

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 3, 2022

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Standing Committee on Social
and Economic Development
Ninth Report**

Mr. Dennis Smook (Chairperson): I wish to present the ninth report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its Ninth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on November 2, 2022, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 40)** – *The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act / Loi édictant la Loi sur les registres des clients dans le secteur de l'hébergement et modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille et la Loi sur l'exploitation sexuelle d'enfants et la traite de personnes*
- **Bill (No. 43)** – *The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act / Loi sur la communication de renseignements pour la protection contre la violence de la part d'un partenaire intime*
- **Bill (No. 46)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act / Loi modifiant le Code de la route*

Committee Membership

- Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MICHALESKI
- Hon. Mr. PIWNIUK
- Mr. SMOOK (Chairperson)
- Hon. Ms. SQUIRES
- Mr. WIEBE

Your Committee elected Mr. MICHALESKI as the Vice-Chairperson.

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- Ms. LAMOUREUX

Public Presentations

*Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 43)** – The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act / Loi sur la communication de renseignements pour la protection contre la violence de la part d'un partenaire intime:*

Debra Danco, Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc.

*Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 46)** – The Highway Traffic Amendment Act / Loi modifiant le Code de la route:*

Roland Boille, RB Telecom Solutions

Written Submissions

*Your Committee received the following three written submissions on **Bill (No. 40)** – The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act / Loi édictant la Loi sur les registres des clients dans le secteur de l'hébergement et modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille et la Loi sur l'exploitation sexuelle d'enfants et la traite de personnes:*

Lianna McDonald, Canadian Centre for Child Protection Inc.

Hunter Doubt, Expedia Group

Emmett O'Keefe, Booking.com

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 40)** – *The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act / Loi édictant la Loi sur les registres des clients dans le secteur de l'hébergement et modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille et la Loi sur l'exploitation sexuelle d'enfants et la traite de personnes*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill with the following three amendments:

THAT Schedule A to the Bill (The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act) be amended by renumbering Clause 5 as Clause 5(1) and adding the following as Clause 5(2):

More than one person admitted to occupy lodging 5(2) *If more than one customer is admitted to occupy the same lodging, the registry keeper must enter the information for only one customer.*

THAT Schedule A to the Bill (The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act) be amended by replacing Clause 7 with the following:

Customer to provide identification

7 A customer must provide the prescribed identification in the following manner:

(a) in the case of a hotel, to the registry keeper, at the time the customer is admitted to occupy a lodging or at another prescribed time;

(b) in the case of an online accommodation platform, to the registry keeper or to the person prescribed to be acting on behalf of the registry keeper, at the time the customer is admitted to occupy a lodging or at another prescribed time;

(c) in the case of any other registry keeper, to the registry keeper, at the time the customer accesses the services provided by the registry keeper or at another prescribed time.

THAT Schedule A to the Bill (The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act) be amended in Clause 20(1) by replacing the proposed clause 20(1)(g) with the following:

(g) respecting the collection, use, disclosure and retention of information and records obtained under this Act;

(g.1) prescribing the persons who may act on behalf of a registry keeper and the duties of such persons;

- **Bill (No. 43)** – *The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act / Loi sur la communication de renseignements pour la protection contre la violence de la part d'un partenaire intime*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 46)** – *The Highway Traffic Amendment Act / Loi modifiant le Code de la route*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Smook: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Fourth Report

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the fourth report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Deputy Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on November 2, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 225)** – *The Non-Disclosure Agreements Act / Loi sur les accords de confidentialité*

Committee Membership

- Hon. Ms. GORDON
- Mr. MICKLEFIELD
- Ms. NAYLOR
- Mr. REDHEAD
- Hon. Mr. WHARTON
- Mr. WOWCHUK

Your Committee elected Mr. MICKLEFIELD as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. WOWCHUK as the Vice-Chairperson.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings:

- *Hon. Mr. GOERTZEN for Hon. Mr. WHARTON*

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- *Mr. LAMONT*

Public Presentations

*Your Committee heard the following 18 presentations on **Bill (No. 225) – The Non-Disclosure Agreements Act / Loi sur les accords de confidentialité**:*

Shannon Hancock, Private Citizen

Julie Roginsky, Lift Our Voices

Marcel Williamson, Private Citizen

Karen Koslowsky-Jones, Private Citizen

Julie MacFarlane, Can't Buy My Silence

Sherri Thomson, Private Citizen

Jan Wong, Private Citizen

Pam Gordon, Private Citizen

Susan MacRae, Private Citizen

Kelly Donovan, Private Citizen

Jennifer Schulz, Private Citizen

Laura Fougere, Private Citizen

Aalya Ahmad, Private Citizen

Bridget Lontok, Private Citizen

Barbara Captijn, Private Citizen

Heidi Rimke, Private Citizen

Candide Allen, Private Citizen

Douglas Kuny, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

*Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 225) – The Non-Disclosure Agreements Act / Loi sur les accords de confidentialité**:*

Grant Driedger, Manitoba Law Reform Commission

Bills Considered and Reported

- ***Bill (No. 225) – The Non-Disclosure Agreements Act / Loi sur les accords de confidentialité***

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Cox), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Alan Lagimodiere (Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to table the Path to Reconciliation

Act Annual Progress Report 2021-22 for the Department of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Acting Government House Leader): I am pleased to table the sequence for the consideration of departmental Estimates in the Committee of Supply.

Madam Speaker: And in accordance with section 32(1) of The Elections Act, and subsection 107(1) of The Election Financing Act, I am tabling the Annual Report for Elections Manitoba for the fiscal year ending December 31st, 2021, including a report on modifications to the voting process for the Fort Whyte by-election.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable First Minister—and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Remembrance Day

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Remembrance Day Awareness Week, a time when Manitobans remember and honour the heroes who served our country.

Across our province, Manitobans will take part in ceremonies to remember those who have died in military conflicts in the First and Second World Wars, in Korea and to the present day.

At the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the armistice was signed between the allies and Germany for the cessation of hostilities in the western front in 1918.

Every year on November 11th, Canadians pause in a moment of silence to honour and remember those who have served and continue to serve Canada during times of war, conflict and peace. We remember the more than 2.3 million Canadians who have served throughout our nation's history and the more than 118,000 who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Jack Winter Quelch, of Birtle, Manitoba, was in the trenches at Passchendaele. In a letter to his mother he wrote, and I quote: I thought I had seen a few thousand guns while I have been in France but have never seen the mass of guns there are in this place and the incessant bombardment. The country is a big jelly pot of wet mud and water, shaking, or rather quivering,

under the fire of the guns. I have seen a few hundred dead, too, but this is the worst. It's an ungodly hole. From the front line to three miles back there is hell. I think I will leave it at that. They are lying all over, shell holes full of water and corpses. End quote.

Madam Speaker, today we remember Jack and all those who fought for our country.

Madam Speaker, the Centennial Flame on Memorial Boulevard has been lit to mark the beginning of Remembrance Day activities throughout Manitoba. It was also lit in recognition of a ceremony with the Royal Canadian Legion that presented the first poppy of the 2022 Poppy Campaign to the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba.

The flame serves as a physical reminder of the lasting impacts of war and conflict, and how our veterans have helped shape our province, country and world for the better.

The Poppy Blanket is again on display at the Grand Staircase of the Legislative Assembly. Created by Sheilah Lee Restall, who joins us in the Speaker's Gallery today, with the assistance of hundreds of volunteers, the Poppy Blanket consists of over 8,000 handmade poppies; in over 26 metres in length, and has over 2,000 dedicated ribbons. It has featured during the anthems at the Winnipeg Jets game, The Joint Veterans Association Remembrance Day ceremony at the Winnipeg Convention Centre and is displayed each year at the Manitoba Legislature.

Madam Speaker, I encourage all Manitobans to wear a poppy, take a moment to reflect this week and to observe the moment of silence at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month.

Let us remember those who fought, those who died and those who were injured. Let us all also remember those who carried the scars and memories of war throughout their lives. And, finally, let us remember those who have worked for peace, today and throughout our country's history. Lest we forget.

Madam Speaker, I am honoured to acknowledge and welcome the Joint Veterans Association, who join us in the gallery today. The Joint Veterans Association also serves as the organizing committee for the Remembrance Day Service at the Convention Centre each year, and Mr. Armand Lavallee has served as chair for 30 years.

On behalf of all Manitobans, I want to thank you and the entire Joint Veterans Association for your service.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The honourable First Minister.

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I seek leave for a moment of silence after all statements have concluded.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by expressing our profound thanks for the service of the veterans who join us today. You are among those who have delivered us our freedoms and as we gather here as parliamentarians, we only do so within the context of a democracy that you helped to ensure continues to this day. So, thank you for your service.

I also want to thank the artist behind the beautiful Poppy Blanket that we can now witness along the Grand Staircase. I had the opportunity to study it today, along with some guests who are joining us in the gallery.

And I also want to say that this past year, our family lost a good friend who was a notable war veteran. And thinking of him and his relatives today reminds me that the sacrifices of those who have served over the years includes those who laid down their lives to protect our liberty. It includes those who survived the theatres of war and peacekeeping operations, but it also includes the families left behind, tragically in many cases.

* (13:40)

November 11th is Remembrance Day, and we know it across this great country for the important tributes that we pay to those who have served. Across Manitoba, I know that each of us will return to our own constituencies and find ways to honour those that we hold in such high esteem.

We know that the red poppies being worn by Manitobans across this province—again, I see many of them in the Chamber today, and I want to thank our colleague from Brandon East for also furnishing us with some of those poppy pins. And so, we encourage Manitobans from all walks of life to wear a poppy, to reflect on the significance of doing so and to find a respectful way to honour it after Remembrance Day, either laying it on a wreath or finding a place to safeguard it safely, as we do safeguard the memories of those who came before us.

I also want to acknowledge that Indigenous Veterans Day will come on November 8th, and in the Indigenous community in Canada, where Canadian First Nations people are allowed to serve in both the Canadian Armed Forces as well as the United States

military, we honour our warriors. That's why at every powwow we let the veterans go before us. We shake their hands and say thank you for your service and we stand at attention for the Flag Song and we dance hard for the veterans song. And so, I encourage all Indigenous youth to practise and continue those traditions, to honour our warriors.

At this time I would like to also encourage Canadians to use this Remembrance Day as an opportunity to reflect on how we must treat our veterans better here in these lands when they come home. Far too many veterans confront issues like PTSD, homelessness, poverty and other forms of trauma. It's my belief that if you pick up a gun or a helmet or a stretcher to serve this country, then this country owes you at the very least to treat you with respect for the rest of your time here on Earth. So I call on all of us Canadians to demand better treatment for our heroes.

This coming week, I know that we will have an opportunity to reflect also on the importance of those who are undergoing training operations overseas right now in theatres close to the Ukraine. And so we send our best to everyone who will be away from their families this Remembrance Day. Words cannot do justice to the debt that is owed, but here today and on Remembrance Day, we say thank you for your service.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I seek leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

Mr. Lamont: As we approach Remembrance Day this year, we do so once again with the spectre of war in Europe. I've mentioned many times in this House that I had grandfathers, great-uncles, an aunt and uncle who served in the First and Second World War.

On November 11, 1918, my father's father, J.S. Lamont, was with Canadian troops during the liberation of Mons, Belgium. My great-uncle, Frank Bastin, who I knew as a child, fought at the Somme, Vimy, before being shot in a trench and left for dead and stripped of his gear in the last months of the war. Since his chances of survival were next to nothing, a telegram was sent home telling his family he was dead. They were surprised and overjoyed to learn six weeks later that he was alive.

My mother's father, Robert Barrett, served in the RAF in the First World War and happened to be the right age to serve in the Second, as well, in the royal engineers. His brother, Alfred, was killed at Vimy,

fighting for Canada, and his body was never found, though his name is on the Vimy memorial.

Another brother, Gilbert, crashed many times in RAF training in the First World War and never recovered from his PTSD.

My great-uncle, Jack Clarke, who was born in Armagh, Northern Ireland, was known as one of the town's troublemakers and was shot down by a German plane on a training flight on the 9th of May, 1941. He was awarded a prize for his bravery because he crawled back into the burning wreckage of the plane to pull his instructor free.

He wrote in his account, he said: When I awakened, I was in a narrow bed, my arm in a plaster, resting on a pillow. There were curtains around the bed and some noise I made attracted Davy's attention—Davy being his instructor—in the bed beyond. How are you feeling, Clarke? Drunk as a lord, sir, and I was—he was because they were both on morphine. He seemed quite cheerful, even lively. His wife and parents were with him. I fell asleep again. When I awakened, the bed next to me was empty.

When the effects of the anesthetic wore off, as it did very soon, I suffered what was told—what I was told was secondary shock but I am quite convinced it was my first attack of depression. I had not thought Davy might die. Serious injury, yes, but he had been so cheerful and alert and the sight of the empty bed, I think, started the depression. I didn't need to be told he had died.

Jack was told he was a hero, but it hurt because Davy's family and fiancé couldn't forgive him and he couldn't forgive himself for saving Davy—for not being able to save Davy either.

In his later years, he wrote: all the miserable happenings around the medal devalued it in my mind for years but now, in my old age, I have a mild sense of pride in that I was the only pupil pilot to have been shot down and then decorated.

At the end of the First World War, in the negotiations at Versailles, John Maynard Keynes quit and wrote the consequences of the peace, in which he warned that the punitive measures, acting almost out of a sense of revenge, could mean another war in 20 years. And his prediction came true.

After the Second World War, there was a sharply different response: a commitment to rebuilding and peace and forgiveness. A Marshall Plan of forgiveness

and investment, and this, too, is an act of remembrance that honours what our forebearers fought for—for peace, for democracy, to live free as we choose. These ideals have sometimes failed us, but they are always ideals worth striving for.

We will pray for a just and swift end to the war in Ukraine. And this November 11th, we will remember and honour the dead. Lest we forget.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave for a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please stand.

A moment of silence was observed.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: It seems timely right now for me to introduce the guests that have already been referenced before we move on to the next ministerial statement.

But I would like to draw your attention to all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today Sheilah Lee Restall, the creator of the Poppy Blanket, which is now on display at the Grand Staircase of the Manitoba Legislative Building.

And also in the public gallery, we have with us today members of the Joint Veterans Association, including co-chairs Armand Lavallee and Peter Correia.

On behalf of all honourable members here, we welcome all of you to the Legislative Assembly.

And I think I'll introduce the students to you now, too, because they're going to be leaving soon.

We have seated in the public gallery, from Collège Jeanne-Sauvé, 28 grade 9 students under the direction of Dominic Courcelles, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Riel (Ms. Squires).

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

* * *

Madam Speaker: Further ministerial statements?

The honourable Minister of Health—and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise in the Chamber today to proclaim the month of November as Lung Cancer Awareness Month. Lung cancer affects approximately 30,000 Canadians every year and will claim the lives of 21,000 more. While the number of people diagnosed with lung cancer has decreased steadily since 1990, there is still more work to be done.

A quarter of all cancer deaths will be from lung and bronchus cancers. And smoking, I'm told, Madam Speaker, is responsible for about 30 per cent of all cancer deaths and is known to cause or increase one's risk of developing lung cancer.

Our government is proud to support the first Manitoba health-related social impact bond, Quit Smoking with Your Manitoba Pharmacist. This initiative is supporting thousands of people over a three-year period to become non-smokers.

* (13:50)

Manitobans over the age of 18 are eligible for assistance and can approach participating local pharmacies for an initial assessment. They will also receive follow-up counselling sessions and up to \$100 worth of prescribed medications, and nicotine replacement therapies will be offered over a one-year period to support individuals in their journey to quit.

Lung Cancer Canada is also a resource for lung cancer education, patient support, research and advocacy and invites everyone to raise awareness and show support for those diagnosed with lung cancer by joining the Hope Army.

The Hope Army is a group of lung cancer patients and supporters who will fight this deadly disease by raising awareness through their joint voices and actions. Our government remains committed to working with stakeholders in the health system to increase awareness of lung cancer.

Madam Speaker, early detection is key in the fight against cancer. It is important that people with family histories of cancer, those who smoke or have other high-risk factors regularly screen for all cancers.

This November, I encourage Manitobans to support cancer research, get active and avoid activities that increase your risk of lung cancer.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Lung Cancer Awareness Month is a time to have important conversations about lung cancer, it is—as it is the leading cause of cancer deaths. More efforts are needed to raise awareness of the causes and preventions of lung cancer. This could go a long way in reducing the number of patients or people at risk of the illness altogether.

While cigarette smoking is far—by far the most common cause of lung cancer, radon is the No. 1 cause of lung cancer among non-smoking people and generally the second cause of lung cancer.

Now, radon is one of the most deadliest naturally occurring health risks present in our world today. It is a radioactive gas and is mainly present in indoor environments, which includes homes, schools and workplaces.

However, the level of radon in one place as well as the duration of a person's stay in that environment determines if they become at risk of lung cancer or not.

In contrast, radon present in outdoor spaces raises little concern because of—air dilutes the gas to non-threatening levels. Consequently, it is important to ensure proper ventilation and tests for radon in indoor spaces. Radon detection technology ranges from an alpha track detector operated by professionals to radon home test kits that anyone can purchase.

Last month, I had the pleasure of meeting Pam Warkentin from Canadian Association of Radon Scientists and Technologists, as well as Adam Anderson from the Manitoba Lung Association. I thank them and all others for their work to increase awareness about radon and their efforts to reduce the risk of lung cancer in Manitoba.

Therefore, at this time I encourage everyone present and all Manitobans to support Lung Cancer Awareness Month by going to takeactiononradon.ca to learn more about how they can reduce the risk of lung cancer for themselves and those around them.

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, there's need for urgent action to create better awareness of lung cancer

and for better measures and efforts to screen for and detect lung cancer early.

I've had far too many calls within—from individuals and families where there's been lung cancer because the cancer was detected too late. There have been significant improvements in lung cancer treatment in the last decade and more are coming. But there is a critical need to detect lung cancer early where the chances of successful treatment are much greater.

There are two well-established major risk factors for lung cancer: smoking and radon exposure. In parts of Manitoba where there are very high proportions of homes with high radon levels, it is as likely that the lung cancer would be caused by radon as by smoking. We are not doing nearly enough—a good enough job of screening the smokers who have lung cancer. We need to do better.

All homes in Manitoba need to be tested for radon levels. One quarter of homes have high radon levels, and there is nowhere—way to check unless you test. There is nowhere near an adequate public health effort to test Manitoba homes, starting in areas with highest risk levels.

The Province should ensure that there are digital radon monitors in every library in the province so that people can easily access them to test the radon level in their home.

In order for testing and mitigation to be effective, the Manitoba government needs to subsidize the mitigation for those on low and middle incomes, and to make the costs of mitigation tax deductible for those on higher incomes.

It is not acceptable that both NDP and PC governments over many years have done so little to help detect and mitigate high radon levels in homes when this is such a significant contributor to lung cancer in our province.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Community Safety Initiatives

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): We know that many Manitobans are deeply concerned about crime. People are worried. People are scared to go downtown. People want to see improvements and people have had enough

I was very proud to see our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) announce today \$3 million to the

Winnipeg Police Service, RCMP and other police agencies to create an integrated violent offender apprehension unit and strengthen intensive bail and probation services for serious violent offenders. These are concrete steps our government is taking to make our communities safer.

Our government will continue to take strong action to combat crime and violence at its root causes across our province, while supporting vulnerable Manitobans.

Just this week, we also announced that we are increasing our annual funding rates to shelters, transitional housing and homeless outreach mentors to \$15.1 million from \$6.1 million. This will be an increase of \$9 million.

Along with that, our government also announced another \$3.6 million to an already committed \$5-million initial investment to the Downtown Community Safety Partnership, a collaborative community initiative aimed at creating a safer, more inviting downtown Winnipeg for businesses and residences.

However, many Manitobans have expressed that crime is rising not only in downtown Winnipeg, but across the entire city and province.

I was very happy to learn that a couple in my constituency of Fort Whyte are doing more than just talking about it; they are taking action. I would like to recognize Brendan Bain and his wife Dayna Palsson, who are here today in our viewing gallery, for spearheading and going out of their way to organize community safety meetings at the Linden Woods Community Centre. This has become a monthly occurrence in which meetings are a safe space for community to come together, have discussion, share stories and make action plans on what we can do to make our community safer.

This is a monthly meeting; I encourage everyone to attend. We are planning a larger safety forum to engage more of the community, along with the Winnipeg police and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen).

I ask that we stand today and recognize Brendan and Dayna for their hard work.

SABE Peace Walkers

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Osborne Village, like many communities across Manitoba, has seen more issues with addictions, crime and homelessness. That's why I was moved when I heard this story from a constituent.

Not too long ago, a retired woman who lives by herself in the village went out for a night at the symphony. And I guess the orchestra was in fine form because they played a number of encores.

But what this meant is that the senior had to take a later bus home and got off at the corner of River and Osborne much closer to midnight than she'd expected. She was feeling a little uneasy about being out at this time of night by herself, when she was approached by a few young Indigenous people.

Now, she smiled when they walked up to her because she recognized their blue and yellow vests—they were SABE Peace Walkers. That night, they gave the woman a walk home and ensured she got into her condo safely.

* (14:00)

The SABE Peace Walkers, with the support of the Osborne Village BIZ, have been running a 17-week pilot foot patrol since August to bring safety, support and services to our community. They've been able to de-escalate situations in the neighbourhood. They've been able to respond to mental health crises with a compassionate approach that, quite frankly, frees up first responder and police resources to respond to other calls. They do this while reminding us to think of our relatives on the street as part of our community.

The woman who they gave a safe walk home to came to our recent town hall where we introduced SABE to local residents, and she said: I thought they were only there for people in distress. I didn't know they were there for people like me.

Another woman said: if all of us seniors find out we can come out at night again, then you are going to be very, very busy.

I would ask for leave to continue another 15 seconds to conclude my statement.

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

Mr. Kinew: This SABE Peace Walkers pilot program is being funded by Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, so I urge them to extend it.

And to the SABE Peace Walkers, I say, miigwech. Thank you for making our community safer by walking among us with calmness, compassion and love for your fellow Manitobans.

Community Safety Initiatives

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Residents in Winnipeg are worried about rising crime rates, and I want to assure them our government is taking the steps that are necessary to improve public safety and support for vulnerable Manitobans.

This week our government announced they will partner with the downtown community safety patrol to help free up police officers and instead use community safety partners to respond to a multitude of calls. This will free up officers to respond to incidents around the city.

In addition, the new Scrap Metal Act was a great bill passed earlier this year, which has already seen a decline in auto-part theft. I know that our caucus is working diligently to increase safety in the heart of our communities.

The Manitoba government just increased its annual funding rates to shelters, transitional housing services and homeless outreach mentors to \$15.1 million from \$6.1 million, a great step that will allow shelters to offer more services to people experiencing homelessness.

We have acted to improve mental health and addiction services, which in turn make our communities safer for everyone. The new department of mental health, wellness and recovery was also established as its own department to further our commitment to supporting Manitobans.

From listening to constituents in Seine River, I know that public safety is top of mind. We know we need to have resources for people with addictions. We are seeing continuous investments in mental health resources, and we are listening to law enforcement about what tools they need to do their jobs.

As the MLA for Seine River, I will continue to do my part to advocate and ensure our communities can be safer places for Manitobans to live while addressing many of the reasons that crimes are committed in the first place.

Madison Supportive Housing Facility

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): The Madison building in Wolseley was purchased in April 2011 by Siloam Mission to become a supportive housing facility for those who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Having a comfortable and affordable living space is a crucial part of people's mental health and well-being. At the Madison, 85 residents live in private

units with shared kitchen, bathroom and recreational areas. The space is designed for intentional community building, with on-site staff and volunteers to help support and engage residents, many of whom live with cognitive or physical disabilities and struggle with mental help.

Some residents have lived at the Madison for many years and hope to age in place. Siloam Mission is working hard to raise the funds to upgrade heat and air conditioning and increase accessibility for those using mobility aids.

The Wolseley constituency has lost affordable housing over the past few years with closures of several rooming houses. Increasingly our parks, riverbanks, vacant lots, bus shelters and parking lots have become home to those with no housing.

Amid these challenges, Siloam Mission's Madison building is an oasis of calm and community for many people who were at risk of homelessness or have transitioned from shelters or on the street.

It serves as a beautiful example of the kind of wraparound supports that the NDP housing strategy hopes to implement in the years ahead. The Madison's programming includes good nutrition, community building and support for personal goals such as sobriety or participating in cultural programming. But each person's goals are based on their individual healing journey.

Residents help with community clean-up every spring. Some volunteer in our community. And everyone actively participates in caring for the building, gardening, snow removal and cleanup responsibilities for their common spaces.

Madison residents are my neighbours, and I appreciate their presence on my street and in my community, and I'm happy to welcome them to the Legislature today. Please join me in recognizing residents Ernest and James, as well as program manager Brenda Lavallee.

Neurodiversity

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Madam Speaker, I speak this morning—or, this afternoon, on the subject of neurodiversity. Everyone has a unique brain.

The concept of neurodiversity was developed to change the approach that we have to conditions like ADHD, autism, dyspraxia and to learning disabilities

including dyslexia, 'dyscalcula,' dysgraphia, auditory or language processing disorders and non-verbal learning disabilities.

Instead of seeing ADHD, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, as a deficit, we should learn that individuals with ADHD have brains which work differently—that they are part of the spectrum of neurodiversity. Individuals with ADHD may have trouble with time management, but they often show high levels of passion, drive and creative thinking, and can be superior performers in jobs or positions for which they are well suited.

Individuals with autism may have less empathy and do less well socially, but they may be excellent in computer software development.

Instead of neurodivergent people being ridiculed, discriminated against, stigmatized or bullied, their strengths need to be recognized and celebrated.

Let me give you an example: Don Barnard, status Ojibwa, raised Métis, who has autism—Asperger's type with a high IQ—dyslexia, 'dyscalcula' and, because of past traumas, PTSD. He recently produced, together with Yolandi [*phonetic*] Papini-Pollock, a film—Unusual in Every Way—which was shown earlier this year at the international Jewish festival.

Because of his neurodiversity, he has suffered much from being misunderstood, been stigmatized and bullied. It's time that our society helped people like Don to thrive instead of him being held back and tormented because he's different.

This Sunday, I am holding a forum on neurodiversity. If you are interested in attending, please call my office for more details, and you are welcome.

Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Wait Time for Surgical Procedures Cost for Out-of-Country Care

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, people in Manitoba are waiting longer than ever for the surgeries that they need.

In January of this year, the government announced that, as part of their highway medicine plan, that they'd get 300 surgeries done. And yet, as we approach the end of the year, we learn through FIPPA documents that only 60 surgeries have been completed. I'll table these documents for the Premier to review.

Why is the government failing to get people the surgeries that they need?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): We recognize after the worldwide pandemic that there were significant challenges, that we needed to set up a surgical and diagnostic task force in the province of Manitoba to help address some of the challenges that came out of COVID.

We know that they are making good headway, Madam Speaker, but we also recognize that there is more work to be done.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those people on the task force who are working diligently on behalf of Manitobans to ensure that they get better health care closer to home more expeditiously.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, people in Manitoba are waiting longer than ever to get the surgeries that they need, and now we know how few of them are actually receiving them: 60. That's one fifth of what the government had announced earlier this year.

Further to that, the Premier refuses to tell us just how much each of these out-of-country surgeries are costing our health-care system. That's a concern, because experts tell us that these surgeries could cost up to three times what it would cost to provide these surgeries right here at home in Manitoba.

* (14:10)

We now know how many of these surgeries have been performed. We know that the government will have signed off on a total amount for these surgeries. The question remaining for the Premier to answer today is: Just how much are each of these surgeries being delivered in America costing Manitobans?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, the important thing here is that those individuals are getting the surgical procedures that they need.

But I will remind the member opposite we recognize that there's challenges in this area. That's why we set up a surgical and diagnostic task force, and they are making significant headway.

In fact, cataract backlog was reported to be 1,200 cases in February, and has been reduced to 116 cases in August. So far in 2022, we have completed more cases than in the last two years for cardiac surgery, cataract surgery, CT scans, ultrasounds and other areas, Madam Speaker.

We want to thank the task force for the incredible work that they continue to do to ensure that Manitobans get the surgical and diagnostic procedures that they need, when they need them.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, Manitobans are waiting longer than ever for the surgeries that they need. That's why these accountability questions are important.

We know that the government is falling short of its own announcement by the tune of 80 per cent. We also know that the Premier continues to duck the question of just how much each of these out-of-country surgeries are costing the Manitoba health-care system.

We should know how much more each of these surgeries could cost so that we can understand how much more we're paying American companies rather than paying Manitoba surgeons these—fees to deliver surgeries right here in operating rooms in our own province.

Will the Premier simply tell the House the answer that she knows: How much are each of these surgeries costing Manitobans?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, what we on this side of the House care about is ensuring that Manitobans get those surgical procedures. It shouldn't matter where they're getting them. We would love to have them getting those here.

The fact of the matter is, under the previous NDP government, they took an ideological approach when it comes to delivering health-care services in our province. I will tell you, Madam Speaker, on behalf of all of our government, we will not take an ideological approach.

We will ensure that Manitobans get the surgeries that they need, when they need them.

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

Manitoba Hydro and Public Utilities Board Request Not to Pass Bill 36

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, this is your daily reminder that the PCs and the Liberals voted against our hydro-rate freeze. That's the choice that they made, and it's costing you money.

It's getting harder and harder for Manitobans to make ends meet. We know that gas prices are going

up, grocery prices are going up and now, because of the way that the PCs and the Liberals voted, your hydro bill will be going up, as well.

Of course, there's still time, Madam Speaker. That's the good news. Bill 36 hasn't passed. It probably won't pass until later this evening. There's still time for the PCs to abandon it.

Will they simply, in the name of helping Manitobans through this cost-of-living crisis, abandon their plans to pass Bill 36 today?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, the member for St. James (Mr. Sala) said, and I quote, hydro rates should continue to be set through an independent process managed by the Public Utilities Board.

Now the Leader of the Opposition is getting up and saying no, that shouldn't be the case, Madam Speaker. What he is saying is that he should be able to set the rates of Manitoba Hydro.

We say no. We say we're going to leave it to the Public Utilities Board. That's where it should be made, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Reminder to members that we have some guests in the gallery and out of respect for the guests in the gallery, I'm going to ask everybody to show respect for each other here on the floor and not heckle and listen to the questions and answers.

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

Milk Price Increase Request Not to Raise

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, it's very clear on this side of the House we think that you should save money on your hydro bill. On the PC side of the House, they want to raise your hydro bills by 5 per cent yet again.

The good news is there's still time. The PCs can join us and vote down Bill 36 tonight.

The price of milk will also be going up again. That's because the Premier is set to sign off on the third increase to the price of milk this year. This is a staple, Madam Speaker. This is something that families—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —rely on.

They're denying that families need milk now in the question period, Madam Speaker? Certainly, this deny-deny-outcry approach that they're taking wears thin.

My question is simple. It is this: Will the Premier listen and not sign off on a third consecutive increase to the price of milk?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, caucus meetings with the members opposite must be very interesting, because the member for St. James (Mr. Sala) also said citizens alike need to know that rates are being set in a fair and independent process through the Public Utilities Board, Madam Speaker.

We agree with the member for St. James, Madam Speaker. We disagree with the Leader of the Opposition. We believe that rates should be set through an independent process. That's with—that's what's happening right now through the Public Utilities Board.

Bill 36 actually enhances the independence of the Public Utilities Board. I would think that members opposite should be voting in favour of that this afternoon. I hope they will reconsider. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Manitoba Hydro and Public Utilities Board Request Not to Pass Bill 36

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, the choice you have in the next election is this: save money on your hydro bills with the NDP, save money on the price of groceries with the NDP or pay more, more, more with the PCs.

We know that, in addition to legislating a 5 per cent hydro rate hike, that Bill 36 will also gut the Public Utilities Board's ability to stop future PC rate hikes.

Is the Premier going to stand with the member for St. James and vote against Bill 36? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, what the real question is, Madam Speaker, is will the Leader of the Opposition stand with his member for St. James when he says that there's—that citizens alike need to know the rates are being set in a fair and independent process? Hydro rates should continue to be set through an independent process managed by the Public Utilities Board.

We agree with the member for St. James. The question is, does the Leader of the Opposition also?

Labour Dispute in Ontario Use of Notwithstanding Clause

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Workers' rights are under attack in Canada. We need every member of this House to clearly say the Ford government's use of the notwithstanding clause to attack workers' rights is wrong. That's what it means to stand up for workers and workers' rights.

Will this Labour Minister have the courage to stand up today and do this?

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services): Well, I've made it clear in this House before, Madam Speaker, and certainly this case, we are not the employer in this case. We do not employ teachers in Ontario. That is their role.

* (14:20)

In Manitoba, collective bargaining has been working. We continue to find that the unions negotiate with the employers in our situation, and they find a solution and they agree on that solution and they ratify it. And that is how collective bargaining works in Manitoba, mister—Madam Speaker.

Ontario's—as far as I know, I believe the member opposite knows—is a different province.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a supplementary question.

MLA Lindsey: Every member of this House should stand today in their place and clearly say what the Ford government is attempting to do is wrong.

The right to association, the right to strike are fundamental rights. These rights are being attacked and undermined. That's absolutely wrong. Any labour minister worth their salt should be able to stand up and say that that's wrong.

Will this so-called Minister of Labour say the Ford government's attack on workers' rights is wrong? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Helwer: Well, I know the member opposite might live in two provinces, but I thought it was Manitoba and Saskatchewan. But apparently, now, he's also in Ontario, and wants to be an MPP.

In Manitoba, we negotiate with the unions that we are responsible for. The employers negotiate with the unions.

Collective bargaining has been working in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, and we'll continue with that process.

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

MLA Lindsey: On this side of the House, we stand with workers who are fighting for good wages and good jobs.

We know this government attacked workers in Manitoba with wages under bill 28. They attacked workers' rights with bill 16. But you know what? Workers stood up, standing united—like workers do—and fought back against these bad bills.

So, will this so-called Minister of Labour be clear and tell the House if he thinks what Doug Ford is doing in Ontario is wrong?

Mr. Helwer: Well, apparently, the member opposite is offended that our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has enabled and made a minister of Labour in our government. And we're proud of that, Madam Speaker.

We have been working with various labour groups in Manitoba. The unions have been negotiating with their employers, with the Manitoba government. And we're finding that—as the member opposite knows, I'm sure—that collective bargaining is very healthy in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

And we'll continue down—to follow that process.

Review of Provincial Parks in Manitoba Timeline for Release of Report

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, the PCs' plan for parks is contracting out and privatization.

A Texas company has been paid \$1 million by Manitobans for park reservations. The PCs were devising a scheme to sell off parkland, and then they started contracting out core services. It's all part of the plan which the minister has had in his hands for six months.

When will the minister release the park review?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks): Certainly, our government is proud of our record with our parks—unlike members opposite, Madam Speaker, that spent 17 years in power doing absolutely nothing.

Actually, Madam Speaker, cutting—cutting absolutely everything in parks, except for the grass.

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

Ms. Naylor: Madam Speaker, the minister has had the parks review for at least six months. I will table a FIPPA that shows that the government received the review at least at the beginning of May, and it's now November.

This government's agenda is contracting out and privatization. They've already sent \$1 million to Texas for parks reservations.

So, what else is the minister going to contract out, and why won't he just release the parks review to Manitobans?

Mr. Wharton: I certainly appreciate a question on parks reservations, Madam Speaker.

We know that, again, for 17 years, the NDP did nothing with the reservation system in our parks, Madam Speaker. Year over year, Manitoba families would sit on the phone, sit on their computers for hours on end. As a matter of fact, after four or five hours, they'd drop off and they'd have to go back to the beginning again.

We're not going back to the dark days of park reservations under the NDP. We'll get it right. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: You all know how sensitive I am about heckling when there are students in the House. I'm going to tell you, I'm extra sensitive when there are veterans in the House.

And I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please. We talk about freedoms and, while we have freedom of speech here, it does come with some responsibilities for enhancing democracy—that it be respectful and civil debate.

The honourable member for Wolseley, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Naylor: Brian Pallister and the PCs gave direction to sell provincial parkland. This is directly from the government's own briefing notes.

Since that time, they've chipped away at our parks, contracting out to a Texas company, selling off a campsite at St. Ambrose. And now, for at least six months, the minister has kept hidden his long-term plans for the future of our parks.

I ask the minister: What is he hiding? And if he isn't hiding anything, why won't he simply release the parks review?

Mr. Wharton: First of all, I would like to thank and, again, congratulate the Métis owner of the—or, not the owner, Madam Speaker, actually, the operator—of the St. Ambroise park.

This fellow and his family—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wharton: —are making true investments in that park—a provincial-owned park, Madam Speaker; our parks are not for sale. And we know that this individual and his family are making more investments in St. Ambroise after the 2011 flood.

They ignored it, Madam Speaker; this individual is getting it done and supporting Manitoba parks.

Post-Secondary Education Funding and Tuition Costs

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): The PC government should end their attack on post-secondary students in Manitoba.

Since taking office in 2016, the PC government has cut from—post-secondary funding by nearly 18 per cent. At the same time, students are paying average tuition of over 16 per cent more. And on top of that, they kicked off international students from their provincial health-care plan. With—all of this together have had a detrimental effect on students' lives.

So will the minister commit to stop cutting funding and stop hiking tuition and actually listen to students, and will he do so today?

Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration): Madam Speaker, as outlined in the Auditor General's report, our government is improving our accountability system for post-secondary institutions as part of the action plan in Manitoba's Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy.

This will ensure that our \$1-billion investment in post-secondary education is achieving the intended results, and that post-secondary education is aligned with government priorities.

We are taking action, Madam Speaker.

* (14:30)

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

Mr. Moses: Madam Speaker, there are Canadian Federation of Students members here with us in the gallery. They're here because they're concerned about the cuts the PC government have imposed on funding to post-secondary institutions. They're here because they're concerned about how tuition hikes will make it harder for students to obtain a post-secondary education.

It's clear the minister hasn't listened to their concerns, and he continues the cuts to funding and the hikes to tuition. Thankfully, it's not too late, Madam Speaker.

Will the minister stop ignoring students and commit to stop cutting funding and stop hiking tuition today?

Mr. Reyes: Average tuition in Manitoba is around \$5,000, with a provincial contribution of 39.2 per cent to PCI revenue. If we compare our numbers with British Columbia, the NDP government of BC contributes only 32.4 per cent to post-secondary institutions' revenue, 6.6 per cent less than Manitoba, while the average tuition is almost 20 per cent higher in BC as compared to Manitoba.

Our government is committed to investing more in post-secondary education while keeping tuition one of the lowest in western Canada.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Moses: If the minister truly listened to students, he'd know that his cuts and his hikes to tuition are hurting Manitoban students.

The minister wants to talk numbers. He should know that post-secondary funding was cut by 17.8 per cent. If he wants to talk about tuition, that rose over 16.3 per cent. These trends are hurting students who are already struggling with the rising cost of living.

The minister should commit to stop hiking tuition and stop cutting funding for post-secondary. He has a chance to do so today. Will he do it? Yes or no?

Mr. Reyes: Madam Speaker, the introduction of the Post-Secondary Accountability Framework is consistent with the calls from the Office of the Auditor General's 2020 report on the Oversight of Post-Secondary Institutions for publicly funded univer-

sities and colleges. Recommendations include developing a modern framework with defined performance benchmarks and stronger reporting 'requirements'.

The NDP neglected accountability for years while also banning the quality of education delivered at our post-secondary institutions. We are still cleaning up the mess they left behind. We are taking action and getting things done, Madam Speaker.

Island Lake First Nations Mental Health Services

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Yesterday, our colleague, the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie) stood alongside Indigenous leadership and Red Sucker Lake First Nation citizens as Chief Knott declared a state of emergency after two suicides and 17 attempted suicides in the last many weeks.

The community is mourning the deaths of a 30-year-old man and a 16-year-old boy. Many other young people are among those who have attempted suicide. Urgent action must be taken to address the dire state—state of mental health among First Nations youth and its citizens.

Can the minister outline what action she is presently taking to help the residents of Red Sucker Lake First Nation?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): I would like to offer my condolences to the entire community. Any time there is a loss within your community, it is tragic. But certainly, when you're facing the loss through suicide, that adds to the trauma.

Our department has reached out to the health-care providers in the northern region, and we know that Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre has reached out to current and former clients within the community and are going to be one the ground shortly to offer supports.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Leaders from Island Lake First Nations are calling on the provincial and federal governments to provide equal access to health care.

Leaders have said that the state of mental health of their more than 15,000 citizens is presently very dire, Madam Speaker. They're calling for the province to build a local hospital, an addictions treatment centre and land-based mental health supports.

Will the minister step up and commit to taking action to help Island Lake First Nation's citizens today?

Mrs. Guillemard: Our department has worked on a five-year road map that includes investments in the northern regions.

We have already implemented telepsychiatry services, which allow anybody, anywhere in Manitoba, to access psychiatry services in their own communities and come up with care plans. We will continue to invest in those services and supports for those areas.

We agree with the chiefs that the federal government does need to be at the table and does need to be helping provinces in addressing the northern and remote area needs and—especially of those in the Indigenous communities.

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

Ms. Fontaine: Suicide is the leading cause of death among Indigenous youth here in Canada. That alone should urge the provincial government to act and to act today. Without urgent action, Island Lake First Nations are worried that the suicide crisis is only going to grow exponentially.

Rather than fighting over who will pay for health-care services, the minister should step up and take action to help Island Lake First Nations residents.

Will she do so today?

Mrs. Guillemard: We have taken action, not just today but for the last six years. And we are enhancing the connectivity of northern regions to the broadband, which the NDP ignored for 17 years. And I will tell you, Madam Speaker, that we take this situation very seriously.

We will work with our partners in the federal government to find solutions and to offer supports. And I know that the communities have asked for a number of investments from the federal government to increase recreational services, and we will be at the table to have those discussions.

Thank you.

Non-Disclosure Agreements Request to Prohibit Use

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Last night's presenters for our Bill 225 to reform the abuse of non-disclosure agreements was five hours of riveting testimony from brave people who've been abused and silenced and finally able to speak openly their stories

of outrageous and disgusting abuse, protected by NDAs or threats of NDAs. Every single presenter deserves to be heard, praised for what they've done and protected from any further retribution.

One of those stories we heard was of Marcel Williamson, an Indigenous IT professional who works in Winnipeg, who documented his years of racist abuse and even physical assaults that the WRHA and Shared Health knew about and failed to address, and have tried to buy his silence with an NDA.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and Health Minister launch an investigation to see what went so terribly wrong with Mr. Williamson's case and, until our bill passes, set a policy prohibiting the use of NDAs across government immediately?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I was one of the members that sat at the table last night for the five hours of committee around the non-disclosure agreement. And the stories were heart-wrenching, Madam Speaker. And I just want to express my support to the individuals that came forward with their stories yesterday.

And I am disappointed in the member for St. Boniface, that he has chosen to politicize someone's personal story and—here in the Chamber today.

Madam Speaker, we are going to continue to support individuals who have experienced the—so many of the stories that we heard last night, and move the non-disclosure agreement bill forward.

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

Request for Reform Legislation

Mr. Lamont: Well, it would be impossible for anyone to hear yesterday's testimony and not be moved by the 'bravery' of the people speaking out, because many times we heard people were punished for reporting. And we heard the reason they reported was because they wanted to make sure that what happened to them never happened to anyone else.

Jan Wong, the former journalist with The Globe and Mail, said her first guest for her famous column, Lunch with Jan Wong, 25 years ago, was Peter Nygård. She asked him about sexual harassment charges. He threatened to sue, and she could not interview the affected women because they'd all been forced to sign NDAs, which silenced them for life. Imagine if they had not been silenced and we'd been able to act 25 years ago.

Will the Premier work with us to ensure the passage of an NDA reform bill before the year is out?

* (14:40)

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I also want to thank all of those who bravely came to committee—committee, either personally or virtually, last night to share their stories—often heart-wrenching, as the member opposite indicates.

As I mentioned last night and I've mentioned in this House before, the issue is currently being reviewed by the Manitoba Law Reform Commission. They'll be putting out a consultation paper in the next weeks. Testimony from last night will be considered by the Manitoba Law Reform Commission, but they also welcome other testimony through the consultation process, and they've committed to report back early next year on this very important issue.

I thank the member opposite for his advocacy on the issue.

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

COVID-19 Pandemic Home-Care Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, adequate home care is a critical issue today.

The government cut back substantially on home-care hours and patients seen in 2020, at a time when home care was needed more than ever to keep seniors in safer home environments during COVID. I table materials from Prairie Mountain Health to confirm this. Indeed, some individuals receiving home care had to go into personal-care homes, where they were at higher risk.

Why did the Premier and her government fail to put a priority on home care during the COVID pandemic, at a time when more was needed, not less?

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): I appreciate the question from the member for River Heights. I know how passionate he is on this particular issue, and I can assure you that the government is also very passionate on finding solutions to be able to deal with the challenges that we have with home care.

I've indicated a number of times to this House that the seniors strategy is certainly well under way. We've consulted with stakeholders. We've consulted with

Manitobans to find the best way to address this issue. And we will continue.

And I look forward to bringing the seniors strategy forward.

Integrated Violent Offender Apprehension Unit Community Safety Announcement

Mrs. Cathy Cox (Kildonan-River East): Madam Speaker, the increase in violent crime is a concern to citizens, not only in Winnipeg but across the province.

Many acts of violence are being committed by repeat and prolific offenders who are well-known to law enforcement.

Can the Minister of Justice please explain how our government is keeping communities and Manitobans safe by taking the bad guys off the street?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank my friend and colleague for that question and her advocacy.

I was pleased to be joined by the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) this morning, who made a very important announcement about an integrated warrant violent suppression unit that will ensure that those who have outstanding warrants—the worst of the worst, often gang members—that there'll be a dedicated unit—an integrated unit that will go after those with those outstanding warrants.

The Brandon police are a part of this. The Winnipeg police were there. The RCMP were there. The First Nations policing service were there. All very, very dedicated to ensuring that we get those who have these warrants off of the street.

And that's the difference, Madam Speaker, between us and the members opposite. We defend the police, they defund them.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

I'm going to have to call—[interjection]—I'm going to call the members to order.

Manitoba Hydro and Public Utilities Board Request to Withdraw Bill 36

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Madam Speaker, Manitobans in every corner of this province have stood up in opposition to Bill 36, and yet the minister and this government are still planning on moving forward with this terrible piece of legislation—legislation which is focused on one goal and one goal

alone, and that is jacking up hydro rates as quickly as possible.

Presenters at committee and so many Manitobans have warned of the harms this bill presents, and by this point it should be abundantly clear to this government that Manitobans do not want this bill to pass.

Will the minister take this opportunity to reconsider his misguided approach and withdraw Bill 36?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Madam Speaker, this is your daily reminder that the NDP have completely flip-flopped on Bill 36.

After falsely alleging for months and months that the bill would interfere with the PUB and its mandate, this member kept saying—and this is his own quote—hydro rates should continue to be set through an independent process—managed by the PUB, he should have added. But that was yesterday, because they went out this week and said, we changed our minds, we want to directly interfere with the PUB.

Madam Speaker, there is no credibility in that member's question or his rationale.

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

Mr. Sala: Manitobans know the truth. They know that on that side of the House, they stand for dismantling the PUB and jacking up rates. And on this side of the House, we stand for protecting the PUB and keeping rates as affordable as possible.

Manitobans are facing an affordability 'crisis'. Rates should be frozen, not increased by 5 per cent at the Cabinet table. The financial targets and repayment schedule the—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala:—government is setting with Bill 36 aren't justified, and it will result in massive year-after-year rate hikes.

They're eroding Manitoba's energy advantage. They're going to hurt our competitiveness. They're going to cause job loss, and they're going to hurt consumers.

Will the minister do the right thing and use this final opportunity to withdraw Bill 36?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, Webster's defines a flip-flop as changing from one policy to virtually its exact opposite. It's a flip-flop. It's a U-turn. It's a 180. It's a change of direction.

They said for months and months, erroneously, that Bill 36 would take away the right of the PUB to decide. And now, while they try to shout me down, one thing becomes apparent to Manitobans, and that is they want to set hydro rates at the NDP caucus table.

And we say no to that.

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

Economic Review of Bipole III and Keeyask Implementation of Recommendations

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): The minister is pushing for higher rates for hydro, and at the same time he's hiding his plans for privatization. This government has already sold off pieces of Hydro. They have a report that calls for pieces of Hydro to be chopped off and sold.

Where's the accountability, Madam Speaker? When will the minister provide his government's action plan for the Wall report, and will they reject its plans for privatization?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Here's another one for the member for St. James' highlight reel.

He says: there's one thing you touched on, which is that we know the rates are being set in a fair and independent process; member of St. James, October 11th.

However, what we didn't know, is that he was planning to go out with his premier—or, his opposition leader, oh my goodness, who will never be premier. And the opposition leader, what it is, they issued a press release, they retracted a press release and then they reissued a press release. And all it said is that the NDP want to interfere with Hydro.

And we say no to the NDP interference with Hydro.

Madam Speaker: Due to the noise in the room, I did not hear the last 30 seconds of what the minister was answering. However, I am going to make a decision that the time for oral questions has expired anyway, and I hope Hansard, at least, was able to pick that up.

But, again, very disappointing to see that my requests from earlier have not—well, I guess they've fallen on deaf ears for a part of the day. But time for oral questions has expired, and I will go to petitions.

PETITIONS

Hydro Rates

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Since the Progressive Conservative Party took office, the provincial government has interfered in the activities of Manitoba Hydro and has attempted to undermine the Public Utilities Board's, PUB, role in the hydro rate-setting process.

(2) The provincial government has raised Manitoba Hydro bills by hundreds of dollars since 2016.

* (14:50)

(3) The provincial government is now ushering in changes to Manitoba Hydro rate setting and the PUB through Bill 36, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act.

(4) The PUB is the one thing standing in the way of the provincial government and unchecked hydro rate increases.

(5) The PUB's independent rate-setting process has worked for many years by balancing the ability of consumers to pay and the financial health of Manitoba Hydro.

(6) Bill 36 strips the PUB of its rate-setting powers and hands it over to Cabinet, reducing transparency and oversight.

(7) Bill 36 guarantees that Manitobans will pay more for hydro.

(8) In the first fiscal year after its implementation, Bill 36 will increase rates by 5 per cent during a period of high inflation that has made the average Manitoba's cost of living significantly higher.

(9) A hydro rate increase would amplify the financial pressure Manitoban families are facing and would undoubtedly increase the number of people who have difficulty paying their hydro bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to respect the PUB's independent rate-setting process, and to not increase the financial pressures Manitobans are currently facing and withdraw Bill 36.

This petition has been signed by Lorraine Kaczor, Debby Spraggs, Danny Guillas and many other Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Louise Bridge

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Over 25,000 vehicles per day cross the Louise Bridge, which has served as a vital link for vehicular traffic between northeast Winnipeg and the downtown for the last 110 years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(8) The NDP provincial government signalled its firm commitment to partner with the City on replacing the Louise Bridge in its 2015 Throne Speech. Unfortunately, provincial infrastructure initiatives, such as the new Louise bridge, came to a halt with the election of the Progressive Conservative government in 2016.

(9) More recently, the City tethered the Louise Bridge replacement issue to its new transportation master plan and eastern corridor project. Its recommendations have now identified the location of the

new Louise bridge to be placed just to the west of the current bridge, not to the east as originally proposed.

(10) The City expropriation process has begun. The \$6.35-million street upgrade of Nairn Avenue from Watt Street to the 111-year-old bridge is complete.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: —urge the provincial government to recommend that the City of Winnipeg keep the old bridge fully open to traffic while the new bridge is under construction.

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

And this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

Health-Care Coverage

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) Health care is a basic human right and a fundamental part of responsible public health. Many people in Manitoba are not covered by provincial health care: migrant workers with work permits of less than one year, international students—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —and those undocumented residents who have lost their status for a variety of reasons.

(2) Racialized people and communities are disproportionately affected by the pandemic, mainly due to the social and economic conditions which leave

them vulnerable while performing essential work in a variety of industries in Manitoba.

(3) Without adequate health-care coverage, if they are ill, many of the uninsured will avoid seeking health care due to fear of being charged for the care, and some will fear possible detention and deportation if their immigration status is reported to the authorities.

(4) According to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, denying essential health care to undocumented, irregular migrants is a violation of their rights.

(5) Jurisdictions across Canada and the world have adopted access-without-fear policies to prevent sharing personal health information or immigration status with immigration authorities and to give uninsured residents the confidence to access health care.

(6) The pandemic has clearly identified the need for everyone in Manitoba to have access to health care to protect the health and safety of all who live in the province.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately provide comprehensive and free health-care coverage to all residents of Manitoba, regardless of immigration status, including refugee claimants, migrant workers, international students, dependant children of temporary residents and undocumented residents.

(2) To urge the minister of Health and seniors care to undertake a multilingual communication campaign to provide information on expanded coverage to all affected residents.

(3) To urge the minister of Health and seniors care to inform all health-care institutions and providers of expanded coverage for those without health insurance and the details on how necessary policy and protocol changes will be implemented.

(4) To urge the minister of Health and seniors care to create and enforce strict confidentiality policies and provide staff with training to protect the safety of residents with precarious immigration statuses and ensure they can access health care without jeopardizing their ability to remain in Canada.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

Hydro Rates

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Since the Progressive Conservative Party took office, the provincial government has interfered in the activities of Manitoba Hydro and has attempted to undermine the Public Utilities Board's role in the hydro rate-setting process.

(2) The provincial government has raised Manitobans' Hydro bills by hundreds of dollars since 2016.

(3) The provincial government is now ushering in changes to Manitoba Hydro rate setting and the PUB through Bill 36, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act.

(4) The PUB is the one thing standing in the way of the provincial government and unchecked hydro rate increases.

(5) The PUB's independent rate-setting process has worked for many years by balancing the ability of consumers to pay and the financial health of Manitoba Hydro.

(6) Bill 36 strips the PUB of its rate-setting powers and hands it over to Cabinet, reducing transparency and oversight.

(7) Bill 36 guarantees that Manitobans will pay more for hydro.

(8) In the first fiscal year after its implementation, Bill 36 will increase rates by 5 per cent during a period of high inflation that has made the average Manitoban's cost of living significantly higher.

(9) A hydro rate increase would amplify the financial pressure Manitoban families are facing and would undoubtedly increase the number of people who have difficulty paying their hydro bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to respect the PUB's independent rate-setting process, and to not increase the financial pressures Manitobans are currently facing and withdraw Bill 36.

This petition has been signed by Warren Rawnka [*phonetic*], Randy Novak and Monika Tardiff.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Any further petitions? If not, grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, a number of leave requests that I'm going to put before the House. I don't believe that they'll come as a surprise to anybody, after consultation.

* (15:00)

Could you please canvass the House for leave to allow for consideration at concurrence and third reading this afternoon of the following three bills, despite the fact that they were reported from the committee today and are not yet on the Order Paper: Bill 40, The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act; Bill 43, The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act; Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Second, could you please canvass the House for leave to not see the clock until the questions have been put on concurrence and third reading motions for Bill 40, 43 and 46?

Third, could you please canvass the House for leave to rescind the decision of the House made on October 25th, 2022, on the motion for concurrence and third reading of Bill 237, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Poppy Number Plates). For clarity, the result of this agreement would be that the debate on the bill would remain open at concurrence and third reading.

Madam Speaker: And I will break those up into three votes here—or, leave requests.

Is there leave to allow for consideration at concurrence and third reading this afternoon of the following three bills, despite the fact that they're—that they were reported from committee today and are not yet on the Order Paper: Bill 40, The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act; Bill 43, The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act; and Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Is there leave to not see the clock until the questions have been put on the concurrence and third reading motions for bills 40, 43 and 46?

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

And is there leave to rescind the decision of the House made on October 25th, 2022, on the motion for concurrence and third reading of Bill 237, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act (Poppy Number Plates). For clarity, the result of this agreement would be that debate on the bill could remain open at concurrence and third reading.

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I have a leave request.

Could you please canvass the House for leave to allow me to move without notice, and for the House to consider today, a report stage amendment—two report stage amendments on Bill 43, Disclosure To Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the member for Tyndall Park to move without notice, and for the House to consider today, two report stage amendments on Bill 43, The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act.

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Goertzen: Could you please call report stage amendments on Bill 43, followed by concurrence and third reading and votes on Bill 40, 43 and 46?

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider the following this afternoon: the report stage amendments on Bill 43, and then concurrence and third reading of bills 40, 43 and 46.

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Bill 43—The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act

Madam Speaker: So, I will therefore start by calling report stage amendments of Bill 43, The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

THAT Bill 43 be amended in Clause 1(1) by adding the following after clause (a) of the proposed definition "intimate partner violence":

(a.1) abuse through electronic communications, including social media, text messaging, instant messaging, websites or e-mail;

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux), seconded by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

THAT Bill 43 be amended in Clause 1(1) by adding the—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The report stage amendment is in order. Debate can proceed.

Ms. Lamoureux: Just a few words based off a presentation from last night at committee. Abuse through electronic communications should be added as a form of intimate partner violence because we have learned how technology can facilitate abuse and can be used as a form of control or to provoke fear as a way to stalk and to harass people.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Any other members wishing to speak on that?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): We had a presentation at committee last night from Canadian Centre for Child Protection which we know, of course, does amazing work in this field protecting children each and every day, not just here in Manitoba, but around the world.

And they were very supportive of two of the bills that we'll be debating here this afternoon, both Bill 40 and Bill 43.

Specifically to Bill 43, they had mentioned that, of course, with the world of technology rapidly evolving and changing on a regular basis, they had certainly thought that an expanded definition, or the inclusion of that definition in the legislation, would be effective. And, of course, that is what the member for Tyndall Park is also asking for.

I have been advised by our—my department after consultation with Legislative Counsel that yes, indeed, these items can be addressed but would be better appropriate in the regulations. And let me explain why.

That—currently as drafted, the definition of intimate partner violence is very broad and applicable regardless of the method, the mode or the means of violence. And it is intentionally written as such to be very broad and all-encompassing.

And with further defining that in regulation, just to ease the facilitation of additions in future years, given that we know that intimate partner violence—there could be potentially other forms of abuse that are not yet conceived of to be drafted in the legislation. And it would make for the ease in which we could amend regulation in the future.

So, I will be addressing all those enhancements, but certainly, we'll be doing it in regulation.

I'm also very pleased to be inviting the Canadian Centre for Child Protection to the working group who will be sitting around the table, in addition with many, many other stakeholders and partners in the province of Manitoba, as we are drafting those regulations.

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

If not, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the first amendment moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt—on Bill 43.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I will now call on the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) to present the second amendment to Bill 43.

Ms. Lamoureux: I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

THAT Bill 43 be amended in Clause 1(1) by adding the following after clause (g) of the proposed definition "intimate partner violence":

(g.1) spiritual abuse, including the use of spiritual or religious beliefs to hurt, control, ridicule or scare a person—any person, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park, seconded by the honourable member for River Heights,

THAT Bill 43 be amended—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Ms. Lamoureux: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to bring forward this amendment. And again, I'll keep my remarks short, as I would like to see the legislation passed here very quickly this afternoon.

I've had the opportunity in the past to work with women here in Manitoba who have experienced significant spiritual abuse. And I believe it should be added as a form of intimate partner violence because using spiritual or religious beliefs to hurt, control, ridicule or scare any person into doing something or not doing something is, in fact, a form of abuse.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Squires: Of course, our government is also concerned about the spiritual abuse of any individual in the province of Manitoba, and certainly do consider it a form of intimate partner violence.

And as I had mentioned earlier, in consultation with many of our stakeholders, we will be expanding that and really detailing out the various forms and modes of abuse in regulation.

* (15:10)

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

If not, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the second amendment moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park to Bill 43.

All those in favour of—or, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 40—The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act

Madam Speaker: Moving, then, to concurrence and third reading of Bill 40, The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister of Community Wellness—Mental Health and Community Wellness (Mrs. Guillemard), that Bill 40, The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: It was wonderful to be able to see this bill move forward because we know that this bill will provide protection to children throughout the province.

Unfortunately, and sadly, we know that there are over 400 children in the visible—that are visibly being sexually exploited here in Manitoba. And that is just a small glimpse of what we know to be in the visible sex trade and that many, many, many more children are

exploited on a daily basis in online platforms and in other means that are not captured in the statistics that I just cited.

And this is a very urgent, urgent matter, and I want to thank everybody who has consulted with on this—drafting of this legislation, everybody who has spoken in favour of it and who has agreed with our government that we need to end child sexual exploitation here in the province.

And I look forward to this bill being passed today.

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): It's my pleasure to rise today in support of this bill and to see it one step closer to getting passed. And it was also my pleasure and honour to be present yesterday at committee to see those processes go through there and to hear back from presenters—well, actually, in that case, it was written submissions—to try to improve this bill.

Certainly, on this side of the House, we will do what we can to always support the government in these types of issues, especially trying to eradicate human sex trafficking and child sexual exploitation. This is something that we are proud to do, and we will do our best efforts to do this in a non-partisan way, as quickly as possible, in an effort to—and do what we can in this province to eradicate this terrible scourge.

You know, I just wanted to remind the minister and the department about the seriousness of this issue, especially as it relates to systemic issues of poverty and the high rate of Indigenous girls and women under 35 years old that this affects, and that poverty and this type of intersection with our Indigenous girls and women—this is the focus group that we would like the department and the minister to pay attention to—this—and as we move forward with this bill.

Thank you for the time.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm happy to rise and just put a few words on record to Bill 40, The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act.

Madam Speaker, I believe that this is a very positive piece of legislation that everyone here in the House has been able to non-partisanly come together on. I believe that it's putting more eyes on the ground, more feet on the ground. It reminds me of the saying, how it takes a village, and I believe this legislation creates more opportunities throughout the province of Manitoba where we can watch out for one another.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

If not, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 40.

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

Bill 43—The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act

Madam Speaker: I will now call Bill 43, The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act, for concurrence and third reading.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (Mr. Piwniuk), that Bill 43, The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: It is with pride that I stand today to introduce the third reading of this bill. It has been an incredible journey from the inception of bringing Clare's Law here to Manitoba today, where we are seeing Bill 43—I hope and I anticipate—seeing it become law.

And I really do want to take a moment to thank everybody, whether they were in the Department of Justice, the department of Status of Women and the Gender-Based Violence Committee of Cabinet, to—who have come together in such a meaningful way over the last many, many months to develop what we are calling the next generation of Clare's Law.

We also had the benefit of looking at what other jurisdictions have done with the implementation of similar legislation in Canada and abroad, and be able to incorporate some best practices from those jurisdictions, as well as learn from some of those mistakes, so that we are intending to initiate a Clare's Law in Manitoba that will be accessible to everybody in a variety of ways and means.

It is the first of its kind, with an expanded scope in allowing for other individuals to come forward. For example, if you're concerned about your child's

partner—adult child's partner, you can access for disclosure.

And we are also ensuring that the person who is making application for information, that they would be entitled to choose a designated individual who would also be able to receive that information. We know in other jurisdictions that applicants would be the recipient of information that they had asked for through disclosure, only to have to keep that in secret and not be able to share what they found with anyone else and to talk to another loved one or family member about what they have learned.

And we know that that is not a trauma-informed approach, and this way, our individuals who are coming forward can have a loved one present when they hear the information and they can also discuss it with that individual that they have chosen to be their designate, who will also be restricted to confidentiality to ensure and safeguard the confidentiality of the subject of the disclosure.

And so, I just really want to thank also the working group that has come together and we look forward to spending many, many more hours around that working table; hearing from our partners and our stakeholder groups and all—and department officials on how we can ensure that the regulations that support this bill are going to be meeting all of its intended targets.

So, with that, Madam Speaker, I think this will make a big difference in the lives of many individuals in the province of Manitoba, and it is a great honour for me to be the government's representative here today, bringing this bill forward to help survivors of intimate partner violence.

* (15:20)

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Again, similar to Bill 40, this—on side of the House, we are also very much in favour of Bill 43, The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act, commonly known as Clare's Law.

This is an important bill, and it will be receiving royal assent today and we're very happy that we're going to be having these extra types of protections in place for folks that are suffering from intimate partner violence.

At this time, I'd also still like to mention that, in addition to passing legislation, the Families Department and this minister have budgets at their disposal to also

support and to continue to enhance that support to victims of intimate partner violence and their families.

I'd like to remind them that it's—this—it—important intersections of newcomers, of Indigenous women, of women living in northern and rural regions, and when this—and when these groups intersect, that there is more, you know, potential for intimate partner violence.

So, to have those supports in place for these types of communities is really, really important in addition to legislation like Bill 43.

And with that, thank you for the time.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm very honoured to be able to rise for a third reading here to talk about Bill 43.

It's a piece of legislation, Clare's Law, that I am very passionate about and I think that the minister has learned that I have grown to really, really—I want to see this legislation here in Manitoba. It's overdue. We need it. We needed it yesterday, Madam Speaker.

Just a little bit about the bill itself. Currently, Clare's Law is practised in Saskatchewan and in Alberta, and every province does it a little bit differently, whether that be the intake of applicants and how applicant—or, who can actually apply for the program. And a few points that I really appreciate that Manitoba specifically added to the legislation is the right to tell.

So, for example—if a police officer, for example, sees someone who they—maybe a red flag has gone up and they feel that this person may benefit from knowing a little bit about Clare's Law, the police officer can actually put Clare's Law, the concept, the idea of this legislation, on the radar of the person who may benefit from it, Madam Speaker.

I also really appreciate that it includes family violence. So if, for example, a partner physically abuses or throws or does any sort of—form of harm towards a child, this can be constituted under Clare's Law as family violence. And it includes the threat of harming and killing animals and damaging property, as well.

I think it's really important that we know people, when they get heated and they choose violence in any context—it's scary to see someone pick up a glass and throw it across the room and have it shatter on the wall. Imagine being in the room for that, Madam Speaker. And again, Clare's Law is making it so people who are fearful of this can come forward with legislation.

Madam Speaker, the purpose of Bill 43 is to have a process for individuals who feel that they might be at risk of intimate partner violence. It's to ensure that the process has a safety plan for these individuals who come forward, a risk assessment for them and referrals and supports for different services.

I spoke about this a little bit at second reading here in the House, but I know I've had the opportunity to work with women who need to come up with escape plans from their own homes. How do they get from their bedroom past the living room or the kitchen out the front door and safely into a new facility or home or base without their partner harming them? It's very real. It happens every day here in Manitoba, and Clare's Law is a positive step towards equipping people with the resources that they need.

Madam Speaker, I do think that—I had the opportunity to bring forward a couple of amendments, one being spiritual abuse and one being abuse that happens through electronic communications. And I want to express that I appreciate how I was given leave in the House to bring forward those amendments.

And I take the minister at face value and I am positive and confident that she is, in fact, going to be working with the working group on this legislation to incorporate and ensure that those, for example, who are being spiritually abused—if a person is being forced to, whether it's practise a spirituality or, in some cases, some partners of others will say, if you don't do this, you are sinning in God's eye. That's just an example, Madam Speaker.

We need to make sure that spiritual abuse is, in fact, added to this legislation in some context, whether it be through an amendment or not, Madam Speaker, and the same idea when we heard from a presenter last night at committee.

Electronic communication is becoming a more and more dangerous platform. We know what—the social media platforms. We know there's text messaging; there's emails; there's instant messaging. And every single day we hear it from students in school, from cyberbullying to partners, where people are copying and pasting images, Madam Speaker.

It's pretty terrifying, and we need to make sure that this is being considered in Clare's Law. And again, it's a positive step that Manitoba could be taking a lead on.

So I really want to thank the minister for introducing this legislation. I'm very honoured to be able

to be a part of it being passed here in the Manitoba Legislature.

Thank you.

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just very briefly, a couple of points.

The first is I want to compliment my colleague, the MLA for Tyndall Park, for the work that she has done. People here in the Chamber may not know that the MLA for Tyndall Park had put a lot of work into producing a bill on Clare's Law, and if the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires) had not brought this forward, she might have presented a similar bill. So I just want to acknowledge all the work that the MLA for Tyndall Park has put into this.

I also want to thank the Minister for Families and the Status of Women for bringing this forward. Addressing intimate partner violence is really critical in our society today.

My sister-in-law in Saskatoon spent many years addressing issues of intimate partner violence, so I—whenever we get together, I have heard lots and lots on this subject and the need to address it better.

I'm pleased that this is moving forward and I want to thank the minister and thank the MLA for Tyndall Park.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: If not, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 43.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 46—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: I will now call concurrence and third reading of Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Hon. Doyle Pivniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister for Families,

that Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, be reported from the standing committee of the Social and Economic Development and concurred in and be read for the third time and passed.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (Mr. Piwniuk), seconded by the honourable Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), that Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Piwniuk: Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise today for the third reading of Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. This bill will make Manitoba's roads safer by creating a new offense under The Highway Traffic Act to prohibit driving on closed highways.

Generally, Manitoba drivers know that they are—should not be driving on closed roads. However, we saw last winter or during the spring flooding events, Madam Speaker, that some drivers continue to make dangerous decisions to ignore signs and intentionally drive around barricades.

The RCMP approached our government early this spring asking for stronger enforcement tools to discourage this behaviour, and Bill 46 delivers this by making it clear that driving on closed roads is illegal and that the offenders can face a significant fine reflecting the seriousness of the offense, Madam Speaker.

I was pleased to hear, during this debate at second reading, that all parties are supportive of the importance of this legislation which delivers our own commitment to improving road safety for all Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

* (15:30)

I look forward for a speedy passing of this bill with the intent that have the regulations needed to proclaim the bill completed by early 2023, before—hopefully, before we have spring—if we—before the spring. Hopefully, we won't have floods next year. This will make sure that we are in the position to start enforcing new offences as soon as possible, Madam Speaker.

And, like I said, this is, basically—when it comes to this bill, Madam Speaker, it is really going to be the RCMP. They are the ones that make the decisions to close highways during bad weather conditions, and they are also the ones that will determine when

people—when it's—essential services can go and onto the highway for essential service.

And there's just times where—the storms are all different, and if a storm is so bad that even emergency vehicles should not be on the road, this is the discretion of the RCMP, Madam Speaker, or city police.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I appreciate the opportunity to speak at third reading on Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

We are, as the minister rightly indicated, in support of this bill. And, in fact, safety on our roadways and our highways has been a clear focus of our caucus throughout this session. So, it's fitting that this would be one of the bills that we bring—or, that we support and that is passed here this afternoon.

As you know, Madam Speaker, our caucus has been focused on safety on our highways in a number of ways; not least of which, of course, bringing forward concerns about Highway 6 and about snow clearing and about safety going north. Highway 6, we heard from members today talking about Highway 60, talking about Highway 10 and, of course, we've brought that forward in question period in a number of forum.

The minister will also remember that, of course, we brought forward concerns about Highway 210, Highway 12 in Estimates, and the concerns that we had with regards to safety at that intersection, but also on Highway 210 itself.

The minister will, I'm sure, have been listening intently every time I brought forward a petition with regards to the Perimeter Highway, talking about the concerns that folks have there about closures and how that will actually make things less safe for those who are accessing roads off of the Perimeter Highway.

Just this morning, as I mentioned, a bill was brought forward by the member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey). A bill which I thought should have had unanimous support from this Chamber, to say that we understand the impacts that this minister's neglect of our highways have—has had with regards to the number of people working and the amount of equipment that's available to clear our highways; and that some standards should be set and that should be enforced and should be guaranteed to the people of Manitoba.

Again, something that, you know, our caucus has brought forward many times, should have been supported by this government and yet, it wasn't.

You know, so, this has been a focus of our caucus over and over again, day after day, we've brought these issues forward to the minister.

What has been their focus; what has been the government's focus? Well, first it was, of course, you know, as I said, cuts to snow clearing, cuts to the budget, underspending in the Infrastructure department in general.

And the concerns that we're hearing directly from those on the front lines who are trying to clear our highways; saying there's not enough equipment, there's not enough staff. The minister now says, well, we've got a plan. We're going to—we're going to hire people. Well, his cuts have created the problems that we're talking about. It's his government's austerity measures that have caused the issues that we have brought forward day after day in this session.

We know that this government has been on the defence with regards to the minister's overreach when it comes to changing decisions at the minister's table to say that the people of Brandon should be less safe when it comes to a development that is going into south of Brandon.

That's been the minister's focus; he's been focused on making things less safe on our roadways and on our highways.

And, now, they may have seen the light. That may be why they are finally bringing Bill 46. And as we said, we are in support and willing to move this through more quickly. But it remains a duty, a special obligation, of all of us, I believe, to focus on highway safety as we move forward.

And I believe we have a special obligation not just because we're looking out for the people of Manitoba, but because we lost a colleague, Madam Speaker. And it is so important for us to not just use the example that, you know, of what happened to our colleague, but that the stories that came out of that tragedy, the stories that are still available on the website brought forward by residents in Thompson who have said, just share your stories about close calls, about accidents, about tragedies that you know of on Highway 6.

And we heard earlier one of the members opposite heckling, saying, you know, that we're using Danielle's memory in a political way or that we're, you

know, invoking her name just to take a shot at the government. I don't believe that that's the case. I believe that we have that special obligation; every single member here, to honour her memory by making sure that highway safety is a No. 1 concern.

So this bill does go a step in the right direction with regards to that endeavour. We know that Manitoba roads become unsafe, you know, particularly in winter. And we've been talking about winter coming for a while now; at least I have. But we know that for our northern friends right now, winter's here. The roads are treacherous today and we need to ensure that the steps are taken.

And as I mentioned in my second reading speech on Bill 46, you know, we listen to our northern caucus because they have the experience. They're driving that every single day.

And when I asked the member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey), I asked the member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin), when I asked other members in our northern caucus, they say, you know, what do you do when a highway's closed? When—you know, how do you get that information? How's that communicated to you from Manitoba infrastructure and transportation, or how is that communicated to you, from the RCMP or from law enforcement?

And they said, there is no communication. There's no—those highways are just not closed. People travel on them, they use their best judgment. They're often-times unsafe and yet people are forced to travel on them because they know that they can't wait for a plow that may never come or may be days and days late.

So, the—you know, this may be applicable in many situations, this bill, but we know that there are many situations where, unfortunately, this bill doesn't go far enough ensuring that folks have the information that they need, that our highways are ultimately safe and that we're doing everything that we can to ensure that snow is cleared, that highways are safe and that, if there is a closure, that that information is communicated properly.

The minister will also know that at committee yesterday, we heard directly from a telecommunications worker, someone who has experience on the front lines out in Manitoba, you know, doing his job to make sure that people are connected even in emergency times. And, you know, I appreciated the presentation because it gave us a sense of what it's really like when a highway's closed but we're relying on people to get out there and do their jobs to make sure that

people, in his case, that people are connected and they have cellular service.

You know, I didn't know much about the technology and was impressed by his description of exactly how those towers are kept functional, even in emergency situations, even when power is cut. And it really does take those people who are out on the roads and on the highways to keep us going.

And there are a number of others that may be in similar situations—Manitoba Hydro workers and others who are not specifically exempted in this bill, but who are expected to be out on the roadways and highways doing their job to make sure that Manitobans are connected and that we have power and that we have communications.

I thought we were bringing forward what would be a friendly amendment for the minister, but he shot it down and he said no. He said that, ultimately, it's going to be up to law enforcement, who I think have come forward to us and asked for some clarity, given some exemptions, so that they can understand who is authorized to be on the roads and who very clearly isn't so they can give that direction to those folks who are out this winter and doing that work.

So, I was very disappointed that that amendment didn't go forward. And also quite disappointed, Madam Speaker, that we didn't get more clarity with regards to the vicarious responsibility that companies would face if they instruct or direct one of their employees to break the rules. We know that this bill does include some provisions that give some direction that employees can—you know, would not be on the hook, it would be the employer. However, we're concerned about the amounts that have been levied here.

* (15:40)

And more particularly, Madam Speaker, we are concerned that for those independent contractors who aren't directly employed by a company but maybe, you know, may still be operating or working, you know, to further their directives, that—would they also be liable? That extends to gig workers, that extends to those who are delivering and who are doing ride-sharing and other ride delivery activities. So, there's a big concern there.

And I don't feel that we've gotten the clear answer. You know, the minister has said, well, we'll get that in regulation. But we'll be watching this very closely to see exactly how this is implemented out in the field.

At the end of the day, Madam Speaker, as I said, an absolute focus of our caucus remains that our highways are safe. That is the first step in ensuring that our province is connected, that our communities are connected to one another, that trade can continue and can be enhanced. Lots riding on this.

And, you know, while we know we can see some harsh conditions in Manitoba—snow, ice, flooding this spring—we know that, you know, Manitobans, they still expect a safe roadway and a safe highway when they're travelling.

We want to make sure that we, as legislators, we honour our colleague's memory by making sure that these investments actually impact the people who are using our roadways every day. So as a caucus, and I hope all members of this Chamber, will continue to do that.

I believe that Bill 46 can be a step in the right direction, but as I said, we will be watching this very closely and looking at ways that we can enhance this going forward in the future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I rise to support this bill.

As Liberals, we want to make sure that our highways are safe and that people are safe to drive on it. Our only concern is that for a bill like this to be effective, it is very important that when a road is not closed, that there not be a sign: road closed up.

We had an experience not very long ago on Waverley where there was a road closed sign, and on the block, you could see from one end to the other and the road was open. And people went around the sign and down the road. And there were multiple people doing this.

And if you have a situation where people can see that there isn't a block on the road, there isn't a problem, then you're going to have people not following the law. So it becomes really, really important that if a road is closed, that not only is it clearly marked, but that when the road is opened, that the sign is removed and so people don't get the impression that there will be occasionally signs up on roads which are not really closed.

I think it is very important that when we have road closed signs, that people pay attention to them. We don't want, as has been talked about already, accidents occurring because people are travelling on a road which is closed because of severe weather, or a road

which is closed because there was a bridge out—because I heard recently of an occasion where individuals went past a road closed sign and didn't see where the bridge was out and went down into the creek or river below. Fortunately, they weren't hurt, but that's the sort of accident which could very easily be fatal and we don't want that happening.

Clearly, we need to be using the road closed sign in appropriate ways, and there is danger on that road when there is construction or some other event happening which it's not passable.

But this is an important bill. We support this bill because we think that this will help provide a very strong message to people not to go on roads which are closed.

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

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 46.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, could you please canvass the House to see if it's the will of the members to call it 4 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 4 p.m.? [Agreed]

The time being 4 p.m., in accordance with rule 2, we will now proceed to conclude the business of Supply.

The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to conclude the consideration of departmental Estimates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

CHAMBER

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

For the information of all members, our rule 2(1) provides in part that where all required actions for the business of Supply in the Committee of Supply have not been completed 60 minutes prior to the usual adjournment hour on the last Thursday sitting prior to the Remembrance Day week, the provisions outlined in rule 2(24) are to apply.

Therefore, the hour being 4 p.m. I will now put the questions, without debate or amendment, on all remaining resolutions before this section of the Committee of Supply.

Accordingly, I will call in sequence the remaining resolutions for Legislative Assembly; Agriculture; Municipal Relations; Natural Resources and Northern Development; Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services; Employee Pensions and Other Costs; Public Service Commission.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): This section of the Committee of Supply will now consider the Estimates of the Department of Legislative Assembly.

I will now call resolution 1.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$11,162,000 for Legislative Assembly, Other Assembly Expenditures, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,375,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Auditor General, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$4,350,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Ombudsman, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,574,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 1.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$5,799,000 for Legislative Assembly, Office of the Advocate for Children and Youth, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes the consideration of departmental Estimates in the Committee of Supply—no, it doesn't. It doesn't do that. Wrong page. Sorry, everybody.

This completes the Estimates of the department of the Legislative Assembly.

AGRICULTURE

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Agriculture.

Resolution 3.1—I will now call resolution 3.1.

Resolution 3.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$18,166,000 for Agriculture, Corporate Services and Innovation, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$132,026,000 for Agriculture, Risk Management, Credit and Income Support Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$19,436,000 for Agriculture, Industry Advancement, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$13,606,000 for Agriculture, Agriculture Production and Resilience, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$426,000 for Agriculture, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 3.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$247,430,000 for Agriculture, Loans and Guarantees Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Agriculture.

MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Municipal Relations.

Those of you watching from home, we have more resolutions coming.

I will now call resolution 13.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$7,323,000 for Municipal Relations, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,753,000 for Municipal Relations, Community Planning and Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$12,098,000 for Municipal Relations, Municipal Assessment and Advisory Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$348,239,000 for Municipal Relations, Financial Assistance, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,725,000 for Municipal Relations, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 13.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$81,288,000 for Municipal Relations, Loans and Guarantees Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Municipal Relations.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Natural Resources and Northern Development.

I will now call resolution 25.1, for those who have been waiting: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$2,829,000 for Natural Resources and Northern Development, Finance and Shared Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 25.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$31,861,000 for Natural Resources and Northern Development, Stewardship and Resource Development, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 25.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$28,474,000 for Natural Resources and Northern Development, Resource Management and Protection, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 25.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$49,325,000 for Natural Resources and Northern Development, Manitoba Wildfire Service, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

* (16:00)

Resolution 25.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,275,000 for Natural Resources and Northern Development—I'm just going to correct the record there—RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$3,277,000 for Natural Resources and Northern Development, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 25.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$70,781,000 for Natural Resources and Northern Development, Other Reporting Entities Capital Investment, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the Department of Natural Resources and Northern Development.

**LABOUR, CONSUMER PROTECTION
AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the Department of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services.

I will now call resolution 8.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,663,000 for Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services, Corporate Administration and Planning, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 8.2: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$262,261,000 for Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services, Capital Programs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 8.3: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$43,014,000 for Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services, Digital and Technology Solutions, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 8.4: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$8,412,000 for Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services, Procurement and Supply Chain, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 8.5: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$22,400,000 for Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services, Public Safety Communication Services, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 8.6: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$16,840,000 for Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services, Consumer Protection, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 8.7: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$20,745,000 for Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services, Labour, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 8.8: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$56,200,000 for Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services, Capital Assets, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Resolution 8.9: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$47,633,000 for Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services, Other Reporting Entities Capital Investment, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. Chairperson: This completes the Estimates for the Department of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services.

EMPLOYEE PENSIONS AND OTHER COSTS

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this Committee of Supply is for the department of Employee Pensions and Other Costs.

I will now call Resolution 6.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$32,178,000 for Employee Pensions and Other Costs, Employee Pensions and Other Costs, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

This completes the Estimates for the department of Employee Pensions and Other Costs.

MANITOBA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): The next set of Estimates to be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply is for the department of Public Service Commission, and this is the last one.

I will now call Resolution 17.1: RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty a sum not exceeding \$26,283,000 for Public Service Commission, Public Service Commission, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Resolution agreed to.

This concludes our consideration of departmental Estimates and the Committee of Supply for this session.

I would like to thank the staff, ministers, critics and all honourable members for their work and dedication during this process.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted certain resolutions.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: We will now move into the Main Supply procedure. The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the concurrence motion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

* (16:10)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I move that the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023, which had been adopted at this session, whether by a section of the Committee of Supply or by the full committee.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is in order.

As the hour is past 4 p.m., there is no debate on this motion.

Shall the motion pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: The motion is accordingly passed.

This concludes the business before us.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Chairperson): Hello, Madam Speaker. The Committee of Supply has adopted a motion regarding concurrence in supply.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Concurrence Motion

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), that this House concur in the report of the Committee of Supply respecting concurrence and all supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2023.

Motion agreed to.

Supply Motion

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Johnson), that there be granted to His Majesty for the Public Service of the Province, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023, out of the Consolidated Fund, the sum of \$15,298,010,000, as set out in part A, Operating Expenditure; and \$939,237,000, as set out in part B, Capital Investment; and \$425,718,000, as set out in part C, Loans and Guarantees; and \$1,742,198,000, as set out in part D, Capital Investment, by Other Reporting Entities of the Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 47—The Appropriation Act, 2022

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Seniors, that Bill 47, The Appropriation Act, 2022, be now read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Johnson)—no, sorry; senior's. Let me start again.

It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister for Seniors, that Bill 47, The Appropriation Act, 2022, be now read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

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

SECOND READINGS

Bill 47—The Appropriation Act, 2022

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Families, that Bill 47, The Appropriation Act, 2022, be now read a second time and be referred to Committee of the Whole.

Motion presented.

* (16:20)

Madam Speaker: Just as a reminder, the honourable minister, official opposition critic and the three independent Liberals can speak in debate for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. Friesen: This bill is intended to provide expenditure authority for the amounts that we just read into the record and that are shown in the Estimates of expenditure for the year 2022-2023.

The amounts, as already has been referred to but I will repeat here for posterity and for Hansard: as we mentioned, \$15,298,010,000 in part A, our Operating Expenditures. In part B, which is our capital estimates, \$939,237,000, as listed—are listed by department in the schedule of the bill. Part C refers to the total amount of Loans and Guarantees being set forth, and that amount is \$425,718,000, listed by department in the schedule of the bill.

And the last part I will refer to is what we call part D, the Other Reporting Entities Capital Investment authority. That amount, \$1,742,198,000, also listed by department in the schedule to the bill.

I will further elaborate on the contents of the bill in Committee of the Whole. Suffice it to say, though, that the total sums that we just referenced for The Appropriation Act in 2022 are going to help Manitobans' key budget commitments including strengthening of health care; including a \$110-million amount to reduce the backlog created by COVID-19 as well as measures to make life more affordable like the new Residential Renters Tax Credit that will go to 35,000 more Manitobans than ever received the benefit before; building the economy through measures like the Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy; and, of course, our very significant efforts to attract immigrants to the province of Manitoba.

Those efforts continue with a new and improved and expanded MPNP program, the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program. We are investing in our communities with investments to make child care

more affordable and accessible. We're protecting our environment and, of course, much, much more in these amounts.

But, Madam Speaker, I will leave it there and allow others to put their comments on the record.

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 and remaining questions asked by any opposition members. No question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Recent reports from economists have projected that Manitoba will be in a surplus for 2022-2023 budget year.

I'm wondering if the minister can confirm his own ministry projections are bearing that out, and what's the estimated surplus Manitoba will have in next year's budget?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): First, I would say it's the first time in a long time that any NDP critic has indicated any kind of enthusiasm or interest in a path that would lead to balance. Why do you want that path? Because it stabilizes the investments that we make in places like seniors and education and families and infrastructure.

However, the member knows we just released our first-quarter results and we'll be releasing our forecast results in December, and until then, it would not be appropriate to be suggesting what our position might be in-year.

Mr. Wasyliv: Will the minister confirm that Manitoba provincial revenues are up much higher than the budget projected?

Mr. Friesen: The member knows that there are many things that we are navigating on behalf of Manitobans as their government at this time.

It includes the most significant Ukraine resettlement effort of any province. I can report to this House that right now, Manitoba's efforts to resettle Ukrainians fleeing the conflict in Ukraine are amounting to 14 per cent of all Canadian arrivals. The federal

government called our arrival program to help refugees settle the gold standard.

That is just one of the challenges; affordability, navigating with low labour rates. These are all the challenges that our government is facing, investing in, to help Manitobans.

Mr. Wasyliv: Well, will the minister confirm that Manitoba finances are better than pre-pandemic levels due to underestimations of the—Manitoba's own-source revenue and revenue from Crown corporations?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, every single senior government in Canada, the Bank of Canada, the United States government, made estimates about their revenue and expenditure levels prior to the pandemic, and every one of those governments has had to face the impacts of the pandemic, and coming out of the pandemic, all those challenges that are emerging now.

The member has no crystal ball. He pretends to now. He only has the ability to use hindsight. We're planning carefully; we are managing demands and we're making good investments for Manitobans.

Mr. Wasyliv: We know that higher inflation results in higher revenue for provincial governments. As we know, that goods are getting more expensive for Manitobans, but that also means the Province is collecting more revenue from PST.

Can the minister confirm that the Province is, in fact, raising more money from PST, and how much more money is he projecting to be raising through PST for Manitobans?

Mr. Friesen: Yes. Like the member says, you know, even just this afternoon, the federal Finance Minister gave a full economic statement. She acknowledged in that statement that there has been an upside to revenues received by the federal government.

Clearly, I have said publicly, and our government has said, that we have seen already the evidence that we believe that, for a while, revenues will continue to be above budget, but that there are storm clouds ahead on the horizon. The senior—or, the federal minister said as much today.

It's very important that we continue to have good fiscal management to be able to manage not just now, but as it looks like the economy is continuing to lose steam.

Mr. Wasyliv: Now, we also know that some employers have been raising wages as a result of their inability to either keep or retain staff, and that would

mean higher incomes for some workers. We also know that corporate profits are way up, in some industries to windfall levels.

How much more money is Manitoba projected to raise through corporate and personal income tax?

Mr. Friesen: We will be happy to be providing Manitobans and this critic for Finance with that update in the forecast that will come out at the—at probably the middle or the end of December. That is the appropriate time at which governments make those updates.

In the meantime, though, that member should be very, very clear that while revenues may seem to be rising in the near term, we know that there are pressures that Minister Freeland pointed out only hours ago in Ottawa that are into 2023, into the first, second and third quarter.

We will continue to manage, make good investments in Manitobans, and help along the way as we carefully assess the financial situation.

Madam Speaker: Is the member for St. Boniface standing to ask a question?

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Yes, thank you. I wasn't just stretching my back, Madam Speaker.

Yes, I was just—I—if—I was wondering—hoping the minister could expand a little bit more on that, because I know that there is some—like, everyone is projecting a recession—in my opinion, it's being engineered by the central bank, which is unfortunate.

But the question is, here, what is going to be the impact, because the government has been doing all sorts of unfunded tax cuts, which is to say, we've been borrowing to cut revenues.

So, what is going to happen—what—are there any projections on what's going to happen in revenue if there's a collapse in the real estate market in Manitoba?

Mr. Friesen: It's difficult to expound on much in the very limited time allotted to us in these exchanges, but I will say to that member that today, the federal minister pointed to the view that the Canadian economy will undergo what they are calling today a mild recession.

I would remind members in this House that there has been no recession yet articulated or identified on the near horizon for Manitoba, so we'll continue to monitor as we go forward.

Mr. Wasyliv: Now, we also know that federal transfers are up, as well.

I'm wondering if the minister can tell this Chamber how much additional federal transfers Manitoba is receiving this year than was expected?

* (16:30)

Mr. Friesen: Federal transfers were just reported to this Legislature a matter of weeks ago in the Public Accounts. It gives that member an excellent opportunity to identify the amount he is looking for.

As he knows, though, under the leadership of my Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), who is now the chair of the council of federation, our province continues to lead the way when it comes to setting the table with Ottawa for them to be a fuller partner in the delivery of health care.

One-offs will not do. The provinces and the territories need the consistency of a fully committed federal government on the Canada Health Transfer.

Mr. Wasyliv: Just picking up on the minister's last comment, there was a CIHI report that was released recently that showed Manitoba was under the Canadian average for spending per person in health care.

So, I'm wondering: How does the minister go to the federal government asking for more money when we're not spending the money that we have here in Manitoba on health care?

Mr. Friesen: It's very interesting to see what makes the difference when you look into that study by CIHI. Every other jurisdiction in Canada has a greater amount of health care delivered through the private part of it. You have your public system; you have private partners.

The NDP had some private partners, too, but they froze that ability to be able to flex and allow the health system to deliver on both sides of the margin. That ideological decision hampered Manitoba.

Right now, we are committed to one thing and one thing only, and that is getting the care that Manitobans need sooner rather than later, closer to home.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): In the—talking about federal transfers—I'm aware that the federal government has provided money for home care over a number of years.

And I wonder if the minister could tell us what extent there was home-care dollars and spread over

how many years, and do that dollars continue this year and next year?

Mr. Friesen: The member knows from tradition that on a day like this, we are wrapping up and concluding hours and hours of Committee of Supply, where that member had every opportunity to ask these questions in detail.

I have 30 seconds allotted to me. What I can tell him is that our government is making significant investments in home care in order to help Manitobans.

Mr. Wasyliw: According to the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, commercial rebate cheques from this government haven't been filtering down from landlords to small businesses. This government is aware of the problem. They've done nothing to fix it.

I'm wondering if the minister can explain why he's abandoning small businesses?

Mr. Friesen: The member has alleged a problem. He has never substantiated it. I have asked him to deliver me any evidence of a retail lease in which a retail client believes that their landlord is not passing on that education property tax rebate.

I even ascertained from my own constituency office in a meeting with my landlord one week ago—he showed me exactly—on my net lease—exactly where the education property tax goes back to the government of Manitoba for the payment of that lease.

Mr. Lamont: I—just a question about transfer payments and health payments in particular.

I know that the government has talked about going back to 35 or 50 per cent. As far as I've been able to find, the last time it was 50-50 per cent in—was before our reorganization of transfers in about 1976, and it's been between 25 and 18 per cent pretty much every single year for the last 45 years.

So one of the things that could change would be if we could actually—if the government actually appealed for equity, we could see an instant increase without the federal government actually having to increase at all. We'd actually see a better, more justified—or, funds would essentially be flowing to where it's needed.

I was just wondering if that was—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Friesen: I don't believe the minister—or the member—had a chance to finish his statement, but he was talking about equity in delivery of health care, which

we believe very strongly in. I hope the member wasn't trying to make the claim that, somehow, the feds have done enough.

We know, through every independent study and body for the last 10 years who has continued to indicate that the federal government has more fiscal capacity than the provinces and territories to address health care, and we know that the federal government has been losing both enthusiasm and steam when it comes to funding health care. They prefer one-offs.

We want the consistency and we want the federal government to be a full partner in the delivery of health care which Manitobans need and deserve.

Mr. Wasyliw: The minister says that he wants some proof that the commercial businesses are not getting their share of the rebate cheques from landlords. The proof comes from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, and I'm wondering why the minister continues to ignore their concerns and actually called them liars, saying that it's not happening.

They're saying it's happening. The question is, why isn't the minister responding?

Mr. Friesen: Very proud of the work that the Canadian Federation of Independent Business does in Canada.

I've had a chance to meet with them, both in the Manitoba stage and the national stage. I was on the phone with their president, Dan Kelly, just a week ago, where I congratulated him on joining our new tax working group on tax affordability and tax fairness and tax modernization. At no point in time did the president indicate to me that he has a concern. Neither has their regional director communicated to me at any time that there's a concern that this member is raising in principle.

We are proud to be making record education property tax returns to families, farm families and commercial enterprises.

Mr. Wasyliw: Forty per cent of Manitobans are renters; it's almost 600,000 people, and this government has raised their taxes two years in a row, planned to raise it for a third, and many rental are households with no children, meaning they didn't get any affordability cheques. Not only are they not receiving help from this cost-of-living crisis, this government's actively raising their taxes.

Why is the minister making life less affordable for Manitoba renters?

Mr. Friesen: What the member is trying very carefully to skirt around is that we have the most significant form of affordability payment to Manitobans in the form of the education property tax rebate, sending 37.5 per cent of those cheques back to Manitobans.

But there was more. In fall, cheques to every family with children under 18, to address those needs in those households as prices rise, and to every senior with a family income of less than \$40,000.

While that member says he could do it better, we know that Manitobans are appreciative of the work that our government is doing to stand with them when it comes to affordability.

Mr. Gerrard: I'm just following up on the question that the MLA for St. Boniface asked.

The issue of equity is important because, under the Stephen Harper government, they moved to make it inequitable—the transfers. They gave Alberta a billion-dollar windfall at the expense of taking money away from Manitoba and all the other provinces.

If equity was restored and fairness, then Manitoba would get more money. Is the minister in support of equity that will give Manitoba more money?

Mr. Friesen: I think that that member should take note of the fact that even today, as Minister Freeland gave her update from Ottawa; as expected, no changes to the parameters of the major federal transfer programs, no changes to the Canada Health Transfer announced in the fiscal update—economic update today.

I would encourage that member to contact Ottawa, talk to his federal cousins, and remind him—remind them of the principle that he is raising here today.

We know that Manitoba needs its fair share when it comes to health care so that we can provide to Manitobans the level of health care they need, when and where they need it.

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period is over.

Debate

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

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): This government has never balanced a budget, not once.

The one year—the one year—that there was a technical balanced budget was with the help of the federal

government, who provided \$1 billion in extra transfer payments that the Province had never received before. The deficit was \$1 billion, so they simply transferred the money from Trudeau over to the balance sheet. They have never once done it on their own, with their own source revenues. That's their legacy. That's the legacy of this government.

Since then, they have borrowed money, and a lot of it. At the same time, they've cut education funding. At the same time, we now spend less than the average Canadian on health care per person.

They've allowed our infrastructure to crumble. They continue to underspend infrastructure dollars to the point where now we have the highest infrastructure deficit in Manitoba's history.

* (16:40)

Child poverty is back on the rise in Manitoba. And, of course, we are living in a cost-of-living crisis in Manitoba, which this government has stuck their head in the sand and pretended not to notice.

We've seen small businesses having to shut down left and right. Our high streets and our downtowns in our major towns and cities are gutted. They didn't bounce back after opening despite the economy rebounding. And we haven't seen a raft of new businesses because, quite frankly, they haven't been supported by this government.

Homeless crisis like we've never seen before, and people now forced to live in bus shelters. This government sold off social housing. We have a drug epidemic that's overwhelmed our communities, and a government with absolutely no plan and no response. They continue to ignore experts who advocate for harm-reduction strategies. And despite what they have done, nothing's worked. And they've tried nothing, so they are full out of ideas.

Manitoba used to pride itself on being a major centre where you could actually own your own home. Well, that's starting to disappear too. Since this government took office, there are less Manitobans who are able to afford a house today than they did in 2016, and that number continues to fall. And what that means is that this government has mismanaged our economy so badly that Manitobans can less and less afford to actually own their own home.

In the first time in a generation, in over 20 years—we haven't seen this since the Filmon government—more Manitobans are leaving the province than

coming to it. They are literally voting with their feet. Young people no longer see a future in this province.

Tuition is skyrocketing; 16 per cent in the last few years. That's an advantage Manitoba used to have. That was an advantage where people would come to our province, international students and other Canadian students, because our tuition was cheap. And we're losing that advantage.

And, of course, this government's absolute fixation with privatizing Hydro. They are now forcing rate hikes of five per cent, year over year, while they've attempted to privatize 'subsidiaries.'

They have raised the cost of milk during a cost-of-living crisis—not once, not twice, but three times.

They have been chasing professors out of the province, and those professors have research grant money that is leaving with them. Cutting-edge research that used to happen in Manitoba is now going to Saskatchewan and Alberta and BC. And not only are they taking some of their talent and their innovations, they're taking their best students with them, because the students are following where the action is, where the innovation is, because right now it's not happening in Manitoba.

And as a parent with children who are university age, that concerns me. I don't want my children growing up in a province where the economy is stagnant, where we're not doing cutting-edge research, where our businesses aren't innovating, where this government just believes in malaise and stagnation.

So, who is benefitting from this government? Well, it's long cliché in politics that the PC Party has been described as a coalition of privileged interests. It's the party of millionaires, for millionaires. And every decision they make in this budget is with the express blessing of their campaign donors. They don't do anything without their campaign donors' approval. And they put the interests of their wealthy friends over Manitobans every single day they come into this House. Absolutely shameful.

So, let's use just but a few examples. We have the affordability cheques. Again, money they didn't have. They borrowed \$89 million, which will end up turning into hundreds of million dollars once interest is factored in.

Did they help renters? No. They actually raised their taxes three years in a row and plan to do it more. They've actually made their lives less affordable.

Did they help students? No. They raised their costs on tuition.

Did they help low-income people who lived alone? No, they didn't. Somehow, they didn't deserve assistance.

Did they help low-income families without children? No, they didn't. Apparently, they're also not deserving of support.

Who did they help? They did help those families with children, but also the highest tax-bracketed individuals. They sent out cheques to people who fall into the highest tax bracket. They're not big cheques, but those small cheques would make a difference to low-income Manitobans, and they use—those cheques could be bigger if the help actually went to the people who needed it.

So, other Manitobans have to struggle. Other Manitobans have to bear the costs of this cost-of-living crisis while this government ends up handing out cheques to the highest tax bracket.

We also have the education to property tax rebate. We know that over \$40 million of that money is going to commercial landlords, railroad companies, Toronto megacorps, oil barons and some of the richest billionaires in the world. Again, none of these people asked for it. This money is going to leave Manitoba. It's not even staying here. It's not going to create one single job. And it won't help those that need the most help in Manitoba.

And, of course, you know, let's compare: this government prides itself on having the second-lowest minimum wage in the country. And even after they were forced—and they were forced to increase the minimum wage. It would—became politically embarrassing and humiliating for them—

An Honourable Member: Guilted into it.

Mr. Wasyliv: Yes, absolutely guilted into it.

And they not only were seen as callous, but to the point of cruelty. So, their guilt got them to raise it up to \$15 an hour, something we've been talking about for six years, which is no longer adequate anymore. And even with that change, we're still going to be the second lowest minimum wage in Canada, which will not allow Manitobans to live with dignity and properly with a living wage.

But this government's made it clear they just don't care, right? These people don't donate to their party. They're nobody to them. That's how you get attention

of this government. You have to cut a big cheque to the leadership campaign.

So, we've heard recently that this government is flushed with money. Inflation's actually been pretty good for this government. The—when the prices of goods go up, that's not great for Manitobans when you go to the grocery store and you're paying more for various items. Well, you're paying more PST, too, so we know that this government is getting a PST windfall.

We know that some employers are forced to pay employees more money in order to keep them, and that means higher income taxes. We know grocery stores and other companies that are receiving windfalls from inflation are going to pay more corporate tax.

We know the federal government is sending way more money than they have in the past to this government. All in all, this government is flush with money and they have more money now than they have ever had in their six years.

And are they using that money to rebuild health care? No, they're not. Are they using that money to rebuild the education system? No, they're not. Are they using that money to make life more affordable? No, they are not.

This province needs is a new government, and we're here to help.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I'd like to respond, in particular because the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) wanted to—asked for some clarity around the question of equity when it comes to health-care funding.

And look, there's the difference between, I guess, what you would call equality and equity, or equality and outcomes but, fundamentally—one of the fundamental things that's changed in our health-care funding at the federal level is that it used to be that other considerations were taken—there were more complicated calculations taken into consideration when it came to the Canadian Health Transfer, that it was equitable. That they actually—they didn't just do it on a strict per capita basis.

In 2014, that changed. It changed because, in 2007, as part of an omnibus bill under the Conservatives, there was a section in there that said—it was a really radical change—it said: We're no longer going to calculate based on need. We're no longer going to take

into consideration things like distance and other things, or the fact that some provinces, because they are, as you'd say, have-not, or because Manitoba, which is historically and miserably and unfortunately and tragically, the family and child poverty capital of Canada, where we have some of the deepest poverty in Canada, which has a direct impact on health, which—and as a result of systemic racism, of systemic—and—but we've enforced poverty over decades.

* (16:50)

So, one of the things that we have is we have equity in transfers. And this something that used to exist up until 2014, and then it changed. And I will just read what the impact of it was, because there was an article in The Globe and Mail which said—in 2014, which talked about how this broke our health-care system. It basically meant that in a single year, Alberta had a windfall of a billion dollars and every other province lost.

Manitoba lost about \$31 million a year; Ontario was around 200, 300 million; Quebec was around \$200 million; BC was a couple hundred million. All of these losses. So, if we were to actually switch back to an equitable Canadian health-care financing—transfer, CHT, tomorrow, you'd see an instant improvement in health-care funding in nine out of 10 provinces.

And Alberta, which is frankly swimming in cash right now—they managed to spend over—they dedicated over—they have a windfall so great from the colossal increases in the price of oil that they were able to pay off something like 13 or 14 billion dollars of debt. They were just able to cut a cheque because they used that to reduce their debt rather than—again, rather than investing in health care or investing in individuals.

But it's also important when we're talking about the history of this, because people talk about it: Well, you know, it used to be 50 per cent. Well, it was—the last time it was 50 per cent, I was seven years old. It has been nowhere near 50 per cent, as a 50-50 split between the federal and the provincial government. And if people want to argue that it should go to 50-50, that's fine. But let's not pretend that it has been—that it went from—that it's been declining 50-50, or that it's been declining even in the last seven years. Because—*[interjection]* Sorry?

Mr. Lamont: Well, I'm—I—look—the members—the minister across the way is asking me to put it on the record.

Look, all you have to do—these statistics are available up on provincial websites. They're available. And, in fact, this government's own documents—when I look at the Public Accounts, it says, the fact is, is that we've got less and less. We have less and less of our own source revenue and a greater and greater reliance on federal revenues, which is to say that this government has been spending less and either using more federal revenues or it's been using federal revenues to offset tax cuts, which it has been doing.

But there was a cap. The other thing about it for Manitoba; Manitoba was essentially singled out by the Harper government. There was a point when they just simply said, we're going to go from 6 per cent to 3 per cent a year. There was no consultation, no—there had been—health care had been—transfers had been going up for 6 per cent a year. It was changed to 3 per cent unilaterally by the Harper government. And I recall at the time that the Minister of Finance—the federal Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty—said, well, if you have a problem with it, just raise taxes. So, if you're going to find that there's a shortfall, just raise taxes.

So, for six years straight, there was a cap on the transfers to Manitoba. So I, believe it or not, I have some sympathy for the NDP, because it meant that that government had a choice—was being forced into a choice between cuts or austerity or borrowing. These were the choices.

And it was—and after the global financial crisis of 2008, the federal government at the time did less than any federal government prior to that in helping out the economy and helping out provinces. We recognized that the federal government has greater capacity. But it doesn't make sense to us to say, well, we're just going to add more and more, more funding to a province like Alberta, or have-provinces like BC or Ontario, where there are—where there's a huge financial base, where there's a huge resource base and to say, but we're going to leave Manitoba out of it.

That's why we're saying we need to have equity in transfer payments. And it's also the case that the Canadian health-care transfer is not the only way we pay for health and education and social services. We should also have equity in the social transfer. But what's happened over the years is that that's been—disappeared. We wrote a letter—I wrote a letter to the Minister of Health, I wrote a letter to the Minister of Finance and I wrote a letter to the Prime Minister asking for all these things. And I wrote a letter to every premier—and every letter.

And—because this is—it's frankly—it's really unfortunate, because this government and the premiers of Canada have been buying ads in newspapers to mislead Canadians and say, well, it's been declining. It has not been. The federal share in Manitoba has not been declining. It's been going up because, for the first three years of this government, this government either cut or froze. Those are the actual funds.

If you look at the actuals, not what they—because there was always this bait and switch. And they always talk about—well, this is what's in the budget, so we're going to talk about what's in the budget, but we're not going to talk about what we actually spent, but if you actually look at what was spent from 2016 to 2019 in total health care in Manitoba, there were cuts and freezes—cuts and freezes—while there was inflation.

We know that people were leaving the system, and it is truly unfortunate. It is truly unfortunate because if we want to have—this is the most important issue for Manitobans, its the most important issue for Canadians and people deserve to know the truth about what's actually happening.

If we're going to have an honest debate about it, let's have an honest debate about it. But if it—the last time that there was a 50-50 split was in 1976, and it was changed after that because a whole bunch of tax points were shifted to the EPF, which is the finance program—the new transfer system. Basically, the federal government, it dropped, but only because the federal government said, okay, we're going to take our tax points, and we're not going to collect them anymore; we're going to give that to the provinces. So, it wasn't an actual drop—it wasn't a cut in funding, it was a change in the way it was measured. So, we need to be honest about this.

And look, I believe in public healthier—public health care saved members—saved the lives of members of my family. And I was talking with Gail Asper the other day, and I'm not—because my dad happened to go to school with Izzy Asper.

Izzy Asper grew up poor in Minnedosa. And in the early 1980s, he had a choice. He had to have quadruple-bypass surgery, and he didn't go anywhere else. He didn't buy his way. He didn't go to the Mayo Clinic, he didn't go to New York, he didn't go anywhere else. He stayed and waited on the wait-list because he knew that that's the way it had to work. That's what he thought was fair.

And so, this whole idea that we have two—that it's okay to have two tiers of care is not okay. We have enough resources in this country to be able to support everyone—everyone—but only if we're going to be equitable about it, not if we're just going to treat everybody as if they're exactly the same, because that doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense. Some people have more needs.

And if we actually make sure that we're doing that, it's not only more just, it's more efficient. It means we're not spending too much money, and sending too much money to Alberta, which is already flush with it. That's—and that's where we're coming from.

So, I hope that this is something that will be taken more seriously, because the issue of equity—the issue of equity in health-care transfers, in social transfers, from the federal government should be one of the major issues that we're all talking about, not just cranking up, not just saying, well, we need to go up to 25 or 35 per cent, where it has not been since 1976. We need to have—we need to be honest about what's happening too.

So, with that being said, I will yield the rest of my time.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), seconded by the honourable Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), that Bill 47, The Appropriation Act, 2022, 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? [*Agreed*]

The House will now resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Bill 47, The Appropriation Act, 2022, for concurrence and third reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 47—The Appropriation Act, 2022

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): The Committee of the Whole will come to order to consider Bill 47, The Appropriation Act, 2022.

During the consideration of this bill, the enacting clause and title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; clause 6—pass; clause 7—pass; clause 8—pass; clause 9—pass; schedule—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

* (17:00)

That concludes the business before us. Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Chairperson): The Committee of the Whole has considered the following: Bill 47, The Appropriation Act, 2022, and reports the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

(*Continued*)

Bill 47—The Appropriation Act, 2022

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Justice, that Bill 47, The Appropriation Act, 2022, as amended and reported from the Committee of the Whole—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 47, The Appropriation Act, 2022, as reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder that the honourable minister, official opposition critic and the three independent Liberals can speak and debate for up to 10 minutes each.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, we are pleased to bring the appropriation act for this year, an appropriation act that reflects our government's commitment to do more for Manitobans to help them on affordability when prices are going up dramatically, a bill that makes progress on tax credits and helps businesses

and individuals, a bill that strengthens health care, including \$110-million investment to reduce the backlogs, a bill that makes life more affordable for renters by making 35,000 more renters eligible for a tax credit, a bill that has raised the education property tax credit rebates to people while we fully fund, at record amounts, education in this province, and so much more.

Madam Speaker, we are creating child-care spaces, we are building schools and hospitals, and we are making investments in communities, and we are pleased to commend this bill at third reading for consideration.

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

If not, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the Main Supply motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt—*[interjection]*—oh.

Oh, the question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 47.

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

The time being after 4 p.m., we will now proceed with concurrence and third reading motions, without further debate or amendment, on the following designated bills: 13, 14, 22, 24 and 36. The House will not adjourn until all applicable questions have been put and royal assent has been granted.

In accordance with our rules, all matters of privilege and points of order are deferred until after these actions have been concluded. The bills will be called in the order they appear on the Order Paper.

Bill 13—The Social Services Appeal Board Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: So, I will now call concurrence and third reading of Bill 13, The Social Services Appeal Board Amendment Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 13, The Social Services Appeal Board Amendment Act, be concurred in and be now—sorry, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance, that Bill 13, The Social Services Appeal Board Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be 'concurr'd' and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Goertzen: Of course, this bill has been before the House for now several months. The minister took questions on it at second reading of the bill, it went to committee and—where there was an opportunity for Manitobans or others to make presentations on the bill, which of course also had extended remarks at second reading.

So I won't add much further onto that other than, of course, that it is designed to ensure that proceedings are fair, but that there still is a process by which they happen in a way that is efficient, Madam Speaker, ensuring that an appeal may be heard by a single member of a board so that is a determination that there is a fair process, but that there is not an unnecessary delay in process which, of course, we know for these type of appeals that when there is a delay, that itself can cause in a hardship.

An appeal may also be heard in writing or by telephone or other electronic means, and that is in accord or similar to a lot of things that have happened in the last little while—not just because of the pandemic and how we've learned to—how we can do things differently, but a lot of that was happening even before; it's just been accelerated.

So the minister's comments have been put to this bill at second reading, at second reading question and answers and within committee, and I look forward, after these many months, to see this bill finally pass in the House.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): This was a bill that we delayed because we heard loud and clear at committee that people didn't want to support this bill, that they had concerns with appeals not being heard by a panel of three.

This now takes away that mechanism. It could be heard by one person and, if it's deemed to be 'vexitious,' that it could just be dismissed. So, lots of, you know, issues with this bill.

And the purpose, really, of the Social Services Appeal Board is to give a fair, impartial and informal appeal process of decisions related to a variety of social services and programs. This takes away that right.

Basically, what they're saying is what we decide—one person decides—is the be-all and end-all. They're not allowed to take it any further. They're just—that's the last stop for them, which is unfair. They're silencing Manitobans. Manitobans deserve to have their appeals heard by more than one person.

And there's no definition on what vexatious is—or, you know, so someone can decide on their own that, you know what, this is not something that we should be hearing, and not hear them at all. The proposed changes in the bill will allow written appeals to be heard by a single board, rather than three members, and give the board the ability to dismiss appeals that are considered frivolous or vexatious.

Well, Madam Speaker, one person is deciding this. If I'm cut off EIA, which we know a lot of people have been thanks to this government, a lot of people have lost their disability benefits, they've lost their shelter benefits, which has resulted in a lot of people being homeless in this province. They—if somebody deems that 'vexatious' or frivolous, then they don't even get to be heard. And one person is deciding this.

* (17:10)

This is unfair. And, you know, the minister heard loud and clear. There wasn't one person that came to committee that was in favour of this bill.

So, you know, these—again, this PC government likes to just silence people and do whatever they want and don't want to hear people's voices.

These changes are certainly concerning to us, and that's why we held it over, because we don't think that people's voices should be silenced here in Manitoba. We think that they should be heard, not by just one person. And we even heard from former members who sat on the Social Services Appeal Board that said it was a bad idea for them to take away that panel of three to just one person. That's put a lot of pressure onto one person, as well.

And, you know, this government isn't putting their, you know, concerns forward. They didn't hear their concerns when they said, I've sat on this board; I've heard concerns that have come forward; never once have I heard any one of them being 'vexatious' or frivolous.

And they couldn't even define, actually—they couldn't even give us any examples. When the member from Burrows and I went to the briefing, we asked for some examples of what frivolous or 'vexatious'—'vexatious' would be. And they couldn't even give us

an example of what that would be. So, you know, when one person is deciding that, that's unfair.

Many applicants to these programs are vulnerable Manitobans who may find the bureaucracy of government difficult to navigate. Certainly, someone who—and I've worked with a lot of students who were adults that—in an adult education program—that, you know, didn't have the ability to read, didn't have the ability to advocate for themselves.

And now this has been taken away from them. This government is essentially saying that they don't matter. If they can't read the text, if they can't bring someone in to advocate for them, and one member can just say, you know, submit a written, you know, or telephone—we know a lot of people don't have telephones, either. There's a ton of homeless people in this province because of this government. And many of these folks have to sit in a shelter and wait for a phone call, often, even just to get on EIA. I've heard many examples of that.

So, an appeal board of laypersons allows the eligibility decisions of the government to be given a sober second look, and that's being taken away as well. So, one person can decide, you know what, we're not sending it anywhere; we're dismissing it; it's not something we want to hear. And, you know, you—you're not getting EIA benefits; you're not getting shelter benefits; you don't qualify.

And I think about those folks who took CERB, you know, that were on EIA. They were cut off. They weren't even allowed to go in front of the Social Services Appeal Board. They were just told, you know what, you—once that's paid back, then you can have your EIA back. Well, \$6 being taken from someone's EIA benefits when they're only getting \$87 a month to eat is a lot of money.

And, you know, someone might go in front of the appeal board for that. And this appeal person can say, well, you know, that's, you know, fair. You're giving \$6 back. But that could be a whole day of meals or two days of meals. And that could be—that could mean someone, you know, maybe loses their hydro because they're having to pay a hydro bill and that \$6 was going towards that. They're not able to do that anymore.

And, you know, the Stefason [*phonetic*] government is watering down these provisions. And we are concerned that allowing the board to dismiss certain appeals is removing the opportunity for the voices of Manitobans to be heard without a legitimate reason.

These provisions can be open to abuse, and there's been no evidence provided by the government the appeal board hears 'vexitious' appeals. Rather, it looks like this is another attempt by this government to try and take away the rights of Manitobans, especially vulnerable Manitobans who seek to redress for decisions that might be legally and functionally mistaken.

Government bureaucracy can be cumbersome to navigate, and we all know that. I know working, like I said, with adult education folks and, you know, them trying to advocate for themselves and 'navigate'—navigate this system is difficult. And they're making it even more difficult. They're putting more barriers in place for folks to actually get their concerns heard.

The legislating is—the legislation is extending the board's time to make a decision, but procedural deadlines for applications for appeals are not further extended. That's unfair, Madam Speaker, and we asked about that in the briefing too, and we—actually, we asked for that to be amended so that it would be equal time allotted for someone to make the appeal, to put their—put it in writing or whatever it was.

But, again, you know, they haven't amended it in here. They extended the time for their folks to make a decision, but not for the folks who wish to put in something in writing or come before the board. We think that it's reasonable to give applications—applicants more time.

And it isn't the first time that this PC government has made regressive change to the appeal board. In fact, in 2018, they stripped the ability of the board to make decisions based on a person's Charter rights.

And the function of the Social Services Appeal Board, they're actually appointed by Cabinet to give a fair, impartial and informal appeal process of decisions relating to a variety of social services and programs. And these programs include EIA, adoption agency licensing, child-care qualification, certification, 55 PLUS, Rent Assist, Manitoba Prenatal Benefit, residential-care licensing, employability assistance for persons with disabilities program, community living disability program.

So these are a lot of programs that this Social Services Appeal Board are going to be able to dismiss. So, if I want to, let's say, appeal a decision because I want to open a daycare and they decide that I can't open a daycare—and we know that there's a lot of people that are waiting for daycare spots—there's a long list of people—this government can say, no, we're not

going to hear it. We've decided that you're not going to be certified.

In 2017, the Manitoba Court of Appeal found that the Social Services Appeal Board does have this jurisdiction obligation to consider Charter rights. Nonetheless, the PC government went ahead and moved the board's ability—hear these cases.

We will not be standing in support of this. We listened to the people at committee, and it's too bad that the PC government isn't listening and that they're wanting to silence Manitobans. Shame on them.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I rise this afternoon to speak to third reading of Bill 13—the Social Services Appeal Board.

Madam Speaker, I suspect that everyone in this House has the same goal here in Manitoba, of wanting to ensure that anyone who's bringing forward in a case—or, in this case, an appeal, has a fair and a just opportunity to do such. And there are just too many unanswered questions still with this legislation.

And my colleague referred—from Point Douglas—referred to the bill briefing that we had, and it is very accurate. We were asking questions and, unfortunately, we were not receiving clarity on the questions in which we were asking. And we can reflect at second reading here in the House, and we asked—many of us here in this House asked questions of this government on the legislation and, again, they were not able to answer our questions.

And some of the concerns were around cases being rushed or dismissed, even up until the night before. Madam Speaker, people put in a lot of effort into their cases and into their appeals. They put in time. They mentally prepare themselves, as well. And knowing that their case—their appeal could be dismissed or dropped or postponed the night before they're actually about to make the appeal—this isn't fair, and Manitoba can do a whole lot better than that.

There are concerns around the bills being diligently brought forward, concerns around terminology. Again, my colleague spoke a lot to this around already, but terms, including vexatious and complex—we asked time and time again for the government to define what does vexatious mean.

So a case can be thrown out, essentially; appeal can be thrown out if it is considered vexatious, yet we are not being told what the term vexatious actually encompasses. And I think, in order to be able to support legislation such as this, we need to be able to understand what those terms mean, what they include.

A big part of this legislation is ensuring that there are mechanisms in place to safeguard against perceived biases and discrimination. And I don't think that there is anyone who is intentionally doing this, but we all have our biases and unknowingly so, Madam Speaker, and I think that's why it's really important that we have 'mechanisms' in place that when people are bringing forward cases and appeals, that those who are, in fact, judging these cases and appeals do not have biases towards them.

* (17:20)

And again, these questions, which are really, really important, were not able to be addressed—were not addressed in the debate of the legislation. So, we can't support it moving forward at this point, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 13.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear no.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Acting Opposition House Leader): On division.

Madam Speaker: On division.

Bill 14—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment, Highway Traffic Amendment and Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: I will now call concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment, Highway Traffic Amendment and Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Transportation, that Bill 14, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment, Highway Traffic Amendment and Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Thank you.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: I'll be relatively brief. I've put extensive comments on the record at second reading, fairly lengthy comments with a detailed description of the bill, and then returned to committee, as I often do, with answers on questions as they might arise from the critic and others during the question and answer period, second reading.

There were no presenters, I don't believe, at committee on the bill, so nothing to reflect on on that as there weren't any presented.

But I'll just be very, very brief, then, in terms of the very high level of the contents of the bill with that in mind.

So, this bill will discontinue the student sticker program, which is a streamlining method that's deemed not to be necessary anymore. It'll clarify MPI's authority to issue temporary licences while a photo card is being produced and mailed. I think that that's, you know, clarifying, perhaps, practice.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

It will clarify the acceptable use of antique vehicles, as there's been some confusion there. It will prohibit the use of regulated vehicles with foreign drivers' licences; so, would prohibit new residents from driving heavy vehicles or buses with an international driver's licence not issued in Canada or the United States before they obtain a Manitoba licence. And we know from the Humboldt tragedy and some of the MELT requirements coming across Canada what that is related to.

There is a regulation here for deregulating the rebates and surcharges for fleets. The amendments remove the fleet business rules, will authorize MPI to publish the business rules and the fleet rebate surcharges in its online rate guide.

There are provisions for vehicle-for-hire insurance, enabling MPI to issue blanket certificates to

transportation network companies. We've had a discussion with the critic about this, and I know the MPI is continually engaged with those who are involved in the taxicab industry and the ride-share industry.

Permitting electronic documents—this is in line with a lot of other, sort of, bills that have been coming in, certainly past—after the pandemic it's been accelerated to allow for the issuance of electronic documents. So, that requires technology changes at MPI.

So, I know we've talked about—sometimes about being able to have electronic driver's licence, which is available in most provinces, and I think virtually every state in the United States. That would be dependent upon technology changes which would be forthcoming but probably not forthcoming in a very—it won't be immediate that those changes will happen.

So, with that, Mr.—the Deputy Speaker, recommend this to the bill, of course—or, to the House. The bill has—will have various proclamation dates, and different portions of the bill might be proclaimed at different times as the result of a variety of different issues in terms of timing. But it will continue to modernize MPI.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Members, calm yourselves.

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): It is my honour to rise in the House today to put a few words regarding Bill 14, which makes changes to The Drivers and Vehicles Act, The Highway Traffic Act as well as Manitoba insurance corporation act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have—through the committee and during the quest—second reading questions, where our particular concern is is the blanket insurance for ride-sharing companies. Why is it a concern is, recently, a couple years back, PUB directed MPI to raise vehicle-for-hire insurance by 20 per cent each year for ride-sharing companies. So, two years—three—two years happened, now this is going to be the third year that their insurance is going up by 20 per cent.

Why is it that their insurance is going up? Because there's more accidents happening in their own group. So, taxis—taxi companies have their own groups, and ride-sharing companies have their own group where if there's—an accident happens in that insurance group at fault, the insurance—their insurance goes up. So, our regular general ratepayers, Manitobans, will not be affected with this.

So, what happened with this bill, with the blanket insurance now is, for example, ride-sharing companies, if they have a customer in the car, that's when their blanket insurance kicked in. And otherwise, it's just regular insurance, regular—your insurance, my insurance. Even though you are doing business as a commercial vehicle, but your insurance is—you're using the private insurance. So, any accident happens between those period of time will be onto our regular, general insurance rates going up.

So that's—that was the big, main concern.

I know there's good things in the bill, but those good things will not be implemented quickly because during the question period, minister said there's only part of the bill will be implemented right away, and the remaining parts will be implemented when Project Nova will be implemented.

So that means—so, the bill came to this House only one reason. Putting some good stuff in there and all the sudden then you put a blanket insurance in there to benefit out-of-country multi-billion-dollar companies. So, this is the main concern here.

So, for example, there's about 700 cars are registered with the—one of the ride-sharing companies. And each insurance for those companies is around \$2,000 for the four vans to use 24 hours at the ride sharing. To cut that, just to give them a blanket insurance, now they will be only using half time that insurance. And the remaining half time, they will be using a private insurance.

For instance, if you were to call a ride-sharing company standing like to—from the Legislature Building and you are, let's say, standing by University of Manitoba, on the way to coming here to pick someone up, you had an accident and you are at fault; that insurance now goes into a private insurance, so—which means our insurance will go up.

I raised this issue with the minister, that insurance will definitely—a hundred and ten per cent—will definitely go up. This is a thing that—it's going to happen.

* (17:30)

Is this to give benefit to only certain companies and to give—otherwise, what I seen in the bill, as I said, there's so many good things, but they will not be implemented right away, which is going to be happening only after Project Nova is implemented.

So, with this few comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not a good bill. I think, Minister, reconsider this bill, especially this part where blanket insurance is.

And thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, we've had a careful look through this bill, and we've come to something of a different conclusion than the NDP have done.

The change that's been made in terms of ride-sharing companies, that which is personal insurance, right? If a car has an accident, if it's me or anybody else, right, your insurance will go up, and that will hold true for those with personal insurance. It doesn't affect the person who is a good driver and has no accidents.

And so, the part which is the personal insurance, it will vary by the individual driver and whether they're a good driver or not what their insurance is, just like everybody else.

For the blanket coverage, this, first of all, will have to go through the PUB, right? And there will be, you know, taxi companies and others who will make representation. But for MPI, it will assign a risk for that blanket in coverage depending on what the number of accidents are, and that blanket coverage may be different, right, for different groups.

And this may—you know, it may be when they go through the PUB that they could decide to do something slightly different. I'm not sure. But I think that, you know, in our view, PUB is a pretty good system, right? They look very carefully at what's happening and make good decisions, which is why we continue to have the PUB after many, many years.

And, you know, we know that the government doesn't always want the PUB. We were surprised that the NDP decided that they want to interfere in PUB decisions as we've seen on Hydro, right? But, be that as it may, you know, what's happening on Hydro is different from this, and I think that we can probably agree that the PUB has a pretty critical look, right, and a pretty fair look at what's going on.

So, we've looked at that and we're not convinced, right, that it's going to have an adverse effect on regular drivers in Manitoba. Right?

Now, we've looked at other areas of this bill, and one of the areas which, to me, was of particular interest—that this bill looks at the liability coverage, right, and basically says that no matter whether you're in province or out of province, that you have to have a basic liability of \$500,000. That's \$450,000 which would be claims arising out of loss of or damage to property and \$50,000 over claims arising out of bodily

injury or death. That's the basic liability that everybody is going to have.

And at the moment, in some instances, particularly if you're covered by non-MPI insurance on out-of-province vehicle, you may only have \$200,000 liability. And the problem with that is, if a Manitoba driver in a Manitoba insurance car has—gets into an accident and there is a liability claim against the other car, right, because they were at fault, then you may only be able to collect \$200,000 when your real—you know, when the real damage was \$500,000.

So, I think it's actually a pretty good deal to move everybody up to the \$500,000 level and say that you can't sneak in with a—insurance from some other province which is less.

So, that will happen, aside from what happens with the—you know, the information technology, the Nova plan and so on. We're, like the NDP, very concerned about the overruns, which have been horrendous in this project. In the long run, it will be helpful, but we sure wish that they had managed this contract better and overseen it better so it didn't have this enormous overrun.

So, Madam—Mr. Speaker—Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're actually in support of this legislation after having had a careful look, and that is, you know, our decision, and that we put forward. And we look forward to it becoming law.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment, Highway Traffic Amendment and Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Ayes have it.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Acting Opposition House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On division.

**Bill 22—The Environment Amendment Act
(Pesticide Restrictions)**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 22, The Environment Amendment Act (Pesticide Restrictions).

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), that Bill 22, The Environment Amendment Act (Pesticide Restrictions), reported from the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wharton: It's my pleasure as Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks to stand once again for the third reading of Bill 22, The Environment Amendment Act.

Bill 22 will amend The Environment Act to allow Manitobans to use Health Canada-approved cosmetic pesticides on their lawns, while at the same time enhancing protection for children and pets.

The bill responds to what we've heard from Manitobans: that the current legislation is not working. We heard that products currently available to Manitobans are not effective and must be applied multiple times, which risks our environment and can be expensive for municipalities and households. Manitobans want the option to be able to use products approved through Health Canada's robust scientific approval process.

Our government is committed to science-based decisions following Health Canada guidelines.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Health Canada conducts reviews to strict health and safety standards and has deemed these pesticides to be low risk when used correctly. All pesticides must go through this review before they can be sold in Manitoba.

Health Canada regulator re-evaluates pesticides and will open on a special review if new research shows that the risk level may have changed.

* (17:40)

Out of an abundance of caution, pesticides will remain restricted at schools, child-care centres and hospitals. In addition, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bill will allow—or add new restrictions to pesticide use at municipal playgrounds, picnic areas, dog parks and provincial parks, putting more protection in place than any other prairie province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our prairie neighbours have no ban on cosmetic pesticides and do not protect sensitive areas. In direct response to what we heard from Manitobans, I am pleased to present Bill 22 to the House for third reading.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any speakers wishing to speak to this bill?

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I'd like to start debate with tabling a letter that I'm going to read into the record. This letter was received by our Honourable Jeff Wharton and Honourable Audrey Gordon. It was sent to them on—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I'm—yes, I'm obligated to just advise members to refer to other members of the House by their portfolio or constituency.

Ms. Naylor: Thank you for that correction, Mr. Deputy Speaker; I made the mistake of just reading the letter. It is addressed to the Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks and the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon).

Dear ministers, regarding Bill 22, the environment amended act, pesticide restrictions. We are writing to urge that current restrictions on non-essential uses of pesticides in Manitoba be maintained. We request that the provisions of Bill 22 that would allow for the use of the more toxic herbicides on lawns be withdrawn.

The current ban represents sound science-based public policy with important health and environmental goals. Independent, peer-reviewed evidence has

identified serious health risks associated with human exposure to chemical pesticides. Detailed reviews of health studies have been conducted by the Ontario College of Family Physicians in 2012 and the Prince Edward Island public health office in 2015, among others.

This body of research indicates that pesticide health risks include harmful impacts affecting adults—in brackets—diabetes, cancer, neurological disorders, as well as adverse reproductive neurological development and respiratory outcomes that are particularly significant for children.

In addition, lawn care chemicals run off into waterways, adding to stress on aquatic organisms. Pesticides are linked to illnesses in domestic animals, and they pose a threat to essential pollinators.

We understand that some municipalities and lawn care service providers in Manitoba are eager to regain access to currently prohibited herbicides, but we believe the government has not struck the right balance with Bill 22. Protecting human health is a higher priority than accommodating an aesthetic preference for weed-free lawns. There are safe and affordable methods by which attractive lawns and green spaces can be maintained without resorting to chemicals that harm children's health.

Please amend Bill 22 so that families can live in healthy neighbourhoods where they and their children are not exposed to avoidable pesticide health risks.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Yours truly, Anne Lindsey, Cosmetic Pesticide Ban Manitoba coalition, on behalf of the following organizations: Manitoba College of Family Physicians; Manitoba Lung Association; Manitoba Nurses for Health and the Environment; the Winnipeg Humane Society; the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment; the Coalition to Save Lake Winnipeg; Corydon Osborne Residents for a Healthy Community; Fireweed Food Co-op; Kairos Christian life community; Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition; Organic Food Council of Manitoba; people for the protection of the Willow Island coastal wetlands; South Osborne Residents' Group; Urban Ecology Winnipeg; Canadian Environmental Law Association; ecojustice network; Manitoba Public Health Association; Manitoba Health Coalition; Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba; Butterfly Project of Dunnottar and area; Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Manitoba chapter; Corydon Osborne Greenway Butterfly Way; Environmental Health

Association of Manitoba; Green Action Centre; Manitoba Eco-Network; Mixedwood Forest Society; Outdoor Urban Recreational Spaces-Winnipeg; Social Planning Council of Winnipeg; Sustainable South Osborne Community Co-op; Winnipeg Trails Association; David Suzuki Foundation; and Prevent Cancer Now.

So I—it was important to put that on the record. I know that the minister heard directly from a number of those organizations and speakers on committee, but I'm not sure that others in this Chamber had the opportunity, so I wanted to share that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Minister Wharton was appointed Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks at the first of this year, several months after Brian Pallister resigned and vacated the Legislature. Regardless, even from Costa Rica, the former premier can be confident that he left behind several ministers that are more than willing to implement his plans.

Six years after Brian Pallister's consultation on pesticide restrictions—a consultation that has been critiqued for its lack of reach and lack of understanding to participants—six years later, this minister introduced Bill 22 to roll back the restrictions on cosmetic pesticides. It's beyond disappointing that someone who has been tasked with the responsibility of protecting Manitoba's water, habitats and air has brought in, as his first and only bill as Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks, a bill that modifies The Environment Act to allow a broader use of cosmetic pesticides in municipalities, near hospitals, schools, home daycares and in municipal parks. What a legacy.

This bill risks harm to the environment, but it also harms human health. I'll reiterate what I've said in the past: the World Health Organization calls these specific chemicals probable carcinogens; the Canadian Cancer Society warns that people shouldn't be in areas where these products are sprayed, for up to 48 hours.

Earlier this year, just before Bill 22 was introduced, the Federal Court of Appeal ruled that Canada's pesticide regulator must justify its decision to dismiss public health concerns about glyphosate after reapproving the controversial pesticide for use. Glyphosate is primarily used in agriculture, but it is one of the ingredients used in some cosmetic lawn-care products. The minister knows this. He knows that his assertion that these products are deemed safe by federal regulators is oversimplifying a much more complex conversation. Manitobans deserve more care and serious thought when it comes to decisions that

affect our health and the health of our children and pets.

The minister continues to perpetrate a myth in this House, which is his assertion that pesticides are approved by Health Canada, so they're safe. If only that were true. Instead, this is a commonly held myth and one that it's time to leave behind.

The reality is that approval from Health Canada does not mean a pesticide is safe—that language is never used. The decision is instead based on acceptable risk, and the framework is premised on risk management options with legal and practical considerations taken into account. The framework and review process has, at times, undermined health concerns.

Many cities across Canada have already banned the cosmetic use of pesticides. Every province east of Winnipeg, and many cities in British Columbia, have had these restrictions for years. I think we can all agree that Vancouver has some beautiful parks and gardens, and at the same time they are protecting biodiversity and public health. In some places, cosmetic pesticide restrictions have been in place for over 20 years.

And now, as we grapple with health and ecological crises, eliminating unnecessary exposure to toxic chemicals is more important than ever. Clear best practices exist to protect people and the environment from pesticides. A cosmetic pesticide ban is that best practice.

Children must be safe walking to school and playing in neighbourhood yards and city parks, bees and birds must be protected from further extinctions and biodiversity in general must be protected in order to prevent the collapse of ecological and food systems. People must be free to open their windows without worrying about toxic chemicals drifting in from a neighbour's sprayed lawn.

With those remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to speak again on the record on this issue. And with that appeal to this—I will appeal to this House to vote down Bill 22, to vote for best practices in pesticide regulation and to not amend The Environment Act.

Thank you.

* (17:50)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise in opposition to this legislation. Let us look at some of the things about this legislation.

In 2015, the Manitoba medical officer of health stated—simply stated, if pesticides are not needed, they should not be used. Pregnant women and children should always be priority populations for avoiding risks, regardless of the nature and magnitude of that risk. Whether they live in rural Manitoba or urban centres, their exposure to pesticide should be minimized.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we brought in a number of report stage amendments to try and limit the exposure, but one by one, this government turned them down. This government even turned down an amendment to not use these cosmetic pesticides on the Legislative Precinct.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the government should put up a big sign that this lawn—the Legislative lawn—has had cosmetic pesticides sprayed on it. People should be warned and they should have the choice to avoid coming here, particularly with their children and particularly when they're pregnant.

There is substantive evidence that pesticides contribute to the development of chronic diseases, including cancers. And while the conditions may be multifactorial, there is good reason to really eliminate readily preventable contributors to ill health.

Now, they're connected to—cosmetic pesticides—to cancer, to birth defects, to reproductive dysfunction, to autism, to behavioural disorders, to autoimmune disorders, to diabetes, to Parkinson's and Alzheimer's disease.

And while the evidence in each of these cases may not be, in a sense, the result of a randomized clinical trial—because we don't want to be exposing humans to cosmetic pesticides in any sort of trial—the tests do not address low-dose or cumulative effects. There is not adequate testing done on endocrine disruption, which is an important mechanism of action—potential mechanism of action—and pesticides are not tested in combination.

So, much of the medical literature which has been quoted and brought forward by groups like the College of Family Physicians has not been adequately assessed by this government. They have been, in my view, delinquent in looking at the adverse impacts of cosmetic pesticides.

It's to be noted that the PMRA does not use the word safe in its decisions. They don't claim that cosmetic pesticides are safe. People should know this. They say whether the risks could be acceptable. Now, acceptable risks depends on who you are and what you

consider risks. But certainly, the risks of cosmetic pesticides, when added up, are potentially quite significant.

It's to be remembered that the insecticide chlorpyrifos, which was approved in Canada in 1969, but the evidence that this had serious and harmful effects on children's neurological development finally accumulated to the point where it was banned in 2021. So, it was used for 50 years. Surely, it should have been better tested before it was into the system. And part of the problem we're dealing with is that many of the chemicals were brought in before the sort of testing that we would do today was applied.

And it's to be remembered that Health Canada itself advises it's good practice to reduce or eliminate any unnecessary exposure to chemicals—to pesticides. So, they don't get a clear bill of health, these cosmetic pesticides, by any standard. And other jurisdictions—the European Union, in their 2020 biodiversity strategy, 'incruces' proposals for legally binding targets to reduce pesticide use and risk by 50 per cent by 2030.

And we have to recognize that, already, pesticides which affect insects have changed the ecology of North America: 76 per cent of flying insects have disappeared in the last 27 years; 40 per cent of insect species are currently believed to be threatened with extinction and the bird species which are—catch insects in flight are going downhill in population. And a number of them are considered now threatened or endangered, including a species, as common as it used to be, as the barn swallow.

Insects may be little things, but they have a big impact. And when cosmetic pesticides change the whole ecosystem of North America, we need to be concerned. We need to be concerned about the impact on insects, because insects are important for pollinating plants; there are many which are beneficial. Pesticides don't pick and choose.

Remember, a chickadee alone can feed approximately six to nine thousand larvae and insects to one clutch of five baby birds. That's a lot of impact on insects, and we should probably be relying a little more on birds and a little less on cosmetic pesticides.

We may be the only jurisdiction anywhere in the world to go backwards after having passed this pesticide—cosmetic pesticide ban previously. There is a number of years now of experience. The arguments go back and forth but, in fact, there is data which suggest that the replacements are actually pretty effective at controlling weeds and herbicides in spite of some of the comments that have been made.

On one of the synthetic pesticides, it indeed is stated: toxic to small wild animals, birds, aquatic organisms and non-target terrestrial plants, toxic to broadleaf terrestrial plants. Now, that's not without very significant impact on our ecosystem.

There are many who grow healthy foods without pesticides. And that's a direction which the European Union is heading, and we should not go backwards.

Remember that in the case of Dewayne "Lee" Johnson v. the Monsanto company that the lawyers showed that Monsanto knew that 'glyphosphate' can cause cancer, and that's why there was a significant award.

There are many organizations, and the MLA for Wolseley has named many—they include the Manitoba College of Family Physicians, the Manitoba Health Coalition, the Manitoba Lung Association, the Manitoba Public Health Association, the Winnipeg Humane Society and many others.

Most studies on non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia show positive associations with pesticides. We need to be more careful. Childhood cancers are up 27 per cent since 1975, and that could be because of pesticides. We need to be careful.

We should not pass this legislation.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 22, The Environment Amendment Act (Pesticide Restrictions).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

* (18:00)

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, Ayes have it.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Recorded vote, please, Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

* (19:00)

Order, please.

The hour allotted for the ringing of the bells has expired. I would like to ask the staff to close the doors and turn off the bells.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 22, The Environment Amendment Act.

Division

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

Yeas

Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Khan, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart.

Nays

Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliv, Wiebe.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Katerina Tefft): Yeas 29, Nays 21.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion is accordingly passed.

Bill 24—The Real Property Valuation Board and Related Amendments Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now move to concurrence and third reading of Bill 24, The Real Property Valuation Board and Related Amendments Act.

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development (Mr. Nesbitt), that Bill 24, The Real Property Valuation Board and Related Amendments Act, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Helwer: I'm pleased to rise to speak to third reading of this bill.

This bill will amalgamate the land value functions of the Land Value Appraisal Commission, the Surface Rights Board and the assessment appeal function of the Municipal Board.

And that is it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There's been lots of fearmongering across the way from all entities over there trying to scare Manitobans, as they often do, but this is all that this piece of legislation does.

Currently, several boards in Manitoba provide similar roles and functions related to land valuation and land value disputes.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

The real property valuation board act will create a single window for stakeholders seeking resolution of land value disputes. This action will improve board services to Manitobans and create a simplified, fair, transparent and streamlined process for the public to interact with government on matters related to land value.

And that is the content of the bill, Madam Speaker. I know the members opposite will try to scare Manitobans, as they have time and time again, but it has no relation to what happens under the land. This is only the land value.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): You know, I really did think that the government might see the error of its ways, you know. And, you know, it's not too late, because they could certainly vote to defeat this bill and they could see the light that's been shown to them by municipalities across this province who have said, loud and clear, that they don't want to see more taking-back of power from local authorities and local voices and taking it to the hands of this provincial government.

We've seen this over and over and over again, and, you know, we gave them the opportunity to rethink bill 37. In fact, when it first came to this Legislature, it was this team on this side of the House that stopped that bill in its tracks and made the government go back to the drawing board, go back to AMM, go back to their—to the municipalities across this province and get some feedback and try to get it right.

We thought maybe that would be the end of it, but no. This government pushed ahead and pushed forward on bringing back what then became bill 37.

Now we're in the midst of the implementation of bill 37, and it's these kind of bills that we're going to continually see that take away power from those local voices.

Now, we just had a municipal election, and folks were elected across our province to local boards in municipalities. I've taken the opportunity to thank those folks because I think it's important to do that. They are the folks on the front lines—the closest to the ratepayers, as they like to say—those folks who are taking the viewpoints of their constituents and bringing them forward.

But their hands are being increasingly tied by this provincial government who says no; you don't get to make the decision. In fact, we'll give it to, in this case, the Municipal Board, and we'll allow them to make the decisions.

And we know that the Municipal Board is already overwhelmed with the number of cases that are coming forward—coming forward from developers who are asking for them to take a look at it, coming forward from municipalities who are saying, take this and relook at this and make a decision outside of what council had decided.

This is a problem, Madam Speaker, that I think we need to very closely monitor, and we certainly will be doing that as an official opposition.

Case in point, Madam Speaker: we're just learning that there was a development here in Winnipeg that went through council, was approved at the council level, you know, went through the regular democratic process. Again, we just had a municipal election, and yet it was the Municipal Board, the unelected Municipal Board, who made a decision contrary to what council had already decided.

* (19:10)

You know, I think Winnipeggers and Manitobans in general would be very concerned if they knew that they didn't have the same opportunity to have an influence or an impact on what development is going to happen in their particular municipality.

And I know what we've heard from not only councillors here in the city of Winnipeg who are concerned about this, but, as I said, municipalities across the province could have not been more clear over the last

year and a half, two years, that this government has pushed ahead on bill 37.

Time after time at AMM meetings and conventions and just meeting with local municipalities, we've heard loud and clear that they don't want the Province and especially unelected boards stepping on their decision-making abilities. They've also told us very clearly that they understand that this extra level of bureaucracy is simply going to slow the process down. They—you know, it's amazing that a party of cutting red tape is all of a sudden, you know, making more red tape, making more bureaucracy, another layer of bureaucracy in the municipal planning world.

You know, we've heard from members who sit on the Municipal Board who have said that they are already overwhelmed. They're seeing more cases than ever, and these are more complex cases; cases that require a lot of work.

Now, you know, these aren't, you know, full-time, you know, professional folks; these are folks who are certainly professionals but not necessarily on the Municipal Board. And so, their time is valuable, and it's increasingly being tied up by decision making that should be happening at the local level with the input of local officials.

You know, there was, at one point in this government, a clear vision; it was the wrong vision, mind you, of—from Brian Pallister. But, you know, he was ready to cut bureaucracy and cut red tape. Well, now his ministers and this government are—seem to be the ones who want to bring more steps and more levels of bureaucracy in.

We remain concerned that the changes that are being proposed with Bill 24 won't solve the problems of the overburdening of the Municipal Board. We understand that the real property valuation board, you know, in its role taking over from these other matters, will just simply be another step that folks need to take.

And they're as concerned about resourcing that particular board as well. So, again, we're creating more boards to do this—you know, this increased amount of work. There's no new resources for these boards, and we know that this is going to be a problem.

At the end of the day, Madam Speaker, we spend a lot of time on this side of the House listening to our local partners and understanding how we can work with municipalities, how we can engage them and how we can work as—in true partnerships with those municipalities.

That is—should be a starting point for any provincial government, and yet this government decided its first—its most important priority in this case was to bring forward a bill that takes away local choice, takes away that local democratic input and hurts, I think, all municipalities.

We've heard it loud and clear. We'll continue to push back every single time this government tinkers around the edges when it comes to the impacts of bill 37. Bill 24 is a very specific example of that, and we know that it needs to be opposed. We will be voting against this legislation today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, we have some significant concerns about this legislation, which is being moved by the government and which—the biggest concern that we have relates to getting rid of the Surface Rights Board. The minister says, in his naiveté, that this is just about the value of the land. When it comes to surface rights, it's about much more than just the value of the land.

The surface rights were set up initially to be able to decide on situations where you were—had a landowner, usually a farmer, and below ground you had a source of oil. And the person who had the mineral rights had the right to go on the land, to drill down; if they found oil, to pump that oil up and to make money out of it.

And the situation, when we're dealing with this kind of surface rights issue, which is more than just about the value of the land. For example, in some oil wells, when there is not just oil coming up, but sour gas, which has impact on health. We have the impact on the land, and it has proved, in talking with people in southwestern Manitoba, where they're dealing with 'surfin'—surface rights, more complicated than people have thought initially.

Not just an issue of the value of the land, but there needs to be, on such a surface rights board, representation, not just from those who own mineral rights, but those who are landowners, so you can have a fair and just discussion and you can have a fair and just resolution.

Now, the situation in Manitoba is changing. There is the largest mineral rights exploration going on, maybe in the history of the province, in southeastern Manitoba. A large land area has been allocated the rights for getting silica sand.

And the silica sand, as with oil, what happens is that the person who wants to mine the silica sand puts down a well and uses a mechanism which essentially pushes water down and brings up to the surface sand and water, sucks this to the surface; and then, after it's been exposed to some air a little bit, the water gets pumped down the well, and you have, then, the well being closed over.

And the problems here are a number. One is that well is going down into the groundwater. It's disturbing the groundwater, mixing up the sand and the water, and, more than that, the concern is that there is a layer which contains rock which can be oxidized, and that that can result in pollution of the groundwater.

And that groundwater in southeastern Manitoba is some of the best groundwater anywhere in the world. In fact, there's a fellow who sells water, bottled water, from there as the best water in the world, and it's known that it's of extremely high quality.

So, as opposed to somebody running a truck over the land and putting an oil well down—and there's a lot of experience with putting oil wells down and maybe concerns with things like fracking and things like that—but when you get to a situation of the sand mine wells, you're not talking just, you know, one well here and another one over there and—what you're talking about is whole groups of wells being put down. And you're talking about sand coming up, and the sand may be associated with dust particles, and there is concern about health effects of some of those—what's in those dust particles.

And so, whereas if you put a road in on the surface you can take up that road after the oil has been extracted, when you're talking about pollution of the groundwater, once it's polluted, is very, very difficult to get it back to the pristine quality that it was before.

* (19:20)

Some people say it's going to take decades. Some people say it'll take hundreds of years. And we don't know the answer when you were dealing with these aquifers and the depth that the aquifers are at.

So there is, rightfully so, a concern from many municipalities and many landowners about what's going to happen because of the, you know, what are projected to be hundreds or thousands of these wells going down, depending on how far it goes, and maybe tens of thousands of them in southeastern Manitoba.

And people, when we're talking about surface rights, it is more complicated than what the—this bill anticipates for the real property board.

And so, our view is that the government should have kept the Surface Rights Board and the issue of surface rights out of this. They should have had a surface rights board which had the proper representation, both of landowners and of people who are involved in mineral or sand extraction, so that we could have a fair balance and a fair view of the situation.

Now, the situation with the surface rights and the sand mines has become complicated because the local government has now taken away some of the decision-making power from the municipalities and given it to the Municipal Board. And just in the last couple of weeks we've had hearings from the Municipal Board, which is looking and are considering the possibility of overriding the local decision.

And so, here we have a municipal board which probably does not have much in the way of experience of dealing with silica sand and silica sand mines under these conditions. In fact, to some extent, this is a novel way of extracting silica from a mine, and we don't know the long-term consequences.

So, while we have concerns about taking rights away from local municipal level, our major concern is that by putting the Surface Rights Board and the surface rights decision in with the Real Property Valuation Board that there can be some real problems in the decision making. And if we're not careful, we can have pollution of groundwater, which we don't want and long-term, very untoward effects.

So, for those reasons, Madam Speaker, we are going to vote against this bill. We see it fraught with problems because of what it's trying to do and we have not had an adequate explanation, right, from the minister, of why on earth he wants to include the Surface Rights Board and surface rights decisions about surface rights, not only about oil wells but about sand mines included in this bill. It should not have been.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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 24, The Real Property Valuation Board and Related Amendments Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

Bill 36—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: I will now call concurrence and third reading of Bill 36, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister for Economic Development, Investment and Trade, that Bill 36, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, Manitoba Hydro matters. It matters for Manitobans who have for years relied on the low rates that the generation of clean hydroelectricity have produced for Manitobans as an advantage.

It matters for businesses who may move here or stay here because of that lower competitive rate. You may not know that Manitoba Hydro boasts the second lowest hydro rate in all of North America, second only to Quebec.

Manitoba Hydro matters because, at a time in the world when people are increasingly moving towards the examination of more sustainable and renewable and green technologies, we are well positioned on that landscape to be able to boast this clean and green hydro as some of the best technology in the world.

But the NDP know their sad legacy on this file, and that is that this NDP party overspent and bungled planned expansion of Hydro's assets: Keeyask, a dam that went billions of dollars over cost; Bipole III, a transmission line that went billions of dollars over cost and 1,000 kilometres around the province, while they hid the cost overruns from Manitobans, while they circumvented the very processes that had been put in place to measure the needs for and alternatives to such large megaproject. The result of which, they said, would not matter because their former minister said—and some of them sat around the table at the time—Manitoba's oil, they said it doesn't matter because the US companies and the US contracts will pay for everything. Manitobans wouldn't pay a single cent, penny, for that hydro.

And now the gig is up, and now the verdict is in, and now we know that the cost of these assets, four and five billion dollars over their planned budget, and an expert report on Keeyask and bipole shows the poor decision making, shows the attempts to evade accountability and shows what could have been done instead to plan a better, brighter future for Hydro.

It puts us in this place where the debt of Hydro now sits tripled at \$24 billion. It puts us now at a place where we understand that the cost of those bad decisions are borne by Manitoba customers and not by US contracts.

And what would the NDP say more than anything? Forget about it. Don't talk about it. There's nothing to see here. This problem is self-correcting.

But it's not, Madam Speaker. And action needs to be taken. And that is the basis and the foundation for Bill 36. It won't just be all okay. Action is needed—action needed to protect the low-rate advantage that Manitoba Hydro customers have come to enjoy.

Those members will never say it. You will never hear them ever utter anything about CPI. But right now, we know that in Manitoba, the consumer price index sits at 8 per cent. And if, today, the Public Utilities Board were presiding on a rate application by Hydro, they may be saying 6, 7, 8 per cent energy increase rates but for the provision of this bill that says there's a ceiling. There's an upper limit. Rates cannot go above this amount.

It acts as a governor. It acts as a speed limit. It keeps those rates down which would otherwise be higher. Why? Because of N-D-C bad decision—NDP bad decision making, Madam Speaker.

But the bill goes further. The bill says that never in the future again will there be a time when Manitobans' advantage in hydro is threatened by a government that doesn't take better decisions. The PUB gets new powers to preside over any large infrastructure projects for generation or transmission.

And, Madam Speaker, that's a protection to all of us. Because maybe that next dam will be built, but maybe it will be postponed, or maybe a better way will be found to provide power, and maybe a better examination of alternatives, of wind and solar and others. And maybe a better examination of the potentiality for Efficiency Manitoba to make the difference.

* (19:30)

But those considerations were shut out by the previous government who boldly went ahead, promised Manitoba things, made promises they could not keep, and we all now have the impact of that.

However, over time, Madam Speaker, that low-rate advantage and that ability for the PUB to do its own work also presides, or also is founded on another foundation, and that is Hydro needs to get more stable over time—not all of a sudden, not in a shocking way—but over time, benchmarks for Hydro to hit to become more stable. We have the worst debt-equity ratio in all of Canada for any energy generator, producer, transmitter.

Madam Speaker, we've got a problem at Hydro. This bill would fix it. In brief, it provides, as I said, oversight. It changes the regulatory process to make it broader and better. Also, in this bill, and not—hasn't been subject to much debate, that ability for the PUB in future to come back and present its budget means that if PUB says—you know, for too long, we have gone outside of the PUB to get the expertise we needed.

If the PUB says that the expertise is needed within their shop, then our government is going to support that ability for the PUB to grow, get that expertise within, install it within the regulator and use it and have that continuity, have that institutional knowledge. We haven't talked about—a lot about that.

This bill also says, though, a three-year rate application is just better than a one-year. All other jurisdictions are going to a three-year rate application. Why? It gives rate certainty for residential ratepayers. It gives rate certainty for businesses. It puts us in line with other provinces.

As I said, the PUB contains and maintains its role to set the rates. There was an irritant in a previous iteration of this bill, and the NDP didn't like it. And they said that there was this ability in that bill 34 for the government to set hydro rates. Well, it didn't. It had placeholded an amount to allow the Province to get to that place where the PUB would do a three-year rate application.

But in this instance, there is no such provision in this bill. There is no such provision because Hydro has an interim rate set by the PUB that can be extended for two years. There is no activity for the government, for the Cabinet, for the caucus to set rates in this bill.

Manitoba Hydro has challenges, as I said. Manitobans may not know that 40 cents of revenue on every dollar collected by Hydro now goes for debt repayment. That's not okay. It's not a-sustainable. It means there are investments that Hydro would make, but it cannot because it is extended and it can't make those good investments.

Madam Speaker, to sum up, under Bill 36, the PUB remains strong. Under Bill 36, Manitoba's rates remain lower than they otherwise would have been during a time of hyperinflation. And under the PUB, over time, Manitoba Hydro gets back to a place of stability.

The NDP have tried everything to distort and to tell in their own words a story of Bill 36 that does not stand up to scrutiny. No wonder the Winnipeg Free Press said about them that this, their actions on Bill 36, are the worst kind of politics, designed to mislead Manitobans and foment fear in order to drive opposition to the bill when they actually knew the facts.

It has been disgraceful to watch day after day, this opposition party get up. If they want to disagree with us on policy, they should do so every day. But they don't get the luxury of their own facts. And tonight, nothing would please Manitobans more for them to stand up and say that we blew it.

But what's the best evidence of the NDP party actually totally getting it wrong? They spent months saying that the fundamental premise was that there was going to be the independence of the PUB until this week. When they stood up in a press release and fired out a press release that said they will interfere with the PUB.

They brought a brand new policy this week. It puts the Leader of the Opposition at odds with his own critic for Hydro, and it says we changed our minds:

we will interfere with the PUB, we will set the rate ourselves at the NDP caucus table.

It is outrageous. It is a U-turn. It is an about-face. It is a one-eighty. It is a change of directions and every Manitoban can see it.

Manitoba-Manitobans know we will continue to protect ratepayers, Manitoba Hydro and the PUB, while they continue to try to mislead Manitobans.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Well, tonight, after working at this for several years and many failed attempts to pass bills 44 and 35, it seems that this government is finally set to pass legislation that will disempower the PUB and will raise—make for big hydro rate increases on Manitobans.

This is not something to be celebrated, Madam Speaker. We are in the midst of an affordability crisis, and I know that I'm not alone in hearing about this from constituents in my community. I know all members in this House hear from their constituents about their concerns about the financial challenges they're facing right now. And this is especially true for seniors and people on fixed incomes.

And, again, I know that everyone in this House hears from their constituents, and so that's why it's so shocking to me to see this government bring this bill forward. It genuinely is hard for me to believe that this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and every single member of this PC caucus continue to stand behind this bill.

The people in this province would be right to think that right now, in this economic environment we're in, that their government would be focused on keeping hydro rates as low as possible, that they'd be focused on ensuring the most affordable access to energy that we can possibly muster and that, if this government was bringing forward legislation focused on hydro rates, that that legislation would be focused, again, on a hydro rate freeze or keeping those rates as low as possible.

But instead, we're seeing something very different, Madam Speaker. We see a government that's focused on gutting rate-setting authority of the PUB so they can advance huge rate increases at the Cabinet table.

It's no exaggeration to say that I'm shocked that every single member of this PC Party continues to stand behind this bill. And the only conclusion I can come to is that members of this party—everyone other than, perhaps, the minister responsible for this bill—hasn't read the bill or don't know what's in it. That's

the only explanation I can come to because it's clear that this bill is going to harm Manitobans.

So, I ask every single member of this PC caucus here tonight to consider—and I'm going to try to break the fourth wall here with everyone that's staring down at their phones on the other side of the aisle. Do you really know what you're voting for here tonight? Do you really have any understanding of what it is you're supporting here tonight with your vote?

Do you recognize that this bill will force Hydro to raise \$7 billion by 2040, all to come out of the wallets of Manitobans and all on the basis of a wacky formula that your government invented that is without precedent in all of the world?

Do you recognize that this bill will completely disempower—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

I'm just going to ask the member to make his comments in third person and avoid using the word you and your because that just inflames the situation here, and I would just ask the member's co-operation.

Mr. Sala: Do members of this PC caucus understand that this bill will completely disempower the Public Utilities Board and hand all hydro rate-setting power to Cabinet for the first time since 1913 in the history of the Public Utilities Board?

Do they understand that it will trigger crushing year-after-year 5 per cent increases in the middle of an affordability crisis that will be applied on families, seniors, people on fixed incomes and all of the small businesses in their ridings? And that it will lead to job loss and disinvestment from this province, as was clearly stated by the members of the Manitoba Industrial Power Users Group, who presented to committee recently, who spelled out clearly how this bill is going to damage our economy in this province.

* (19:40)

I would like to know if the members opposite understand that and if they have a real understanding of how this bill is going to impact their constituents, who they're going to have to face after they vote in support of this bill tonight. I'd like them all to ask themselves what their constituents would say to them to know what they're supporting here. This bill will have a disastrous effect on the affordability of life in Manitoba, and it will have a disastrous effect on our economy.

We heard over and over again about this at committee on this bill. Folks who tuned in will know that we had near unanimous opposition to this bill at committee. We heard over and over again from a huge coalition of Manitobans, environmentalists, right down to the—again, the biggest industrial power users in this province, that this bill needs to be scrapped, that this bill is going to have a hugely negative impact on the affordability of life in this province and on our provincial economy.

I asked the members 'oppit' to consider what it means when a bill goes to committee and every single presenter that comes to that committee is unanimously in opposition to a bill. What does that mean? It should mean something to them, Madam Speaker. And I think it's going to mean something to all of them during the next election. I think they're going to hear about this going for.

There's another huge concern with this bill that I want to make sure I mention before this bill's vote tonight. And that's that this bill opens the door wide open to privatization. It ends Hydro's monopoly on the retail sale of energy in Manitoba. Manitobans know how important Hydro is to this province and the future of this province, and they want to ensure that all aspects of Manitoba Hydro remain public. We have an immeasurably large advantage over other provinces in this country in that we own our generation system, we own our distribution system, we own our transmission system.

Opening the door to the private sale of electricity has enormous implications for the future of Hydro, but the PCs have failed to answer the question as to why they're doing this. They have not clearly answered that question.

And that should have every single Manitoban very concerned because these changes will create huge profit-making opportunities for private business in this province. And we know that the PCs cannot be trusted with this kind of power because we know if they get any opportunity to privatize any aspect of Hydro they will take advantage of it.

All aspects of Hydro must remain public, and should this bill be allowed to pass tonight we will be watching this government each and every day to stop them from using this provision to advance their goals of advancing—of furthering privatization at Hydro.

Before closing my remarks here tonight, I would like to say thank you, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank all those folks, all those Manitobans, that stood

up against Bill 36, that stood up against its previous two incarnations, all those folks that fought so hard over the last several years to stop this legislation from passing. The amount of time that those folks invested in fighting back against this bill as citizens is nothing short of inspiring, Madam Speaker, to see citizens stand up, educate themselves about this bill and fight back and let this government know that it should not pass.

I want to say a thank-you to the Consumers Coalition of Manitoba, to the CCPA, to the Manitoba Eco-Network, to the Social Planning Council, to IBEW 2034, to SEED Winnipeg, to Harvest Manitoba and the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg for helping in the fight against this bill.

I'd also like to single out the Protect the PUB Coalition, who did an incredible job educating Manitobans about the impacts of this bill so they could prepare themselves to come to committee and make a case as to why this bill should be scrapped.

And I'd also like to thank every single person who made time to come out to the Bill 36 committee to express their concerns. Thank you to every Manitoban who stood up to tell this government where this bill should be—go—where this bill should be sent—to the trash can.

I know I speak for all of us here in opposition when I say thank you. It's been an honour to work in partnership with community to fight against this bill, and our fight for an independent PUB and affordable hydro rates doesn't end tonight.

I appreciate the opportunity to offer some final words on this bill before the vote.

Thank you.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): This is a truly terrible bill.

That's not just our opinion. That was the opinion of virtually every presenter. Presenter after presenter after presenter didn't just say this needs to be changed, it needs to be altered or it needs to be improved. They said it needs to be withdrawn. And it was across the board. It was across the board.

This is a terrible, terrible bill. It's going to be damaging to Hydro, damaging to the PUB, and it's going to be damaging to the economy.

It wasn't just environmentalists; it wasn't just consumers. The largest industrial consumers in Manitoba said that these hikes are going to drive people out of

Manitoba. They said it's already happening; it hasn't just started.

And, frankly, this isn't a bill that should ever have come forward because it takes—we are going to be making a decision tonight that we shouldn't be making. It's up to the PUB. It's not up to anybody in this Chamber to say what hydro prices are going to be; not the opposition, which is why we opposed their amendment, and surely not the government.

The interference with Hydro has been relentless and it has put the finances of this province at risk. And I want to say that when I hear the NDP and the PCs on this it's like they're—it's like a dark mirror between the two of them, because they keep saying—they keep blaming each other for doing exactly the same things.

In 2003, Gary Doer wanted to do the same thing. He wanted to strip the Public Utilities Board of its power. He complained about the cost and duration of hearings of the PUB, which is what this bill does. He said there were problems with the regulatory bodies like the Clean Environment Commission taking too long. And, at the time, Hydro had not raised residential or commercial rates for more than six years, and the PUB ordered—issued an order to reduce rates because the PUB thought that that was the appropriate thing to do.

Those—and Doer said, I thought that decision was wrong. Hydro's having one of the worst years in 10 years. The PUB makes him go through a very expensive process just so they can order them to lower rates that are already among the lowest in North America. The same story we hear all the time.

But there's a reason why they're the lowest in North America: they're supposed to be. That's what it's supposed to be. We're not supposed to be going out of our way to make profit. The whole point of having a public monopoly on power is to make it as cheap as possible for the benefit of everyone. It's as close as it can be to a public service, and that's something that nobody seems to understand.

I've been to northern communities where they're desperate because the power bills they have to pay, because all the electrical heat—all the heat is electrical. So, we have isolated First Nations. They don't have roads. They don't have—like, Island Lakes—they've got—they have a hydro line but they don't have roads, they don't have rail. And so, unbelievable amounts of money is flowing out of impoverished First Nations communities into Hydro's pockets. And this is going to make it worse.

And the other thing is, look, this government wants to blame the NDP for lots of stuff, but they don't actually want to fix anything they did, and they want to keep doing lots of the same things. They want to complain about bipole.

Look, it was a political decision, but there are a couple of things—I'm going to say something that's just factual: If bipole were not built, Manitoba would be at enormous risk. That was the finding of an independent consulting study which said, look, if you don't build this and there's a storm that knocks out the one transmission line, Manitoba could lose a third of its GDP and we could have blackouts and brownouts in Winnipeg for weeks or months.

So, imagine that there's a storm in January or February, and there are blackouts or brownouts in Manitoba, and we lose a third of our GDP because the PC government wanted to cancel bipole, even though it was partly built.

But—and the other thing is, the PUB made a recommendation on this. The PUB actually said, you know what? Because the government forced Hydro to do this, and it was a political decision, the government should compensate them. There was an order in 2018 that the PUB said, look, stop taking money from Hydro for a while.

Because that's the other dirty secret of all of this. The reason Hydro's in so much trouble, and the reason Hydro's debt is so high, is because it's been forced to take on that debt. In the last decade, of the \$10 billion that's been added to that debt, \$4 billion of that flowed right to the government of Manitoba—\$4 billion was taken from a Crown corporation that was in debt every single year and taking on more debt.

So, we'd been borrowing from Hydro. We've been putting it all on Hydro's credit card. So, the reason Hydro's debt is so dangerously high, and that if it were to default we'd all be in big trouble because the government of Manitoba doesn't have \$24 billion on hand.

* (19:50)

This is the danger that it was—and I have to say that because the Manitoba government takes water rentals for no good reason, it has a debt-guarantee fee for no good reason and it has a capital tax. So, what happens? The bigger your cost overruns, the more taxes they pay. So it's a big benefit, No. 1.

So, there's perverse incentives that actually encourage massive overbuilding and over—and excess

debt, because the more Hydro goes into debt, the bigger the debt fee that Manitoba gets to collect for doing nothing—nothing. Because it's not guaranteeing that fee. That money isn't going into any sort of fund that's going to help pay it off. It's not insurance.

It's absolutely reckless. We've had two decades of governments playing reckless games with Hydro. And Hydro does have a problem, and it's called the Manitoba government. And it doesn't matter—it hasn't mattered whether it's NDP or PC.

There's been no difference in what these two parties are offering because both think it's their job to politicize Hydro and to fix prices here when it should be left to the PUB. And to act as if they're a saviour when each of these parties has taken \$2 billion out of Hydro just in the last two years just to pay for the government of Manitoba when Hydro was in debt.

The answer to Hydro's problem's a strong and independent PUB, and for this government to let it—to stop taking from it, to take—to listen to the PUB and stop taking water rentals and stop taking the debt-guarantee fee. And that way—if that actually happened, Hydro wouldn't have to cut and we wouldn't have to see rake—rate hikes the way we have. That's what the PUB asked for. That's what the solution is.

Because both parties have put Hydro at risk, and the only way to put Hydro back is to stop plundering it. And that's what we'll do.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 36, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

* (20:50)

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

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 36, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Division

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

Yeas

Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Johnson, Johnston, Khan, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Mickelfield, Morley-Lecomte, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart.

Nays

Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliw, Wiebe.

Clerk Assistant (Mr. Tim Abbott): Yeas 29, Nays 21.

Madam Speaker: The motion is accordingly passed.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Before we proceed to royal assent, I would like to draw members' attention to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have a very special guest with us tonight.

Monique Fontaine, formerly Monique Grenier, is our former journals clerk and committee clerk, and she stopped by tonight to say hello and watch the end of the session with her former colleagues.

On behalf of all honourable members, Monique, we welcome you here back to the Assembly and hope you are enjoying your retirement.

And I understand the Acting Administrator's in the building, so we will now prepare for royal assent.

* (21:00)

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Cam Steel): Her Honour the Acting Administrator.

Her Honour Diana M. Cameron, Acting Administrator of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Madam Speaker addressed Her Honour the Acting Administrator in the following words:

Madam Speaker: Your Honour:

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

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Vanessa Gregg):

Bill 47 – The Appropriation Act, 2022; Loi de 2022 portant affectation de crédits

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): In His Majesty's name, the Acting Administrator of the Province of Manitoba thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to this bill.

Madam Speaker: Your Honour:

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

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Vanessa Gregg):

Bill 13 – The Social Services Appeal Board Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission d'appel des services sociaux

Bill 14 – The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment, Highway Traffic Amendment and Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les conducteurs et les véhicules, le Code de la route et la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba

Bill 22 – The Environment Amendment Act (Pesticide Restrictions); Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement (restrictions applicables aux pesticides)

Bill 24 – The Real Property Valuation Board and Related Amendments Act; Loi sur la Commission de— sorry, restart. The Real Property Valuation Board and Related Amendments Act; Loi sur la Commission de l'évaluation des biens réels et modifications connexes

Bill 36 – The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba et la Loi sur la Régie des services publics

Bill 40 – The Hospitality Sector Customer Registry Act and Amendments to The Child and Family Services Act and The Child Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking Act; Loi édictant la Loi sur les registres des clients dans le secteur de l'hébergement et modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille et la Loi sur l'exploitation sexuelle d'enfants et la traite de personnes

Bill 43 – The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act; Loi sur la communication de renseignements pour la protection contre la violence de la part d'un partenaire intime

Bill 45 – The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2022; Loi d'exécution du budget de 2022 et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité

Bill 46 – The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route

Bill 208 – The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants

Bill 233 – The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les ingénieurs et les géoscientifiques

Bill 240 – The Jewish Heritage Month Act; Loi sur le Mois du patrimoine juif

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): In His Majesty's name, the Acting Administrator of the Province of Manitoba assents to these bills.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

God Save the King was sung.

O Canada was sung.

Madam Speaker: The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, November 15th or at the call of the Speaker.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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