plan. Maybe it's even secret from himself.

The plan says that they're going to cut \$10 million from the Louis Riel School Division. They tried to hide it until after the election, but Manitobans deserve to know the truth and the government's real agenda. Now, after seven years of cuts, Manitobans don't believe this government because they know they have a track record of empty provinces.

They know this PC government will pay for all of their election promises with cuts to the classroom, and they want, today, the Premier to stand up and apologize.

So, will she commit today to stop cutting education from students in Manitoba?

Mr. Ewasko: Madam Speaker, the only cuts that we're doing are cutting taxes for individuals, making life more affordable in Manitoba, making sure that students are going to achieve success in this great province of ours, no matter where they live, their cultural background or their own personal circumstance.

It looks like the NDP maybe cut their budget on photocopying, Madam Speaker. This plan that the member tabled was a rejected plan; we had gone forward with \$100 million, a 6.1 per cent increase this year alone. I had already tabled and listed off a whole lot of percentage increases—23 per cent since we formed government.

We're not going to take any lessons from the NDP, nor should any Manitobans; and I appreciate the media being here to see that the NDP are putting more false things on the record, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Education System Government Funding Plan

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Well, after seven long, long years of deep cuts, the PCs are making empty promises left and right in an election year: you get a million dollars; you get a million dollars.

Manitobans know that they can't trust the PCs to follow through on their promises. And even if they did try to follow through, Manitobans want to know how the PCs will pay for all of these announcements.

The only way that the PCs can pay for their announcements is to cut education, including an \$11-million cut to the Seven Oaks School Division. And I'll table the document.

Why is the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) so committed to cutting our children's education and their future?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Gender Equity): Madam Speaker, let me put some facts on the record.

Earlier this year, our government made a commitment to Velma's place, which is a 24-7 safe space for women, something that the members opposite should've supported. What did that member do when

she had a chance to support women in need in this province? She voted against it.

Shame on her.

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

MLA Fontaine: Since the day that the PCs took office, they have refused to support Manitoba schools.

Years of PC cuts have forced the Seven Oaks School Division to consider cutting the Learn to Swim program, up to 50 staff and after-school program.

We know what the PCs' real agenda is for education after the election. Their hidden funding model makes it clear they plan on making cuts to the education, including an \$11-million cut to the Seven Oaks School Division. That's just horrible, Madam Speaker.

Will the Premier stop hiding her plan and simply admit her plan to Manitobans before the upcoming election?

Ms. Squires: Irrespective of the false information that that member is putting on the record, our government has an agenda to make life better for women in the province of Manitoba.

That is why we took our women's resource centres and our women's shelters funding from \$5 million to \$15 million. We nearly quadrupled the investment in women's programming.

And what did that member do? She voted against it.

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

MLA Fontaine: Madam Speaker, after seven long, long years, the PCs are making empty promises in an election year in a desperate attempt to buy back support.

We know the only way that PCs can pay for these announcements is to cut education, to cut the future of Manitoba children. We've seen the documents; I've tabled the documents. The PC' hidden education funding model includes an \$11-million cut to Seven Oaks School Division.

This is just wrong, Madam Speaker.

Can the Premier explain why she's planning on cutting \$11 million to the Seven Oaks School Division, and why she's hiding it until after the provincial election?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): What's wrong with the member's statement is just the plain misinformation that the member continues to put on the record, Madam Speaker.

It's actually great that some students are in the gallery today to see, on that side of the House is all fiction, on this side of the House is all facts, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question on the funding model review. Just yesterday, we announced that we are unpausing the funding model review and, in addition to that, under the leadership of this great Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) of ours, we're making sure that there's a funding guarantee. As we can—as we transition into the new funding model, all school divisions will receive an increase.

Dead wrong on that side of the House, Madam Speaker. Old talking points from an old, tired opposition party that will stay there for years and years to come. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: We have some guests that just arrived in the gallery, and they're not there for a very long time.

We have, seated in the public gallery, from Linden Christian, 52 grade 9 students under the direction of Jason Smoker. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan).

On behalf of all members here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

Justice System—Rural Manitoba Circuit Court Hearing Cancellations

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): We've recently learned that the PC government is cancelling a multitude of circuit court hearings throughout rural Manitoba. I'll table the document that shows this.

This includes four cancellations in Altona, two in Arborg, six in Emerson, six in Gimli, three in Lundar, 13 in Selkirk, 22 in Steinbach and two in Stonewall. That's concerning, Madam Speaker.

Everyone has a right to timely access to justice, and we're worried that the PCs' cancellations will cause further harm to Manitobans and their communities.

Can the minister explain why he is cancelling 58 circuit court hearings while violent crime is increasing under this PC government's watch?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We know, Madam Speaker, that courts and circuit courts are delayed for a variety of different reasons that have to do with individual factors within the court system itself.

That member opposite, just a few months ago, was raising the alarm that every day, he said, that there would be cancellations on northern circuit court scheduling, and that wasn't true. And so I don't take the member's opinion as fact, ever, in this House. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. *[interjection]*

I'm going to call the Minister for Consumer Protection to order.

The honourable member for Concordia, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Wiebe: I invite the minister to look at the document I tabled, which proves that these recently announced cancellations are affecting many court circuit dates across the province.

The document, in fact, shows that 58 cancellations are being done, and I quote, in an effort to provide timely access to justice. End quote. But that, of course, defies logic: cancelling circuit court dates doesn't increase access to justice, it does the opposite.

* (14:20)

This decision will negatively impact Manitobans in communities like Selkirk and Gimli, in Altona and more. We know the PC cuts to justice have made our communities less safe and these cancellations are just another example.

Can the minister explain how he can claim he's ensuring timely access to justice while cancelling 58 circuit court dates in the next while?

Mr. Goertzen: That actually wasn't me who said that, that is signed by the chief judge of the Provincial Court of Manitoba. Perhaps you'd like to apologize to her.

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

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I'm glad to be catching the minister up to speed on this important issue.

We've repeatedly the-raised concerns with PC cuts and mismanagement within the justice system. They've cut programs to improve safety and have failed to support Crown prosecutors who are overworked and burnt out. The result is that violent crime has increased under their watch and our communities are less safe.

And now we've learned that the PCs are going to cancel 58 court-circuit court dates across rural Manitoba, all while claiming this, quote, will provide timely access to justice. That makes no sense, Madam Speaker.

Will the Stefanson government just stop making cuts to justice and reverse the 58 circuit court cancellations that are scheduled?

Mr. Goertzen: I'm shocked that the member opposite would disparage the Provincial Court chief judge in this House in the way that he has.

But he issues—or he raises the issue of violent crime and wonders why it's going up. It's going up because there's a lot of things, including bail reform, that need to change in the country. This is a government, this is a Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) who led that bail reform fight.

There needs to be more work to do, but there are some, including some in his caucus, who feel that violent offenders already are getting—are—should be released more often and more easily. In fact, if he wants to note one of those members, he can just turn behind him, who advocated for letting more people out on jail who are violent offenders.

Manitoba Hydro Rate Increase Concerns

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): The PC government's hydro rate hikes are hurting Manitobans during a cost-of-living crisis. Rates have gone up 20 per cent under this government since 2016, and now they want to raise rates another 5 per cent over the next year.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses wrote a letter calling on this PC government to cancel their planned rate increase. I'll table it for members opposite to read again—not that they read it last time we introduced it.

Will the Premier listen to Manitoba small-business owners and cancel the rate hike today?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Well, Madam Speaker, our government is reducing payments—transfer payments from Manitoba

Hydro to the government of Manitoba, \$190 million this year. That takes the rate increase on 3.6 to 2 per cent.

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

Mr. Sala: Small businesses are still struggling coming out of the pandemic, but the PC government is making it even harder for them to keep their doors open. Higher electricity costs means small businesses will have fewer resources to create jobs, invest in their businesses and contribute to the provincial economy. The PC government's rate hikes have put a massive burden on business owners and their families.

CFIB represents over 4,000 Manitoba businesses and they're asking this government to reconsider their planned rate increase.

Will the minister change course and stop hiking hydro rates today?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, the members opposite should do their homework.

What's happening in Nova Scotia: 6.9 per cent increase; New Brunswick, 4.8 per cent; SaskPower next door, 4 per cent; Hydro-Québec business, 6.5 per cent; industry, 4.2 per cent.

Here in Manitoba: 2 per cent.

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

Mr. Sala: I hope the minister listens closely to this bit of information, which they like to deny.

CFIB says that the PC government's Bill 36, quote, draws serious concern, end quote, for how it limits the Public Utilities Board's ability to independently review rate increases.

That's shameful. This PC government didn't like the PUB's independent oversight of hydro rates, so they rewrote the law to let them hike up rates 5 per cent every year. This is hurting Manitoba families, not just on their residential rates, but also for their businesses.

The last thing they need—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: The last thing they need is yet another hydro rate hike from this government.

Will the minister do the right thing, listen to small-business owners and cancel the planned rate hike today?

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, what is shameful was the legacy the NDP left Manitoba Hydro in—\$24 billion of debt, obviously, having to be serviced on the backs of Manitoba homes.

We're taking bold measures, saving ratepayers \$190 million this year alone. We are creating a strong Manitoba Hydro. We're also reducing rates to Manitobans.

And not only that, Madam Speaker, they didn't like the PUB. They went around the PUB. We're actually strengthening the PUB with an additional \$2-million investment in the PUB.

Construction of Churchill River Dam First Nations Lawsuit for Damages

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): When we talk about reconciliation in Manitoba, the role of the Province and Hydro should be near the top of the list.

O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, OPCN, and two other community associations have launched a lawsuit against Manitoba Hydro because of a massive dam that diverts the Churchill River that was built 50 years ago against the communities wishes.

The project resulted in the forced relocation of the entire community of South Indian Lake and the imposed burning of the previous settlement. The fishery, which made the community a beacon of northern self-reliance and stability for decades, has collapsed.

Now, Hydro knows the damage they've done. We all do.

Why are First Nations, whose communities were ruined by Hydro and broken government provinces, forced to go to court to get justice?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Certainly, there are certainly challenges when it comes to Hydro development.

We recognize that. I think Manitoba Hydro recognizes as well. Certainly, there's lots of conversations going on in terms of trying to remedy those situations.

Clearly, any of these issues before the courts, it's not a good time—not an opportune time for me to speak to that.

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

Mr. Lamont: Now, in 2021, we asked the minister to consult with and listen to the representatives OPCN

who were pleading not to give Hydro what they called a licence to destroy.

This is a massive Hydro project that was allowed to operate for nearly 50 years, no matter who was in government, with an interim licence.

In 1986, the government granted Hydro's request to deviate from the licence, raising the lake further with the condition that Manitoba Hydro fully mitigate any effects of the altered levels and flows. That's never happened, and the damage is far greater and lasting much longer than it was ever predicted in 1986.

If we're serious about addressing the harms of the past, this is a big one.

Will the minister amend the licence to ensure Hydro repairs the damage it did?

Mr. Cullen: I know Manitoba Hydro have been consulting with First Nations for a number of years.

We do realize that there was damages that were certainly occurred in the past, and discussions will continue. In respect of the court cases, we'll certainly wait how the court cases unfold.

Certainly, I know there is discussions with communities. Those discussions will continue. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Lamont: In 1967, a report warned the Manitoba government against raising the level of the lake because the impact it would have, but said that they expected it would happen because of this Province's bad treatment of Indigenous people.

But, under an Indigenous—under an NDP government in the 1970s, Manitoba Hydro built the Churchill River Diversion Project. They poured cement in the water, blasted a nine-kilometre channel through the forest and forcibly relocated the entire community.

The Churchill Diversion redirects 85 per cent of the flow of the second largest river in Manitoba, flooded an area twice the size of the—Winnipeg, including culturally significant sites and graves.

If the Manitoba Hydro and the Stefanson government are committed to reconciliation and righting wrongs, why won't they stop hiring lawyers and sit down to negotiate fair compensation so these communities can recover and rebuild?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, I think the member has certainly indicated there is a long history when it comes to Hydro development in Manitoba and some of these issues do go way back.

* (14:30)

We certainly will allow the court cases to unfold as they will, and, clearly, I know there's outstanding licensing issues that have to be dealt with in the future as well.

Cost-of-Living and Tax Relief Government Record

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Manitobans are concerned about the rising cost of living caused by liberal NDP tax-and-spend policies, and there's a fundamental difference between our Conservative Party—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter:—and the NDP. Our Conservative government is letting Manitobans keep more of their hard-earned money, while the NDP want to raise their taxes.

Can the Minister of Finance explain for the benefit of members opposite how allowing hard-working Manitoba families to keep more of their money helps to grow our economy? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: I'm going to have to call the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) to order.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for Borderland for the question.

The NDP raised taxes on the backs of Manitobans 36 times in their last tenure in office. This has taken millions of dollars out of the pockets of hard-working Manitobans.

Our government takes a different approach. In fact, beginning in July of this year, Manitobans will see an increase in their paycheques because of our tax decreases; in fact, \$525 in savings for each Manitoban.

With our bracket changes in 2024, Manitobans will see \$1,400 in savings.

In addition, Madam Speaker, this year's budget, 47,000 low-income Manitobans will come off the tax rolls altogether. That is true and long-term savings for Manitobans. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: I'm going to have to call the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) to order as well. *[interjection]* Order.

Rural Paramedic Services Response Times and Staffing

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Madam Speaker, the PCs' cuts continue to negatively affect rural Manitobans. We recently learned that, since 2018, rural paramedic response times are taking up to 30 per cent longer.

And there's nearly 33 per cent vacancy rates among rural paramedics. And at the same time, paramedics have gone the last five years without a contract.

These are not coincidences. Paramedics are tired of being disrespected and overworked by this PC government and are looking for work elsewhere.

Can the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) explain: Why has she failed to support rural paramedics?

Hon. James Teitsma (Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services): We value and respect rural paramedics and all paramedics and everyone in our health-care system.

Negotiations are under way, not at this table, but at the bargaining table where they should be. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

The honourable member for Burrows, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Brar: Madam Speaker, when someone in rural Manitoba calls 911, they're having to wait up to 30 per cent longer for a paramedic compared to 2018. That's unacceptable.

The PCs' cuts have caused response times to increase and have driven paramedics to seek work elsewhere. Rural Manitobans are suffering as a result.

Can the Premier explain: Why is she failing rural Manitobans when it comes to health care?

Mr. Teitsma: Madam Speaker, I sure hope this member is not attempting to destabilize the bargaining work that's—the good work that's happening.

That's where the work needs to happen, is at the bargaining table, and he should allow it to continue.

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

Mr. Brar: I'm simply asking a question, and it deserves an answer. The PCs' cuts are having—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brar: —adverse impacts on rural Manitobans. They have closed rural ERs. They have failed to fill massive vacancy rates. And they have failed to hire—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brar: —doctors.

And now, we have learned that rural paramedic response times have gone up dramatically under the PCs. Compared to 2018, it takes up to 30 per cent longer for paramedics to respond to the most serious emergencies. That's moving in the wrong direction.

The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) needs to commit to stop cutting rural Manitobans' health care and properly support front-line workers like paramedics.

Will she do so today?

Mr. Teitsma: I think the NDP are forgetting that they are the ones who closed 20 rural emergency rooms across this province. Shame on them.

We are investing in rural health care—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —like never before, with new hospitals being built and new emergencies and expansions to emergency rooms. That's investment, not like what members opposite did.

Paid Leave for Miscarriage or Stillbirth Request for Government to Pass Bill 210

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): It is estimated that in—one in five pregnancies end in miscarriage. When a family experiences this devastating loss, they should not face the added burden of lost wages while they take the time to grieve.

Bill 210 would have provided guaranteed paid leave to families grieving a pregnancy loss. This is an amendment our party has brought forward three times now, and it's long overdue.

Bill 210 has passed second reading, but will this government do the right thing and pass the right bill and see it through royal assent?

Ekosi.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Well, it's a historic time in the Manitoba Legislature with 15 private members' bills having already passed third reading.

One of those bills was the bill brought forward by the honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield) that'll provide, for the first time in the province of Manitoba, leave for those who are dealing with a miscarriage. This is a historic bill, an important bill that'll provide support and relief for those families who are dealing with a miscarriage.

I want to thank the honourable member for Rossmere, commend him for bringing forward this bill and successfully getting it passed today, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Third Party Advertising Practices

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) In 2006, the City of Winnipeg announced it would tear down Kelvin Community Club, which sparked huge opposition from local residents.

(2) As the MLA for the area, the member for Elmwood sponsored two ads to CanStar Community News Herald on October 19 and October 26, 2006, advertising the October 29, 2006 Kelvin Community Centre Halloween barbecue, which was reported by the Winnipeg Free Press on October 30, 2006.

(3) The ads were approved and paid for by Members' Allowances, as was a third similar ad run in the Winnipeg Free Press.

(4) Two months later, city council set a date for the decisive vote on the future of the club at its Wednesday, January 24th, 2007 meeting at 9:30 a.m.

(5) The member for Elmwood received Members' Allowances approval to produce a professional TV ad, and ran mainly—and ran the ad mainly on CTV, which gave a 50 per cent discount, as it was a community club. The ad asked people to phone the mayor and attend the council meeting Wednesday, January 24th, 2007 at 9:30 a.m.

(6) Almost one year later, a CTV reporter questioned the ads and save Kelvin campaign expenses. CTV offered an apology after it was discovered that a

PC staffer deliberately misled the reporter. She was ultimately fired for her role in the events.

(7) On June 2008, shortly after a request was made by the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, the Manitoba Auditor General decided to conduct a detailed audit of allowance claims and covered 100 per cent of Members' Allowances claims for the two-year period from April 1st, 2006 to March 31, 2008.

* (14:40)

(8) Pages 125 to 127 of their November 2009 audit report noted that the audit covered all Members' Allowances and printing claims from all MLAs and found nothing—quote: Nothing came to our attention during this audit to suggest that material inappropriate spending was taking place.

(9) The date of the auditor's report was November 2009, leaving only two months of the two-year statutory limit to file a 'defination'—defamation suit, which originated with the CTV report of January 18, 2008. This would have given little, if any, time to proceed with court action against CTV.

(10) The Regina-based Canada Growth Council, a branch of the Canada Strong and Free Network, formerly the Manning Centre, is now conducting a paid ad campaign which includes defamatory ads on Facebook, which have been proved false in 2008.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Elections to consider the legality of out-of-province, third party advertising by the out-of-province Canada Gross [*phonetic*] Council through its social media platform on Facebook, which, in its sponsored Manitoba Watch 2023, are spreading ads that have been proven defamatory.

And this petition's signed by many, many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: In accordance with our rule 133(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Further petitions?

Construction Wages

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) In 2022, after consultation with industry members, the provincial government mandated the first construction industry minimum wage increase since 2017.

(2) Construction industry minimum wages for the majority of the industrial, commercial and the institutional sector will increase by 14 per cent from 2022 to 2024.

(3) These wage increases were necessary to catch up with inflation from the lack of increases since 2017 and to maintain pace with inflation for the next three years.

(4) However, heat and frost insulators will only receive an 8.91 per cent increase from 2022 to 2024, despite insulators experiencing the same cost of living increases as other trades.

(5) This lower wage increase will make it more difficult to attract and retain skilled professionals to the heat and frost insulator trade, which will be to the detriment of the construction industry as a whole.

(6) The 8.91 per cent wage increase will mean that over 300 and frost—heat and frost insulators working in Manitoba will lose roughly \$3,578 per year when compared to a 14 per cent increase.

(7) This lower wage increase is unfair and harms heat and frost insulators and the trade as a whole.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to modify the construction industry minimum wage schedule to implement a 14 per cent increase to the heat and frost insulator trade to reflect a wage of \$34.23 in 2024.

This has been signed by Rob Duarte, Mike Hall, Erin Jorgensen and many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I've got three leave requests, and I'll put them to the House separately.

Could you please canvass the House for leave to call Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act,

for concurrence and third reading debate this afternoon, despite the fact that the bill is not yet listed on the Order Paper.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to call Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act, for concurrence and third reading debate this afternoon, despite the fact that the bill is not yet listed on the Order Paper?

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

House Business

Mr. Goertzen: This leave request relates to business tomorrow afternoon.

Could you please canvass the House for leave to consider condolence motions in the House tomorrow, May 31st, 2023, under the following arrangement:

(a) The seven currently outstanding condolence motions for deceased former members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba shall be called as the first item of business under orders of the day, government business, in the following order: Edward Williams, Jean Allard, Jim Carr, Michael Kawchuk, Joseph Paul Marion, Clif Evans and Jay Cowan.

(b) The party to which each former member belonged shall designate the mover of each motion.

(c) For each motion, the mover may speak for up to 10 minutes, and any other member wishing to speak will have up to five minutes.

(d) Once all members wishing to speak have done so, the Speaker shall put the question, asking members to approve the motion by observing a moment of silence.

(e) Following the passage of each motion, the Speaker's office shall send to the deceased member's family the Hansard transcript from that day—from that sitting day—along with a personal letter of condolence from the Speaker.

(f) The House shall not see the clock that day until the consideration of all seven motions concludes.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to consider condolence motions in the House tomorrow, May 31st, 2023, under the following arrangements:

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(e) Following the passage of each motion, the Speaker's office shall send to the deceased member's family the Hansard transcript from that sitting day, along with a personal letter of condolence from the Speaker.

(f) The House shall not see the clock that day until the consideration of all seven motions concludes.

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Goertzen: I thank the House.

Finally, on the last leave request, could you please canvass the House for leave to allow end-of-session speeches in the House on Thursday, June 1st, 2023 under the following arrangements:

(a) These speeches shall be called as the first item of business under orders of the day, government business.

(b) Any member wishing to speak shall have 10 minutes to do so; and

(c) The House shall not see the clock that day until all members wishing to speak have done so, and once these speeches conclude, the House will rise.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow end-of-session speeches in the House on Thursday, June 1st, 2023 under the following arrangements:

(a) These speeches shall be called as the first order of business under orders of the day, government business.

(b) Any member wishing to speak shall have 10 minutes to do so.

(c) The House shall not see the clock that day until all members wishing to speak have done so, and once these speeches conclude, the House will rise.

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mr. Goertzen: Then, for business this afternoon.

I recognize that we'll have a backstop period at some point, but could you please call for concurrence and third reading Bill 40, 10, 22, 23, 32 and 35.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider the following bills this afternoon: they are on concurrence and third readings of Bill 40, 10, 22, 23, 32 and 35.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 40—The Combative Sports Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: So, I will start by calling concurrence and third reading of Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act.

Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I, seconded by the minister of advanced—*[interjection]* Oh.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Training (Mrs. Guillemard), that Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

* (14:50)

Mr. Khan: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today for the third reading of Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act. This bill makes a number of amendments that will benefit Manitoba's combative sport community.

This act will expand the mandate of the Manitoba Combative Sports Commission to include the regulation and oversight of designated amateur combative sports, in addition to the regulation and oversight of professional combative sports. This will allow for more types of amateur combative sport competitions to take place safely in Manitoba.

Our government is committed to enhancing athletes' safety in all sports and in expanding the range of sport activities in the province, including combative sports.

I would like to thank all of the stakeholders and community members that came out to committee to speak in favour of the bill. I would like to give a special shout-out to Giuseppe DeNatale, who's joining us here today, owner of CFC gym, for his leadership, passion and drive over the better part of the last decade

to make this bill happen, all for kids' safety in this province.

Thank you, Giuseppe, for your work and leadership on this.

I would also like to thank John McDonald for his work with the Manitoba Combative Sports Commission for their co-operation and support throughout the process of developing this legislation. We look forward to continuing work with the commission on matters affecting the combative sport community in the future.

I would also like to take a second and thank everyone in the House today, as well, for passing this very important bill, all for the protection and safety of amateur athletes in this province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): It's always an honour to put a few words on record as the MLA from The Pas-Kameesak.

There is amateur combative sport activity already occurring in Manitoba, with the exception of MMA and kick-boxing, as there are no provincial sport organizations to regulate them. This bill will change that just in time for the World Police & Fire Games, which is occurring in Winnipeg this year.

There—this is something MMA and kick-boxing enthusiasts have been asking for, so we're happy to see the government act here.

Unregulated sports—always a risk to the participants and organizers, one which have—has largely been ignored by regulations and governments until now. Combative sports can be dangerous, and unregulated amateur competitions lack the oversight or licensing required for certain forms of insurance, although injuries are just as possible.

Without standards imposed on competitions through the commission, there is fear of inconsistent safety in these competitions, and, as a result, more injuries and consequences for organizers are possible. This is especially true for our youth.

There is—there are significant challenges in regulating full-contact martial arts and combative sport, however the alternative to allow the unlicensed and unregulated activity to continue or ban it outright.

In offering legal amateur combative sport competitions, the hope is that legal and unregulated sport activity will decrease. In a vacuum of nobody to regulate, the events have continued, and belief is that

they will continue in the future. If it were to continue, the government has now acknowledged they need to change, so inaction at this point is not really an option any longer.

In addition to potentially driving economic activity, the goals of this regulation are generally beneficial to this province.

Generally, medical community has accepted that regulation is a necessity for combative sports in order to provide medical care. Under the Criminal Code of Canada, it's against the law to participate in any pre-arranged fight with fists, hands or feet, except in certain circumstances.

The Criminal Code allows provinces and territories to determine the sports in which amateur contests may be held and with those—and with whose permission, and allow professional boxing and mixed martial arts contests with the permission of a body, such as the office of athletics commission.

There has been comparable jurisdictions that have made this move to regulate the previously unregulated combat sports, and in large the response has been positive. Wisconsin State Senate made this change in 2016 in a first wave among US states. The bill that it passed aimed to regulate all combat sports with varying degrees of regulations.

Alberta is a unique jurisdiction, at is—as it's the only jurisdiction in the US or Canada where sports are not regulated by the state or province, but instead kick the 'regularoty' can down the line to the municipal level. So, city by city the rules and regulations differ.

And lastly, in Ontario, 2019, the Combative Sports Act had—has regulated and allowed a far broader range of combative sports to be legalized in Ontario, both amateur and professional. They created regulating bodies were—where they didn't exist previously, and this is very comparable proposal to the one in Manitoba.

Ekosi, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm happy to rise and just put a few more thoughts on record here for Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act.

Very happy to see the bill moving through third reading here this afternoon, and typically, regulation is very beneficial for all parties involved in most factors in life here, Madam Speaker. In this case in particular, we know that this legislation will help with safety for athletes, for coaches, for facilities.

We know it's going to create opportunities for athletes, whether that be professional athletes, they're going to be coming from Manitoba even more now because of this legislation and regulating these sports here in the province. It—being able to compete in safe, sanctioned sports within the province, Madam Speaker.

It's also great for our Manitoba economy; by regulating the sports, we're going to have athletes from around Canada come to Manitoba. They're going to use hotels in Manitoba, use restaurants in Manitoba. It's actually going to create more business for our province, as well as provide incentives for athletes within the province.

Ultimately, this further regulation of combat sports will help us have more hometown athletes. Very happy to be supporting this legislation. I want to thank those who have joined us here today, who played a big role in the creation of this legislation, and for the minister for bringing it forward.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is there any further debate on this bill?

If not, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act.

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

Bill 10—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Social Responsibility Fee Repealed)

Madam Speaker: I will now call concurrence and third reading of Bill 10, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Social Responsibility Fee Repealed).

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mr. Khan), that Bill 10, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Social Responsibility Fee Repealed), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, and subsequently amended, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: This bill amends The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Act in order to repeal the social responsibility fee on cannabis retailers operating here in Manitoba.

The social responsibility fee ensured that cannabis retailers contributed to the social cost associated with cannabis legislation, including increased health cost, public education and addiction services. Repealing the social responsibility fee will continue to reduce legal cannabis costs to consumers looking to switch from the illegal market.

* (15:00)

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

On May 10th, 2023, Bill 10 was heard at committee; 17 presenters registered to speak to the bill, all of whom had direct business interest in the cannabis industry here in Manitoba. We heard overwhelming support for repealing the social responsibility fee, as well as a recommendation that repeals the social responsibility fee to January 1st, 2022 instead of January 1st, 2023.

Subsequently, we filed a report stage amendment that would do just that: repeal the social responsibility fee retroactively to January 1st, 2022, and we were pleased to see that pass. We understand the capital and labour investment opportunities that would open up for these businesses by doing so, and we are pleased to further help these businesses make ends meet.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these initiatives are another step towards our government's goal of supporting legal cannabis operators as they compete with and displace the illicit cannabis market in Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I'm happy to rise today and put a few words on the record, and I'm certainly glad to see this bill having been brought forward and to know that it will be passed in the Legislature today.

Over the past few months, as the relatively new critic on this file for the liquor, gaming, cannabis control act and everything around Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, I have spent quite a lot of time talking to both small- and large-business owners in the cannabis industry.

And, you know, it's really clear to me that a lot of things were rolled out by this government regarding how cannabis became, you know, started and was for sale as a legalized product in this province, but not necessarily well-thought-out in terms of, you know,

the kind of respect that we want to see for business owners and their inclusion in this process.

And I realize that cannabis business owners are really up against a lot of barriers, some of which have been created by this government and some other types of barriers, perhaps created by the federal government, around the implementation of the cannabis industry in our province.

And we know that the 6 per cent so-called social responsibility fee on cannabis sales was what the PCs did instead of just putting a PST on cannabis. They love to say they hate taxes, but then they bring in—they call it a fee, but it's really a tax; it was a tax that was actually hidden from the consumer, so just really, really on the backs of small-business owners. And now they've decided to remove this, which we think is a very good idea.

And the main reason we think it's a really good idea—I mean, partly because of the harm to small businesses when you're not upfront about it being a PST-type of tax—but also because, as we heard from so many small businesses, you know, not only does the consumer not necessarily know, but that money we know wasn't spent on social responsibility. We know from the FIPPA's that were done that that money has just kind of disappeared into the government's general revenue and can't be accounted for.

And, you know, on committee, we heard from folks that the only social responsibility thing that they ever saw come forward from this government was some pamphlets that they were to put into consumers' bags when they made purchases. And, you know, I think I heard the number about \$1 million was spent on those pamphlets, but we also know millions and million and millions of dollars have been collected. I believe it's \$20 million that hasn't been accounted for in general revenue.

So, listening to those cannabis owners, sitting on committee, hearing them talk about the impact that this has made on their ability to survive, especially for small-business owners to survive and thrive, and also hearing some wonderful stories about some of the initiatives they have taken as business owners for their own social responsibility.

There was one company with a couple of stores that—couple of stores here and a couple of stores in another province—that's reinvested over \$25,000 of their own sales into their community and into charitable contributions and things to make their community safer and stronger.

We heard from another small business in the west end of the city that, you know, it's quite small, family run, just one location, where they talked about the cannabis users who are—have medical conditions, sometimes recovering from cancer. And, you know, building relationships with their consumers, spending time, you know, celebrating with people when they—when their cancer's in remission or in other ways building these very meaningful relationships when people are using cannabis for health reasons as I described.

So, it's been really a pleasure for me to get to know some of these small-business owners, to have these meetings and conversations. And I learned a lot from them, and I have a lot of respect for the folks that came to speak to committee and to share what the impact, the very difficult impact of this fee or tax has been on their companies.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to say that it's about time that this fee is being repealed. And I hope that we can move forward in this province with, you know, being sure to respect small businesses and understand the impact, you know, the thousands of jobs that are created by these businesses, and work with them for, kind of, fair and meaningful ways to—for businesses to contribute to social responsibility and to also be sure that businesses are consulted when these kinds of things are developed and to make things fair for the—on—across the field for small-business owners such as this.

So, thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for giving me a few minutes to speak about this.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few words on this bill.

The government put this social responsibility fee, which is actually a social responsibility tax, but the government doesn't like to pronounce the word tax, so they used fee. It was put on cannabis businesses with the idea of helping to alleviate problems which could arise because of the decriminalization of cannabis and the ability to sell and market cannabis legitimately.

However, the money which was collected was never used for this purpose, so far as we're able to tell. It was just put into general revenue so that the government could claim that it was balancing the budget, which they never did, or if they did, they did it so temporarily just before the COVID pandemic that it wasn't all that meaningful.

What was clear at committee stage was that the small businesses who are operating cannabis stores around Manitoba are struggling. They've been in considerable difficulty, and that due to the ineffectiveness of the government in the way that it managed the social responsibility fee and in the way that the government failed to enforce and address the sales of cannabis on the black market.

So, because the government failed to be too concerned about the black market and illegal cannabis sales, the illegal cannabis market continues, as I understand it, to be about 50 per cent of the total market.

And many small businesses are complaining that they set up a legitimate business selling cannabis in a very carefully controlled way, had this extra tax put on them and it is appropriate now that we are removing or the government is removing this tax and that it's being done retroactive to January of 2022.

* (15:10)

But at the same time, it raises the issue which remains unexplained as to why—when we have a Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) who should be concerned about illegal actions in our province—why the Minister of Justice took no actions with respect to the sale of cannabis on the black market.

And that was a difficulty. It's putting people at risk when they're buying cannabis on the black market because it may be contaminated, it may not be accurately described and sold, it may be more or less potent than it's claimed and clearly the—there should have been much better action to address and to reduce the black market illegal sales of cannabis.

At the same time, there is still some work to do. In the sale of liquor, we have precise amounts of the amount of alcohol in the liquor that is purchased. But when it comes to cannabis, it is less clear what the precise amounts of active ingredient are and that could be—and, I think, should be—standardized, even though there are some challenges in doing that.

So, we're certainly ready to support Bill 10. We want to make sure that cannabis, to the extent that it is being sold, is sold on the legal market, not on the illegal market. We want to make sure that cannabis businesses have an opportunity here to market their product and to have a legitimate, as they are, business which can do well in our province.

So, with those few words, our support for this bill, but at the same, we recognize that the way that the

government has handled cannabis sales in Manitoba leave quite a bit to be desired.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 10, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Social Responsibility Fee Repealed).

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

DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 22—The Emergency Measures Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously announced, we will now move to debate on concurrence and third reading for Bill 22, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Keewatinook, who has 28 minutes remaining.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a chance to share a few more words on Bill 22, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act.

Some of the comments that were made at a couple different readings of this, and also some conversations that went on with communities that were affected by these issues, is sometimes legislation that's brought forward from the government is almost called housekeeping—you know, changing terminologies, changing some different aspects of legislation and departments that are also—already within government.

But this also takes on a little bit more. There's different terminology; for example, the name of the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization is now going to be changed to the Manitoba emergency management organization. So, there's housekeeping things like that.

But there's also a matter of the fact it also makes mention of now—different departments and different aspects of government now having to have a continuity plan when it comes time to emergency planning. And including also—then designating certain organizations or corporations for critical services.

So, that did beg the question from some organizations—and, in particular—and I will cite the community of Peguis that did ask, then, what exactly does that mean. What does the critical service mean, what potential corporation is it and what does that empower them to do, or what kind of authority would they have?

And again, first and foremost, Peguis thought of that as a reactionary approach, not so much a proactive approach into how this is coming to be. And this response, of course, this piece of legislation now is coming at the end of this legislative session, and while a pandemic happened for a vast majority of this term, we're now sitting here talking about things that we're going to change after the fact, not prior to. So again, a reactive approach by this government and not something proactive to be able to do.

So, the response is not significantly changing the province in preparedness for all emergencies, but rather provides changes reflective of those that we've already had. So we've already had the pandemic, we've already had snowstorms, fires, floods.

So again, now this legislation's coming today rather than at the beginning of their term, or beginning going all the way to 2016, to have those in place looking ahead to potential issues that we may arise, whether it be flood, fire—I mean, of course nobody could've foreseen the pandemic, but that is a reality that we faced and we were thrown into. And if perhaps we were more prepared by bringing forward legislation prior to those kind of events it would've left us in a better position to be able to react to that.

But again, this is just now this government attempting to kind of get a political win from their term of office, although many of those issues were mismanaged. Many of the issues with the flood were mismanaged, with the fire situation, with the pandemic, were mismanaged time and time again by this government.

So now they're bringing forth a piece of so-called housekeeping legislation to kind of clarify and, well, let's do this; we're going to now defer things to different departments, we're going to put a plan in place. Of course, this is the government that says we're going to plan, we're going to announce, but actually when it comes time to boots on the ground, at the bedside, at the classroom, it—that really doesn't come into effect.

But with Bill 22, some of the questions in the Q & A part of discussions were very simple, I thought;

very straightforward questions that were brought forward. For example, does this legislation come with any consultation of communities that were affected by issues that may arise, whether it be fire situation—and I can cite my constituency specifically, during fire season, during a devastating fire season, where my communities were completely cut off—where my communities were completely cut off not just from access, but even just being able to communicate.

So again, they asked at that time, you know, where's the plan? And everything just kind of scrambled around, and everybody—it was a free-for-all. And at the same time this government, because they neglect the North time and time again, it was a thought process of out of sight, out of mind; that's not an issue to deal with. But meanwhile, for weeks and weeks—and going on months, even—those communities were not only displaced, but they were cut off from support from this government.

So, plans like this, where were these at that point in time? And now we're having discussions now saying we're going to—now we're going to fix that; we're going to fix that process. Well, the fact of the matter is, we haven't seen that. We haven't seen proof that they're—they have that ability to do that.

And so, I cited just one example from my constituency, where they were cut off from fire season—completely cut off. And including—and I remember specifically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, having those discussions and we were texting back and forth the leadership in the communities, and all of a sudden, nothing. Because that's when the fire went across the hydro line, took out any kind of power source they had.

So, they had no way to communicate and nobody knew what was going on. Nobody. The community was isolated. They didn't know what was going on. They had some people that were evacuated, who were communicating with loved ones back home, and again, there was—just completely cut off.

So, when this legislation now talks about a continuity of service, what exactly does that then mean in that situation? So those are clarifications that we looked for time and time again, and we're not seeing that in this situation. And we go back, now, not even as far back as that; now we go into where the floods now affected communities all over Manitoba, not just in southern Manitoba, in the Interlake as well. And again, we had communities completely cut off.

So, the continuity of service is something that is first and foremost their priority, because that just simply did not exist for those communities. And there we are, playing catch-up to the emergency of the day. And in that situation it was a flood. So, again—and we all know that when those situations 'arie,' whether it be a snowstorm, a flood, fire—things change on a moment's notice. So these plans need to be in place.

And Bill 22, with The Emergency Measures Amendment Act, attempts to try and do that. But again, it's more a housekeeping measure.

* (15:20)

So, the question of a continuity plan in those situations—what exactly does that entail for all aspects and what department is going to be responsible for that? Is it going to be Transportation and Infrastructure? Or is that now going to be deferred to a different department to come up with their own? Or is Transportation and Infrastructure going to oversee that plan to ensure that that is, in fact, happening?

Because those issues go over and they overlap into all—basically all departments, whether it be Health, whether it be Education, whether it be Conservation. An issue—an emergency issue like that, even if it is fire, floods, snowstorms, pandemic, it oversees all departments.

And I know all the ministers and all of Cabinet realize that every time we have an emergency here in Manitoba, it affects them. Whether it be a bigger effect or a lesser effect on your department, it does have an impact on your department. So that continuity plan needs to be completely clear and concise so everybody knows, so it's not a matter of, oh, that's this department; that goes over to this department; oh, that's, in this case, potentially a corporation—so who is going to oversee that?

So, those are some of the questions that arose during the question-and-answer period. And there wasn't a really clear answer as to how that overlap and how that little grey area of who does what and who oversees to make sure and ensure that all of these pieces that are addressed in this legislation is actually going to be followed through so that every department, in fact, does have that plan in place.

Because, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when an emergency arises, sometimes it's just, boom, we're in the middle of it. And people don't know where to go; they don't know how to react. So the plan needs to be thought out so they, in fact, know, I can see either—whether it be a person or whether it be a department

or whether it be a community or whether it be a corporation, that's the head—where we need to go so we get a clear, concise answer of where we're going to, what steps need to happen, so we do have a continuity.

Because I know when those situations happen, there's a plan for continuity of government. So when we do those kind of issues and we have an emergency situation, there is a continuity of government. So that same plan needs to now get out to those communities. Because sometimes, it may be one community; sometimes, it may even be—just be a family. But for the most part, it is large geographical sections of Manitoba that are affected by issues such as this. So those need to be thought out, need to be explained, need to be clear and concise so there is no confusion.

Because when we get in those situations, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we have an emergency situation, whether it be flood, fire, snowstorms, pandemic, there is a lot of panic. There's a lot of uncertainty from the general population as to where things are at. And they should look to this government for leadership. They should look for their leadership in their communities, in their municipalities and their First Nations for that leadership. But if they aren't aware of the plan that is in place for all of them, then it just adds to that confusion.

So, in this legislation, that is what this is intended to do. This is intended to clear up that confusion. And, again, citing the word continuity that is in here. That's what's important, too, so we have that continuous dialogue, that continuous kind of method and steps that we'll take so there is no confusion. Because in those times, there's families, and Manitobans are potentially panicked and not knowing what to do.

So, when we talk about emergency measures, every Manitoban should know exactly what the situation is happening and what could potentially happen and what does a various situation mean for their community, whether it's a number to call or if—let's say they don't have that ability to call, where do they go? Or if they don't have that ability to go anywhere, who do they contact, or who comes to contact them?

So, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those kind of plans need to be worked out today as well. Not just a broad legislation that's going to look at cleaning up some housekeeping, changing some terminology, but something that actually has a plan going forward and saying, this is what we're going to go; this is where every Manitoban can go to look for their answers in whatever situation it may be.

And I know—understanding—fully understanding that there's situations that we may not be able to foresee. Nobody could have foreseen the pandemic, but it was a situation that we were just thrown into. But if we had a plan in place for something similar to that or something to that effect and then we just build on that and adapt to when the situation is happening, it's a starting point and it's a base for us to be able to plan that emergency situation and our response to those situations.

Because we don't know what's coming. We don't know if the—you know, we've heard the term now, it's a one-in-100-years flood, it's a one-in-100-years snowstorm, one-in-100-years fire season. This pandemic is a once-in-a-century kind of pandemic. But the reality is, those are potentially things that are happening every year now. You know, we could have floods every year. We could have fire situations every year. And it's becoming the norm.

So now, how do we react to the norm? And this legislation needs to be able to do that.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like many, many pieces of legislation brought forth by this government, it's a starting point, but it is something that needs to be built on, needs to be clear and concise for all Manitobans so there is no confusion.

Because Manitobans should have that faith in their government where they can come and get a clear answer, not a confused—not deferred to here, not deferred to there, just because a certain department or a certain minister or a certain corporation does not want to deal with the issue, there is a disclaimer for them to be able to offload that responsibility to somebody else.

There should be a clear and concise method, a—clear and concise steps that we take in the case of an emergency situation, whether it be, again—I can't say this enough—flood, fires, snowstorms, pandemic, those kinds of situations. There needs to be a clear answer and clear steps where all Manitobans can go, and they're getting nothing like that from this government. There needs to be clear and concise answers.

So, again, legislation is a step in the right direction here, but there needs to be some clarity as well, and I'm hoping in due course that clarity comes with whatever needs to happen over the various departments, whether it be in the Transportation and Infrastructure Department or other department where these kinds of methods overlap.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to start by making a comment on what the MLA for Keewatinook said. He said no one could have foreseen the pandemic.

Well, he's wrong; there's a lot of people who did foresee it. But it is true that the NDP, when they were in government, did not foresee it, and they didn't plan for it. And it is true that the PCs, when they were in government, did not foresee it and did not plan for it.

So, it is important that we have legislation like this, and it be as good as it can be, to make sure that we are prepared for any emergencies.

One of the most recent events was the fire which threatened Pimicikamak, Cross Lake, and some 7,000 people, I understand, had to be evacuated. There was not as clear a plan as there should have been to protect Cross Lake so that there didn't have to be an evacuation.

And, from the perspective that we have, that their government has not provided an explanation for why that was so, and we don't have a report—a full report—yet on that fire, as to why and how it got to the extent that it had required a full and expensive and disruptive evacuation to people from Cross Lake.

I remember it wasn't long ago when there was a flood at Peguis First Nation. And it was quite apparent at that point, and Peguis First Nation got one day of warning that the flood was coming. It was completely inadequate, because there wasn't a plan and preparation to make sure that people in Peguis First Nation knew well in advance that there was a threat of a flood.

So, we are hoping that this legislation will enable better work to be done in the future than has been done in the past. We will support this legislation.

We believe that there is much more that needs to be done and is here and that we need to make sure that everybody throughout the province is protected with emergencies.

So, with those few remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will sit down and look forward to this legislation passing and becoming law in due course.

Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 22, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act.

* (15:30)

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

I declare the motion carried.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(*Continued*)

Bill 23—The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 23, The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Amendment Act.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Accessibility): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (Mr. Ewasko), that Bill 23, The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les personnes vulnérables ayant une déficience mentale, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: I'm very pleased to see this bill move forward because we know that it will improve the lives of adults living with intellectual disabilities in our province and the individuals that support them. And I want to thank everyone who came out to speak at this—about this bill in committee a few weeks back.

When this bill was first—or, when this act was first introduced in 1996, it brought in a regime that was considered progressive for its time and is still, in some respects, unique across Canada. Despite the act's focus on best practices, however, it has not been updated in 26 years. Elements of the act are out of date, and we recognize that the legislation must evolve as the understanding of disability changes.

Bill 23 modernizes our approach to both abuse and neglect, updates the language we use to talk about disability and improves access to information for adults and their family members through the abuse investigation process.

We recognize that this is only a first step towards the longer journey, and we expect to make more

changes as we hear and learn more. Our—I look forward to seeing Bill 23 become law and to its passage in the House today.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm pleased to put a couple of words on the record in respect of Bill 23, The Vulnerable Persons Living with mental—a Mental Disability Amendment Act.

I—again, the bill amends The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act and replaces wording. And the following wording changes are made: so, vulnerable person is replaced with adult living with an intellectual disability; mental disability is replaced with intellectual disability; and then, supported decision making is replaced with assisted decision making.

And again, as I've said many times in the House, language matters, and the way that we use language informs the way that we interact and experience and see the world around us. And so, certainly, as I said at second reading and at standing committee, we do support Bill 23 in respect of ensuring that the language that we use in Manitoba is respectful, it is reflective of the experience and the expertise and the desires of the community in which it is impacted on.

And, again, as I said yesterday in respect of Bill 218, when we know better, we do better. And certainly, I would argue that this is probably one of those bills that is seeking to do better in the language that we utilize here in Manitoba.

I do want to just reflect on committee, which was a couple of weeks ago, I guess. And the minister will know, we actually had some pretty phenomenal presentations by folks.

And one in particular that I would like to acknowledge, I believe, is Tomas Ponzilus [*phonetic*]-Ponzilius. I hope that I am pronouncing that—his last name—properly, and if not, I apologize for that. He was very thoughtful in his presentation to the committee and I listened very intently, and I know that the minister did, too.

He did a really good job of sharing with the committee and—for history, because, of course, that will be a part of Hansard—his experience as a Manitoban living with an intellectual disability. And I really respected what he shared with us, and the way that he shared with us as well.

He had some notes and read from some notes, but he also took opportunities to just share in the way that

he's able to share, and the way in which he feels comfortable sharing with the committee at the time. And I just wanted to take an opportunity to acknowledge him and to—and I know that both the minister and I did thank him for his presentation—but, I just wanted to say Miigwech to him one more time.

It takes—you know, for us this is something that we do every single day. But, you know, for Manitobans it does take a sense of courage to make that step to register for committee and then to make your way down to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, and then to make your way into that room, into a committee room, and then certainly to stand before, what—we are strangers.

We are basically strangers to Manitobans, for the most part, to Manitobans who come and make a 10-minute presentation. And I've always really appreciated Manitobans who exercise their democratic right to come and present at committee. And, as everybody knows, we are one of the few jurisdictions across the country that participate in that.

And so, I wanted to acknowledge him because how much more so, for a Manitoban who has acknowledged that he's got an intellectual disability, to go through all of those steps and to make his way on that particular evening and to present to us.

And he did struggle a little bit, and he did admit to the committee that he struggled, but he did so well and I just wanted to acknowledge him. I know that after his presentation, or a couple other presentations, I went to himself and to another Manitoban who presented right after him—for the life of me, I'm pretty—I can't remember what her name was, and I apologize for that.

But I wanted to just go and thank them both for their presentations. And he said to me at that time, he said, I hope it was okay, I was nervous. I said, absolutely; I said, you did so wonderful. It was really important for us to hear the message that you were sharing, and the teachings that he was sharing to us. And he said, well, and he said, you know, I know that sometimes I kind of went off, he says, but that's the way that I learn, and that's the way that I can express myself.

And I think that that was beautiful. I think that if there's anything that we can do in this House, is create space, and safe space, for every single Manitoban to come and—as is their democratic right—come and spend some time and present, and for us to listen.

It is really, truly, the bare minimum that we can do as legislators, is to listen to Manitobans as they share with us their experiences and their expertise, and so that hopefully we are creating legislation and informing legislation that is better for all of us.

So, I just wanted to take a couple of minutes, and then to all of the presenters that we had that evening, all of whom are dedicated and committed to ensuring that we have a safe and equitable province, I want to thank them for their words that they put on the record, as well.

It's important words, and I think that everybody—I would hope that everybody in the Chamber knows the very important role that we play in creating and legislating changes here that make it best for everyone.

So, with those few, few words, we on this side of the House will continue to support Bill 23, and we look forward to its royal assent and proclamation.

Miigwech.

* (15:40)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to start by thanking the MLA for St. Johns for her comments about Tomas Ponzilius. He has made an incredible effort. He has overcome incredible obstacles. And he did remarkably well when he presented and was clear and able to answer questions well.

And it shows how well an individual with a learning disability, as he has, can do with a little bit of help. And it emphasizes why it is so important that individuals like Tomas Ponzilius have that help so that they can do well.

And we hope he continues to do well. He is off this fall to do a degree in social work because he has decided that that's where he wants to go. And he's also decided that it's really important to have people like himself in social work because too often, many in the social work field are not as sensitive as they could be to individuals with learning disabilities, to understanding the struggles that they're going through and to being able to provide some help and some accommodation.

I think his stories of the fact that when he asked for accommodations, sometimes he was able to get them and sometimes he was not, and he was turned down. And it's important to note that it's actually in the Human Rights Code, in Canadian human rights, that people with disabilities—and Supreme Court ruling—should get accommodation as they need it for

their disability. And this is something which is too often not adequately recognized, particularly for individuals with learning disabilities.

I'm going to comment briefly on the presentations of Jessica Croy, Dale Kendel, Debra Roach, Amy Shawcross and Suzanne Swanton.

Dale Kendel was clearly very involved in putting together a report which was, I think, excellent from what I know, except in one respect: that it didn't adequately consider people with learning disabilities.

I admired the presentation of Jessica Croy, who emphasized that it is the person first and the disability second, that we—substitute decision makers should be the last resort and sometimes they are used too quickly and take away the rights of people with disabilities.

I listened carefully to the words of Debra Roach and Amy Shawcross, who laid it out very clearly: that the justice system is too often two-tiered, that people with disabilities face a different system of justice; others can go straight, when there is abuse, to the police and somebody with a disability has to go to the department. And that may take quite some time and there may even be a barrier there to getting it to an adequate investigation by the police.

So I think that the points were well taken and we need to be making sure that we are treating people fairly, particularly those with disabilities.

I'm also going to say a few words about the presentations which dealt specifically for the need to include individuals with learning disabilities.

Tomas Ponzilius, Sharon McIlraith and Twila Richards all talked about this area and they all described situations where it's very apparent that there needs to be a much better understanding of and accommodation for people with learning disabilities in Manitoba.

Tomas Ponzilius spoke specifically and said that he often felt that people with learning disabilities were abandoned by society; that often, disability services in Manitoba do not consider learning disabilities. And it's to remember that most individuals with learning disabilities, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, et cetera, et cetera, have normal to above-normal IQs. And so, they don't fall in the category that's included with support for CLDS after age 18, even though there are many who really desperately need it.

And Sharon McIlraith spoke specifically about her son who's over 18, who has an impairment in

adaptive function, and yet, he has been selectively included from this—excluded from this legislation and he's not covered, and that is sad.

It is, and was important to note, as Sharon McIlraith pointed out, that in Newfoundland, they no longer use the criteria solely based on IQ but they rather have criteria based on the needs of the individual and so that they are able to include individuals who have a normal IQ and an impairment of adaptive functioning.

And it was significant, I thought, that Sharon McIlraith brought out the fact that her son is very bright in certain respects but very restricted in others. And so, on an IQ scale, he was something like in the 98th percentile for verbal communications, I think, and—but when it came to adaptive functioning, he was down in the 6th percentile, and that was the area where he has trouble.

And people presume, because he can communicate so well, that he is able to look after himself, but sadly, that is not the case. And being over 18 and without able to get the supports that he really needs, he continues to struggle.

Twila Richards, who has dyslexia and is a teacher, again demonstrates the amazing ability of people with dyslexia if they are given a chance. There are a large number of people with dyslexia who have done very well.

And, indeed, as Malcolm Gladwell has pointed out in his book *David and Goliath*, that he mentioned the occasion when he was in a room full of leaders, of entrepreneurs in the United States, and in this room full of people who were leading entrepreneurs, he asked how many had dyslexia, and it was 30 per cent. And those are 30 per cent who were given the opportunity and 30 per cent who have done extraordinarily well.

And it just shows that if we don't support people with dyslexia, if we don't help them, we lose out on developing and helping people who can be amazing entrepreneurs and contribute in many different ways to our society.

So, Twila Richards made some pretty important points, including the fact that, sadly, learning disabilities were largely excluded from consideration under this bill. And so, clearly, we need to go back at the earliest possible opportunity and to change this legislation so that it includes people with learning disabilities.

And it is a big disappointment to me, personally, who's worked with many people with learning disabilities to find that there was this selective exclusion.

So, with those remarks, we are prepared to support the legislation, even though I'm disappointed in parts of it, because it is a step forward. It is progress. It's not as far as we should. We missed a big opportunity, but we will accept some movement forward.

* (15:50)

Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 23, The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

**Bill 32—An Act respecting
Child and Family Services
(Indigenous Jurisdiction
and Related Amendments)**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now move to Bill 32, An Act respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Related Amendments).

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Training (Mrs. Guillemard), that Bill 32, An Act respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Related Amendments); Loi concernant les services à l'enfant et à la famille (champ de compétence autochtone et modifications connexes), reporting from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Families, seconded by the honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Training, that Bill 32, An Act respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Related Amendments), reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Ms. Squires: I certainly do want to start off my remarks by expressing my gratitude to everyone who

came to committee to present on this bill as well as to the Indigenous leaders that were consulted and contributed greatly on the—this bill's content.

So, I'm very pleased to speak on the third reading today of Bill 32, An Act respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Related Amendments). Provincial CFS law must adapt to better support at-risk children, youth and their families. We also need to recognize Indigenous governments as they draw down jurisdiction over the delivery of Child and Family Services.

Changes to the CFS act under Bill 32 will align Manitoba laws and practices with the federal CFS act. These amendments recognize the inherent jurisdiction of Indigenous governments. They also propel changes within the provincial CFS system to provide more tools to preserve, sustain and restore families.

Through this bill, changes to temporary orders will also allow judges to extend these orders instead of issuing permanent orders. What this means, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there will be a reduction in the need to sever parental ties due to arbitrary timelines and reduce the number of permanent wards.

Our bill affirms that the views of the child, their family and the child's Indigenous nation must be considered without discrimination. Furthermore, these principles recognize that Indigenous language, culture, practices, customs, traditions and ceremonies are critical to prevent Indigenous children from losing their connections.

These amendments respond to long-standing advice and recommendations from Indigenous leadership and service delivery partners. We recognize that this is only another step in a long journey, and we continue to engage with Indigenous partners, and we expect to make more changes as we hear and learn more about what is needed to support the realization of Indigenous jurisdiction.

I look forward to seeing Bill 32 become law and congratulate all First Nations and Métis partners who helped us bring this legislation to the House today.

Thank you.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Well, I am pleased to put a couple of words on the record in respect of Bill 32, An Act respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Related Amendments).

This is the last opportunity that I have to get up in the House to put some words on the record in respect

of legislation in this 42nd Legislature of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

It is fitting, I suppose, that it is in respect of Indigenous children and Indigenous children in care. I don't think that there is a single greater issue that is affecting Indigenous peoples in Manitoba than the continued conditions that our children getting apprehended are predicated upon.

And you know, often if you talk to folks in the Indigenous community, we know that there's no other issue that we can talk about—unsheltered, our unsheltered relatives, MMIWG2S, the over-representation of Indigenous peoples within the correctional facilities, poverty, addictions—you cannot talk about any of those issues without connecting it back to CFS, in many respects.

You know, the MMIWG2S national inquiry, in the report, it very clearly laid out that many of the MMIWG2S women, girls and two-spirited that have gone missing or murdered had interactions with CFS. I think here in Manitoba, you know, one of the most well-known cases of an MMIWG2S falling through the gaps, I suppose you could say, is Tina Fontaine and her interactions with CFS, and the conditions that Indigenous peoples and Indigenous families, Indigenous mothers face when trying to navigate the CFS system. And, again, like, Tina Fontaine is just one of many.

Fonassa Bruyere, who—I hope members in the House read on the weekend, there was a really well done, thoughtful piece done by Shelley Cook, I believe, from the Winnipeg Free Press, that interviewed the family of Fonassa Bruyere. And Fonassa Bruyere—both Tina and Fonassa are from my reserve of Sagkeeng Anishinaabe First Nation, which I have said many times in this House actually has the unfortunate distinction of having the highest numbers of MMIWG2S not only in Manitoba, but across Canada. And it's heartbreaking to know that. But both Fonassa and Tina were from my community.

And the—and we've known this for very long, since Fonassa was found in September of 2007 or 2008. She fell through the cracks of the CFS system and is a reflection of all of the system's failures. And she was only 17 years old—she's just a baby. And actually in the article that Shelley wrote this weekend, the family had, you know, talked about how sweet she was and how good she was and how happy she was, and how she always called—she was raised by a collective of relatives, and how she always called

Janet mom. And that's Janet Bruyere, who loved Fonassa so much.

But when Fonassa was found, I've said this before, very soon thereafter, community organizations got together and created what is called the Sexually Exploited Youth Community Coalition. I was a part of that, as the director of justice for Southern Chiefs Organization. And I've shared before, like SCO was involved, AMC, MKO, the police, we had government at the time that sat on that. And one—and then we had gone through this exercise—no, she would've been found in September of—early September of 2007, because then it started this whole path to looking at Tracia's Trust.

Which most people would know, Tracia's Trust is a—you know, a government policy, a government—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

* (16:00)

The time being 4 p.m., I'm now interrupting debate to put the question on the remaining concurrence and third reading motions on the specified bills without further debate or amendment, except for the debate provisions allowed under 2(14).

For each such bill, the minister, critics of recognized parties and independent members may speak for a maximum of 10 minutes per bill. The House will not adjourn until all applicable questions have been put and royal assent has been granted.

In accordance with our rules, all matters of privilege and points of order are deferred until after these actions have been concluded. The bills will be called in the following order: Bill 32 and 35.

Okay, so we will now resume Bill 32, with the honourable member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) having four minutes remaining.

MLA Fontaine: I forgot that we were operating on a deadline, so I apologize for that.

I will wrap up my comments to say this, is that one of the things that the death of Fonassa Bruyere did was bringing everybody together to try to work together as a community collective, in partnership with government as well.

And we embarked on this journey; we had called it, like, a path session. I think we were—it was like over the weekend, we were all—all of the stakeholders involved, participating in this path journey.

And one of the things that was abundantly clear was the gaps in service for the CFS, or the child-welfare system. And when we looked at it, when we dissected it, Fonassa fell through every single gap that was intrinsic within that system.

And so—and then, you know, a—you know, several years later, then we know that the death and the murder of Tina Fontaine, one of the things that was said there was the gaps in service, and how she was failed by the system and fell through the system.

So, I don't think—I—again, there is no greater issue that faces Indigenous peoples living here in Manitoba and across the country. And so, ways in which we can strengthen legislation that ensures that we are keeping Indigenous children with their parents, Indigenous children with their communities, Indigenous children with their collective relatives; anything that we can do that supports that, that supports the protection of Indigenous children and supports families, is something that I think that, no matter what side of the House that we sit on, we should all be actively working towards.

I don't think—I would hope—that none of us want to be here in 10 years from now or 20 years from now still talking about the same issues that affect Indigenous families, and I don't—I would hope that none of us want to be here where we are still taking Indigenous children away from their families and from their communities. We've got to do better. We have got to do better.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

I know that for myself, one of the reasons why I chose to run was to be able to effect change, was to ensure that there was transformative change in our families, in our communities, for our women, for our children, for our little girls.

And so, I hope—as this is the last opportunity that I have to speak on legislation—I hope that we continue to centre Indigenous children, that we continue to—or start, in many respects—start to centre Indigenous children, start to centre Indigenous families, so that every Indigenous child that is here now, who is yet to be born, who is still coming, has the best opportunity that every other Manitoban has to live a good life, a safe life, a loving life, a compassionate life, entrenched in culture and tradition and surrounded by love and honoured for the sacred beings that they are.

Miigwech.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Before proceeding, I would just like to take a moment. We have a guest in the loge to my right—[*interjection*—that I'm trying to introduce. I would like to introduce Blair Yakimoski, who is the former MLA for Transcona, and we welcome him back to the Manitoba Legislature.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And back on debate for Bill 32.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, a few comments on Bill 32 at third reading.

We had a series of really excellent presentations on this bill by Doreen Moellenbeck-Dushinsky [*phonetic*], Bert Crocker, Trudy Lavallee, Sherry Gott and Joshua Nepinak. I thought that their contributions were exceptional, and they had a whole variety of recommendations for changes and improvements to this legislation. [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Gerrard: Sadly, all too little of these recommendations were actually followed, and so that the improvements that could have been made to this legislation as a result of their comments were not, and I am sure we're going to have to come back and change this legislation in the future as a result of not listening to the comments now.

I was impressed by Doreen Moellenbeck-Dushinsky [*phonetic*], who is a representative of the Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services, the first Indigenous agency in Canada to receive a child-welfare mandate in July of—July 1st of 1981.

And from the experience that the Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services has had, she recommended incorporating a model like honouring our family voices, which is a form of family group conferencing, a process that the Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services agency developed. She felt that that would be beneficial, in part because the children in CFS and the families learn about resilience, culture and history from the paternal and—paternal figures, mothers, aunts, grandmothers and others.

I listened carefully to the comments of Bert Crocker. He made a whole series of recommendations based on his many, many years working in child and family services. There were some very excellent suggestions, but, sadly, too little was actually listened to.

Trudy Lavallee presented. She is working with an Indigenous agency currently. It's noteworthy that it

was Trudy Lavallee who wrote about Jordan River Anderson back in about 2005 and was the first to suggest that we have Jordan's Principle, that children in First Nations communities should be treated fairly and equitably with those outside the communities and that children in First Nations communities should be helped.

Thanks to many years of advocacy and pushing, the federal government, following the election of a Liberal government in 2015 in Canada, has provided very substantial support for the implementation of Jordan's Principle, and it's making a big difference in many communities.

Trudy Lavallee provided a practical vision and concerns about the impact of this legislation on funding, and I think that her words need to be looked at very carefully because it is important that these changes don't lead to decreases in funding at a time when it is critical that funding in this area be well supported.

* (16:10)

Trudy Lavallee also pointed out that there is a growing segment of Indigenous children that do not fall under the criteria of First Nations status recognized by the federal government's Indian status rules. And thus, she's very concerned about these children falling through the gaps.

And she has told me that in her agency and the work that she's doing at the moment, up to half of the children would fall in this gap. So, it's a rather large gap, and we need to make sure that these children are not forgotten and not omitted in the—as things develop.

Sherry Gott, who is the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth, presented and, again, presented some very well-conceived ideas. She's very concerned that, for example, that as structured, there may be some barriers and impediments to the involvement of the Manitoba child and youth advocate where agencies would like such involvement.

I introduced an amendment to—at—on her recommendation to facilitate this. Sadly, the government turned that amendment down. And we shall see how things develop, but I am quite concerned that the result may be some additional bureaucratic difficulties which really were not necessary.

The comments of Joshua Nepinak, I suggest, are quite important. He suggests, as others have done, that the age be extended from 18 to 25, because for many of these children who have been in Child and Family

Services, that they continue to need supports after they are age 18. All too often, they have not had the chance to mature sufficiently at age 18 to be fully independent. And his recommendation, again, was not considered by the government. And this, I suggest, may be a continuing problem in the years ahead.

So, Madam Speaker, Manitoba Liberals will support this legislation, but we see that if the committee members present—if the committee presenters had been adequately listened to, we could have had significant improvements in this legislation which, unfortunately, we don't have.

So, thank you, merci, miigwech.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 32, An Act respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Related Amendments).

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

I declare the motion carried.

**Bill 35—The Education Administration
Amendment Act (Teacher Certification
and Professional Conduct)**

Madam Speaker: I will now call concurrence and third reading of Bill 35, The Education Administration Amendment Act (Teacher Certification and Professional Conduct).

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), that Bill 35, The Education Administration Amendment Act (Teacher Certification and Professional Conduct); Loi modifiant la loi sur l'administration scolaire (brevets d'enseignement et conduite professionnelle), as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ewasko: Oh my goodness, crickets.

Madam Speaker, Bill 35, The Education Administration Amendment Act (Teacher Certification and Professional Conduct) is a historic step towards improving safety for Manitoba students, which our government takes very seriously.

As noted at the second reading, this bill was developed through extensive consultation with our education partners and proposes new structures and processes to improve accountability and transparency regarding the regulation of teachers, while aligning Manitoba's legislation with that of other Canadian jurisdictions.

From April 24th to April 26th, Bill 35 was presented at the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development. It is now past that stage. During these three days, I heard Manitobans' thoughtful oral presentations and reviewed written submissions on Bill 35.

Citizen feedback is particularly important when a new framework such as the one outlined in Bill 35 is being introduced. Based on the feedback received, I proposed the following amendments to the bill that would enshrine in law:

(1) This, at the express right to representation during hearing panels. This confirms that teachers and the commissioner will have the right to be present and be represented at a panel hearing.

(2) The commitment to consult with the sector, including teachers, their representatives, employers of teachers and anyone else the minister deems necessary prior to establishing professional standards for the teaching profession.

And the third amendment, that personal health information not be made public when a teacher's found to be incapable of carrying out the responsibilities of the profession due to a mental or physical disability unless the commissioner is satisfied that the public interest significantly outweighs the teacher's privacy interests.

My appreciation goes to all citizens who provided their input during the committee stage and to our education partners for their continued engagement in developing this new framework.

I look forward to seeing Bill 35 implemented, as I am confident it will enhance the safety of all K-to-12 students in this wonderful province.

Thank you, merci and miigwech.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): It always remains a great pleasure to put words on the record regarding public education, representing the people of Transcona, representing the people that I used to work with in this Chamber. It's a responsibility I don't take very lightly. And, as mentioned, and we're on the record as saying

that the safety of Manitoba students is our No. 1 priority, absolutely.

We are called in loco parentis, Madam Speaker, in place of the parent, when children are handed over at the school door to teachers and to all the professionals that work in the building. This bill is important. Like I said earlier, it does reflect our support for accountability that needs to be there.

People have to absolutely believe that when they're handing over their children; they're handing them over to people that are committed to their education and their well-being. A vast majority of public educators in this province—I mean, everyone that I've ever worked with—has that as their No. 1 priority and is certainly aware of that incredible responsibility that we have as educators.

I do recall, and I have said this before in the House, Madam Speaker, the many, many steps that teachers take to ensure that students are prepared for whatever endeavour we go on. What this bill will do will ensure that the people that have that responsibility are capable of providing that.

I want to thank people that presented at committee, that proposed amendments, the amendments that were really important, especially the one around having society representation for members when brought before the commissioner.

There are pieces that will need to be improved in this particular bill, I'm sure. But as legislators here in this Chamber, we will look and see how this bill goes through the process, how it's actually implemented, how it works. I think we're all interested in ensuring that everyone in our schools are safe and that we have a process in place that is—not only works well, but also is predictable and is something that people will look at as an important piece of ensuring student safety, Madam Speaker.

I do want to finally wrap my comments up by saying this: I did take seriously some of your comments to me regarding how people regard us in the House. As a former educator, people have higher expectations of people that were teachers in this Chamber. I think it's important to remember that. It's more than just me being the MLA; it's what I used to do as well, and that's the important piece, and I want to thank you for that advice.

* (16:20)

And with those few comments, I will sit down and allow others to speak on Bill 35.

Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to rise this afternoon and just put a few more words on record for Bill 35, The Education administrative—Administration Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker, we've had the opportunity to debate this legislation here in the House throughout second reading as well as a lot in the committee rooms. And, you know, I've been elected since 2016 now, so, over the course of seven or eight years, I've had the opportunity and the privilege to participate in many committees.

And Bill 35 and the presentations at committee were one of a set of presentations that really resonate with a person, that really stick with us MLAs. And I know I've had conversations with members of the government, members of the official opposition party and with my colleagues about some of the presentations that we heard, and they were very powerful and impactful.

And I'm glad to hear that some of the remarks were brought forward, and therefore, this legislation was adjusted a little bit. I think we could've brought forward a few more. I know I introduced some amendments, which I'll talk about shortly, that I think would've been very important to have been adopted as well into the legislation.

But I'm hopeful and I'm optimistic that, moving forward, Bill 35 will continue to adapt and that all teachers will have the opportunity to have their voices heard as well, Madam Speaker.

I think that that's one of the things that we need to do better at here in the province of Manitoba, is empowering our teachers. We've seen them step up in ways that we didn't even know teachers had to consider stepping up, especially throughout the pandemic—the adaptability of curriculums, for example; going back from remote learning to in-person learning, oftentimes with 24 hours' notice.

We've seen teachers here in Manitoba have to use their own money to supply school supplies for their students, Madam Speaker. We've seen them go above and beyond to make sure that children in their classrooms, their students, are receiving the nutrition that they need, whether that be through meal programs, snacks and morning breakfasts as well.

And that's why I think it is important that we're listening to them more, that we take to heart what they

have to say. Because their best—what is their best interest is the interest of the students, of the children. And I believe that's what they were trying to articulate at committee and why I think that it would have been important to pass a few of these amendments. And I'm just going to speak to them for a moment here, Madam Speaker.

I brought forward three amendments:

(1) to amend the definition of significant emotional harm and the definition of professional misconduct because we want to see a more objective ruling on this type of harm;

(2) to amend by adding to the legislation that the commissioner may decide not to take further action on a complaint if the commissioner determines that the complaint discriminates unreasonably on a teacher based on characteristics set out in The Human Rights Code; and

(3) to amend that the commissioner may not decide to take further action on a complaint if they determine that the complaint that led to an investigation was made from a place of discrimination based on characteristics set out in The Human Rights Code.

Madam Speaker, if these amendments would've passed, the commissioner—the—would have the discretion to help prevent teachers from being targeted by complaints that may be discriminatory based on characteristics set out in The Human Rights Code.

I know a lot of the presentations that were shared with us at committee were teachers expressing that they are nervous about the conversations that they often have with their students because of this legislation, and we want to make sure that we are empowering teachers; we are giving them the tools that they need, because they do; they influence the students and the children here in Manitoba, and they need to have the confidence to be able to do this in a professional manner and have the support of not only all of us MLAs, but federal and municipal politicians as well.

And with those few words, Madam Speaker, I'm very happy to support the legislation, but my hope is that it will continue to adapt with time.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 35, The Education Administration Amendment Act (Teacher Certification and Professional Conduct).

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

I declare the motion carried.

The House will now prepare for royal assent.

* (16:30)

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Cam Steel): Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Her Honour Anita R. Neville, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Madam Speaker addressed Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:

Madam Speaker: Your Honour:

At this sitting, the Legislative Assembly has passed certain bills that I ask Your Honour to give assent to.

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Vanessa Gregg):

Bill 2 – The Official Time Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le temps réglementaire

Bill 6 – The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba

Bill 7 – The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis

Bill 8 – The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act; Loi sur la sécurité et l'entretien des sentiers pour véhicules à caractère non routier

Bill 10 – The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act (Social Responsibility Fee Repealed); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis (abrogation de la taxe de responsabilité sociale)

Bill 11 – The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2023; Loi de 2023 visant la réduction du fardeau administratif et l'amélioration des services

Bill 12 – The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2023; Loi corrective de 2023

Bill 13 – The Wildlife Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la conservation de la faune

Bill 15 – The Court of King's Bench Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour du Banc du Roi

Bill 16 – The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la violence familiale et le harcèlement criminel

Bill 17 – the regulated health professionals amendment act (2); Loi n° 2 modifiant la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées

Bill 18 – The Legislative Security Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité de la Cité législative

Bill 19 – The Provincial Offences Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les infractions provinciales

Bill 21 – The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route

Bill 22 – The Emergency Measures Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mesures d'urgence

Bill 23 – The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les personnes vulnérables ayant une déficience mentale

Bill 24 – The Wildfires Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les incendies échappés

Bill 25 – The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Wildfire Firefighters); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail (pompiers affectés aux incendies échappés)

Bill 26 – The Limitations Amendment and Public Officers Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les délais de prescription et la Loi sur les officiers publics

Bill 27 – The Intimate Image Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection des images intimes

Bill 29 – The Life Leases Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les baux viagers

Bill 31 – The Animal Care Amendment Act (2); Loi n° 2 modifiant la Loi sur le soin des animaux

Bill 32 – An Act respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Related Amendments); Loi concernant les services à l'enfant et à la famille (champ de compétence autochtone et modifications connexes)

Bill 34 – The Police Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services de police

Bill 35 – The Education Administration Amendment Act (Teacher Certification and Professional Conduct); Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire (brevets d'enseignement et conduite professionnelle)

Bill 36 – The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les pratiques d'inscription équitables dans les professions réglementées

Bill 38 – The Builders' Liens Amendment Act (Prompt Payment); Loi modifiant la Loi sur le privilège du constructeur (paiement rapide)

Bill 40 – The Combative Sports Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sports de combat

Bill 43 – The Provincial Offences Amendment Act (2); Loi n° 2 modifiant la Loi sur les infractions provinciales

Bill 204 – The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Licence Plates for MMIWG2S Awareness); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les conducteurs et les véhicules (plaques de-pardon-plaque d'immatriculation pour la sensibilisation aux femmes, aux filles et aux personnes bispirituelles autochtones disparues et assassinées)

Bill 218 – An Act respecting the Title "Associate Judge" (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur la désignation de juge puîné (modification de diverses lois)

Bill 222 – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Nutrition Programs); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (programmes d'alimentation)—can I read that one again? Okay. Bill 222, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Nutrition Programs); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (programmes d'alimentation)

Bill 227 – The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Access to Washrooms for Delivery Persons); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la sécurité et l'hygiène du travail (accès aux toilettes lors de livraisons)

Bill 229 – The Farmers' Markets Week Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); Loi sur la Semaine des marchés fermiers (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs)

* (16:40)

Bill 230 – The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les élections municipales et scolaires

Bill 231 – The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2); Loi n° 2 modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation

Bill 233 – The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Act; Loi sur les conseillers en ressources humaines agréés

Bill 235 – The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi

Bill 238 – The Personal Care Home Accountability Act (Various Acts Amended); Loi sur la responsabilisation des foyers de soins personnels (modification de diverses lois)

Bill 239 – The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Application Fees and Deposits); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation (frais de demande et dépôts)

Bill 240 – The Remembrance Day Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le jour du Souvenir

Bill 241 – The Mandatory Training for Provincial Employees (Systemic Racism and Human Rights) Act; Loi sur la formation obligatoire des employés provinciaux (racisme systémique et droits de la personne)

Bill 242 – The Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); Loi sur la Journée commémorative des policiers et des agents de la paix (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs)

Bill 244 – The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); Loi sur la Journée de Canards Illimités Canada (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs)

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): In His Majesty's name, Her Honour assents to these bills.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

O Canada was sung.

God Save the King was sung.

* * *

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

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

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

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Bill 23–The Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Amendment Act	2770		

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Bill 238–The Personal Care Home Accountability Act (Various Acts Amended)	2771	Bill 244–The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)	2771

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