

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ADAMS, Danielle	Thompson	NDP
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
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FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
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WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

*The House met at 4 p.m.*

**Madam Speaker:** Please be seated.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

*(Continued)*

**GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

*(Continued)*

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and good afternoon. For the following bills I ask that you seek agreement for each one individually.

Is there leave to consider second reading today of Bill 54 and Bill 59?

**Madam Speaker:** For the following bills, and I'm going to call them individually, is there leave to consider second reading today of Bill 54? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

And Bill 59, is there leave to consider second reading of Bill 59? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Goertzen:** For the following bills, which I can—which I will call one at a time and ask that you seek agreement for each individually in turn—is there leave to consider and put the questions on all remaining stages of the bill process today and for the House to not see the clock until all questions have been put on these bills and royal assent granted on all bills which pass concurrence and third reading today: Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act; Bill 55, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Bill 56, The Family Maintenance Amendment Act; Bill 57, The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act; Bill 58, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Bill 59, The Public Health Amendment Act; and Bill 62, The Fuel Tax Amendment and Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to consider and put the questions on all remaining stages of the bill process today and for the House to not see the clock until all questions have been put on these bills and royal assent granted on all bills which pass concurrence and third reading today?

Bill 54, is there leave?

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** Leave has been denied.

Bill 55, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 56, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 57, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 58, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 59, is there leave?

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** Leave has been denied.

Bill 62, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Is there leave to also not see the clock today until all remaining stages have been considered, all questions put and royal assent granted for: Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Bill 15, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act; Bill 30, The Fisheries Amendment, Forest Amendment and Provincial Parks Amendment Act; Bill 61, The Loan Act, 2020; Bill 60, The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response); and Bill 200, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to not see the clock today until all remaining stages have been considered, all questions put and royal assent granted for Bill 4—is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 15, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 30, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 61, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 60, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 200, is there leave? *[Agreed]*

**SECOND READINGS**

*(Continued)*

**Bill 55—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** Resuming debate now on second reading of Bill 55.

The honourable Minister of Finance has unlimited time.

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** It's my pleasure to rise again to provide some comments to Bill 55.

This bill adds new public health emergency leave provisions that will provide job protection to workers needing to be away from work for reasons related—COVID-19. This will cover employees' needs to be absent for a wide range of reasons, including things such as to be in isolation or quarantine, or to take any other control measures in accordance with information or direction by health professionals, health officers, Health Links, the government of Manitoba or the Government of Canada, a municipal council or board of health. to attain the medical examination and supervision and treatment to comply with the order made under the emergency measures act for the public health—or public health—to provide care or support to a family member as a result of COVID-19, including but not limited to support required because of school or daycare closure, or to comply with travel restrictions. These leaves will be an unpaid leave to employees, will be able to take as much time off from work as needed as long as one of the eligible circumstances continues to apply to them.

The new provisions will apply retroactively to any COVID-19 related absences that occur on or after March 1st, 2020, and will continue to be in place until the date to be fixed by proclamation.

Employers will be able to request reasonable verification of need for the leave for their employees, but will be prohibited from asking for a note for health-care professionals. The prohibition on requesting notes from health professionals to verify the need for leave will also apply those types of leave, such as compassionate care leave or serious injuries and illness leave on a temporary basis.

Though this will help reduce the strain on the health-care system and prevent spread of virus, I should note that while employers will be prohibited from terminating or disciplining employees, specifically they took a leave related to the COVID-19, nothing would prevent them from terminating or laying off employees for other business reasons, even if those reasons are also as it relates to COVID-19, such as a mandatory closing order or a decline in revenue.

The proposed changes will bring Manitoba in line with most Canadian jurisdictions that have passed similar legislations in response to the crisis that may have sit—sat earlier through their legislatures.

The department consulted on this bill with the Labour Management Review Committee, which provides consensus recommendations to provide job protection to employees' needed time off work due to COVID-19. I'd like to thank the committee for their advice on this matter, and I thank you. I'd like to thank you, Madam Speaker, and if there's any questions I can take them.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** I'd like to ask the minister why the government isn't considering paid leave under this bill.

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** That's up to individual employees. If they would like to fulfill that and have paid leave for individuals of their employees, that is certainly something that all employers could consider.

**Mr. Sala:** I think the minister was confused there. I was asking about why the government isn't supporting the provision of paid leave under this bill.

**Mr. Fielding:** I think I did answer the question.

**Mr. Sala:** Okay. I'd like to ask the minister if he could please clarify that for a—public sector workers that no changes to legislation are needed in order to provide paid leave.

**Mr. Fielding:** The legislation that we're talking about provides employees for leave for the following purposes: to be isolated or quarantined or to take any other control measures in accordance with information or directions related to COVID-19 by health professionals, health officers, Health Links, the government of Manitoba, the Government of Canada, municipal boards in health to obtain a medical examination, supervision or treatment if someone needs to be away for that, as directed by an employer due to a concern about employees, employee potential exposed to COVID-19, and to provide care and support for a family member. Let's say there is a child-care need or caring for a loved one.

**Mr. Sala:** I'll just repeat the question again for the minister: Could he clarify that no changes to legislation are needed to provide paid leave.

**Mr. Fielding:** This is not just for public sector employees; this is for a broad base of employees. I know the NDP think that there is only government employees here in the province of Manitoba, but there is over 60,000 businesses that are affiliated in this province. This takes in consideration all employees.

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Sala:** Will the minister extend paid leave for other public sector workers? You've just announced for nurses but will it be extended to other public sector workers?

Thank you.

**Mr. Fielding:** Paid leave as it for COVID-19, or is this paid leave in general?

**Mr. Sala:** Related to COVID-19.

**Mr. Fielding:** We are taking the same process through Workers Compensation Board that all provinces are doing. There's not one that is different. What I can say, and I had the opportunity to tweet out through social media, is that anyone that acquires—or, sorry, anyone that has COVID-19 on the workforce would be covered under the Workers Compensation Board. That process is ongoing. They have accepted applications as it relates to that, and that is a process that all jurisdictions are doing very similar to Manitoba. There's not a difference within any province.

**Mr. Sala:** Did the minister consider amendments to Manitoba's labour laws to allow employees the right to refuse unsafe work due to COVID-19?

**Mr. Fielding:** There's a process that is in place; for instance, if an employee feels that it's an unsafe working condition, they obviously raise it with their employer. The employer has an ability and is required to make sure that the employee feels safe. At that point, if there's a disagreement still between the employee and employer, then workplace health and safety gets involved in that and makes the determination of whether the proper protocols are in place and how they would address the issue.

**Mr. Sala:** Could the minister clarify that this bill would also allow for leave to take care of an extended family member such as an aunt or uncle even if they aren't regular dependants?

**Mr. Fielding:** That is something—I'll give an example for someone who maybe has child-care needs: if you've got a child or you're caring for a loved one. So those are the parameters that we put in place. There are—obviously will be a bit of flexibility as it relates to this on a case-by-case basis.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further questions?

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** If not, the floor is open for debate.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** I'd like to thank the government, first of all, for bringing forward changes that will help to protect Manitoban workers from the risk of losing their job due to circumstances relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. So a sincere thank you to the government for that.

I personally received a number of emails and calls from constituents who are concerned about this very issue, and I think these changes will go a long ways towards helping Manitobans sleep at night by reducing anxieties about the potential for job loss during this difficult time.

I believe another thank you is in order. As much has changed since we first had these discussions about a week ago when government was only considering a 14-day unpaid leave. So thank you to the government for their willingness to improve the bill by providing indefinite job protection leave as it has never been more important for Manitobans to feel confident that if they or a loved one becomes sick, or if they are in need of taking care of someone, or if they're in need to provide child care due to COVID-19 that they know that their jobs will be protected during this difficult time.

We're also really happy to see that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the minister have announced paid leave for front-line health-care workers which is crucial, obviously, but it's in my opinion absolutely outrageous that it took as long as it did and it's—that in order for this government to finally tune in to what health-care workers were saying that it took us such an extended period of time. It was unreasonable to allow health-care workers to be exposed not only to health-care risks, but also to financial risks for them and their families. So we are happy to see that's been put in place but that has taken far too long, Madam Speaker.

So everyone should be able to access paid leave if their job is impacted because of COVID-19, especially if they are required to self-isolate and,

Madam Speaker, I'd like to just point out a major concern, a final concern here with the bill and its failure to provide any type of reasonable job protection leave for those who feel unsafe in their workplace as a result of COVID-19. That's a huge concern. I strongly encourage the government to consider amendments to Manitoba labour laws to allow employees the right to refuse unsafe work due to COVID.

And so, Madam Speaker, while we are supportive of the bill today, I hope that this government will go further and seek to provide greater levels of protection and financial relief to all Manitobans whose livelihoods have been impacted by this crisis.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** We recognize that this is an important bill that takes essential measures in order to protect—provide protections to workers who might be facing health challenges or be forced not to work during COVID. We absolutely agree with the opposition that there needs to be more done, that we need to push further to ensure that paid leave, that the—and that the Province is actually stepping up to provide help and we're not simply relying on a made-in-Ottawa plan in order to have support for workers and small businesses.

We are—it is—the other issue which is positive and important, that it will no longer require doctors' notes, so we do look forward that this being applied and passed today. This is an important bill. We will always be asking the government to do more; it's in our nature. But this is a positive step in the right direction.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there any further members wishing to speak on debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 55, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act.

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

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** I'd like to announce—or, sorry.

I would like to call for second reading Bill 59, and following that Bill 54.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will now consider second reading of Bill 59 and that will be followed by second reading of Bill 54.

#### **Bill 59—The Public Health Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** So, dealing with Bill 59 first, the honourable Minister of Health.

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I move, seconded by the Minister for Municipal Relations, that Bill 59, The Public Health Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a Committee of the Whole.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Health, seconded by the honourable Minister for Municipal Relations, that Bill 59, The Public Health Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to Committee of the Whole.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and the message has been tabled.

**Mr. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, this is a moment of some serendipity. I feel a little bit like I covered some of this material earlier during the Bill 57 debate, but I do welcome the opportunity and I hope that this would indicate, on the part of the opposition party, a return to a more reasonable stance to actually hear these bills, examine them on their merits, and then to make decisions in the best interests of Manitobans. I believe that is all of us on this side of the House, what we want today, and we are hoping that that sentiment exists throughout this House.

Let me simply say the following about Bill 59. Bill 59 seeks to modernize—or perhaps I'll use a different word. It seeks to make certain small improvements to The Public Health Act. This act was first debated in this Legislature in 2006. It wasn't actually receiving royal assent until 2009, but you may say that this is the first official test drive of the bill. This is the first real chance to see this bill as it works in the context of a major circumstance like COVID-19 and, indeed, we have that opportunity now.

So, Madam Speaker, as the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, who I can name, Dr. Brent Roussin, who has been doing an incredible job in his role, as well as Lanette Siragusa from Shared Health, and I will take this opportunity at this point in time to say how well served all Manitobans are not

only by their leadership, but also by those leaders that Manitobans do not see, that incident command structure table, those key leaders. So to them and through them to their various teams, we say thank you for your excellent leadership engagement, long hours, hours away from home, deliberations, decision making that is occurring each and every day on behalf of Manitobans.

\* (16:20)

Now, the chief has advised me that as he has continued to act to keep Manitobans safe, to put orders into effect, orders like the need to limit the size of gatherings, first at 50 and then lowered and then lowered again, but also to advise people to stay home, to close businesses that are deemed to be non-essential, to create some conditions around those businesses to be closed, and other measures as well that there has been some limit of his capacity to do so, a limit that is not exhibited in the same way in other jurisdictions. In other words, there was something that needed to be additionally granted to allow Brent Roussin, the chief, to do his job fully.

And that is why this bill would seek to strengthen the authority of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, in order to give—to order special measures to prevent, reduce or eliminate a serious and immediate threat to public health presented by a communicable disease epidemic or, as in the case of COVID-19, a pandemic, and to strengthen the authority to enforce orders of the chief.

So, in brief, as I said, it was first debated in 2006 and passed in 2009, but I can tell you that more recently when it has come to certain things that the chief has sought to do, like to mandate the isolation of persons returning to Manitoba, it was actually discovered that the chief didn't have the authority under The Public Health Act at the current time to do so. We were able to find some workarounds, but less effective, less efficient. Some of this proceeded from the activity of the federal government to enact provisions of the Quarantine Act that were seeking to make people self-isolate when returning to Canada while in the same way, provinces like Newfoundland and Nova Scotia and BC sought and received that ability to, under the public health act, keep people at home who had travelled back home from other provinces or from areas within the province.

We discovered that we did not have this provision in Manitoba, so this would seek to remedy that in specific. However, there are other provisions as well that this would seek, including certain orders about the

closure of businesses, establishing social distance requirements that are permitted to stay open, the limitations of businesses not only now as—if I can use a colloquialism—as we're ratcheting down certain provisions that Manitobans—but then later when we subsequently begin to release them.

The chief will also need certain additional flexibility, as is in place in other provinces, to be able to say how and by what measure we will allow businesses to reopen. Maybe the chief will make a decision to say that retailers will have to have a mask on. I don't know, but the chief will need to have a mechanism by which he can there order those things. Maybe he will intend to create some social distancing parameters within businesses to make people remain two metres apart. Well, then we will need some ability in law to be able to enact those things, and the chief will need those provisions.

So these are unprecedented circumstances. This bill clearly says that these measures are used in extraordinary circumstances. That should be a form of comfort to everyone. As I've already said, in other jurisdictions there are these powers, but not here. As I already said, as we release these measures, it will be important to have that ability to do so.

I want to speak just briefly then before I end on enforcement of orders. We have noticed additionally some gaps when it comes to the ability to enforce orders that are issued by the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, including in relation to the authority of officials to take action to carry out orders when there isn't compliance. Manitobans will know, I think it was a week ago, there was a certain establishment in the city of Brandon where they were defying the orders to close even though they were non-essential. This was a tattoo—I don't know if you say tattoo parlour or if you just say tattoo establishment—but in this case they weren't closing. We didn't have the ability under The Public Health Act to actually enforce the closure, so we were able to use another mechanism, which was less efficient, in order to accommodate that. But we need to make this right, and this would allow us to do this.

So this—these proposed amendments would also enable other officials, other individuals like conservation officers or liquor inspectors or Workplace Safety and Health officers, retired police officers to be able to come in and enforce these measures, as well. And I heard ripples of a conversation from the opposition leader in a hallway about an hour ago, suggesting that the opposition has

concerns about these powers being vested to these officers to be able to enforce measures. I want to say, it's important to have enforcement measures. Just because the highway traffic limit says 100 kilometres on Highway 3 between Oak Bluff and Carman, it doesn't mean that every police officer is going to give a ticket to everyone. But the speed limit is important and must be enforced, and in the same way we know that these enforcement issues are real.

Manitobans are also perceiving that they are very real and we need that additional mechanism to get compliance because we have done well in Manitoba. It's too early to know how well. We need more data in jurisdiction. But I would say in this place today that we need to continue to exercise this compliance and cooperation and this will help us.

So I invite the debate on this bill this afternoon. I invite the engagement of other parties. We believe that these are reasonable issues, that they are reasonable even in terms of the set limits for the fines. We are saying in this case that we noticed that there was an inequity here, that the fines in this case that were going to be levied when it came to an emergency—or a public health emergency, were actually lower than they would have been for an emergency health hazard order, which could have been like, your backyard was full of junk and old tires and so you got a fine. Now, imagine that that fine could have been higher than one for not complying with an order on public health during a global pandemic.

We won't levy all the fines. There are actually—there are actual penalties that are right now in place, whereby people could simply have a ticket written to them. So it's only in the most extraordinary circumstance that the actual full fine amount would ever be contemplated. Again, protections for the public.

So I invite the debate. I'm happy to be able to sponsor this. I hope that this calling to second reading is a suggestion that we can see this bill through debate and to passage today.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any

opposition members; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Madam Speaker, I'm wondering if the minister might be able to share, or if the minister has any insights into what type of training is being provided for peace officers, or as indicated in 67(1)(b) or any other person who may be asked to carry out the order. Thank you.

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** So what we contemplate right now is that this regulation making authority would allow us to be able to enable other officials, as I said, like conservation officers or liquor inspectors, workplace safety and health officers, maybe even retired police officers to be able to serve in the role of helping to enforce the measures.

The member will know that right now, of course, when it comes to public health we do have public health officers who enforce measures. What we would say, though, is that they are very busy, and so we would need new categories of people who already have training which would assist us to be able to come into this role who understand public relations, who would understand what the scope of their authorities would be and would understand how to approach the situations that would need their expertise.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Madam Speaker, can the government commit to putting these announcements into newspapers, radio and TV, including community newspapers so that people who do not have computers or the Internet will also be reached?

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Friesen:** So I thank the member for the question.

I believe that I am accurate in stating that this is not contemplating moving wholesale away from more analog communications. It is scoping in the use of Internet broadcast provisions, so notices that could be appended to websites, because that's the way the majority of Manitobans now receive their information. I do not believe it is exclusive to that. If it is otherwise, I will provide an update to the member.

**MLA Asagwara:** As I'm sure the minister can appreciate, many people have never experienced, certainly to this degree, it's unprecedented what's happening right now in terms of this global pandemic specific to COVID-19, which has—and I'm sure many, many folks in this Chamber are well aware of the anxieties and the stress and the fear that many people



in our communities are experiencing related to this virus, and the implications of it.

And so, when I ask about training, I suppose I should be more specific: I'm asking about training specifically in regards to how to navigate the issues around this global pandemic and the stressors attached to it.

**Mr. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, I missed the end of that question. I wonder if the member could just repeat that.

**MLA Asagwara:** Sure, thank you, Madam Speaker. I'm asking if the training that is, that—the minister has referenced historical training that folks may have received in their positions as peace officers, et cetera. I'm asking whether or not these folks who would be enforcing this legislation under the act would receive more comprehensive training given the unique circumstances we find ourselves in, rather, with this global pandemic.

**Mr. Friesen:** I would have to know what the member meant by more comprehensive training, because I would suggest that these individuals, the classifications I listed, do receive comprehensive training. There would also be, of course, specific training to understand what it was they were being sent out to enforce. So they would have to have that detailed knowledge of the act, of these provisions, of what an infraction would look like, what an offence constitutes, and then what would be the various and appropriate escalations by which they could then intervene in situations like that.

**MLA Asagwara:** An example would be: unsheltered and folks who are homeless right now have an extremely difficult time finding places to safely self-isolate and self-quarantine, should they be determined to have to do so.

Can the minister expand on what he's talking about in terms of the training that folks will have received that would be able to equip and to deal with folks who right now will be more visible being homeless and unsheltered, given the fact that folks are being asked to stay at home?

**Mr. Friesen:** I thank the member for the question. Our government, as the member knows, has been working with various community based groups, service delivery organizations to contemplate additional shelter provisions for people who might contract COVID-19 who do not have shelter. I think it would be completely in line with that. The effort, the intent of these measures would not be to incarcerate

people or to somehow penalize people differentially who were, let's say, shelter insecure.

**MLA Asagwara:** Would the minister be able to provide a list of all of those who would fall under the category of any other person to carry out the order? The minister has provided some information around that in a previous answer, but specifically if that list is more extensive and we simply just don't have access to that information.

**Mr. Friesen:** So I do not have in front of me any specific information about that. The question though, in principle, about whether there would be appropriate conduct by the people, the classifications of officers that would be trained into these positions to understand particular sensitivities around things like homelessness or people with vulnerabilities who are perhaps, you know, more often living on the street or who are shelter insecure. We would expect and we would require, of course, people to be sensitive to those situations, and I think that in many cases people in these categories we're naming would already be sensitive to situations like this.

**MLA Asagwara:** Can the minister provide any information around what mechanisms exist for folks who may come into, or may have an interaction with any of these peace officers and have an experience where they would like to express maybe concern or offer constructive feedback, or even in some maybe rare circumstances even file a complaint?

**Mr. Friesen:** Not sure I completely understood the question. I'm just going to ask for a rephrasing on that.

**MLA Asagwara:** Can the minister provide information surrounding what options exist for people who may have interactions with peace officers who are seeking to enforce aspects of this legislation, should they experience anything where they feel they need to share those concerns, so there's an accountability process or an investigative process, or that they want to file some type of complaint or even offer constructive, positive feedback?

**Mr. Friesen:** I now understand the question. There is a mechanism for appeal built in here, and, in any case, if a person feels like the charge is unwarranted there is an escalation mechanism, and if someone who is a vulnerable person felt that they didn't have the capacity somehow or the avenue to pursue that, it could also be undertaken by advocates as well. So I would assume that such channels did exist because we have built those protections into the bill. Of course, in—just as the way you make—receive a penalty for a

messy yard, this is much different, but in the same way under The Public Health Act there would be avenues for redress that are appropriate.

**MLA Asagwara:** Given the current circumstances economically for many people with COVID-19, many people being out of work having very limited resources, having almost no resources for many individuals and families, and my understanding of the mechanisms which may exist in order to file an appeal and go through that process, I believe that there's a monetary responsibility attached to that for the person bringing forward the appeal. If that is in fact the case for this such situation, will that expectation be waived given the fact that we know many people will be in financial situations that may not allow them access to those funds?

**Mr. Friesen:** I'm not aware that there is a monetary impact for an appeal in the case of a public health order. There would be monetary implication if somehow it became a judiciary issue. But this does not suggest that it would necessarily become a court action. So I would have to take that under advisement and report back. I'm not aware that there would necessarily be a monetary impact.

**MLA Asagwara:** As we're well aware there are a number of community organizations doing incredible work in communities working directly with those most targeted and impacted by what we're all experiencing with COVID-19, whether it's folks who are unsheltered and homeless who have acute mental health issues, acute issues around problematic substance use and addictions for example. With that in mind, I'm wondering if the minister has given any consideration or any consultation with organizations so that those folks who have the skills and the knowledge working with certain populations could, in fact, be in the role of peace officers.

**Mr. Friesen:** That's a worthy suggestion. I'm sure that in the contemplation of what categories of persons could be considered to be those peace officers, there could be also avenues to consider other categories of persons besides the ones that I named. Of course, there would need to be an assessment of individuals' background experience and level of attainment; that would be necessary. But the idea in principle of the liaison to make sure that it was appropriate for all populations I think is reasonable.

**MLA Asagwara:** Well, Madam Speaker, can the minister speak on whether or not there's some data, some information surrounding who typically is

most impacted by the enforcement of this type of legislation?

**Mr. Friesen:** No, I don't think so.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further questions?

\* (16:40)

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** If not, debate is open.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** I appreciate the opportunity to rise in the House today and speak on this piece of legislation, Bill 59. I think we're certainly all in agreement that working collectively to ensure that every piece of legislation and mechanism is in place to ensure the health and well-being of all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, there are real concerns that I have about Bill 59 and they're concerns that I have heard from a number of people across many jurisdictions, but, certainly, from people right here in Manitoba, and that includes folks working in public health. It certainly includes folks in the communities that I represent in Union Station.

To date, the minister has spoken about the need to enforce aspects of the existing legislation for those who have not been in compliance with the orders. The minister has stated that it hasn't necessarily been the most efficient of ways, however, it was able to be enforced. And my concern, specifically in this piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, is the desire to enhance ability to enforce and who has the power and the ability to enact that enforcement.

And the realities are such that, oftentimes, across all jurisdictions, those people who are on the receiving end of this type of enforcement and infractions are often folks who are already quite targeted and very marginalized, and the concern would certainly be that, without the adequate training and information to go into a number of communities in our province with very, very specific needs, demographics, challenges, et cetera, that if we're not incredibly mindful and invested in ensuring that those folks who are going into communities and enforcing legislation are folks who have a good understanding—existing relationships with those in those communities and recent training and information around the amplification of pre-existing challenges.

Mental health disorders, health issues, all kinds of scenarios and experiences that have been amplified and are going to continue to be amplified as we go

further and further on with this virus and this global pandemic. There's a number of concerns around that specifically, Madam Speaker, and with the lack of clarity around who, exactly, would be called to be enforcing pieces of this legislation.

I certainly understand the concerns that we all have around how folks will navigate the next several weeks, potentially months, dealing with self-quarantine, self-isolation, social distancing, and all of these things that are very, very challenging for anybody and will be increasingly—would be increasingly challenging for those with limited financial resources, with mental health issues—acute mental health issues—living in poverty, acute issues around addictions, you know, a lack of social connectivity, lack of community and supports.

We certainly can appreciate and empathize and we have a lot of compassion—I have a lot of compassion for anybody who is navigating all of those challenges, and I know that in this House we are all actively working to ensure that our constituents and our neighbours and our community members have what they need in order to adhere to public health orders and to flatten that curve that we keep hearing about.

Madam Speaker, I think that at this time, you know, I really—I think it's important that whenever we look at expanding and enhancing enforcement, that we are honest about the realities of who that disproportionately typically impacts, including in Manitoba.

And it's with those in mind, it's with those thoughts in mind and with those realities really top of mind for, I think, many Manitobans, given who we're seeing right now be most vulnerable in our populations to COVID-19 that I put that on the record, and I hope that we can collectively work together to find solutions that will not further have folks be marginalized and targeted during a global 'pandemic'—pandemic when, really, we need to ensure that we're all absolutely taking care of one another and have the appropriate supports and resources in place.

And, Madam Speaker, I would certainly speak—say that community organizations, which I've spoken about rather earlier have a lot of those resources and a lot of that skill set and expertise in order to ensure that those folks in all of our communities who may need more support to abide by legislation to keep us all healthy and safe are able to do so.

So, with that, thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I just have a few short remarks to put on the record.

We will be supporting Bill 59, the public health act amendment, that has been brought forward as we recognize measures do need to be taken to protect Manitobans. We would, however, encourage the government to make sure that everyone has access to these announcements because there are many people across Manitoba who do not have access to Internet, especially people on low income and in rural areas, and people whose English—or whose language, English is their second language, Madam Speaker. Community newspapers are incredibly important vehicles for this information and emergency information must reach all Manitobans.

We also want the government to recognize that the homeless population here in Manitoba need to be considered as well. The issue of homelessness is not forgotten in this pandemic, and while we need people providing direction we need to ensure our homeless population does not become a target because they often do not have homes, shelters, places to sleep, stay warm and eat. This is a complex issue, Madam Speaker, because we want those who are homeless to have places to go and be safe and not spread COVID-19. More shelters don't really fix this because of social distancing. You know, I heard about people lending out their RVs to health-care workers so that they can go to work, and then go home and not be fearful about infecting people or having their family members around them fearful of conducting the virus. Maybe we can be brainstorming and thinking of ways in which we can be creating opportunities for homeless people as well here in the province.

With those remarks, Madam Speaker, we will be supporting the bill; however, we really, really urge those who will be protecting Manitobans on our street to use great discretion with homeless people and just trust that everyone is doing their best and give people the benefit of the doubt.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further members wishing to speak in debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 59, The Public Health Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 54—The Emergency Measures  
Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to second reading of Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act.

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Relations (Ms. Squires), that Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a Committee of the Whole.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure, seconded by the honourable Minister for Municipal Relations, that Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a Committee of the Whole.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and the message was tabled.

**Mr. Schuler:** I am pleased to rise again to provide some comments on Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act.

This legislation provides the provincial government with additional tools to respond to challenges that arise during a declared state of emergency. This bill provides the provincial government with authority to make three types of orders: emergency orders, temporary suspension orders and reporting deadline variation orders. These orders take effect on the day they are made and can be retroactive to start on the day a state of emergency was declared. Orders expire on the day stated by Cabinet and no order can last beyond six months after it comes into effect.

Emergency orders allow the government to take immediate, decisive action to limit serious harm and damage to Manitobans. Orders under this section can include establishing facilities such as emergency shelters, fixing prices for necessary goods and services, requiring information collection and sharing or prohibiting price gouging.

It is important to note that this broad emergency order power is not permanent. The ability for Cabinet to create emergency orders is intended just for the current state of emergency related to COVID-19 and

will be automatically repealed six months from today. It is also important to note that the Legislative Assembly also has the power to uphold an emergency order made by Cabinet via resolution passed by the Assembly.

\* (16:50)

The second type of order is a temporary suspension order that briefly suspends certain types of provisions in the statute, regulation or bylaw during a state of emergency. These types of orders can include suspending late penalties, extending the length of a provincial permit or delaying filing deadlines. These orders must be recommended by the Attorney General and provide people affected by the declared emergency greater services, benefits or time than the law normally provides. For greater certainty, these types of orders cannot be used to increase fees or reduce benefits.

The third type of order is a reporting deadline variation order that extends the time period for government or government agencies to file a report or information during a state of emergency. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly can issue this type of order for independent officers of the Assembly, and MLAs as well. These orders could include providing additional time for Crown agencies to file their annual reports.

This bill will also increase the maximum fines for those who 'violite'—violate these or other requirements of The Emergency Measures Act. Fines will increase to a maximum of \$100,000 and/or one-year imprisonment for individuals and a maximum of \$1 million for corporations. These levels are consistent with those in The Public Health Act. And, Madam Speaker, a new provision also gives courts the option to increase the fines for a person convicted of an offence by an amount equal to the financial benefit acquired by 'violiting' an order.

Combined, these changes will help reduce the negative impacts of public health emergencies and natural disasters on Manitobans by ensuring the provincial government can act quickly to protect the safety and well-being of Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Questions**

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition

critic or designate, subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties, subsequent questions asked by each independent member, remaining questions asked by any opposition members; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I want to just acknowledge that it sounds like the minister has reflected in his comments perhaps some of the discussions that are taking place in the Chamber and around the premises today, so I don't want to prejudice any of those side conversations that are happening.

We did pay attention to the possible scenario if people in an apartment building had a fire, they had to rush outside and weren't able to practise the physical distancing on account of the emergency, that that would seem to be a reasonable excuse, that they should be permitted to, you know, just have an out, if you will, from some of the enforcement measures—constrain they're in.

I'm just wondering if the minister can weigh in on that and if, in fact, people who do have some sort of reasonable excuse would in fact be able to explain that and not face that enforcement.

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, I thank the Leader of the Opposition for that question, and certainly one of the things that has been contemplated currently is that no charge would be made if there were reasonable steps, and that could be explained reasonably by the individual.

**Mr. Kinew:** We've also been, and the minister will know this, as he's done the flood briefings, we're also not only facing the possibility of just dealing with this pandemic situation for the next few months, but there's also the possibility of flooding. And the people of Montcalm know this quite well.

So I'm just wondering if the minister can explain for a few moments as to how if there's differing states of emergency, is there, you know, a process by which the government will be able to use these powers in the flooding situation, or would it be a separate chain of order being given in that case?

Just trying to understand if we do see flooding during the pandemic period, will there be any overlap, or are things going to be able to proceed efficiently?

**Mr. Schuler:** I thank the member for that question. It's important to clarify that under the current emergency measures provisions, those things are

covered off whereby the government has the right to protect individuals and property; they're allowed to go on and use the kind of infrastructure that's in place. So all of those measures that would be needed to protect the province in the case of a high-water event already exist under the current state of emergency provision.

**Mr. Kinew:** I would note that Bill 54 contemplates some limits on municipalities and their powers. I'm curious to know, because the City of Winnipeg has declared their own state of emergency, what's the interface there? How do we balance a provincial state of emergency and the powers under this act versus a local municipality declaring a state of emergency?

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for that question; it's very important to clarify that.

Again, the state of emergency that would—that is currently in place provincially would supersede any other, other than a federal state of emergency.

In the case that was put forward by the Leader of the Opposition, where this provision would come into effect is if the Province of Manitoba would deem that they would need to have a greater presence insofar as a field hospital or some kind of facility that all of the requirements to go in front of community committees and any of those processes would be waived in the greater good of the people of the city and the province to build a facility that could handle the kind of onslaught that could possibly have happened under COVID-19.

**Mr. Kinew:** So I thank the minister for the example, just because it allows me to clarify the question a little bit more succinctly.

So the City of Winnipeg, for example, has the power, I think, under their state of emergency to do a property seizure or to go onto land. So, in the example of a field hospital, whereas the City of Winnipeg may have that power, this act would supersede it because it may make more sense for Shared Health and the provincial government that manages Shared Health to be the entity that oversees that action. Am I on the right track there?

**Mr. Schuler:** Again, those are discussions are probably best had between the Department of Health and the City of Winnipeg. All's what this act provides is that a field hospital could be placed in such a place that would be deemed appropriate and it would set aside any kind of community committees, any kind of bylaws that would be in place. There would—it would allow the Department of Health to place a field

hospital quickly, get it done in the greater good of the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba.

**Mr. Kinew:** So where's the field hospital going to go?

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Speaker, could the Leader of the Opposition please ask that question again?

**Mr. Kinew:** I was just curious where the field hospital or hospitals will go.

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Speaker, it is our hope and our wish and our desire that the curve has been flattened, but we'll see what happens in the next week or two. We believe that under the strong leadership of our Minister of Health that we have services currently in place to deal with that kind of a crisis should it happen.

I would, however, ask each and every one of us pray to whomever you pray to that we might actually see a suppression of the curve and be able to go forward as a province.

**Mr. Kinew:** Yes, under the current legislation, the order has to be renewed every 30 days. That is going to be changed under this law. I'm just wondering, why is that? What was the government coming up against that they couldn't just renew the order on a 30-day cycle?

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Speaker, I want to be careful we're not crossing over between two different acts. So the current state of emergency is a state of emergency for 30 days—one month—and it must be renewed. It can be renewed by declaring a second state of emergency or can be done so by Executive Council—executive—by Cabinet and Lieutenant Governor signing off.

The other orders, again, must be renewed, and the sense is that these are very powerful orders and it's important to have them renewed. I'd like to point out that the orders also must be published publicly.

\* (17:00)

**Mr. Kinew:** So, just to use the language in the act, the emergency orders, why is the government seeking the length of time beyond 30 days when it comes to the emergency orders?

**Mr. Schuler:** I'd like to thank the member for that question. For instance, we do have a lot of different orders that we're contemplating. For instance, one of those would be price gouging and the concern is, is that the price gouging not just would take place during the event itself, but could continue for weeks and months afterwards. And so the order could then be made that for the next three or four months that you cannot get into price gouging, Madam Speaker, and

that would protect probably amongst all Manitobans the most vulnerable in our province.

**Madam Speaker:** Any further questions?

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Yes, this is the—it's a reflection—we made this comment for a previous bill, but it's to ensure that Manitobans are—that all Manitobans have access to the information that an emergency order has been declared. Has there been consideration given to expanding the communications through purchased advertising in newspapers, radio, television and so on, and not just limiting it to the government website?

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Speaker, what is in the legislation is a minimum. We do know we have a very healthy and robust media. And we thank the media who have been great partners in this entire process in getting information out. And they certainly would be covering this kind of order, and did so when the initial state of emergency was declared. But putting it on the website is only a minimum; it does not preclude putting notices in newspapers or any other form of medium.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further questions?

#### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** If not, the floor is open for debate.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** So I want to put a few words on the record at this time that would refer to the bill as was introduced in the House today. The reason why I—or this morning rather. The reason why I want to make this clarification is that I do believe that some amendments could be made later on, and I don't want to prejudice any sort of negotiation or work that is currently undertaken that I think is very, very important and could actually lead to some improvements of this piece of legislation.

So folks in the Chamber and watching at home could keep in mind that I'm speaking on the legislation as it is currently tabled in the House. And it is my hope that perhaps through making these comments and through other measures that we could improve this bill and see one that really, really, I think, is a good fit for what the people of Manitoba need right now.

So I do have some concerns about the legislation as tabled. I want to acknowledge at first that when the public health precautions were being announced, I think there were many, many Manitobans, and many, many Canadians who agree that, yes, we need to take real strong measures to flatten the curve and to try and

protect Manitobans from COVID-19. I also know that there were many people who reached out to myself, and I'm sure to many other MLAs in the Chamber who were really wondering about enforcement, and were really asking that steps be taken to ensure that those public health orders be followed.

So I understand that at first glance many Manitobans perhaps have been wondering about this issue for the past few weeks. However, I want to put on the record that the manner in which we set out that enforcement and the peace officers and other folks who were asked to carry out that enforcement, that the powers that the government grants to itself, that the oversight of the government under this emergency period, that these are all very, very important aspects under this bill that are contemplated and that do deserve proper scrutiny.

And so, while there may be a desire amongst many Manitobans to see action in this space, I suspect that just as many Manitobans would want to ensure that our civil liberties are respected, and that our democracy remains strong through this period. And, in fact, I would put on the record here today that democracy is an essential service and our democracy must continue during this time.

I suspect that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) probably shares in some of the same sentiments if not perhaps the substance of what I'm about to say because I know that he did also speak about civil liberties last week.

So there are a few concerns about civil liberties in the text that I hold before me at this time. Right now, as the bill is currently worded, we have a concern that there is no reasonable excuse, as it were, that there is no ability for somebody to say to an officer or perhaps later on to a judge: You know what? I couldn't respect the physical distancing because my house was on fire, and so I had to run out into the street and it just so happened I couldn't physically distance from the firefighters and, you know, the other people on-site.

I think we would all agree that that's a reasonable excuse and that people should not be prosecuted or not face sanction in such a situation.

Similarly, somebody might want to argue on behalf of an individual with mental health issues, that perhaps their mental health issues stood in the way and constituted a reasonable excuse from them being able to abide by the measures, and so we think that that is an important move that we amend this act on.

We're also mindful of the powers that would be granted to yourselves, to the Legislative Assembly, to

Cabinet, and in particular there are provisions in this bill which would allow the normal public reporting that constitutes an important part of our democracy to be delayed or to be put off or to be otherwise changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In some situations, perhaps that is reasonable. If, perhaps, one, you know, operating entity under the government is operating full out and they're fighting the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, then maybe we should give them a break of a month or two before having to table a report in the Legislative Assembly.

But that same provision may also stand in the way of legitimate functions of the public, the opposition, and others from figuring out what their government is up to, freedom of information requests being one example.

And so we think that if perhaps those measure in this bill could be carved out so that FIPPA requests and other levers of democracy could be protected during this period, I think that would give a lot comfort to Manitobans, who could then understand that, yes, you know, the government is operating under a state of emergency, but I know that there are at least some ways that we can gain some insight and some sharing back of what the government is, in fact, up to.

We also know that any change to fines will lead to a disproportionate impact on vulnerable peoples, Madam Speaker. Part of that has to do with folks who are, you know, maybe disproportionately more likely to have to live in poverty and therefore even a fine which, to some of us, may seem not hugely severe, to them may, in fact, be out of reach.

And so we have some concerns about the penalties which are contemplated under this act and we would point out that, to date, there hasn't really been any evidence that the current penalties under the current law are insufficient to meet the challenge of COVID-19 and the enforcement of the public health orders. In fact, I believe Mayor Bowman and the Premier did a press conference together in which they spoke at length about some of the current measures in place.

And so I recognize that such a press conference was the result of pushing a rock up a hill for 24 hours a day beforehand and only came together at the very last minute, despite some of the concerns that some participants may or may not have had, allegedly.

So, again, Madam Speaker, these are some of the concerns that we have with respect to the bill here. So again, I do think it is important that we have had the opportunity to read this at second reading today—to debate it at second reading today so that we can put these concerns on the record at this time.

And, again, I just want to reiterate that I am making these statements based on the current text of the legislation, notwithstanding the possibility that some amendments may be made and that perhaps some of these issues may be addressed. Then, perhaps, we can have another scintillating discussion at that time.

And so, with that, I would thank you once again for the opportunity to speak, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further members wishing to speak on debate? Is the House ready for the—oh, the honourable member for Concordia.

\* (17:10)

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I do appreciate the opportunity to rise to speak to this very important bill, and it is important because we have returned to the Legislature in order to ensure that we consider bills related to the global pandemic, but that we do so in a way that still allows us for the opportunity to debate, to very closely analyze and, hopefully, capture some of the concerns that we're hearing from Manitobans and give us the opportunity, then, to hopefully be able to bring forward the final piece of the legislation that may be something that really is trying to address what I think Manitobans are talking about.

We've certainly heard a number of concerns and, you know, we take the government at their word that they are trying to bring this forward—bring forward The Emergency Measures Amendment Act in a way that addresses some of the shortfalls and some of the strains that government is seeing right now in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. That being said, of course, we want to ensure that even though we want to have government be able to move past those—some of those issues, be able to address them, we also want to make sure that the accountability is there. And that is really what some of the concerns that we've heard coming forward have been.

We want to ensure that despite a more streamlined process within government that we're still able to get the information that we need as an official opposition, and we're, you know, very conscious of the fact that while we see—we don't see a specific end date right now in terms of the COVID-19 impact here

in Manitoba and how long we will be taking some of these extraordinary measures, we don't know the end date. However, we also want to ensure that some of the legislation that's brought forward is not in this case left to be either open-ended or in some cases given extraordinary amounts of leeway in terms of the times—time frames that it can be applied.

We know that Manitobans are certainly asking to show that there is protection for them. You know, I only have to look as far as my own community. Yesterday, I went out with my family into a wooded area to a park, you know, get my kids outside for some fresh air. And we were virtually alone and—in getting to the park and then being in the park, virtually alone other than just a few other people doing the same thing, taking a small opportunity to get outside to get some fresh air, get some exercise.

And so it's very clear when you look at that situation that Manitobans are taking this very seriously and they are respecting the orders that are being given by health professionals. And I think they're doing it in a way that if you look at other jurisdictions, and I don't want to specifically comment on some of those, but it's very easy to look elsewhere and to see other places where they're maybe not taking this as seriously as they maybe should be.

Here in Manitoba, I think, you know, the people that I know and the people in my community and throughout our province, they understand how important these orders are not just for themselves, but for the protection of all. You know, it doesn't take one very long to sort of think of their own family, their own friend circle or people that they know in their community, that if they don't take the responsible—if they don't make responsible choices and they don't take the responsible path that they're putting others at risk, and that is certainly not something that we want people to be doing.

They understand that, and I think what they're hoping from this government is that while they, you know, bring forward legislation that strengthens the ability to enforce and to make sure that people are adhering to these orders. It also recognizes that for most Manitobans they are already following these orders. And for those that have certain struggles or inability to follow these orders in the same way that some folks can, that they are disproportionately penalized and they aren't disproportionately given orders over and above what others would receive.

And that's where we see some concern with Bill 54. We know that there is certainly some



increased penalty provisions within the legislation, increased penalties which, for most Manitobans, would be already where they stand now, where the government already has the ability to enforce The Emergency Measures Amendment Act. There is already a significant penalty attached to that. By increasing that or ratcheting that up, I think there is some danger in going too far in penalizing folks and disproportionately applying those orders. That is certainly a concern, and that is something that I think we all want to ensure that we don't overstep as a government and we don't push too hard.

You know, again, Madam Speaker, when I look throughout Manitoba and I hear the stories of folks who are, you know, following the orders to self-isolate, following the orders to be at home but at the same time looking out for others and ensuring that those community organizations are still able to function, are able to reach out to the most vulnerable in our society, that is what gives me the most, you know, positive look about how we can approach this rather than from a simply a penalty side of things, rather than simply focusing on ways we can go after people who may not be adhering to these social distancing rules but instead working with those who are already trying to ensure that those social distancing rules can be applied across the board, can be applied to everybody.

I think there are certainly some pieces of this legislation that can be helpful to government. I think there are a number that we need to look at very carefully and I do believe that, you know, our opposition caucus is giving us—giving these bills a thorough and well-thought analysis, and I believe that's what Manitobans are asking of us. They've asked us to come back in an emergency session. They've asked us to come back to move forward on pieces of legislation to ensure that they are protected, to ensure that Manitoba is meeting its obligations with regards to addressing the pandemic, but they didn't ask us to come back and give carte blanche to the government to bring forward legislation and we just are here as a rubber stamp.

They've also asked us to take this time that we have, you know, and it is a very short time, Madam Speaker, rather than the, you know, usual process where we go through weeks of debate where we often have public hearings, where we often have experts who are giving us advice where we also often have stakeholders who are giving us input all throughout the process, where we have an opportunity for, you know, good, solid amendments that can be brought

forward from the opposition, can be brought forward even from the government. There may be issues that they are now seeing that they want to move forward on.

That is what, you know, Manitobans are asking of us in this one day, in this one day of emergency sessions, and it may end up being longer, it may be more than one day. We'd be happy to continue if there is work that can be done, but what they're asking of us is rather than just a rubber stamp, rather than just saying whatever is brought forward we'll have to be good with that, they're asking us instead to pause, to take the time to analyze each one of these bills on its merits and to do all of that work in a way that brings forward legislation that will, hopefully, not only protect Manitobans, not only protect communities but will not overreach and will not push those who are most marginalized already, you know, or punish them for not adhering to social distancing and quarantine provisions.

There is a lot that still needs to be done, Madam Speaker, when it comes to ensuring that Manitobans are protected. I think that Manitobans are telling us not to overreach, not to push too far, but they are telling us to ensure that if we are talking about the protection of Manitobans within our communities, then they are giving us the ability, they are telling us that we need as an opposition and working with the government to bring forward that legislation that will bring that to a head.

\* (17:20)

Now, I want to talk a little bit about some of those organizations I was talking about who are already working with marginalized folks in our community; and what they're being asked to do now is adhere to guidelines that have been put forward by public health officials, but at the same time recognize their own obligations to go out in community and serve those vulnerable people or continue to serve them—and that's no small task. Madam Speaker, that's a big challenge.

It's very easy, or it would be easy for these organizations to say, well you know, our funding is uncertain. We're, you know, very limited in what we can do because of social distancing rules, you know, and, quite frankly we're asking our employees to put themselves at risk when they come in to the office or they come in to whatever space to do the work that they do. It would be very easy for them to say we can't do it, and walk away. And say there's just no way that we can perform the tasks that we would like to be able to perform because of the current situation.

But what I've seen instead, Madam Speaker, and what I've had the privilege to be a part of in my own community is to see those organizations working with—within the rules, working within those guidelines that have been set out by public health officials, and continuing to offer services to vulnerable people.

And now, they are, of course, very limited in many cases, many programming—programs and different opportunities that they offer have changed. The priorities, of course, have changed, and there is some limits to what they are able to offer. But they are still trying in every way they can to offer those services to vulnerable people, and that is one of those stories that, you know, I believe Manitobans are becoming more and more aware of, those organizations that continue to do this work. And, again, it's those individuals who are putting themselves ultimately at risk to give to others that we want to commend and we want to thank. Because it is an incredible duty that they are fulfilling and that they feel, and that is the only reason why those organizations continue to do what they do.

So my concern is, with regards to Bill 54, is that we do not want in any case those individuals who are following the rules as best they can given their circumstances—or organizations who likewise are doing the same, trying to follow these guidelines that are set out, but, you know, recognize that there still is work that needs to be done. What we don't want is we don't want them to be penalized. We don't want this to be something that burdens them over the long term. We want this to be something that is considered temporary, that is changeable as the situation with COVID-19 in our province changes, and that is, hopefully, something we'll see soon, although of course there's so much question with regard to that, about how long we will be under some of these particular orders.

But there needs to be some flexibility for these organizations to do what they're doing, and to understand that the limits to this legislation don't extend too far into the future, don't extend indefinitely.

Again, what I am hoping is is that what the legislation the government has brought forward is, you know, may not capture that, but that is the intent that the government is trying to bring forward. And by, hopefully, being open to, you know, some of the ideas that have come forward from concerned Manitobans, that we can work together. We can craft a piece of legislation that captures, in fact, what the

government is trying to do while still understanding some of the impacts that it's going to have in our communities, some of the anxieties that people feel—and I'm sure all of us have heard from constituents and have heard from others the—some of the anxieties that they're feeling at the very basic level. Anxieties about, you know, ensuring that they're, again, trying to do what they need to do for their own family or for some case—in some cases for their community, but still follow those orders.

That's—that is a level of anxiety that is out there, and what the—I guess, in my opinion, one of the worst things we could do is to push on those people who are already doing their best to follow these orders, to push them to feeling that they are being antagonized by pieces of legislation like this. Again, I don't believe that's what the government is trying to do, but I do believe that we need to walk that fine line, ensure that we protect vulnerable people, ensure that we give organizations and individuals the opportunity to do what they need to do and give them the opportunity to show that they are looking out for everybody in their community.

So, Madam Speaker, I believe with those few words—and I'm just going to have a drink of water, sorry. With those few words, I do believe that there is a lot of opportunity for us to come together. I hope that that work continues and I hope that by giving us this emergency session here in this Legislature, we, you know, we have time now to dig deep into this legislation, we have time to dig into where some of the problems are and some of the issues that have been brought up and those concerns, that some of that is able to be resolved before the end of the day so that Manitobans understand, when we walk out of this place, that we did absolutely everything that we could as legislators to, you know, move forward some important pieces of legislation that protect Manitobans and protect individuals and allow the government to fulfill its role in co-ordinating and giving some detail to how Manitobans can adhere to these rules, but at the same time we don't simply give, you know, carte blanche to the government to push through legislation that may not fulfill those obligations.

We want to make sure that as a Legislature we work together and we work, you know, for the betterment of what Manitobans are asking us to do.

That is no small task and it's certainly no small task when compressed so tightly into one day here in the Legislature, and that is, you know, I mean, we use

the word unprecedented. I think that word maybe is starting to feel a bit under—or overused but it is really what is happening here. This, I don't think, has ever happened in quite this exact way, but I know that Manitobans expect us to come forward with good ideas but then also to put them through the process that we have laid out, whether that be a compressed version of it but still never giving up any of those opportunities—if we're talking about official opposition and our role—never giving up those opportunities to have some influence and to have some impact when it comes to these pieces of legislation.

We will, as the day goes on—and I recognize by taking up some time here today I may be pushing the day even longer which, you know, may not be quite as agreeable for all members in the Chamber, but I do want to impress upon folks how important this particular debate is and how important it is for us to ensure that we are making progress in terms of getting some resolution and some work that can be done to improve this bill and improve this legislation.

You know, Madam Speaker, I think it was said right off the top—and I actually appreciated the tone that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) brought to this House—that partisan politics would be left at the door, that we would in fact be working collaboratively with the government. Again, conceding nothing, in no way giving up our right and our duty as an official opposition to effect change, but working as—in a non-partisan fashion and I believe that was direction that was given right off the top by the Leader of the Official Opposition.

That's certainly how we've been approaching this day, other than maybe, you know, one tense moment here in the Legislature where there was a bit more back and forth than maybe anyone intended. I think that has been shown here today.

\* (17:30)

And I do want to recognize, Madam Speaker, and I just want to say that I know that a lot of folks are under pressure and certainly appreciate the work that's being done by ministers in government, and the amount of pressure that they have in order to fulfill some of the pressures that they have and some of the demands that they have in regards to their portfolios.

I would imagine coming back to the Legislature is a bit cathartic in that sense, a bit of a release and a bit of an opportunity for us to get back to the bit of

political theatre that we sometimes engage in here in this place. That may have been something that we were indulging in a little bit too much given the importance of some of these bills, by my estimation. But I won't go any further on that, Madam Speaker, and simply say that I think that ultimately what we're trying to do is give the opportunity for legislation that's brought forward to have the scrutiny that Manitobans are demanding of us right now.

And, you know, all eyes are on the actions that we are taking here today, and I believe for good reason. What Manitobans are asking of us is important work. They want to ensure that we're getting the job done, but we're not getting it done in a way that doesn't actually—or that overreaches, that over swings in areas of concern. And as I said, there's not nothing that sets people off more than when governments seem to be overreaching. They want a government that's reacting and is working together with its citizens getting that input, getting that good advice and then acting on it in a way that helps the collective. A pandemic such as we're seeing right now could not be a better example of how we can work together to, in this case, to, you know, hopefully, beat this pandemic here in Manitoba.

We only do that if we are working together, that we're trusting one another as Manitobans and, as I said, there's, you know, you can go anywhere in this province and see, you know, so many people who are doing their absolute best to adhere to the health orders that have been given to them. We want to not only appreciate the work that they're doing, but then also as legislators come together and say if the government needs additional powers, how can we do that in a way that doesn't infringe on those rights that Manitobans inherently want to have. And that is a fine line in some cases to walk, and it's a fine line that can only be, I believe, achieved, as I said, in this Legislature when we work together but we don't give up any of the abilities that we have to look at each piece of legislation in its proper context.

I know that members are, as we speak, pouring over details within the bill. They are ensuring that each piece of the bill is not only understood, but that the issues that have been brought forward to us by the public, by stakeholders and by others are being addressed. Again, this is no small task. This is something that I believe every, you know, every Manitoban who's had the chance to look at the bill or understand its context would appreciate is no small task. But what it does is it gives an opportunity for all

involved to have their input, and that is what we are asking for.

Now, Madam Speaker, I know that members are looking forward to moving on to Committee of the Whole with regards to the other bills that this Legislature has brought forward. So I know that folks are anxious to get to that point in the debate. However, I believe that Bill 54 needs to be considered very carefully. So I hope that as we have that opportunity for debate that we will also have an opportunity to bring this back here before the Legislature.

This is, I believe, second reading of this bill. So this is a crucial point, and I hope that we will come back together. We will show that non-partisan spirit that the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) talked about, and that we can actually refine and amend this legislation to actually serve Manitobans in a way that will give us the most, give us the best opportunity to have the kind of input that Manitobans are asking us to do.

And, with that, Madam Speaker, I thank you for the time.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act.

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

\* \* \*

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** On House business, I would like to announce that the following bills will now be considered by the Committee of the Whole: Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Bill 15, the liquor, gaming and cannabis control amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation act; Bill 30, The Fisheries Amendment, Forest Amendment and Provincial Parks Amendment Act; Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act; Bill 55, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Bill 56, the family maintenance act; Bill 57, The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act; Bill 58, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Bill 59, The Public Health Amendment Act; Bill 62, The Fuel Tax Amendment and Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act; and Bill 200, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that bills 4, 15, 30, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 62 and 200 will now be considered by the Committee of the Whole.

The House will now resolve into the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk):** Will the Committee of the Whole House please come to order.

As previously agreed by the House, this committee will consider the following bills: Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Bill 15, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act; Bill 30, The Fisheries Amendment, Forest Amendment and Provincial Parks Amendment Act; Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act; Bill 55, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Bill 56, The Family Maintenance Amendment Act; 57–Bill 57, the regulated health professional amendment act; Bill 58, the residential tenancy amendment act; Bill 59, The Public Health Amendment Act; Bill 62, The Fuel Tax Amendment and Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act; and Bill 200, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act.

During the consideration of the bill, the preamble and the enacting clauses and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order. Also, if there is agreement with the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that are conformed to pages with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may make comments, questions or amendments to the proposed.

Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

#### Bill 4—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

**Mr. Chairperson:** We will now consider Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act.

Does the minister responsible for the Bill 4 have an opening statement? No? Thank you, Minister.

Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement? Okay.

Clauses 1 through 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 15—The Liquor, Gaming and  
Cannabis Control Amendment and  
Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation  
Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** We'll go on to Bill 15.

Does the minister of Bill 15 have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** No? Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 30—The Fisheries Amendment,  
Forest Amendment and Provincial Parks  
Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** We'll go on to Bill 30.

Does the minister of Bill 30 have an opening statement? No?

Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

Clause 1—pass; clauses 2 and 3—pass; clause 4—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 54—The Emergency Measures  
Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** Now we'll go on to Bill 54.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 54 have an opening statement?

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** Very briefly, there will be several amendments that will be coming forward. I understand they will be on the table in the back for members to get their copies of them, so I will ask committee to bear with me. There will be multiple amendments made.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister.

Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

Shall clauses 1 through 3 pass?

**An Honourable Member:** Pass.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Clauses 1 through 3 are accordingly passed.

**An Honourable Member:** No, no.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Oh, I hear a no.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** There—amendments are coming.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, there's an amendment for clause 3.

Clauses 1 and 2—pass.

Shall clause 3 pass?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no.

**Mr. Schuler:** I move

*THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended in the—  
[interjection]*

I move

*THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended in the proposed item 3 of subsection 12.3(2) by adding "but not more than six months from the day it becomes effective" at the end.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure,

That Clauses 3 of Bill be amended in the—  
[interjection]—shall clause 3 of the bill be amended in the proposed item 3 of subsection 12.3-2—  
[interjection]—(2) by adding: but not more than six months from the day it becomes effective, at the end.

The amendment is in order.

The floor is open for any questions.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** As I alluded to in my earlier comments, this was certainly one of the concerns that was brought forward with regards to the length of an order. And, certainly, we, as I said, understand this pandemic to be an evolving situation and we're certainly not a point where it's possible to put an end date on some of these orders. It's not possible to predict exactly how the pandemic will play out here within this province. But we do know that there will be a point where we will need to come back to some normalcy, and I think the concern, certainly, has been to have too long of a time frame is not a positive way to move forward here.

I think this amendment shows some movement, shows some concern with regards to that, and so I think it's something that we can support in the sense that it does put further limits on the length of time for this particular order.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall the amendment pass—oh, the honourable Minister of Infrastructure.

**Mr. Schuler:** I would like to just say that very pleased to be working with the opposition and the third party to come up with these amendments.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, thank you, Minister.

Amendment—pass.

Shall clause 3 as amended pass?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no.

**Mr. Schuler:** I have an amendment.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The honourable Minister of Infrastructure, on the amendment.

**Mr. Schuler:** I move,

*THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended by striking out the proposed subsection 12.3(13).*

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure,

*THAT clauses 3 of bill be amended by striking out the proposed subsection 12-3(13).*

Is the—the amendment is in order.

The floor is open for questions. Any questions?

Amendment—pass.

Shall the—[interjection]—okay, the honourable member for Infrastructure.

**Mr. Schuler:** I have another amendment I would like to make. I move

*THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended in the proposed subsection 12.7(2) by adding the following after the proposed clause (c):*

For clauses (b) and (c), the period of time shall not be more than six months from the day the order becomes effective.

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure,

That Clause 3 of Bill be amended in the proposed subsection 12.7(2) by adding the following after the proposed clauses (c):

For the clauses (b) and (c), the period of time shall not be more than six months from the day the order becomes effective.

\* (17:50)

The amendment is in order. The floor is open for questions. Any questions?

The honourable minister, for another amendment—[interjection]—okay.

There are no questions?

Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Amendment—pass.

**Mr. Schuler:** I move

*THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended by striking out the proposed subsection 12.8(2).*

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure

That Clause 3 of the Bill be amended by striking out the proposed subsection 12—12.8-2.

The amendment is in order. Is the floor ready for—the floor is open for questions. Any questions?

Is the committee ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Amendment—pass.

**Mr. Schuler:** I move

*THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended in the proposed subsection 12.14(2) by striking out "must be specified in the order." and substituting "must be specified in the order, which shall not be more than six months after the day the order becomes effective."*

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure

That Clause 3 of Bill be amended in the proposed section 12—

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Dispense? Okay.

The amendment is in order. The floor is open for questions. Any questions?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Amendment—pass.

**Mr. Schuler:** I move

*THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended by striking out the proposed subsection 12.14(3).*

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure

That Clause 3 of Bill be amended—

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Dispense? Dispense.

The amendment is in order. The floor is open for questions.

Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Amendment—pass.

**Mr. Schuler:** I move

*THAT Clause 3 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed section 12.15:*

**Order may not be made re information access request**

**12.16** An order made under section 12.3, 12.6, 12.14 or 12.15 must not be made in relation to a response to a request under *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and *The Personal Health Information Act*.

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure

*THAT Clause 3—*

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear dispense? Dispense.

The amendment is in order. The floor is open for questions.

Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Amendment—pass.

Is there any more amendments on the clause 3?

Clause 3 as amended—pass; clauses 4 through 6—pass.

Shall clause 7 pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no.

**Mr. Schuler:** I move

*THAT Clause 7(2) of the Bill be amended in the proposed subsection 20(2) by striking out "\$100,000" and substituting "\$50,000".*

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure

That Clause 7 point dash two—7 dash two of the Bill be amended in the proposed subsection—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Dispense? Dispense.

Is the amendment in order? The amendment is in order. The floor is open for questions.

Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Amendment—pass.

**Mr. Schuler:** I move

*THAT Clause 7(4) of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed subsection 20(6):*

**Due diligence defence**

**20(7)** No person shall be found to have failed to comply with an order under section 12 or 12.3 if the person can establish that they took all reasonable steps to prevent the failure.

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Infrastructure

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** *THAT—*

I hear dispense?

Shall the amendment be in—the amendment is in order.

The floor is open for questions.

Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Amendment—pass; clause 7 as amended—pass; clauses 8 through 10—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill as amended be reported.

**Bill 55—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** So we'll move on to Bill 55.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 55 have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Clauses 1 and 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clauses 4 and 5—pass; clause 6—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 56—The Family Maintenance Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** So we'll go on to Bill 56.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 56 have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

Clauses 1 and 2—pass.

Shall clauses 3 and 4 pass?

**An Honourable Member:** Pass.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Yes, we're proposing two amendments. This is a bill that—

**Mr. Chairperson:** What clause?

Member for St. Boniface.

**Mr. Lamont:** There are two amendments. One will be that the following be added after clause 3—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Which clause?

**Mr. Lamont:** Sorry?

**Mr. Chairperson:** Which clause?—[interjection]—3, okay.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Lamont:** This is basically. I move

*THAT the following be added to after Clause 3 of the Bill:*

*3.1 Subsection 53.9(5) is replaced with the following:*

**When creditor may be asked for information**

**53.9(5)** The designated officer may—at any time but not more often than once every six months—request the creditor to provide information to the designated officer sufficient to allow the designated officer to determine whether a maintenance obligation for an adult child remains eligible for enforcement. The designated officer must request the information when asked to do so by the debtor (subject to the six-month limit).

And

*3.2 Subsection 61.1.1(8), as enacted by section 3 of this Act, is repealed.*

And the second amendment—

**Mr. Chairperson:** No, okay, we'll go one amendment at a time.

It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Boniface

*THAT—*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a dispense.

The amendment is in order. The floor is open for questions. Any questions?

Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall the amendment pass?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no.

The amendment is accordingly defeated. [interjection]

The honourable member—okay. The honourable member for St. Boniface? [interjection]

Clause 3—pass.

\* (18:00)

Shall clause 4 pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no. [interjection] Okay.

Shall the clauses 4 pass? [interjection] Yes. Clause 4—pass. Enacting clause—pass. Title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 57—The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, we'll go on to Bill 57. Clause—okay, Bill 57.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 57 have an opening statement? No?

Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

Shall clauses 1 and 2 pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.



**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Clauses 1 and 2 are accordingly passed—I hear a no?

Clause 1—pass.

Shall clause 2 pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** No for clause 2. Okay.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I move

*THAT Clause 2 of the Bill be amended in the proposed clause 56(2)(b) by striking out "in Canada or the United States" and substituting "outside Manitoba".*

This would permit colleges under appropriate—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, this has been moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park

*THAT Clause 2 of the Bill—I hear dispense?*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Dispense. The amendment is in order.

Shall—the floor is open for questions.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** This clause would just simply permit colleges to use discretion.

By no means would people be forced to send health-care workers to work. It would be up to them and up to the individual institutions.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The amendment is in order. The floor is open for questions. Any questions? *[interjection]* Okay.

Is the committee ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall the amendment pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no. The amendment is accordingly defeated.

I was—wanted to ask the member for Tyndall Park if there's any more amendments.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Yes. I move

*THAT Clause 2 of the Bill be amended in the proposed subsection 56(4) by adding at the end ", which may include*

(a) requiring practice under supervision in circumstances that the college considers necessary; and

(b) requiring a report to be prepared by members who supervise those members practising under supervision during the public health emergency and provided to the college to be used in determining whether the member is qualified to practise as a full member of the college after the public health emergency."

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park

*THAT—*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear dispense.

The amendment is in order. The floor is open for questions.

Okay, is the committee ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall the amendment pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The amendment is accordingly defeated.

Is there any other amendments in clause 2? No?

Clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

#### **Bill 58—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, we'll move on to Bill 58.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 58 have an opening statement?

Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

Clauses 1 and 2—pass.

Shall clauses 3 through 5 pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Clauses 3 through 5—[interjection]

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Oh, I hear a no.

Clauses 3 and 4—pass.

Shall clause 5 pass?

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** No, I hear a no.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I move

*THAT Clause 5(4) of the Bill be replaced with the following:*

*Coming into force—proclamation*

*5(4) Section 4, except clause 1(d), comes into force on a day to be fixed by a proclamation and clause 1(d) comes into force on the later of*

*(a) July 1, 2020; or*

*(b) the day the order limiting the operations of businesses in Manitoba made by the chief public health officer under section 67 of **The Public Health Act** in respect of the pandemic caused by the communicable disease known as COVID-19 is terminated.*

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved, by the honourable member for St. Boniface

*THAT—*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a dispense.

The amendment is in order. The floor is open for questions.

Is the—any questions?

Is the committee ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Shall the amendment pass?

**An Honourable Member:** Pass.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no. The amendment is accordingly defeated.

Clause 5—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

### **Bill 59—The Public Health Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** So we'll go on to Bill 59.

Does the minister responsible for Bill 59 have an opening statement?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** We'd only want to add that, for the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux), who raised the question about whether the publication of these notices in—on Internet format would negate other methods of publication, and I can confirm that, no, indeed, this would be in addition to the publication of these notices in newspapers, TV and radio.

I would also add for the member of Union Station that when it comes to the enforcement measures that were discussed this afternoon, that in every case, I've confirmed with officials that the emphasis would be on compliance and dispersing crowds; the emphasis would not be placed on enforcement measures leading to fines being levied. But, in addition to that, if the member sought an audience and wanted an additional capacity to relay those concerns, I would offer up a key official at a later date, but at a key time to be able to accept those concerns and have them received.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister.

Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement? No?

Clauses 1 through 3—pass; clause 4—pass.

Shall clause 5 pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Pass.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I move

*THAT Clause 5 of the Bill be amended by adding the following after the proposed subsection 67.1(5):*

#### **Consideration if person is of no fixed address**

**67.1(6)** When acting under subsection (1), the medical officer or inspector must first consider whether the person has an ordinary residence before determining whether the person has failed to comply with the order.

**Mr. Chairperson:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park

*THAT—*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

The floor is open for questions.

Is the committee ready for the question? Shall the amendment pass?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I hear a no. The amendment is accordingly defeated.

Clause 5–pass; clauses 6 through 8–pass; clauses 9 and 10–pass; enacting clause–pass; title–pass. Bill be reported.

#### **Bill 62–The Fuel Tax Amendment and Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** So we'll go on to Bill 62.

Does the minister of Bill 62 have an opening statement? No?

\* (18:10)

Does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

Clause 1–pass.

Shall clause 2 pass?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** No? I hear a no?

**An Honourable Member:** No, no, no.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay.

Clause 2–pass; clause 3–pass; enacting clause–pass; title–pass. Bill be reported.

#### **Bill 200–The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson:** So now we'll go on to our final bill.

Does the member for Rossmere have a responsible for the bill have an opening statement?

**Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere):** Bill 200, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act exempts veterans' organizations from property tax. This has been the case in the City of Winnipeg for some time and now this bill will expand that province-wide.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the member.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on this Bill 200? Okay.

Clauses 1 and 2–pass; clauses 3 and 4–pass; enacting clause–pass; title–pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes the business before the committee.

The committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

### **IN SESSION**

#### **Committee Report**

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered the following bills and reports the same without amendments: Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Bill 15, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act; Bill 30, the fisheries amendment, forest amendment and the provincial parks amendment act; Bill 55, the employee standards code amendment act; Bill 56, The Family Maintenance Amendment Act; Bill 57, the regulated health professionals amendment act; Bill 58, the residential tenancy amendment act; Bill 59, The Public Health Amendment Act; and Bill 62, The Fuel Tax Amendment and Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act; and Bill 200, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act.

The Committee of the Whole has considered the following bills–has–the following bills with–and reports the same with amendments: Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Rossmere, that the report of the committee be received.

**Madam Speaker:** The Committee of the Whole has considered the following bills and reports the same without amendment: Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Bill 15, the–

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense? Okay.

The Committee of the Whole has considered–no. This one. I move–oh, it has been moved by the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk), seconded by the honourable member for Rossmere, that the report of the committee be received.

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

\* \* \*

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Could you please call for third reading—

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen).

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm seeking leave of the House to allow for third reading debate on bill—for the following bills, which I will call one at a time and ask that you seek agreement for each individually in turn.

Is there leave to consider and put the questions on all remaining stages of the bill process today and for the House to not see the clock until all questions have been put on these bills and royal assent granted on all bills which concurrence and third reading—which pass concurrence and third reading today: Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act, and Bill 55—The Public Health Amendment Act—59, The Public Health Amendment Act?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to consider and put the questions on all remaining stages of the bill process today for bills—and for the House to not see the clock until all questions have been put on Bill 54—okay, for the bill—for the House to not see the clock until all questions have been put on these bills and royal assent granted on all bills which pass concurrence and third reading today?

Bill 54: Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Bill 59: Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Would you please call for third reading Bill 54, bill—

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen).

**Mr. Goertzen:** I will continue and thank you for the guidance of our Clerk—Deputy Clerk. Yes, I'm not giving you a promotion yet. You don't get the raise with it.

Asking for the—you can call for third reading Bill 4, Bill 15, Bill 30, Bill 54, Bill 55, Bill 56, Bill 57, Bill 58, Bill 59, Bill 62 and Bill 200, and then move to the financial processes.

**Madam Speaker:** It has just been announced by the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) that the House will now consider concurrence and third readings of all bills reported from Committee of the Whole: bills 4, 15, 30, 54, 55,

56, 57, 58, 59, 62 and 200. And those will be followed by the financial processes.

### CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

#### Bill 4—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

**Madam Speaker:** And so we will call then third reading of Bill 4.

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Crown Services):** Move—I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Relations (Ms. Squires), that Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read a third time and passed.

\* (18:20)

#### *Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister for Crown Services. *[interjection]*

Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 4, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act.

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

#### Bill 15—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act

**Madam Speaker:** I will now Bill 15, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act.

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Crown Services):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), that Bill 15, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act, be reported from the Committee of the Whole to—be concurred in and now be read a third time and passed.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is third reading of Bill 15, The Liquor, Gaming and

Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 30—The Fisheries Amendment,  
Forest Amendment and Provincial Parks  
Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** I will now call Bill 30, The Fisheries Amendment, Forest Amendment and Provincial Parks Amendment Act.

**Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Conservation and Climate):** I move, seconded by the Minister for Education, that Bill 30, The Fisheries Amendment, Forest Amendment and Provincial Parks Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche, la Loi sur les forêts et la Loi sur les parcs provinciaux, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 30, The Fisheries Amendment, Forest Amendment and Provincial Parks Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 54—The Emergency Measures  
Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to Bill 54.

**Hon. Ron Schuler (Minister of Infrastructure):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Relations (Ms. Squires), that Bill 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act, as amended and reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 30—no, 54, The Emergency Measures Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 55—The Employment Standards Code  
Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to Bill 55.

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 55, the Employment Standards Code amendment, reported—sorry—recorded from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education, that Bill 55, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 55, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 56—The Family Maintenance Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** Moving, then, to Bill 56.

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 56, The Family Maintenance Amendment Act, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 56, The Family Maintenance Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 57—The Regulated Health Professions  
Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** We will now call Bill 57.

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson), that Bill 57, The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 57, The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 58—The Residential Tenancies  
Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** I will now call Bill 58.

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 58, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 58, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 59—The Public Health Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** I will now call Bill 59.

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I move, seconded by the Minister for Justice that Bill 59, The Public Health Amendment Act, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question? *[interjection]*

Does the minister have—*[interjection]* Oh, does the minister have some comments on the bill?

**Mr. Friesen:** Only brief comments to say first to the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux), I wanted to assure, even at third reading, that we had confirmed in the process of the day that the bill will allow for the addition of publication notices in an Internet fashion or electronically, but it does not take away the ability to also publish things on TV, radio or newspaper.

Also, to the member for Union Station who raised concerns about fairness and equity when it came to people who were perhaps challenged from a permanent residence point of—perspective, that fairness would be exhibited by officers, that every attempt will be made to place the emphasis on compliance and not on the enforcement measures—enforcement only as a last resort. But I'm once again offering a key senior official to be able to meet and to discuss any concerns that the member has.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question—or was the member for Union Station wishing to make a comment?

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** I just wanted to put a couple of things on the record. One, I wanted to thank the minister for extending the invitation to meet with someone in the department to discuss the concerns that I stated earlier. Again, I think it's important to express and to articulate in the House that the reality for many communities, when we hear of expanding enforcement, is such that targeted and marginalized communities typically bear the brunt of that enhanced enforcement.

\* (18:30)

And so, when we look at legislation that is seeking to expand those powers, it is critically important that, foundationally, we are centering the needs of those who can be and often are disproportionately impacted by legislation of this nature and that, in fact, we are ensuring that it's those communities and stakeholders and organizations who have their voices heard when this is being conceptualized and developed to ensure that we're not coming back after the fact to make these changes and to implement really important steps to make sure that the fairness that the minister has spoken to appropriately here is, in fact, developed.

So again, thank you to the minister, and I want to thank all folks who are working hard to ensure that the public has the information they need on this issue.

**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 59, The Public Health Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 62—The Fuel Tax Amendment and Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to Bill 62.

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 62, The Fuel Tax Amendment and Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 62, The Fuel Tax Amendment and Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act.

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

**Bill 200—The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to Bill 200.

**Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere):** On behalf of the member for Waverley (Mr. Reyes), I move, seconded by the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk), that Bill 200, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Is this House ready for the question?

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 200, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act.

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

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** And as previously indicated by the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen), we will now move to The Appropriation Act, 2020, and The Loan Act, 2020.

The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the resolutions respecting The Appropriation Act, 2020, COVID-19 response bill, and the Supply bill, The Loan Act, 2020.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**

**Capital Supply**

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Piwniuk):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

We have before us the consideration of the resolution respecting the Appropriation (COVID-19 Response) Bill and The Loan Act, 2020.

The resolution respecting The Loan Act 2020 reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty the authority to borrow a sum of—not exceeding \$5 billion for Supply for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021.

The floor is open for questions. Any questions?

*Resolution agreed to.*

A resolution respecting the covid—Appropriation—(COVID-19 Response) Bill reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be—resolved that there—a sum not exceeding \$1 billion, as set forth in part A, Operating Expenditures of the Supplementary Estimates, be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021.

The floor is open for questions. Any questions?

*Resolution agreed to.*

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

**IN SESSION**

**Committee Report**

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered the—adopt the resolution respecting the Appropriation (COVID-19 Response) Bill and the Supply Bill—The Loan Act, 2020.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Rossmere, that the report of the committee be received.

*Motion agreed to.*

### Concurrence Motion

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that the House concur in the report of the Committee of Supply respecting concurrence in the resolutions respecting the Appropriation (COVID-19 Response) Bill and the Supply Bill—The Loan Act, 2020, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021.

*Motion agreed to.*

\* (18:40)

### Supply Motions

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), that there be granted the authority to borrow for supply purposes the sum of \$5 billion for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Mr. Fielding:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that there be granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenditures of the Public Service, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2021 out of the Consolidated Fund, a sum of up to \$1 billion, as set out in part A, Operating Expenditures of the Supplementary Estimates, laid before the House at the present session of the Legislature.

*Motion agreed to.*

### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

#### Bill 60—The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Wharton), that Bill 60, The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), be now read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

*Motion agreed to.*

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 60—The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 60, The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), be now read a second time and referred to the Committee of the Whole.

*Motion presented.*

**Madam Speaker:** Does the honourable Minister of Finance have any comments to make?

**Mr. Fielding:** Madam Speaker, it's an honour to be here to discuss these items. These are important appropriations. We know the crisis that COVID-19 has put us in, and as a government we need to address these issues. This appropriation will do exactly that. It will provide funding to address emergency needs, whether it be through Health, whether it be things like other appropriations that need to happen, or through emergencies. It's important that we address this; we address this an urgent nature and I encourage all members of the House to support this.

**Madam Speaker:** Do members wish to ask questions on the bill?

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** With the government seeking the authority to spend a billion dollars, why, in their plans, don't they have a provision to provide direct financial assistance to Manitoba families, to small businesses, and to renters who are feeling the financial stress?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Our government has been a leader in the country in terms of providing supports: over \$3 billion of tax relief, in terms of a number, deferrals or taxes to provide to provide some relief for Manitobans.

We already talked about today, amendment in term—or a change in terms of taxation on commercial insurance that will put over \$880 for each of the businesses that are there. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) recently talked, I think as early as today or as late as today, in terms of his news conference: we want to see what the federal government has brought forward in terms of their resolution—or in terms of their emergency plans, and we're going to fill in some of the gaps as it relates to that.

This gives us some room to do that, and we think it is important to do as such.



**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, small-business owners are looking for no-interest loan programs to help them through this difficult time. Many of them are also looking for a program that would allow their rent to be deferred throughout the economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The government, through the appropriation being contemplated today, has the opportunity to bring forward such measures. Why haven't they announced such moves yet?

**Mr. Fielding:** We provided and have and will continue to listen to people in the business community in terms of our—addressing our issues. We put two—\$3 billion on the table in terms of tax measures, relief for individuals. We provided some supports for people having to pay the insurance piece and the Premier (Mr. Pallister), as mentioned earlier on, said we'll be filling the gaps and we'll be enlightening people or giving people more indication in the coming days, what that looks like.

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, with the government today asking for the right to spend \$1 billion and to borrow \$5 billion more, why are they turning around and asking public sector employees to take a haircut on their wages in the midst of a recession?

It goes against economic policy. It goes against the best interest of our entire economy. This will impact the GDP and in turn it will impact future government revenues. Will the government back off this misguided plan to take money away from hard-working Manitobans?

**Mr. Fielding:** Madam Speaker, if we look at the history of what the NDP did when they were in power, they ran up spending tax and spending policies, where we're spending over \$1 billion in debt-servicing charges. And that's something that the moderating agencies have clearly said was not the right direction to go in.

We've taken steps to be more fiscally prudent as a government. We're going to continue to do that. We're going to make evaluations, we're going to make important investments that will support individuals. We think this is an appropriate level of money. These—situation is evolving fast, and so we're nimble on our feet in terms of providing some supports, and we're going to continue to look where there's needs and address those.

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the policy of Filmon Fridays was proved to be a failure in the 1990s. I wonder why the government would choose to repeat

such a misguided economic policy during a recession in which Manitobans need financial assistance.

Again, regardless of where the economists may fall on the political spectrum, perhaps more conservative neo-classical economist or perhaps a more progressive-leaning one, everyone agrees that government has a special role to play to keep people working, to keep jobs intact, and to keep the economy moving during times of financial crisis.

Will the government reconsider their plan to take money away from hard-working Manitobans, especially at a time when they're asking for permission to spend \$1 billion of their money?

**Mr. Fielding:** We have appropriate amounts of monies that is in here. These are evolving situations. We know that we've already supported front-line workers, which is extremely important to us. The people that are on the front lines are—need our support, and that's what this appropriation does. Over \$500 million for expenditures: we spent close to \$1 billion just on things like PPE already that support front-line workers. We think these are important.

We also know that there'll be other expenditures, whether it be related to Rent Assist, things like EIA, things like Justice that are part of this, and other different initiatives that we're going to be announcing in the coming days, will be supported with this appropriation.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** As this is our one opportunity to get some of the detail that is obviously not available to us otherwise, with regards to how this money will be spent, the minister mentioned some elements of increased spending, mentioned PPEs, mentioned increases in EIA.

Could he give us the details on how he plans to spend that? How much is for new programs, and how much is for volume pressures that they're experiencing right now?

\* (18:50)

**Mr. Fielding:** We've already provided over \$3 billion in tax relief for Manitobans. We think that's really important to give businesses some room and flexibility to address issues. We've already provided \$35 million for businesses so they don't have to pay insurance on their properties. That's real money that can be put in the pockets of Manitobans.

In terms of their comment of how much, it really depends on how many people apply. These are mandated programs through EIA as well as through

Rent Assist. The problem is, of course, that the former government, when they were in power, of course failed to address those needs and we had to push in opposition to have the Rent Assist program that's moved us from the child poverty capital to middle of the pack.

We're making a lot of progress. We're going to continue doing that, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So, Madam Speaker, we've heard the partisan talking points before. What I'm hoping to get is a little more detail than a single page which simply says \$500 million with regards to health care. We're asking specifically, when we're talking about protective equipment for first front-line responders and front-line workers, we'd like to get a little bit more detail.

So, how much is being spent towards, for instance, PPEs? How much is being spent for other items in Health? Could the minister give us a little bit more detail?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, first of all, let's put something on the record: We know we're spending over a billion dollars in debt-servicing charges because of the poor financial management that the previous government did for 17 years. So that's the first thing, Madam Speaker.

Second of all, no one knows how long this pandemic is going to happen, whether it's two months, whether it's three months or four months. Those expenditures come in and we're going to address this. We want to protect Manitobans. That's our No. 1 priority, but we can't tell you of how long this is going to last, how much PP you're going to need, how much overtime you're going to need, how much people are going to have in applying for Rent Assist and EIA programs.

Those are things that we'll know in the coming months and days. We think that the billion dollars here is an appropriate level of money to address COVID-19.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Just to be clear, is this new money that's going to be over and above what was originally planned in the budget, or is this—are we basically passing a form of an Interim Supply bill?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, this is above and beyond the billion dollars that we anticipate spending. There is loan authority, of course, that we're talking about as well. Again, we don't know how long that will last, if

it's—some people have talked, saying it could last 18 months, 12 months, three months. We're hopeful that this is as short as possible because we know we need to protect Manitobans.

We think we're doing a good job so far, but we don't have that information and I don't think anyone has that information. We provide our estimates based on nine forecasting agencies. We're trying to get the best numbers we can, but this is an evolving situation that we're addressing.

We think this bill is important. It gives appropriation for money to address protecting Manitobans in terms of health care, other services and supports, and a million dollars more—or 10—hundred million dollars more for emergencies.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Has the government received confirmation from the federal government at this point that core government employees will, in fact, qualify for the federal work share program?

**Mr. Fielding:** The Premier (Mr. Pallister) will be talking to the Deputy Prime Minister tomorrow morning, so we'll have more 'infication' at that point.

**Mr. Lamont:** I was just wondering—I know that there's been discussion about having people—civil servants, public servants, work for three days a week on an EI. I was wondering if anyone opposite or any of the ministers or the Premier had decided to lead by example and take three days off themselves and go on EI as a trial run and see how it would work and then be able to report back to us on how it works for them.

**Mr. Fielding:** I can tell you for a fact because I see it every day, our Minister of Health is working seven days a week. Our Premier is working seven days a week to protect Manitobans. We're on calls every day with our health-care officials. We want to protect Manitobans. That is our utmost priority, whether you're a politician, whether you're working administration or health-care officials.

We're all trying to pull together, not divide ourselves from a Manitoba perspective to address this COVID crisis, and that's exactly what we're going to do.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So, just to be clear, the minister has announced publicly that, in fact, this is the direction that the government is going, that they're bringing back Filmon Fridays with a vengeance, and yet has received no confirmation from the federal government that, in fact, this is even a plan that will work for employees.

Has the government received confirmation from the federal government for Crown corporations, for universities, for health authorities, for school divisions and for all other government agencies? Will those employees qualify for the federal work share program?

**Mr. Fielding:** This is something—a discussion's been happening, obviously we think it's important to address this to make sure, whether you're having front-line Fridays or other things that can help Manitobans. We think it's really important to address these issues that are here. We think the bills before us whether you have—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Fielding:** —over a billion dollars on—in servicing to protect Manitobans, \$500 million for health care, \$400 million for enabling appropriations. Those are costs that you're going to have for things like the Rent Assist from EIA as well as over \$100 million in expenditures. We think this could run up the debt as well by upwards of \$5 billion, but we'll see how long this lasts. This is an evolving situation, and we're going to address this by putting dollars to protect Manitobans.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So, once again, Madam Speaker, a single page in this bill allows the minister to spend \$1 billion, and in this case won't—he won't give any kind of detail, and I do find that concerning. We know accountability is one of the things that's being asked of all legislators around the world.

Could the minister at the very least give us an indication of how much of this money will be used for PPEs to each regional health authority, and how much will be used for home-care providers who are asking for this protective equipment?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, as Minister of Finance, it was my hope that we could use the billion dollars that we're spending because of the NDP's spending patterns in the past to address these issues or, first of all, we want to look at the rainy day fund that was drained from the NDP, of course, from over \$800 million to \$100 million. We're up to about 872 after this year. That's our first priority but, again, to answer the question: we don't know how long this pandemic is going to last.

Our hope is that it's shorter. I can't tell you what those needs will be because we clearly don't know how long this will last for, but one thing is for a fact: we're going to do everything we can to protect

Manitobans and this spending bill will allow us to protect Manitobans.

**Mr. Lamont:** Could the minister explain whether he's going to—or release an economic update of some kind so that we're—we have greater details or at least expectations of the multiple projections for revenue? We've heard that there are going to be major—could be facing a massive deficit. We don't know what revenues are going to be. I know that there—it's flexible.

I know that if we could even at least have an update because, from what I can see that even the worst-case scenario that was projected in the budget that was released—the updated budget, has been completely obliterated.

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, one thing that we're happy with is the progress that we made, and I think it's been backed up by people in the financial communities. A number of the banks have come out recently that said Manitoba will rebound the best of any provinces largely—probably because of our diverse economy which is important as well as some of the hard work that our government has done to get our finances in order.

So we think that is extremely important. Our number one priority is to make sure we have a money bill here, the appropriate money to support and protect Manitobans, and that's what this does through the normal course of action, through the Estimates and supply process. There's 100 hours where people can ask as many questions as they like in terms of how we're spending the money and that's up to the opposition members.

**Mr. Wiebe:** This is unbelievable. Here we are asking straightforward questions with regards to detail about how this minister intends to spend \$1 billion in this province, and he can't give us one answer. It's frustrating when all we get is talking points and spin rather than detail. I'm simply asking. I'd like some detail. Enabling appropriations: \$400 million.

Could the minister simply give us some level of detail? How much is being spent in each department? How much are they budgeting for?

This minister has the information; why is he not giving it to the House?

**Mr. Fielding:** Our government has already spent \$100 million on expenditures. We spent over \$27 million, in fact, even more on things like child care. We're spending about \$80 million, \$80 million a

month on PPE, right. So there's a lot of money that is being appropriated. We're going to spend what it takes to protect Manitobans. That is our utmost priority.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for—oh, sorry, the time for this question period is over.

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any members wishing to debate the bill?

\* (19:00)

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I do appreciate the opportunity to put some words on the record. What I had hoped for was that there would be some level of detail that was offered by the minister here before the House.

Now—and just to inform folks who are following along at home as to the normal process that we follow here in the Legislature, this sort of bill that is being brought forward before the House, an exceptional spending bill for exceptional times. However, there would be normally a number of opportunities for us as legislators to dig in to these numbers, to get more detail before we were asked to pass this particular spending bill. We would be given an opportunity, as the minister alluded to. There would be an opportunity for Estimates. There would be an opportunity for full debate here in the Legislature, and what would be expected at each one of those stages is that the simple one half-page summary that's been given to legislators could be detailed and could—we could get additional information.

Now, we recognize that we've come together today in an emergency session in an emergency capacity to move forward quickly on legislation, and we remain committed to doing that: to working with the government to ensure that Manitobans are protected and that the pandemic is dealt with here in this province as best we can.

However, when we're given no information, when the minister simply puts on the record talking points that we've heard for four years from this government that mean absolutely nothing, when the Premier (Mr. Pallister) sits with his back to the minister and will continuously feed him partisan talking points rather than letting the minister answer the question with some level of detail that would give us some context what we are agreeing to pass here today, it's frustrating to say the least, Madam Speaker, and I do believe that it flies in the face of the spirit with which we came to this place today.

We came to this place today, as the Leader for the Official Opposition said, in the spirit of non-partisanship, in a way that we wanted to work with the government to accomplish some emergency measures that would protect Manitobans, and I believe that some of that has been on display here today. However, at the very last stage of this process, what some would argue is maybe one of the most important stages of the process, the process where we are enabling the government extraordinary spending powers that I haven't seen in my time as a legislator and I can only imagine when this would have been the case in the past, when we are not given the opportunity to at least get some context it throws that entire sense of non-partisanship out the window. And it's beyond frustrating. It's, in fact, I think disrespectful to this place, disrespectful to the people of Manitoba and it's disrespectful to the democracy that we are supposed to be espousing here in this Legislature.

Now, there is an opportunity, I believe, throughout the process—I may be wrong—that the minister could pause, could give more context. I know we still have to deal with the loan act, which there is certainly a lot of information we're hoping to get there. An additional \$5 billion of spending being asked for in that bill. We are asking for more detail here. But, beyond that, Madam Speaker, we are in fact asking for some level of accountability from this government. We are asking that they report their information about how they're spending their money. We asked very clearly that it could be within the committee setting; we'd be happy to work, again, in a non-partisan way to ensure that the money is going where it's needed. We proposed that there could be additional reporting opportunities that we could come back as a Legislature to analyze and to debate and get more information about how this information—how this money is being spent, and at every turn this government has denied those ideas.

And now, when asked the most basic, simple questions about how this government is going to spend \$1 billion, the minister talks about the rainy day fund. It's pouring outside, Madam Speaker. I mean, I don't know where—what week he's in, what month he's in, this is a crisis and what we're talking about right now is real money that is not going to the people in this province who need it the most.

We've heard time and time again from Manitobans that they're concerned about the health-care services that are available to them. They're concerned about their employment. They're concerned about their small businesses.

We are simply asking whether this money that we are now agreeing to in this Legislature, whether that will go to deal with those concerns.

Now, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), the Leader of the Official Opposition asked those questions, hoping to get some insight whether that could be areas that this minister would consider, that he would consider supporting Manitobans directly.

Again, we got nothing but platitudes and spin. That is not acceptable, Madam Speaker. It's frustrating. We have come together here in a non-partisan way. I hope we can move forward in a non-partisan way, but in order to do that I simply ask that the minister take this process seriously, that he give information as he has it, that he's open and transparent with us here in this Legislature, and going forward that he continues to be open and transparent with Manitobans about how he's spending their money.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** We do have some very serious concerns about this bill. There's no—absolutely no question that the government needs to step up and needs to do much more, but there's a really troubling lack of detail. The fact that we're saying, well, it's \$500 million on this, \$400 million on this, and \$100 million on this, really comes across as something that was just made up on the back of an envelope.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) has said, well, we have plans that are going to be announced in the coming days. I simply cannot understand why those plans cannot be announced today, why we cannot be told, as members of this Legislature, what those plans are going to be and what the greater details are going to be.

One of the major proposals when we talk about the fiscal state of this government of saying, well, we're going to ask civil servants to either take leave or that this government is going to strip away funding from not-for-profits and that this funding will be reinvested in health care.

To date, this government has not reinvested a dollar into health care because health-care funding has been frozen at the same rate for the last four years until now—until now we're actually facing a major crisis.

The government has also been incredibly reactive and had taken a wait-and-see approach to see what the federal government does first and then respond. This is something that other governments haven't done.

They haven't waited to see because this entire approach, aside from being reactive, is failing to provide Manitobans with the security and the certainty that they need.

So we're extremely concerned about this and, beyond all of this, there are major challenges for both Hydro and the finances of the government in general because this government's credit rating, which was downgraded twice under this government, was downgraded and, under the projection and there is a warn by—a warning by S & P that the projections—that the government's projections were based on growth and continued revenue.

That's clearly not the case anymore. This is why the government has had to go and ask the federal government to be a co-signer on their loan. The—we are in very serious financial trouble, I think, and that we need a more specific plan in order to make sure that this government is investing and continuing to flow money to make sure that small businesses and others will stay afloat and not simply say that, well, we're going to spend more money on PPE.

I also want to point out that when we talk about the relief that this government is offering, if they talk about billings and—in tax relief, that is not a cancellation of taxes. All it is is a postponement. We're talking about postponing taxes; we're talking about deferrals. These are all things that are going to—this is just kicking the can down the road in a way that is inevitably going to result in bigger bills down the line, so we're extremely concerned about that.

There needs to be more detail and we need to see support for businesses, for Manitoba businesses who've been forced to close for no reason other than that they are not deemed essential in a pandemic. This is an act—we are all willing and recognizing that the pandemic shutdown is necessary in order to save lives and keep people safe, but the economic consequences are also colossal and we are talking about decisions that this government makes that will make the difference between whether a small business goes bankrupt in the next few weeks or not, whether people can pay their mortgage in the next few weeks or not.

\* (19:10)

And we have yet to see the kind of money flowing in—not just tax cuts, not just deferrals, but actual money being put into the hands of businesses and individuals that is going to be essential, and I will also add to that child-care centres. Because I've heard directly from people who've told me they're going to

be—they're not going to be able to pay their bills, they're going to be bankrupt within weeks. This is something the CFIB has said. They've been pleading with this government. So it's really unfortunate. I have to say, I'm—we are in favour of increased spending because it's essential. We're even—we're willing to accept that the government needs to borrow, borrow in a very major way. But it also needs to be—it—that money needs to find its way into the economy and it needs to be done in a way that's fair and just and that does not just follow the trickle-down economics that we've seen for so long where we give to the top and we leave nothing for the bottom. And that's—unfortunately, that's—we're seeing too much of that.

So I don't expect the Premier (Mr. Pallister) or the Finance Minister to have a conversion on the road to Damascus to Keynesianism and—but I have to recognize—but we have to recognize that for too long, too many people in Manitoba have been suffering. And I'm extremely concerned that there are overly optimistic—I mean, I want to be optimistic—I want things to be able to be secure, but I—that this—that—the COVID-19 shutdown is going to trigger a much more serious downturn because there are so many people who are living in precarious conditions, people who are—not just the people who're homeless, the working poor, families who are scraping by and much of the middle class who are going to fall through the gaps because we have a social safety net that's been cut and eroded and rotted for so many years. And we're going to see exactly what that's going to be.

So I hope, again, that we're—that the government will be willing to come back and give us details and talk about what these—what this—these actual expenditures is going to be, because who benefits is absolutely critical.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), seconded by the honourable Minister of Health, that Bill 60, The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), be now read a second time and be referred to the Committee of the Whole.

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

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### Bill 61—The Loan Act, 2020

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, I move, second by the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 61, The Loan Act, 2020, be now read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

*Motion agreed to.*

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill 61—The Loan Act, 2020

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I move that Bill 61, The Loan Act, be now read—*[interjection]* Sorry, let me start again, Madam Speaker.

I move, second by the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 61, the loan act, be now read a second time and referred to the Committee of the Whole.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Education, that Bill 61, The Loan Act, 2020, be now read a second time and be referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Is the minister wishing to make any comments in debate?

**Mr. Fielding:** Bill number—it's a pleasure to bring bill—the bill to the table here. It provides borrowing authority for up—going—it provides borrowing authority up to \$5 billion for the COVID-19 response to meet the anticipated liquidity needs during the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Section 1 authorizes borrowing up to the credit of the government to a maximum level of \$5 billion. Section 2 provides for the Loan Act, 2020, to take effect retroactively to April 1st, 2020.

To add some context to this, Madam Speaker, I will say this provides authority up to \$5 billion, and we know one of the members—I believe, from Concordia—talked about comments, what does this consist of? Well, could consist of issues in terms of revenue, upwards of \$3.3 billion in expenditures pressures of \$1.7 billion.

That being said, Madam Speaker, we don't know how long this will last for, so it's anyone's guest—even the financial institutions, the nine forecasting agencies can't tell you how long this pandemic is going to last, whether you're in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Ontario or New York City.

So thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Do members wish to ask questions of the bill? The honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence. First question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Once again, we're speaking in, sort of, a very large, very round number.

I'm wondering how the minister arrived at the figure of \$5 billion in order to move forward here. What was the calculation that was used in order to arrive at the \$5-billion figure?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Well, of course, this is a evolving situation.

We haven't gone through a pandemic like this before, so I don't think anyone has a crystal ball. And, if the member from 'cordia' has some other facts and figures when he can say when this is going to end, then I guess he should bring it to the table right now.

I can tell you it's going to have significant revenue issues for us. I'll put it in maybe three buckets. One would be tax relief. I know the opposition members don't think that tax relief is important, but it's over \$3 billion of tax relief to make sure businesses can get through the hump.

There's also lost revenue associated with some of our fees and services. And I'll say a third piece is other things like reductions, in terms of things like greater business—the business enterprises like Hydro and Liquor & Lotteries, who are on the revenue side.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Yes, I wanted to ask the minister whether this is—also applies to Hydro's borrowing as well. Is this—so this is not just an expansion in terms of fiscal—or fiscal investments for the province of—the Province and its measures, but also for Hydro?

**Mr. Fielding:** No, this is related to COVID-19. That's what we're debating here.

What I'm talking about is in terms of the tax relief, the \$3 billion of tax relief that we're talking about. It's deferrals on a number of things to make it easier—people said need to make it easier for businesses. That's a part of it, so this is related to that. That's upwards of \$3.3 billion of revenue issued and upwards of \$1.7 billion expenditures.

Now, are we going to need all this? It's my hope that we're not going to need all this money. I hope we don't have to borrow \$5 billion. But we don't know how long this is going to last, and so an abundance of caution. It's important to have authority to borrow money if need be to address the critical situation that we're in with COVID.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So, again, Madam Speaker, the minister has sort of mapped out the big picture. What I'm asking for is a little bit more detail. I'm wondering how the government arrived at the estimate of a 25 per cent decrease in revenues? What factors led to that and what was the detail to that?

**Mr. Fielding:** I'll refer you to my last comments, but I'll expel it out again to them, in terms of what our revenue reductions are: we don't exactly know.

This is a new situation that everyone is struggling with. The nine forecasting agencies aren't able to give us a greater picture, but they are saying that Manitoba will bear a little bit better because of the financial track record that we've done and also the diversified economy in Manitoba.

\* (19:20)

The three buckets are related to tax relief: in terms of deferrals, as well as fees and charges that we won't be able to collect or things that people aren't using our services and, again, the third item is related to business entities such as Hydro and things like Liquor & Lotteries, where the debt—income will be less.

**Mr. Wiebe:** And so, maybe, could the minister map out if we were to not bring this forward—this act here—today, if this was not to pass today, could the minister comment exactly when would the government expect to run out of the money that they have available to them right now?

**Mr. Fielding:** It really depends on how long the pandemic lasts for. We don't know. It could be different in certain areas as the economy starts to open up.

Maybe in Manitoba and Saskatchewan it opens up a little bit earlier than places like Toronto or places like New York City, where they're seeing more of a

pandemic—or more of an issue with a lot of deaths, a lot more cases. So I can't answer the question because I don't exactly know.

What this provides is—of abundance of caution, the amount of money—\$5 billion, which we think will address revenue that will be dramatically dropping, as well as things like expenditures that could go up 400 to 500 million dollars a month.

**Mr. Lamont:** I mean, I've often argued, Madam Speaker, that deficits are caused by drops in revenue and not simply by overspending.

Does the minister also recognize that one of the reasons why Manitoba faced such large deficit is because the Conservative federal government froze transfer payments to Manitoba, resulting in frozen revenues for six years prior to his taking—being elected in 2016?

**Mr. Fielding:** Look, you know, I would love to address the issue. I know the member had some sort of op-ed piece fairly recently that talked about wiping out debt for everyone in the world. I'm not sure if that's a good financial plan myself or not, but I'll let other people make those decisions.

What I can say is that the banks, a lot of the charter banks, and most people that have looked at these things said that Manitoba's going to bear the best, and the reasons why are two-fold: because the Manitoba economy is very diversified versus other jurisdictions, in terms of our GDT drop, as well as the management of the government that has taken place over the last four years.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Once again, Madam Speaker, we're talking about some extraordinary spending provisions that we are granting to the government here.

Can the minister speak to the accountability and the transparency that his government will undertake in order to ensure to Manitobans that they are in fact spending this money on new initiatives with regards to this particular pandemic, with regards to COVID-19?

**Mr. Fielding:** What we're debating here is loan authority, loan authority that gives us the right to go out and borrow that money. That is important to have the authority because there are certain times in the capital markets that make sense to go to the markets to get more 'liquidity', I guess I would say, for it.

We as Conservatives have a track record of holding the finances in regard. I think the bond rating agencies have giving us glowing endorsements of

what we've been doing as a government. I won't go through them, but even S&P up until a few weeks ago had said that Manitoba had a one-in-three chance of having the—having their credit rating improve because of the fiscal management that we're doing.

So absolutely we're going to make sure that the accountability is in place. There's 100 hours of Estimates through the supply that people can hold us account for those, as well as through the media.

**Mr. Wiebe:** So, once again, Madam Speaker, is the minister saying that they're—outside of the regular processes within this House, that this additional money that's being asked for, there's no additional scrutiny or accountability that's being granted to the people of Manitoba over and above the usual opportunity that we have here in this House to give some accountability of how this money is being spent?

Is that what the minister is telling this House today?

**Mr. Fielding:** I said nothing of that. That's what the member opposite said.

What the government does is, No. 1, we—this is loan authority that we'll use. The government is certainly tracking on a daily basis the expenditure authorities that have been provided under the department, whether it be Health or essential procurement related to COVID-19.

The actual expenditures based on these authorities is also being tracked through central accounting systems. Any additional COVID-related expenditures that are taking place, for example, through the regional health authorities are also been requested and has been reported through Treasury Board, and of that, the regular accountability process through Estimates process where you have time through to ask questions in—over a hundred hours, as well as questions here, is the appropriate venue to make sure we're spending taxpayers' money wisely.

**Mr. Lamont:** I understand that there are projections that Manitoba's economy could weather this better than others. Does the minister recognize its because we have a large public sector, including Manitoba Hydro, and that forcing people to—in the civil service to laid off would actually undermine Manitoba's recovery?

**Mr. Fielding:** What I'm suggesting—in fact, I'm not suggesting it. What the banks and the financial institutions have been saying, and I believe there's



been two of the charter banks that have come out. They did evaluations of GDP reductions, and I think that's—you're going to see that across the country, that Manitoba's going to bear the best, and I think the reasons why are two-fold: the diversified economy that we have, and they also point to the fact—the track record of the government, in terms of expenditures: making sure we're spending money in an appropriate way.

We've taken some criticism from members of the opposition that somehow we're not making these big decisions. We are making big decisions, but we're going to do it in a prudent way. We're going to evaluate that and make decisions when it is appropriate and we're going to be making some more of those decisions over the coming days.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further questions?

If not, is the House ready for the question?  
[interjection]

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, no.

**Madam Speaker:** Oh, sorry.

#### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** If there are no further questions, the floor is open for debate.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** It's encouraging when even members of the government seem so excited that I'm rising to continue to press this government for more accountability, for more transparency, and I'm just so happy that they are eager to hear and hanging on my every word here this evening.

You know, Madam Speaker, what I heard from the minister here during our brief question period was that the information that we're asking for is, in fact, available. He basically spelled out that the information that we're asking with regards to accountability for this money being spent, is available to him as a minister. It's available to Treasury Board. It's available to the Cabinet. It's available to members of the government.

However, what he failed to say was how he would be accountable to the people of Manitoba, and that, Madam Speaker, is our concern. This is an extraordinary power that we are giving to the government, understanding that we are in extraordinary times, understanding that we need to all work together to ensure that Manitobans are protected in a way that we haven't done before.

However, what we've seen from this government is a complete lack of support—direct support—to Manitobans and it's frustrating that this minister continues to fail to put information on the record about how this money can actually support Manitobans who are struggling right now.

We are willing to work with the government and move forward on this, but I simply ask that if this information is available to the minister and available to Treasury Board and Cabinet, that he simply make it available to all Manitobans, that he come back to the public, that he come back to this Chamber, that he give this information freely and willingly to show that we are in fact all working on the same—to the same ends.

That is what we're asking for, very simply, Madam Speaker, and it's what, at every turn, we have failed to hear from this government. I do hope that they move forward in a way that is more transparent, but as it stands now, we know that we are willing to work together to move forward as a Legislature in the spirit of non-partisanship, of co-operation to ensure that all Manitobans are protected in these unprecedented times.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** There is a real concern over the lack of details around how this is going to be spent. The idea that this is simply going to replace—is going to replace lost revenue has to be challenged, simply from the question—the point of view that delaying or deferring taxes is not permanent relief, that we might be deferring \$3 billion worth of taxes, but ultimately people are going to have to pay that at the end of the day.

\* (19:30)

And it is absolutely critical that this government do more to make sure that as many people make it through this crisis without losing income, without losing their jobs, and that applies to the private sector as much as to the public sector.

There's, you know, on—I used to go on canoe trips and when people go on a canoe trip if you weren't pulling your weight, if there was one person who was really working hard and you were sitting back, sometimes you'd accused of being a lily dipper. And I'm—I have to say that, unfortunately, that the Province of Manitoba, the government of the Manitoba, is the lily dipper of provinces. [interjection] Not the nippy dipper, but the lily dipper of provinces simply because we're not doing—this government is not doing enough to pull it's own weight. Because it's—too much is being

left to the federal government and we have to do more, more than just filling in the gaps, more than being worried about the duplication of services or the duplication of a program when a program may not be—even if the federal programs may not be enough.

This is not a time to be timid. This is not the time to hold back. This is a time when there are genuine, huge threats to our economy and one—again, one of the things that so many projections miss is the fact that so many people are deep in debt, that so many people are vulnerable. We've talked about it many times. Over 50 per cent of Manitobans are a paycheque away from bankruptcy, and that even going on EI, going on—or going on assistance that the income loss they face will mean they will not be able to cover their bills.

I know that the federal government has been continually changing and updating and upgrading and offering new programs. We have been asked to approve \$1 billion in spending and to ask for a—\$5 billion in loans, and we don't know what it's been going on—what it's actually going to be spent for because we are being—but we are being told those announcements will be coming in future days. We knew that this day was coming. We knew this emergency session was about to arrive. There is no reason that these plans should not be made available to us right now—and not just to us, but to Manitobans who need the certainty, need to know what to what this government is planning on doing.

So we are extremely frustrated that—of—the fact is this may not actually be adequate, that \$5 billion. We may actually require more than \$5 billion—that there are going to be huge challenges. As we've seen from hydro is that when energy markets—and even when oil markets plunge—it actually affects—it affects hydro as well because other suppliers can turn to different kinds of sources of electricity other than hydro.

So I—again, I know that we have to balance being optimistic, hoping for the best and doing what we can to prepare for the worst, but I still don't think—I think that—there's an old saying when it comes to parenting or anything else, that when you find yourself shouting it's because you don't have a plan. I really, it is absolutely critical for this government to lay out exactly one or two or three different scenarios depending on what's going to happen to make it clear how small businesses are going to make it through this and how people who are not able to earn revenue are going to make it through this crisis because that has not happened yet.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Now, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), seconded by the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 61, The Loan Act, 2020, be now read a second time and be referred to Committee of the Whole.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Madam Speaker:** The House will now resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Bill 60, The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), and Bill 61, The Loan Act, 2020, for concurrence and third reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**Mr. Chairperson (Doyle Pivniuk):** The Committee of the Whole will come to order to consider the—Bill 60, The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response); Bill 61, The Loan Act, 2020.

During the consideration of these bills, the enacting clauses and the title are postponed until all clauses have been considered in the proper order.

#### Bill 60—The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)

**Mr. Chairperson:** The first bill that we will consider is Bill 60, The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response).

Does the minister of—have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, okay.

And does the critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

#### Bill 61—The Loan Act, 2020

**Mr. Chairperson:** The last bill we will consider is Bill 61, The Loan Act, 2020.

Does the minister have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Does the official critic of the official opposition have an opening statement?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes the business before us.

The committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

## IN SESSION

### Committee Report

**Mr. Doyle Pivniuk (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered the following: Bill 60, The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response); Bill 61, The Loan Act, 2020, and the reports of the same without amendments.

I move, seconded by the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield)—I move—by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cullen) that the report be of the committee be received.

*Motion agreed to.*

## CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

### Bill 61—The Loan Act, 2020

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I move, second by the Minister of Municipal Relations (Ms. Squires), that Bill 61, The Loan Act, 2020, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

*Motion agreed to.*

### Bill 60—The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response)

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I move, second by the Minister for Municipal Relations, that Bill 60, The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response), reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Madam Speaker:** As previously agreed, we will now proceed to royal assent.

\* (19:40)

## ROYAL ASSENT

**Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Ray Gislason):** Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

*Her Honour, Janice C. Filmon, 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:

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba asks Your Honour to accept the following bills:

**Clerk Assistant (Ms. Monique Grenier):**

Bill 4 – The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba

Bill 15 – The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis et la Loi sur la Société manitobaine des alcools et des loteries

Bill 30 – The Fisheries Amendment, Forest Amendment and Provincial Parks Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pêche, la Loi sur les forêts et la Loi sur les parcs provinciaux

Bill 54 – The Emergency Measures Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les mesures d'urgence

Bill 55 – The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi

Bill 56 – The Family Maintenance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'obligation alimentaire

Bill 57 – The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les professions de la santé réglementées

Bill 58 – The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation

Bill 59 – The Public Health Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique

Bill 62 – The Fuel Tax Amendment and Retail Sales Tax Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur les carburants et la Loi de la taxe sur les ventes au détail

Bill 200 – The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale

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

**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. Monique Grenier):**

Bill 60 – The Appropriation Act, 2020 (COVID-19 Response); Loi de 2020 portant affectation de crédits (réponse à la COVID-19)

Bill 61 – The Loan Act, 2020; Loi d'emprunt de 2020.

\* (19:50)

**Clerk:** In Her Majesty's name, the Lieutenant Governor thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to these bills.

*Her Honour was then pleased to retire.*

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** Before I adjourn the House, I just want to say thank you to everybody for being here. Thank you to the clerks who put in yeoman's work to pull everything together for today, and to the House leaders as well, for the work that they've put into this. It took a great deal of effort to make an emergency sitting like this take place, especially in a pandemic.

And I just want to wish everybody the best. Be safe, and this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until—well, being past 6 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until the call of the Speaker.

#### WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS PRESENTED TO COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Re: Bill 55

I would like to express my concerns as a private citizen that owns a small business and have discussed my situation with many others that are in the same boat.

The pandemic and government laws we are following have rendered our businesses obsolete for now as no one can have gatherings that would utilize our entertainment or attractions.

While we appreciate the CREB help of 2000.00 (two thousand) per month this is not nearly enough as our monthly fixed costs or doing business are much higher.

With rent and storage rentals, fixed month advertising costs, phone bills, legal services, on line expenses which are fixed monthly costs this barely covers about 1/3 rd of those monthly expenses.

And then on top of it I still have food bills, car expenses and more to add on top.

There would be a very easy way and if the government wants any of our businesses to survive we should be allowed, and it would be very easy to provide by just sending you copies of our monthly bills or someone could check with each company we deal with and verify. These expenses need to be covered as well as long as we are being asked to close our businesses for the safety and benefit of all concerned.

I want to do my part but a whole life's work for myself and others is in jeopardy if we don't get more necessary help especially if this carries on for much longer.

I certainly could elaborate more if given the chance.

Respectfully,

Allen Pitch

Owner/Amazing Entertainment Agency

Re: Bill 15

Good Evening Chairperson and Honourable Members,

The Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU) represents 32,000 working Manitobans including the employees who work at Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries at retail stores and in the distribution centre. These MBLL members come from communities across Manitoba, providing excellent customer service to consumers and contributing to their local economies.

Bill 15 is a further erosion of the public liquor retailing and distribution model that has served Manitobans so well for many years. This legislation enables restaurants to sell beer, wine, cider and coolers to customers who order food for delivery. The change would add risk to the safe sale of alcohol by potentially increasing sales to minors and those already intoxicated- something that the public system mitigates against. The Bill also allows MBLL to enter into a liquor distribution agreement with a third party rather than use the publicly owned and operated distribution centre. While the changes in this bill are

relatively minor, we caution the government in moving too far down a path that puts Manitoba's public liquor retail and distribution model at risk.

The public system is known to provide very high levels of customer satisfaction with product experts with vast knowledge and a wide variety of selection. We know that the public liquor retailing system is also the safest way to sell a controlled substance, in order to ensure our communities and youth are safe. The most compelling reason to ensure that our liquor stores and sales remain public is that MBLL returns over 280 million dollars annually to provincial coffers to fund vital public services.

Importantly, customer satisfaction surveys rate front-line staff at public liquor marts as extremely professional and very knowledgeable about the products they offer.

Public Liquor Marts are constantly modernizing to serve Manitobans best from Express Liquor Marts in grocery stores to home delivery—something that could be improved and expanded given the circumstances we are all facing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

One of the important roles that well trained and knowledgeable staff plays is in ensuring public safety. Public Liquor Mart staff is trained to spot underage buyers and require proof of age if the customer appears to be under 25, and won't sell to customers who are already intoxicated. This results in less underage drinking, and safer communities. In the past, MBLL has also invested millions of dollars to

promote safety, help parents talk to their kids about alcohol and help fund addictions treatment services.

The recent spike in thefts at liquor stores also highlighted the steps that MBLL took to ensure staff and the public are safe when shopping in liquor marts. While there is still room to improve, it is unlikely that a private liquor retailing system would have dedicated the resources and taken the measures to ensure concrete action was taken to improve the retailing experience.

The public liquor retailing system is also good for public services that we all depend on. MBLL has contributed over 280 million dollars to government revenue annually. This revenue helps support health care programs, education, mental health and addictions treatment and other services that Manitobans depend on. If this system is privatized, this profit will flow to large multinational corporations rather than benefit Manitobans. As a crown corporation, we all own MBLL—and it's accountable to all of us, not to a handful of shareholders and foreign investors.

As you deliberate and debate Bill 15 and make decisions in the future, we urge members of this committee and the government to be cautious in making changes that could impact the public liquor system that provides good quality service, ensures safety comes first, and contributes to our public services and economy.

Michelle Gawronsky  
Manitoba Government and General Employees'  
Union

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 15, 2020

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