

Fifth 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 |
| GERRARD, Jon, Hon. | River Heights | Lib. |
| GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon. | Steinbach | PC |
| GORDON, Audrey, Hon. | Southdale | PC |
| GUENTER, Josh | Borderland | PC |
| GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon. | Fort Richmond | PC |
| HELWER, Reg | Brandon West | PC |
| ISLEIFSON, Len | Brandon East | PC |
| JOHNSON, Derek, Hon. | Interlake-Gimli | PC |
| JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon. | Assiniboia | PC |
| KHAN, Obby, Hon. | Fort Whyte | PC |
| KINEW, Wab | Fort Rouge | NDP |
| KLEIN, Kevin E., Hon. | Kirkfield Park | PC |
| LAGASSÉ, Bob | Dawson Trail | PC |
| LAGIMODIERE, Alan | Selkirk | PC |
| LAMONT, Dougald | St. Boniface | Lib. |
| LAMOUREUX, Cindy | Tyndall Park | Lib. |
| LATHLIN, Amanda | The Pas-Kameesak | NDP |
| LINDSEY, Tom | Flin Flon | NDP |
| MALOWAY, Jim | Elmwood | NDP |
| MARCELINO, Malaya | Notre Dame | NDP |
| MARTIN, Shannon | McPhillips | PC |
| MICHALESKI, Brad | Dauphin | PC |
| MICKLEFIELD, Andrew | Rossmere | PC |
| MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice, Hon. | Seine River | PC |
| MOSES, Jamie | St. Vital | NDP |
| NAYLOR, Lisa | Wolseley | NDP |
| NESBITT, Greg, Hon. | Riding Mountain | PC |
| PEDERSEN, Blaine | Midland | PC |
| PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon. | Turtle Mountain | PC |
| REDHEAD, Eric | Thompson | NDP |
| REYES, Jon, Hon. | Waverley | PC |
| SALA, Adrien | St. James | NDP |
| SANDHU, Mintu | The Maples | NDP |
| SCHULER, Ron | Springfield-Ritchot | PC |
| SMITH, Andrew, Hon. | Lagimodière | PC |
| SMITH, Bernadette | Point Douglas | NDP |
| SMOOK, Dennis | La Vérendrye | PC |
| SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon. | Riel | PC |
| STEFANSON, Heather, Hon. | Tuxedo | PC |
| TEITSMA, James, Hon. | Radisson | PC |
| WASYLIW, Mark | Fort Garry | NDP |
| WHARTON, Jeff, Hon. | Red River North | PC |
| WIEBE, Matt | Concordia | NDP |
| WISHART, Ian | Portage la Prairie | PC |
| WOWCHUK, Rick | Swan River | PC |
| <i>Vacant</i> | Morden-Winkler | |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 1, 2023

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: And I have a statement for the House.

I must inform the House that Cameron Friesen, the honourable member for Morden-Winkler, has resigned his seat in the House effective February 3rd, 2023.

I'm therefore tabling his resignation and my letter to the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council advising of the vacancy created in the House membership.

Introduction of New Members

Madam Speaker: I'm now pleased to inform the Assembly that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a letter indicating the election of Kevin Klein as member for the constituency of Kirkfield Park.

I hereby table the notice of the return of the member elected.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to present to you Kevin Klein, the new MLA for the constituency of Kirkfield Park. He has taken the oath and has signed the roll and he now rightly has claimed the seat in the Manitoba Legislature.

Madam Speaker: On behalf of all honourable members, I wish to welcome you to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and to wish you well in your parliamentary career.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I have a statement that I would like to make to the House, and it is a ruling clarification.

I would like to take a moment to clarify for all members some issues relating to the matter of privilege ruling delivered by the Deputy Speaker (Mr. Micklefield) on December 1st, 2022. During the intersessional period, I've received questions from members about this ruling and I feel it is important for the House to understand the implications of the information shared with the House on that day.

As a reminder, this ruling dealt with a matter of privilege raised by the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) in relation to the honourable member from Midland striking her chair with the intent of stopping her from speaking in the Chamber on November 22nd, 2022. For valid procedural reasons, the Deputy Speaker ruled that a prima facie case of privilege had not been established with this matter. However, he also went on to indicate that the action in question by the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), and I quote, was received as a violation of personal space, and it was clearly offensive and upsetting for the honourable member for Point Douglas. End quote.

The Deputy Speaker also strongly advised all members, and I quote, "to bear in mind how your actions in this place might be received by others, and govern yourselves accordingly." End quote.

I would like to clarify the meaning of this ruling for all members. While this ruling did not find a prima

facie case of privilege, let me be clear when I say that this ruling does not mean that striking another member's chair was an appropriate action for a member in this Chamber. Such an action, or any other form of physical aggression, is unacceptable between members of this Legislature and has no place in this Chamber or in committee rooms.

I am aware that when members are moving their chairs around amongst their desks, sometimes they might inadvertently bump into someone else's chair. I trust all members to be careful and respectful in those moments, but for the record that is not the kind of action I'm speaking of here. I'm speaking of a deliberate, physical action against another member, which would be unacceptable.

I dearly hope that this is not a situation we will face again in this place, but let me be clear that any similar occurrence in the future would also be considered unacceptable and could be ruled as a breach of order. Further, this statement will be appended to the original ruling in our House records for future reference so that any member, House leader, Speaker, or clerk referring back to this matter will see the original ruling together with this statement of clarification. This will ensure that there is no ambiguity on this matter in the future and the precedent set for this Assembly will be that no form of physical aggression will be acceptable between members, and any such action would be out of order in our Chamber or in our committee rooms.

I hope that clarifies this matter for the House, and I employ all—implore all members to adhere to this direction at all times in this place.

I can also assure members that I will remain attentive to decorum in the Chamber, though I trust that we will not see a recurrence of such behaviour.

* (13:40)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 12—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2023

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 12, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2023, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, this is an exciting and much-anticipated day on the legislative calendar where the annual minor amendments and corrections act is introduced to correct typographical errors, numbering errors, translation errors in bills, and all members can look at the various acts that are amended and the corrections that are made, and I look forward to its full support and its speedy passage.

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations First Report

Mr. Dennis Smook (Chairperson): I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on December 5, 2022, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

Committee Membership

- *Hon. Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Mr. GUENTER*
- *Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE*
- *Mr. SANDHU*
- *Mr. SMOOK*
- *Mr. WASYLIW*

Your Committee elected Mr. SMOOK as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE as the Vice-Chairperson.

Officials Speaking on Record

- *Eric Herbelin, President & Chief Executive Officer, Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

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

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Crown Corporations
Second Report**

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for—okay. The honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield).

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Vice-Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the second report on the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its Second Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on December 12, 2022 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2007*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008*

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2010*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2011*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2013*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2014*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2015*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2017*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

Committee Membership

- Mr. BRAR
- Mr. MICKLEFIELD
- MLA MARCELINO
- Hon. Mr. SMITH (Lagimodière)
- Mr. TEITSMA
- Hon. Mr. WHARTON

Your Committee elected Mr. TEITSMA as the Chairperson.

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

Officials Speaking on Record

- Robert Olson, Chief Executive Officer, Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation
- Karl Loepf, Chair of the Board, Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2005
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2006
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- Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2016
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- Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2018
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations Third Report

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the third report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on December 13, 2022, at 1:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

Committee Membership

- Mr. BUSHIE
- Mr. MARTIN
- Mr. MICKLEFIELD
- Hon. Mr. REYES
- Hon. Mr. SMITH (Lagimodière)
- Mr. WASYLIW

Your Committee elected Mr. MICKLEFIELD as the Chairperson.

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

Substitutions received during Committee proceedings:

- Mr. WOWCHUK for Hon. Mr. REYES

Officials Speaking on Record

- *Manny Atwal, President and Chief Executive Officer, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation*
- *Bonnie Mitchelson, Chair of the Board, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

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.

**Standing Committee on Crown Corporations
Fourth Report**

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Vice-Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the fourth report on the standing—of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on January 12, 2023, at 12:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

Committee Membership

- Hon. Mr. FRIESEN
- Hon. Mr. HELWER
- Mr. MICKLEFIELD
- Mr. SALA
- Mr. TEITSMA
- Mr. WASYLIW

Your Committee elected Mr. TEITSMA as the Chairperson.

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

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- Mr. LAMONT

Officials Speaking on Record

- *Jay Grewal, President & Chief Executive Officer, Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board*
- *Edward Kennedy, Chair of the Board, Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Hydro-Electric Board for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

Mr. Micklefield: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Crown Corporations
Fifth Report**

Mr. Dennis Smook (Chairperson): I wish to present the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Crown—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on January 16, 2023, at 1:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of Efficiency Manitoba for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019*
- *Annual Report of Efficiency Manitoba for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020*
- *Annual Report of Efficiency Manitoba for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

Committee Membership

- *Mr. LAGASSÉ*
- *Ms. NAYLOR*
- *Hon. Mr. PIWNIUK*
- *Mr. SALA*
- *Mr. SMOOK*
- *Hon. Mr. WHARTON*

Your Committee elected Mr. SMOOK as the Chairperson.

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

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record:

- *Mr. LAMONT*

Officials Speaking on Record

- *Colleen Kuruluk, Chief Executive Officer, Efficiency Manitoba*
- *Jeannette Montufar, Chair of the Board, Efficiency Manitoba*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- *Annual Report of Efficiency Manitoba for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2019*
- *Annual Report of Efficiency Manitoba for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2020*
- *Annual Report of Efficiency Manitoba for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

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

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs First Report

Mr. Dennis Smook (Chairperson): I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

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 First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on December 19, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2021*

Committee Membership

- *Mrs. COX*
- *Hon. Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Hon. Mr. JOHNSTON (Assiniboia)*
- *MLA MARCELINO*
- *Mr. MOSES*
- *Mr. SMOOK*

Your Committee elected Mr. SMOOK as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mrs. COX as the Vice-Chairperson.

Officials Speaking on Record

- *Shipra Verma, Chief Electoral Officer, Elections Manitoba*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following report as presented:

- *Annual Report of Elections Manitoba for the year ending December 31, 2021*

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

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs
Second Report**

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I wish to present the second report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Legislative—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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

Meetings

Your Committee met on January 26, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

Committee Membership

- *MLA FONTAINE*
- *Hon. Mrs. GUILLEMARD*
- *Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE*
- *Mrs. SMITH (Point Douglas)*
- *Hon. Ms. SQUIRES*
- *Mr. TEITSMA*

Your Committee elected Mr. TEITSMA as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Ms. MORLEY-LECOMTE as the Vice-Chairperson.

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record:

- *Ms. LATHLIN*

Officials Speaking on Record

- *Sherry Gott, Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth*
- *Karlee Sapoznik Evans, Deputy Advocate for Children and Youth*

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021*
- *Annual Report of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2022*

MLA Fontaine: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Tabling of reports?

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: And I'm going to do something a little bit out of order because I'm not sure when our students will be leaving, but I would like to acknowledge the students we have in the gallery today.

Seated in the public gallery from Henry G. Izatt Middle School, we have 54 grade 9 students under the direction of Kelly Orloff, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan).

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

Self-Injury Awareness Day

Hon. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): Each year, March 1st marks international Self-Injury Awareness Day, a global event held to raise awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding self-injury.

Approximately 25,000 Canadians are hospitalized each year after intentionally injuring themselves. It is important to note that this number does not capture those who do not seek help, often due to the stigma associated with self-injury.

The past three years have been challenging for all Manitobans. The social, emotional and financial effects of the pandemic have negatively impacted our

mental health, and for some, it has resulted in self-injury incidents.

Our government recognizes that mental health is a significant concern in Manitoba and that timely access to mental health services and supports is vital. As we move forward with implementation of our five-year road map, addressing mental health challenges faced by Manitobans, including those who may be dealing with self-injury, is a priority.

If you know someone who might be struggling with self-injury or other mental health challenges, please check in on them and remind them that you care.

* (13:50)

For those of you who are struggling today, know that you are not alone. There are a number of services available to provide support to you or your loved ones, including Klinik's 24-7 crisis line and Kids Help Phone. I encourage you to visit the Department of Mental Health and Community Wellness web page for more information about these services.

Thank you.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): This week is self-injury awareness week, a global awareness event that draws attention to the prevalence of self-harm and self-injury in our society.

Many people, particularly young people, use self-injury as a way to cope with mental health issues such as anxiety, depression or difficult situations such as loss, trauma and violence.

Other reasons why someone may cause injury to themselves are to turn emotional pain into physical pain, to counter feelings of emptiness or numbness or to try and regain control of their body. Self-injury is often accompanied by difficult or overwhelming thoughts and feelings.

Sadly, many people who engage in self-injury may feel embarrassed or ashamed because of the stigma surrounding self-injury and mental health issues in general. This may stop people from seeking help in the form of counselling, mental health treatments or even just the support of their family and community.

It is crucial that we speak up and raise awareness about self-injury to end the stigma and encourage people to seek the help that they need so that they can stop and end self-injury.

We know that talking and raising awareness about self-injury isn't enough. We need wraparound supports for the underlying causes of self-harm and self-injury.

While there are many reasons a person may engage in self-harm, common roots include trauma, addictions and mental health injury-issues.

Thank you to the families, caregivers and supports—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the member to conclude her statement? *[Agreed]*

Leave has been granted.

Mrs. Smith: Thank you to the families, caregivers and supports on the front line for the love and compassion that you provide each and every day for those who need it.

To anyone who is struggling with self-injury, I encourage you to seek the help you need. Know that you are loved, you are sacred, you are not alone and you deserve the supports that you need.

Miigwech.

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

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

Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: Self-injury is more common than most of us realize. I suspect the incidence of self-injury may have increased during the COVID pandemic. Certainly, there's been a substantial increase in anxiety and mental health challenges for youth, and it can affect all genders.

It may relate not just to COVID itself but to the very widespread use of social media. When children and youth see self-injury on social media, it can appear to be normalized. We have to recognize that for a teenager, life can be hard.

We have to recognize that youth need a way to release strong emotions and to help them see that there are alternatives to self-harm. Each child, youth or adult who indulges in self-harm is unique and needs individual support from family and friends and from our society in the form of health professionals or from

those who are in our social support systems. The support needs to be holistic and non-judgmental; there is not one simple answer.

In its severest form, self-harm can lead to attempted suicide or suicide. We need as a society to be better able to recognize this possibility and to be there for the person with empathy and support, whether as individuals or as health professionals, when and where such support is needed. We need to be sure we don't dismiss the concerns, but rather, ensure there is continuing support, often including peer support from those with lived experience.

I hope we can all work together, and not just on Self-Injury Awareness Day, to achieve a better understanding of self-harm—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the member to conclude his statement? [*Agreed*]

Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, I hope we can all work together to achieve a better understanding of self-harm when it occurs and of the support and help needed for those who engage in self-harm.

Thank you, merci, miigwech.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Lagimodière.

Some Honourable Members: Selkirk.

Madam Speaker: Sorry, the honourable member—welcome to the member—member Lagimodière from Selkirk.

Red River Floodway

Mr. Alan Lagimodière (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, a lot can be said about nature's ability to maintain balance and the effects that humans can have on that balance.

The Selkirk constituency, located on the banks of the north Red River, is a prime example of the impacts of human activity over time.

Many Manitobans firmly believe residents in this area chose to live in a flood zone. Nothing is further from the truth.

Engineering reports dating back to the 1800s clearly show this area was protected from flooding by

a natural drainage pattern. The firm clay banks of the Red would hold the water, causing it to rise and divert around Selkirk through what is now called Parks Creek to the Oak Hammock Marsh area.

South of Selkirk, the Red River Settlement, present-day Winnipeg, would experience devastating floods in 1826, 1852, 1861 and 1950.

To protect Winnipeg and populated areas to the south from flooding, the Red River Floodway was completed in 1968 with devastating effects downstream. It diverts high-river water around Winnipeg and brings it back into the Red River at Lockport. Unfortunately, this upsets the natural flood protection previously experienced by residents living north along the river.

The floodway increases the volume of water and shortened the time it takes for spring water to arrive in the region. Today, ice jams in the north Red River have become a common occurrence, often with devastating consequences.

Now, land that historically experienced spring flooding is protected, while land that was once naturally protected now floods.

Artificial drainage provides protection to heavily populated areas but removes nature's ability to process moisture. Human activity has clearly altered natural flood patterns, water levels and flow volumes.

Women's History Month and International Women's Day

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Today, is the start of Women's History Month and the beginning of International Women's Day celebrations.

There's much to in—celebrate. Women and girls continue to make inspiring advancements in a myriad of different spheres.

And yet, women and girls continue to suffer in unimaginable ways.

We saw the murder of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini and many other young Iranian women by the Islamic Republic of Iran. This morning, we learned that there have been several chemical attacks against school girls. Iranian women and girls have responded by starting a revolution.

We've witnessed the rape and murder of Ukrainian women and girls in Putin's illegal war.

The Taliban have banned education for women and girls. Child marriage is rampant across the

country. Afghan women and girls have no legal recourse.

The rolling of reproductive rights back to a time when women couldn't have their own bank accounts with the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, with devastating consequences, including forced births and maternal deaths.

Here in Manitoba, we have the continued epidemic of MMWIG2S, women and girls who can't access sexual assault examinations, women who experience the—some of the highest rates of gender-based violence in Canada.

All of these highlight a global gender apartheid against women and girls and are repugnant examples of misogyny by those in positions of power.

Today and always, I lift up and celebrate women and girls on the front lines of transformative work that often goes unnoticed.

And finally, in the words of brave Afghan women and girls, women, life, freedom.

Miigwech.

I Love to Read Month

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Madam Speaker, I rise today to say thank you to the many teachers and hundreds of students in Rossmere who welcomed me into their classrooms for I Love to Read Month.

As many of us know, February is I Love to Read Month, a month dedicated to the love of reading and being read to. I thoroughly enjoyed reading to students in my constituency, talking with them about what it means to serve in government and asking—and answering, sorry, their many interesting questions.

I personally love to read because I benefit daily from pausing everything else in order to read. There is nothing quite like turning off the noise and busyness of a cellphone or computer and stopping to read a book.

* (14:00)

Students told me they love to read because reading the right things restores the soul, expands the mind, guides decisions, informs opinions, inspires for the future and opens a world of knowledge and imagination in a way nothing else can.

Students told me reading creates community, shares stories and invites us to try something new. We can read novels, cookbooks, instructions, poems,

biographies, scriptures, histories, laws, notes, texts, emails and cards.

Madam Speaker, these students are right. I think it's great when people of any age read, whether kids reading alone, families reading together, teachers reading to students or MLAs reading in classrooms. I love I love to read, because I love to read.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Seven Oaks Filipino Employees Association

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): During the break, I was able to attend the Seven Oaks Filipino Employees Association's 10th year anniversary celebration. The night was a celebration of unwavering commitment towards the integration of Filipino language, culture and values within our community.

Seven Oaks Filipino Employees Association, also known as SOFEA Inc., is a group of vibrant and resilient Filipino and Filipino-Canadian employees who are seeking to contribute positively to the promotion and practice of just and diplomatic relations within the wider community while maintaining their Filipino cultural values and traditions.

Since June 2012, this group of Filipino professionals and community members has been instrumental in establishing Filipino bilingual programs, holding annual holidays, cultural and Philippine Independence Day celebrations and countless fundraising events to benefit the community and cultural programs.

SOFEA is a valuable asset to the Seven Oaks School Division and has continued to help us achieve our common goals and celebrate diverse communities for over 10 years.

Please join me in thanking all members of the Seven Oaks Filipino Employees Association very much for dedicating so much continued hard work and perseverance in building and maintaining a thriving community in The Maples. We look forward to countless years to come of more wonderful and empowering community initiatives from SOFEA.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Men's Mental Health

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Sorry, excuse me. I figured I'd make it through this without any tears, but I don't think it will work.

Since the last time I stood up and talked about my personal mental health struggles, I felt it was

important to update the House and the public and to give my sincere thanks for the—and—for the outcry of support.

When I shared, I never could have imagined what would follow. It started with messages of support from my colleagues, my close friends and my family. About the same time, emails started to come and they didn't stop for weeks: emails of gratitude and support, words of encouragement, of stories of similar situations, from all over Canada.

There were stories shared of men who had lost everything because of their mental health battles. Many shared that they were never told that it's okay to be sad, to hurt and that it's okay to get help. And, in some instances, maybe they were told it's okay, but like me, they didn't feel they were deserving of getting help because others' problems are a lot bigger than theirs.

We received calls from men who said they had never told anyone about their struggles, not even their closest family, because they were embarrassed. And now, only since hearing my story and seeing my vulnerability, did they open up.

I had emails and calls from people who had lost very important male figures and they had no idea that they were even hurting. Stories of moms and dads that lost sons, wives that lost husbands, sisters that lost brothers, brothers that lost brothers, children that lost fathers and grandfathers.

As I was still struggling to heal and help myself, my CA, Aftan, recognized I needed some time and stepping up—she stepped up and started taking care of all the individuals that reached out. She took the time to listen and provide the information and resources that they needed. I'm incredibly grateful for her.

It didn't take long for me to recognize the importance—how important it is for men's mental health to be normalized. We need to talk about these things, we need to help support each other. The stigmas around men's mental health must end.

My statement grew to so much more than just my story. It came from amazing conversations with people far and wide. Conversations that sparked something inside of me to keep talking, to keep sharing and to figure out in the long term what I could do to help boys and men that need help.

Even though small bouts of darkness still knock at the door of my mind, I can now, with the help of my medication, manage it. It's okay not to be okay. It's

okay to seek help. It's not okay to go through these things alone.

Together we can all help. Check on the people in your life and make sure they are okay. Have conversations—difficult conversations—and let's normalize taking about mental health struggles.

Thank you.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health-Care System Emergency Room Services

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I just want to take a moment to publicly wish our colleague from Dawson Trail well on his journey and to thank him for sharing.

A Manitoban died in a hallway at the emergency room of the Health Sciences Centre on Monday night. I offer my heartfelt condolences to this person's friends and family.

We all know that there is a crisis in our health-care system. We've seen it in the hallways of hospitals and emergency rooms province-wide. It's a crisis that started under Brian Pallister and has continued under this Premier's time in office. Today, we saw the Health Minister duck questions about accountability.

So, would I like to ask the First Minister: Which specific steps is she going to take to ensure accountability and to ensure that when Manitobans head to an emergency room, they're going to get the care that they need.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): I, too, want to extend my best to the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé). We are here with you every step of the way, my friend, and we will always be there with you. Thank you for your courage and for standing up for men who are suffering with mental health and problems.

Madam Speaker, our thoughts and prayers go out to the family for the loss of their loved one. The—Manitobans should know that this matter remains under investigation and I think it would be inappropriate to comment on this issue further.

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

Palliative-Care Case Concern

Mr. Kinew: The Premier ought to commit that those accountability questions will be shared publicly in a way that respects transparency as soon as possible.

We know that the question in the emergency rooms extends beyond the hospitals and even into people's homes. We've heard many heart-wrenching stories recently about the disrepair of our home-care system.

I want to acknowledge that we're joined today by Eric De Schepper, who is in the gallery. I think we are all familiar with the situation of his wife, Katherine Ellis, who passed away recently in some very difficult situation. She did not receive the services she'd need, and, in fact, there were some additional stresses add to Mr. De Schepper after her passing.

Of course, I want to offer my condolences to Mr. De Schepper, thank him for his advocacy and also to encourage all of our colleagues to listen closely to the message he has to share.

Will the Premier tell the House which specific steps are being taken to ensure that a case like this doesn't happen again?

Mrs. Stefanson: Certainly, we will be sharing the information with respect to the first issue and the matter that the Leader of the Opposition brought up.

* (14:10)

With the second issue that the Leader of the Opposition brought up, certainly our condolences go out to Mr. De Seffer [*phonetic*] and his entire family for the loss of their loved one, for his wife and their loved one.

And I know that just last week the Minister of Seniors was out announcing our seniors strategy and, certainly, home care was a significant part of that; I believe there was investment of almost \$15 million in home care, in—as part of that strategy, to ensure that people get access to the services that they need.

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

All-Party Committee

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, for the past seven years this government has cut home care, and they've attempted to privatize it. And today, we see the impact. And that's why so many home-care workers signed on to a letter echoing many of Mr. De Schepper's concerns after that story was brought to light.

Again, we know that in addition to fixing these concerns, there were also serious issues around communication and assessment that were brought to light by Mr. De Schepper's advocacy. And, of course, in the

end, we should all commit to bringing dignity to those walking through that end-of-life journey.

Will the Premier today commit to working across party lines to address this issue immediately by creating an all-party committee on home care?

Mrs. Stefanson: We certainly, on this side of the House, take these issues very, very seriously. And that's why the Minister responsible for Seniors was out last week talking about this very issue, and making investments and committed—committing to making those investments in our home-care system.

We want to ensure that Manitobans get the home care that they need when they need it; that's why we're investing more dollars in that area. The minister was out last week, and I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that there's more to come.

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

Carberry Manitoba ER Closure Inquiry

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, the health-care crisis, which started under Brian Pallister, has continued under this Premier. Hallway medicine is in our emergency rooms, and for folks who live in rural Manitoba, it's highway medicine.

The residents of Carberry are concerned. They know that seconds count when it's an emergency, and they need a real plan for their local health-care centre. They're concerned specifically that now that the Glenboro ER has cut their hours, that the ER in Carberry will close this coming September.

Will the Premier tell the people of Carberry whether their ER will close this fall?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): We continue to make record investments in our health-care system: more than \$7.2 billion in the budget for last year, Madam Speaker, and over a billion dollars more than the NDP ever did.

I will remind the member opposite that under the previous NDP government, hallway and highway medicine existed at that time, Madam Speaker, and there wasn't a worldwide pandemic that they were facing at the time. I can tell you, there are significant challenges with respect to health human resources, and we know that we're working with our counterparts across the country to address those matters.

We've invested over \$200 million in health human resources to bring 2,000 more health-care workers to the province of Manitoba, so we're committed to getting that work done for Manitobans.

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

Rural Manitoba Health-Care Services

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, rural Manitobans are suffering because of this Premier's cuts to health care. We've seen the EMS station close in Wawanesa; Glenboro ER has had to cut hours; Carberry could close next—that's what they've been told by the Prairie Mountain Health authority.

It's said that there are no longer health-care services along Highway 2 in Manitoba. That's the word from the Westman, Madam Speaker, and you can go to the Interlake and ask the folks of Eriksdale how it's going with them. They're fighting to keep their ER open. It's all because this Premier is still implementing Brian Pallister's plan to cut health care in Manitoba.

I'll table the documents for her to review. Will the Premier tell the House when people in Glenboro, Eriksdale, Wawanesa and other communities can expect to get their health-care services back, and what actions is she taking to help the people of Carberry avoid a similar fate?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, it may be a new session, but it's the same old, same old NDP. I can tell you, the Leader of the Opposition continues with his litany of false accusations that he continues to put on the record in this Chamber.

The fact of the matter is we are spending more than \$7.2 billion in our health-care system, a billion dollars more than the NDP ever did when they were in power, Madam Speaker. We don't want to go, and Manitobans don't want to go, back to the dark days when members opposite closed 20 rural ERs.

We will continue to make the investments in health care so that Manitobans get the health care they need, when they need it.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, I asked the questions in a straightforward manner, and there was no answer

from the Premier about whether Carberry's ER is going to close and no hint of a plan of action to help people in communities like Glenboro, Wawanesa, Eriksdale, Melita, Boissevain or any of the other communities that are experiencing health closures—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —right now under this PC government.

These are folks in the Westman, the Parkland, the Interlake, who have been asking for a real plan for health care from this government, and yet all they get are more cuts and more talking points from the PC government.

Will the Premier tell the House if she plans to continue with Brian Pallister's health-care-cut agenda?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, again, Madam Speaker, the litany of false accusations.

The fact of the matter is, is that we are investing more in health care every day in the province of Manitoba to ensure that Manitobans get the health care that they need, when they need it.

I will tell the Leader of the Opposition, I'll remind him he voted against this, Madam Speaker, continuously in this Chamber: \$200-million investment for 2,000 more health-care workers in the province of Manitoba. This is nothing that's unique in the province of Manitoba. Health human resources is an issue right across this country. We're working diligently with our counterparts across the country to ensure that we have more of a—more—like a solution for this challenge.

That's a significant investment. That's more than the NDP has ever offered, and I can tell you, the Leader of the Opposition, what is his plan, Madam Speaker? He has no plan.

Home-Care Services Government Record

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, unlike the Premier, who is also known as Pallister's failed Health minister, our leader and our NDP team understands the No. 1 issue for Manitobans is fixing their health care.

Case in point, Madam Speaker, is the crisis in home care. Seniors and elders are not receiving the dignified care they deserve, and front-line workers are being disrespected again and again and again, and it's because of Brian Pallister and the Premier's cuts to health care in our province.

Will the minister acknowledge to this House that there's a crisis in home care in our province because of her government's cuts?

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): I would indicate to the member that, yes, there are challenges in home care, and our government recognizes that, and that's why this government initiated the senior strategy to address—to hear the people of Manitoba and to address their needs as per the concerns that they brought forward.

The senior strategy was brought forward to the people of Manitoba with a number of different focuses, and those focuses are now being—action's being initiated to address those needs, including home care.

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

Staff Vacancy Rate

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, the facts show just how much damage the PC cuts have caused. FIPPA documents that I will table show vacancy rates for home care are only getting worse. Vacancies increased to over 20 per cent in 2022, up 10 per cent from the year prior. That's a terrible record and it's only getting worse.

Will the minister tell the House why her government has cut support for home-care workers and treated our front-line workers so terribly?

Mr. Johnston: I would correct the member. This government has done nothing but support home care in this province, and will continue to do that. *[interjection]* Thank you.

* (14:20)

Madam Speaker, in our recent announcement, we announced that we were going to contribute significant amount of dollars: \$12 million-plus, to self and family care—managed care, which is—addresses fully—or, more fully, the needs of the seniors of Manitoba. We are reviewing home care as a whole and we will be bringing forth a further model to enhance home care.

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

Number of Seniors Receiving Service

MLA Asagwara: So, Madam Speaker, I guess Manitobans are now going to have to wait for yet another report from this government while they don't

receive the home care that they need? Manitobans deserve good home care today, and the only response from this government is more reports maybe, and privatization.

FIPPA documents that I'll table show vacancies increase. The number of clients has gone down by over 1,000, and the number of hours of care has gone down by over 265,000 hours. That's close to a 10 per cent decline. The health-care cuts need to stop.

Why is the minister cutting the number of seniors receiving home care in our province?

Mr. Johnston: Madam Speaker, I'm happy to provide the member with a copy of the seniors strategy that was just brought forward which indicates a number of initiatives that are brought forward to help seniors, including home care.

Obviously, the member wasn't aware of the million dollar—millions-of-dollar investment that we just brought forward in regard to self- and family-managed care supports, and, as I indicate, the opposition can get ready for more announcements.

Education System Funding Levels

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): The PCs continue to cut and underfund education and fail Manitoba students.

At a public meeting on Monday night—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare:—Seven Oaks School Division showed they're being forced to consider cutting teachers because of the actions of this Stefanson government. Learn to swim, school busing for grade 7 to 12 students, and as many as 50 staff positions are potentially on the chopping block, all thanks to PC cuts that have been going on since 2016.

Will they finally do the right thing and begin fully funding public education today?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome everybody back—all political stripes—back into this great Chamber of ours, Madam Speaker. Also, I'd like to congratulate each and every one of everybody who participated in I Love to Read Month, Inclusive Education Month and, of course, Black History Month.

It's unfortunate that my friend from Transcona continues to put misinformation on the record.

Madam Speaker, Seven Oaks School Division received a 3.8 per cent overall increase. It went from \$88.4 million to 91.7. That's more, not less. I wish the member from Transcona would improve his math skills.

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

Mr. Altomare: Well, Madam Speaker, it would be great if the minister actually attends some of these information meetings because then he would hear fully what's happening in schools everyday in this province. And it's been underfunded since 2016 and they know it, and they're feeling the cuts in the classrooms. These cuts have hurt the quality of education and the services that our children receive.

Will he finally do the right thing? Fully fund and stop cutting education today?

Mr. Ewasko: I'm just checking with you. You might want to stop the clock—just checking to see if my microphone is working. Can you hear me okay, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: We can hear you fine.

Mr. Ewasko: Okay, great.

Thanks, Madam Speaker, because, unfortunately, it looks like my friend from Transcona—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —is having difficulty, and just I would like to alert him to the fact that there are earpieces in the desk.

Madam Speaker, with this side of the House, has more than funded—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —education since we've taken government. Madam Speaker, \$100 million promised in just two week—couple weeks ago, in the funding announcement disclosure. That's a 6.1 per cent increase.

I wish the member from Transcona would check the inflation tracker; that's well—more than inflation. Matter of fact, Madam Speaker, more than double inflation.

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

Mr. Altomare: The PC cuts and underfunding are hurting Manitoba students. That's been the case since 2016. School divisions are being forced to consider

cuts for a second straight year, and funding is not keeping pace with enrolment or inflation.

Superintendent Brian O'Leary said, we wish we were talking about how to improve nutrition programs—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare: —we wish we were talking about how to improve graduation rates, how to improve arts program; rather, we're just trying to figure out how we're going to hang on.

Pembina Trails, Madam Speaker, is forced to cut their all-day kindergarten program.

Will they finally admit and—to their underfunding and commit to stop cutting education today?

Mr. Ewasko: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to put some facts on the record. Once again, my from—friend from Transcona is listening to some form of senior executives from the NDP party—or, former senior executives from the NDP party.

I know my friend—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —from Transcona can do some basic math, Madam Speaker: so, Seven Oaks School Division received, this year alone, \$91.7 million; last year, it was \$88.4 million. So, I'm going to do simple math for the member: that is \$3.3 million more, that's 3.8 per cent increase.

The department has met with Seven Oaks School Division, Madam Speaker. I think they're getting the numbers right. Unfortunately, the member from Transcona can't seem to grasp the concept of numeracy. We'll work on that together, Madam Speaker.

Silica Sand Mine Project Water Supply Protection

Mr. Mark Wasylw (Fort Garry): On Monday, public hearings on the Sio Silica mine began at the Clean Environment Commission. This silica mine would be located near Vivian, Manitoba, and nearby residents are concerned about the potential environmental impacts. They're especially concerned that—the potential contamination of their water supply.

Residents need to know this government is committed to protecting water in our province, but they haven't seen any action.

What is this minister doing to protect the water supply for residents of eastern Manitoba? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Environment and Climate.

Hon. Kevin E. Klein (Minister of Environment and Climate): My apologies. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Clean Environment Commission has begun the hearings, which is an independent body that will be listening to the concerns of the residents. That's what we want to do is, we want to hear the concerns the residents.

The Environment and Climate Department, which is the regulatory body, has a duty to hear from all people—to hear from experts, to hear from community people, Indigenous leaders and such. And that's what our department is doing.

Mr. Wasyliv: Madam Speaker, they may change their minister, but the empty answers remain.

Manitobans deserve to have safe drinking water. Many concerned residents—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —are voicing their concerns at the Sio Silica mine project at the Clean Environment Commission over the coming weeks. They're worried that the Sio Silica mine project will negatively impact their water supply.

This government has been more focused on their internal dysfunction than doing their job to protect the province's water.

What concrete steps is this minister taking to prevent the water supply from being contaminated in eastern Manitoba?

* (14:30)

MLA Klein: First and foremost, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the civil servants who work in Environment and Climate, who take their job very seriously, that are taking the time to ensure everything is followed and that is what the CEC has been charged to do. They are doing community engagement. They will provide recommendations to our experts who will make the right decision.

They are listening to the people of Manitoba—something the other side of the House has never done.

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

Mr. Wasyliv: You know, what Manitobans don't need is a grandstanding minister. What they need is action. It is just important for this government to listen to their concerns and to take real action.

Residents are concerned that the Sio Silica mine project will impact their water bodies and clean drinking water, yet the government has been silent.

What concrete steps is this minister going to take, other than making speeches in this House?

MLA Klein: Madam Speaker, I am proud to sit on this side of the House because it was this government who stopped pot hash—or, potash being dumped into Lake Winnipeg.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas. *[interjection]*

Order. Order.

The honourable member for Point Douglas.

Safe Consumption Site Request for Facility

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Some things haven't changed since the last time we were in session, and that's the fact that the Stefanson government still hasn't opened a supervised consumption site, despite experts agreeing that they save lives.

Instead of listening to experts, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) misled Manitobans by claiming supervised consumption sites failed in California. However, California has never had a safe consumption site.

The new minister, however, has the opportunity to right the wrongs of her government and commit to opening a safe consumption site and saving lives here in Manitoba.

Will she do so today?

Hon. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): Every life matters.

Our government's committed to reducing risks for individuals, for their families and their loved ones. Our belief is the recovery for individuals who are in pursuit of recovery, and we will provide that through the many facilities, RAAM clinics and supports that we have put in place.

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

Mrs. Smith: It's sad that I have to keep getting up in this House and reminding this government that they have a responsibility to save lives in Manitoba. Simply providing self-harm supplies is not enough.

We know that there's hundreds of Manitobans that died last year. We know that those numbers are even higher than the experts have told us this year.

What is this minister going to do different than her government has done? She can be a leader. She can stand up. She can help save lives here in Manitoba, open a safe consumption site, be the leader that you were elected to be.

Will you open a safe consumption site today and help save lives?

Madam Speaker: Prior to the minister answering, I would just remind the member that all questions should be posed through the Chair.

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Nothing can undo tragedy, devastation and pain of losing anyone to addiction, and my heart goes out to everyone that has lost an individual.

But we have put supports in place to support individuals who are in pursuit of recovery. We have supplies of safe needles—or, clean needles, sorry, nalaxone [*phonetic*] kits and NARCAN products for individuals to use, and the availability of individuals to go to RAAM clinics if they need.

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

Mrs. Smith: If this government was being—doing enough, these numbers wouldn't keep rising here in Manitoba.

These are people's loved ones. These are Manitobans. These are people who elected them to come to this place.

There is suffering happening. People have trauma. They're not providing the wraparound services that they need to be providing. There's homeless people that are struggling. They're turning to addiction because this government is failing to support them.

So, again, I'll ask the minister: When are they going to listen to the experts—those on the front lines—that have proven that these save lives? Nobody in Canada has died in a safe consumption site.

So, will this minister do the right thing, change course from her government and open a safe consumption site today?

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Investing in mental health and recovery supports is the goal of our government. It is our priority.

And we have invested in medical support beds; we have invested in education; we have invested in services. And we are looking at 1,000 treatment spaces to offer supports for individuals seeking further support in their—

Home-Care Services Palliative-Care Case Concern

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): On Friday, February 17th, I spent an hour with Eric De Schepper as he shared his story of spending weeks caring for his terminally ill partner, Katherine, without respite because home care never showed up. Sadly, the next day—'Satur' the 18th—she died.

The WRHA only returned calls after he went to the media. They didn't send anyone to help until after his wife had died. And the message of condolence they sent, which I table, was a form letter.

This is a total failure from beginning to end, when care was needed most.

When can Mr. De Schepper, who's sitting in the gallery today, expect a public apology and a public explanation from the WRHA for what went wrong?

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): As Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, I can apologize to Mr. De Schepper for the anguish and the tragedy that he endured.

Our government is—finds that initiative unacceptable. I, as minister, have indicated that there is an inquiry going on through my office to determine exactly what went wrong. And I will be reviewing the whole situation and I will be acting on the results that I—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

Wages and Working Conditions

Mr. Lamont: I've spoken to many home-care workers who say they're being horribly mistreated at work, and that is why they're leaving.

I table a letter from a home-care worker that outlines the crisis: they've had no contract since 2018; no sick pay since 1974 when the program was created; workers may have, quote, no access to staff lunch rooms, water cooler, staff bathrooms, end quote; and

supervisors watch as they perform baths, peri-care, while the client is feeling stripped of their last shreds of dignity. Some clients actually cry out because of this invasion of their privacy.

That was sent last June 28th to the president and CEO of the WRHA, who said the concerns would be forwarded to HR and someone would respond. No one ever did.

Can the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) explain why this hasn't happened?

Mr. Johnston: I would indicate to the member that his commentary in regard to—ongoing negotiations and discussions with particular areas of employment with the government of Manitoba continue to go on and, Madam Speaker, ministers really aren't in a position to interfere with that process.

I can indicate to the member that this government is fully cognizant of its responsibilities to the health-care system, which include, certainly, fulfilling the needs of our seniors in regards to home care; and the seniors strategy, as well as other initiatives, are addressing that.

* (14:40)

Home-Care Services Recruitment and Training

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, problems in home care today are many, as we've heard in relation to Katherine Ellis, with Tannis Duerinckx and many, many others.

Home care is now in a very bad situation because for the first six years the PC government failed to prepare, and failed to do what was needed: adequate recruitment and training and support and retention plan for workers. The government may say it was because of COVID, but the problem predates COVID. Indeed, COVID was a time when training and recruitment should have been dramatically increased, but wasn't.

How could the government have been so unprepared that we have an—such an unacceptable situation for home care in Manitoba today?

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): Our government recognizes that there are challenges in home care, primarily in regards to staffing, and our government is taking many initiatives to try to address that particular issue.

Our Health Minister invested, as the Premier indicated earlier, \$200 million in recruitment and

training in regards to our health-care workers. Our minister of—I'm not sure what Minister Reyes is—*[interjection]*—in Immigration, has certainly been taking on initiatives to try to further recruit.

So, Madam Speaker, we're aware of challenges—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Strategy to Address Homelessness Government Announcement

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Minister of Families announced Manitoba's homelessness strategy, appropriately named A Place for Everyone, which will provide funding supports for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Could the minister please elaborate on how yesterday's announcement will help those Manitobans who are most vulnerable?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I'd like to thank my friend from Rossmere for that question about our announcement yesterday, that I was very honoured to make on behalf of the government, with Jason Whitford from End Homelessness Winnipeg, and many, many other partners in the community who are helping us unveil our \$126-million strategy to ensure that everybody has a place in the province of Manitoba.

This includes 700 new units of social and affordable housing for individuals who are precariously housed or experiencing homelessness. This also includes moving some shelters to 24-7 space so that we could make sure that people are receiving the services and that it's a low-barrier offering to all those in our right to housing model of ensuring that everybody in Manitoba has a place to call home.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Arts and Culture Organizations Request for Funding Update

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): Despite all the cuts this government has inflicted on the people of Manitoba, they have been trying to get Manitobans to forget about their terrible record over the past seven years.

The government has announced funds for arts and culture organizations last August.

However, can the minister tell the House how much of their \$34 million arts and culture and sport in

community fund has been approved and flowed to community organizations.

Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Before I get to the members opposite question, I'd like to take a second and say what an honour it is for me to stand here as the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage, and I would like to thank the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) for entrusting me and giving me this opportunity.

Now to the member's question. I am very proud of the work that our government is doing on this side of the House. In Budget 2022, we committed to \$100 million over three years for Arts, Culture and Sport in Community. I look forward to making that announcement very shortly for arts, culture and sports in our community and I—on this side of the government we're getting things done. On that side of the government they're not doing anything.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak, on a supplementary question.

Ms. Lathlin: FIPPA documents, which I table, show only \$240,000 has been approved out of a budget of \$34 million for Arts, Culture and Sport in Community planning. That's less than a—0.7 per cent of their total promise. That's a failure, Madam Speaker.

This government makes all the announcements—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Lathlin: —they want, but they never seem to follow through.

Why has this government failed to provide the support they promised to Manitoba's arts and culture organizations?

Mr. Khan: Members on the opposite side of the House might not understand that this grant program was divided into multiple streams. One of the streams was for community celebrations. The other ones were for special initiatives and small capitals, and the last one was for large capital, Madam Speaker.

I'm happy to announce that in November 2020, our government awarded \$260,000 to community celebrations. The small initiatives—small capital—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Khan: Members opposite don't want to hear all the great things we are doing on this side to support art, culture and sport in our community.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

The honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Lathlin: We know that this government has a problem with failing to deliver, regularly underspending the areas they haven't cut.

Arts and culture organizations were promised support but are receiving nothing in return.

Will the minister tell the House why the government has broke its promise to arts and culture organizations this year. Ekosi. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: I am proud of what we are doing on this side of the House.

I have the great honour of being the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage. I have never had so many fans cheer for me, even when I was a former Winnipeg Blue Bomber, as I do on the opposite side of the House at what we are doing here today.

Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —on this side of the House, we announced \$100 million to go to arts, sports and culture in the community to help them coming out of the pandemic. Stay tuned—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) doesn't want to hear all the great things we are doing. Members opposite want to continue to heckle because we have great announcements to support our arts, sports and culture sectors in this province.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

South Perimeter Highway Noise Barrier

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) Residents of River Park South—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare:—community in Winnipeg are disturbed by the increasing noise levels caused by—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare:—traffic—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please. Order, please.

I'm going to call the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) and the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mr. Khan) to order. I don't think—I think they had enough time to ask questions and answers, and it is time for petitions and I am asking everybody to show respect to the person that is reading the petition.

The honourable member for Transcona, to move forward with his petition.

Mr. Altomare: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

(1) Residents of the River Park South community in Winnipeg are disturbed by the increasing noise levels caused by traffic on the South Perimeter Highway.

(2) The South Perimeter Highway functions as a transport route for semi-trucks travelling across Canada, making this stretch of the Perimeter especially loud.

(3) According to the South Perimeter Noise Study conducted in 2019, the traffic levels are expected to increase significantly over the next 20 years and backward—and backyard noise levels have already surpassed 65 decibels.

* (14:50)

(4) Seniuk Road, which runs alongside the South Perimeter, contributes additional truck traffic causing increased noise and air pollution.

(5) Residents face a decade of construction on South Perimeter Highway, making this an inappropriate time to add noise mitigation for the South Perimeter.

(6) The current barriers between the South Perimeter Highway and the homes of River Park South residents are a berm and a wooden fence, neither of which are effective at reducing the traffic noise.

Therefore, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to consult with those noise specialists and other experts to help determine the most effective

way to reduce the traffic noise and commit to meaningful action to address resident concern, and;

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation to help address this issue with a noise barrier wall along residential portions of the South Perimeter from St. Anne's Road to St. Mary's Road and for River Park South residents.

This petition, Madam Speaker, is signed Robin Hardman, Chris Hardman, Austin Ward and many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

Provincial Road 224

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Road 224 serves Peguis First Nation, Fisher River Cree Nation and surrounding communities. The road is in need of substantial repairs.

The road has been in poor condition for years and has numerous potholes, uneven driving surfaces and extremely narrow shoulders.

(3) Due to recent population growth in the area, there has been increased vehicle and pedestrian use of Provincial Road 224.

(4) Without repairs, Provincial Road 224 will continue to pose a driving hazard to many, many Manitobans who use it regularly.

(5) Concerned Manitobans are requesting that Provincial Road 224 be assessed and repaired urgently to improve safety for its users.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure to complete an assessment of Provincial Road 224 and implement the appropriate repairs using public funds as quickly as possible.

This petition has been signed by many, many fine Manitobans.

Ekosi.

Home-Care Services

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Home-care workers in Manitoba provide skilled and compassionate care that helps better the quality of life for thousands of Manitobans.

(2) Robust home-care services are proven to reduce the strain on health services and the demand for hospital beds.

(3) Home care reduces the demand for long-term-care beds as it allows people to continue living in their own home—excuse me, in their own space.

(4) Studies show that a third of the 200,000 Canadians living in long-term-care homes could stay home with proper home-care support.

(5) Investing in home care saves money, as daily services cost half the price of a long-term-care bed and one seventh the daily cost of a hospital bed.

(6) The provincial government's cuts to home care in Manitoba has resulted in chronic staffing issues that caused the WRHA to cancel 27,000 home-care appointments in the month of April 2022 alone.

(7) Many clients in Manitoba only receive home-care services once a day, whereas countries such as Denmark offer up to six visits a day.

(8) Home-care workers in Manitoba are paid poor wages, are offered little benefits, lack of sick time and are overworked, resulting in difficulty retaining and attracting workers.

(9) Home-care workers have been without a contract since 2017, due to this provincial government's interference in labour negotiations.

(10) Investing in home care is a proactive approach that would save the Province millions of dollars as well as allow more Canadians to age in place.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health and the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care to immediately increase investment in home-care services so that home-care workers can be paid a fair wage and clients can receive the level of service they require.

This petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by John Janvier [*phonetic*], Recel Galvarez [*phonetic*], Agnes Santiago and many other Manitobans.

Security System Incentive Program

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Cities across Canada and the United States, including Chicago; Washington, DC; Salinas, California; and Orillia, Ontario, are offering home security rebate programs that enhance public safety and allow for more efficient use of their policing resources.

(2) Home security surveillance systems protect homes and businesses by potentially deterring burglaries, reducing homeowners' and business insurance costs.

(3) Whole neighbourhoods benefit when more homes and businesses have these security systems.

(4) A 2022 Angus Reid Institute poll found that 70 per cent of Winnipeggers surveyed believe crime had increased over the last five years, the highest percentage found among cities in Canada.

(5) The same survey reported half of Winnipeggers polled do not feel safe walking alone at night, and almost 20 per cent of them said they are victims of a police-reported crime in the last two years.

(6) Although the public understands what the criminologists and community advocates point to as the main drivers of crime, namely the larger issues of lack of food, addictions and poverty, they support rebate programs like these as they help the most vulnerable in our community by removing financial barriers for personal protection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to work with the municipalities to establish a province-wide tax rebate or other incentive program to encourage residents and businesses to purchase approved home and business security protection systems.

This petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

South Perimeter Highway Noise Barrier

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

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

(1) Residents of River Park South community in Winnipeg are disturbed by the increasing noise levels caused by traffic on the South Perimeter Highway.

* (15:00)

(2) The South Perimeter Highway functions as a transport route for semi-trucks travelling across Canada, making this stretch of the Perimeter especially loud.

(3) According to the South Perimeter Noise Study conducted in 2019, the traffic levels are expected to increase significantly over the next 20 years and backyard noise levels have already surpassed 65 decibels.

(4) Seniuk Road, which runs alongside the South Perimeter, contributes additional truck traffic, causing increased noise and air pollution.

(5) Residents face a decade of construction on the South Perimeter, making this an appropriate time to add noise mitigation for the South Perimeter to these projects.

(6) The current barrier between the South Perimeter Highway and the homes of River Park South residents are a berm and a wooden fence, neither of which are effective at reducing the traffic noise.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to consult with noise specialists and other experts to help determine the most effective way to reduce the traffic noise and to commit to meaningful action to address resident concern.

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation to help address this issue with a noise barrier wall along residential portions of the South Perimeter from St. Anne's Road to St. Mary's Road and for the River Park—and for the River Park South residents.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Oh, this petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools

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

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

(1) According to census 2021, Punjabi is the fourth most spoken language in Canada and there are 33,315 people in Manitoba whose native language is Punjabi.

(2) Thousands of Punjabi newcomers are coming to Manitoba as students and as immigrants, looking to call this province home. People of Punjabi origin contribute a great deal to the social and economic development of Canada and Manitoba in fields such as education, science, health, business and politics.

(3) In coming to Manitoba, Punjabi newcomers make sacrifices, including distance from their cultural roots and language. Many Punjabi parents and families want their children to retain their language and keep a continued cultural appreciation.

(4) Manitoba has many good bilingual programs in public schools for children and teens available in other languages, including French, Ukrainian, Ojibwe, Filipino, Cree, Hebrew and Spanish. Punjabi bilingual programs for children and teens as well as Punjabi language instruction at a college and university level could similarly teach and maintain Punjabi language and culture.

(5) Punjabi bilingual instruction will help cross-cultural friendships, relationships and marriages and prepare young people to be multilingual professionals.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to take steps to implement Punjabi bilingual programs in public schools similar to existing bilingual programs and take steps to implement Punjabi language instruction in other levels of education in Manitoba.

This has been signed by Amandeep Kaur Brar, Davinder Kaur Gill and Supreet Singh and many other Manitobans.

Foot-Care Services

Mr. Eric Redhead (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) The population of those aged 55-plus has grown to approximately 2,500 in the city of Thompson.

(2) A large percentage of people in this age group require necessary medical foot care and treatment.

(3) A large percentage of those who are elderly and/or diabetic are living on low incomes.

(4) The northern regional health authority, N-R-H-A, previously provided essential medical foot-care services to seniors and those living with diabetes until 2019, then subsequently cut the program after the last two nurses filling those positions retired.

(5) The number of seniors and those with diabetes has only continued to grow in Thompson and the surrounding area.

(6) There is no adequate medical care available in the city and the region, whereas the city of Winnipeg has 14 medical foot-care centres.

(7) The implications and inadequate or a lack of 'podiatric' care can lead to amputations.

(8) The city of Thompson also serves as a regional health-care service provider, and the need for foot care extends beyond those served in the capital city of the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to provide the services of two nurses to restore essential medical foot-care treatment to the city of Thompson, effective April 1, 2022.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) According to census 2021, Punjabi is the fourth most spoken language in Canada and there are 33,315 people in Manitoba whose native language is Punjabi.

(2) Thousands of Punjabi newcomers are coming to Manitoba as students and as immigrants, looking to call this province home. People of Punjabi origin

contribute a great deal to the social and economic development of Canada and Manitoba in fields such as education, science, health, business and politics.

(3) In coming to Manitoba, Punjabi newcomers make sacrifices, including distance from their cultural roots and language. Many Punjabi parents and families want their children to retain their language and keep a continued cultural appreciation.

(4) Manitoba has many good bilingual programs in public schools for children and teens available in other languages, including French, Ukrainian, Ojibwe, Filipino, Cree, Hebrew and Spanish. Punjabi bilingual programs for children and teens as well as Punjabi language instruction at a college and university level could similarly teach and maintain Punjabi language and culture.

(5) Punjabi bilingual instruction will help cross-cultural friendships, relationships and marriages and prepare young people to be multilingual professionals.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to take steps to implement Punjabi bilingual programs in public schools similar to existing bilingual programs and take steps to implement Punjabi language instruction in other levels of education in Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Harmanpreet Singh, Kulwinder Kaur and Kamalpreet Kaur.

Thank you.

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) According to census 2021, Punjabi is the fourth most spoken language in Canada and there are 33,315 people in Manitoba whose native language is Punjabi.

* (15:10)

(2) Thousands of Punjabi newcomers are coming to Manitoba as a student and are—and as a immigrant, looking to call this province home. People of Punjabi origin contribute a great deal to the social and economic development of Canada and Manitoba in fields such as education, science, health, business and politics.

(3) In coming to Manitoba, Punjabi newcomers make sacrifices, including distance from their cultural

roots and language. Many Punjabi parents and families want their children to retain their language and keep a continued cultural appreciation.

(4) Manitoba has many good bilingual programs in Punjab—public schools for children and teens available in other languages, including French, Ukrainian, Ojibwe, Filipino, Cree, Hebrew and Spanish. Punjabi bilingual programs for children and teens as well as Punjabi language instruction at a college and university level could similarly teach and maintain Punjabi language and culture.

(5) Punjabi bilingual instruction will help cross-cultural friendships, relationships and marriages and prepare young people to be multilingual professionals.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to take steps to implement Punjabi bilingual programs in public schools similar to existing bilingual programs and take steps to implement Punjabi language instruction in other levels of education in Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Kapil Kochhar, Teg Singh and Palwinder Bains.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The petition to this background is as follows:

(1) According to census 2021, Punjabi is the fourth most spoken language in Canada and there were—and there are 33,315 people in Manitoba whose native language is Punjabi.

(2) Thousands of Punjabi newcomers are coming to Manitoba as students and as immigrants, looking to call this province home. People of Punjabi origin contribute a great deal to the social and economic development of Canada and Manitoba in fields such as education, science, health, business and politics.

(3) In coming to Manitoba, Punjabi newcomers make sacrifices, including distance from their cultural roots and language. Many Punjabi parents and families want their children to retain their language and keep a continual cultural—continued cultural appreciation.

(4) Manitoba has many great—good bilingual programs in public schools for children and teens available in other languages, including French,

Ukrainian, Ojibwe, Filipino, Cree, Hebrew and Spanish. Punjabi bilingual programs for children and teens as well as Punjabi language instruction at a college and university level could similarly teach and maintain Punjabi language and culture.

(5) Punjabi bilingual instruction will help cross-curricular friendships, relationships and marriages and prepare young people to be multilingual professionals.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to take steps to implement Punjabi bilingual programs in public schools similar to existing bilingual programs and take steps to implement Punjabi language instruction in other levels of education in Manitoba.

And this has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Could you please call for debate this afternoon, Bill 7 and Bill 9.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second readings of bills 7 and 9 this afternoon.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 7—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: So, I will therefore now call second reading of Bill 7, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Thank you, again, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Johnson), that Bill 7, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act, now—be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you, Madam Speaker—[interjection]—and thank you to my one colleague for their support.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Goertzen: Oh, not—and not having been a Blue Bomber, I have nothing to compare that to, Madam Speaker.

But I am very pleased to be able to stand in the House and once again bring forward this particular bill. And I hopeful for—I'm hoping for support and passage in this session.

I know that the members opposite, members of the NDP party, chose not to pass this bill in the last session, and I think that they're missing out on an opportunity and, frankly, I think what Manitobans are looking for—and that is for modernization of the liquor laws here in Manitoba. And there's a reason for that.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Our regulatory framework when it comes to liquor in the province of Manitoba has largely been unchanged, Mr. Acting Speaker, from the lifting of prohibition until the amalgamation of Manitoba's liquor and gaming regulators in 2014.

Over the past few years, and certainly during the pandemic, it's become very clear that the framework in place for liquor service licences—that is, places like restaurants and lounges where liquor is consumed on site—is a complex system of categories and authorizations that often don't meet both the consumer demand and also the consumer need.

Many of the current licence types have requirements unrelated to the safe and responsible service of liquor, which is very important, of course. You want to ensure that how liquor is both delivered and served and, of course, consumed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, not only is in keeping with what the consumer would demand, but meets public safety.

As a result, the current model presents challenges when Manitoba businesses want to pursue new service models or innovations within the hospitality industry while still being eligible to serve liquor. And that is often the case more recently where we've seen—and the pandemic—I've perhaps demonstrated some of this—where, not only was there a need to deliver the service differently when it came to liquor, either through liquor stores in some ways, but more specifically through restaurants, who were facing a variety of different challenges at that time. But they came forward with innovative ways, then, to be able to not only serve their food, but also then liquor service delivery, as well.

And a number of different changes happened during that time to allow restaurants to be able to do a number of different things. Sometimes it was under special order under the emergency order to allow that flexibility, and some of that went into legislation and some of that we're looking to make into legislation.

Several hospitality industry stakeholders have told us about the need for increased flexibility within the framework that would allow for more business and service models. Restrictions in the current model create barriers to entry and inequalities between industry participants based on their core business. Business owners want to be able to have seasonal or temporary businesses and to be able to focus more on the responsible service of liquor and less on unrelated requirements and restrictions.

This bill aims to not only simplify and streamline the licensing framework, but also provides Manitoba entrepreneurs with more equitable opportunities when it comes to serving liquor. The bill lays the groundwork within the liquor, gaming and cannabis act to create a modern and flexible licensing model via regulations.

Also, last year, our government passed amendments to allow for the delivery of liquor in take-out and delivery food orders by dining rooms and lounges. These changes, supported by industry and driven by change—changing consumer demand, became extremely important, as I have already mentioned, during the pandemic, and it changed how Manitoba's hospitality industry operated.

Building upon this well-received legislative reform, this bill will expand the program to all liquor service licences, not just dining rooms and lounges, providing them the option to sell liquor with takeout and delivery service.

* (15:20)

Finally, the bill will reduce red tape by reducing the number of liquor service licence categories and repealing requirements unrelated to the responsible service of liquor. Unnecessary regulatory requirements can make it difficult for businesses to access and navigate programs and conduct business. Reducing the number of licence categories and non-liquor-related requirements will make the licensing process easier and provide opportunity for entrepreneurial innovation.

As one last comment, I want to note that our government is committed to supporting the modernization efforts that will enhance opportunities for businesses

and increase economic development within the province. We know, for those who travel to other, not just countries but other provinces, they often see the different ways in which individuals can access liquor in other provinces. And, of course, Manitoba has its own model and we're not looking to perfectly replicate other jurisdictions, but there are certainly many things where consumers are saying things should be different and more modernized; that's true for businesses as well.

For example, one of the changes that would happen here when it comes to a stand-alone beverage room is currently there's required to be hotel rooms or rooms for let on a stand-alone beverage room. And one of the challenges of that, and when you look and you ask for the rationale of that, it might, in our modern sense, be thought to have been created so that an individual would have someplace to stay if they had too much to drink. In fact, these are rules and regulations that go back 100 years, and I am told by those who, not were involved with the drafting of those regulations 100 years ago, but who'd have an understanding of them, is that while we might look at it and go, it's because an individual would want a place to stay after they may have been drinking.

So, it's actually the fact that back in the day when people would travel and the means that they could travel that it was about ensuring that somebody had a place to drink where they were staying. So it was actually the opposite effect. But it's because these regulations and rules are so old, they simply don't meet the modern reality and what consumers are demanding.

So when we look at things, like across the street from the Legislature, there've been these pop-up beer cans, I think they're referred to. They're quite popular. I have not had the opportunity to frequent one, but I'm sure others have, and they're very well received and very popular, particularly during the summer. That requires, you know, a huge regulatory burden to allow those to happen. This would allow that to happen in a much more streamlined way because there are entrepreneurs and businesses who are trying to do that sort of thing, to provide other entertainment opportunities for Manitobans.

So I hope that the NDP will stop holding this particular change up, recognize that we're in a different time, recognize Manitobans are looking for more modernized ways to both see liquor delivered and to see it provided in their retail basis while the safety measures are still in place because that it is very

important. So I think that this draws that proper balance.

So I hope that the opposition will see fit to allow this bill to go at least to committee, where questions can be asked and the public can come and make presentations, and that might inform their decision on this bill as well.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Questions

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

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I'd like to ask the minister who was consulted when writing this bill.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I thank the member for the question.

Not only was there significant consultation with those in the broader industry when it comes to restaurants and hoteliers, but, of course, they often came to us. And because of what happened during the COVID-19 pandemic where a lot of rules were changed for home delivery and there was lots of questions about how licensing happened. Many of these things were tested during that time under the emergency order. But also, others came to us and said, hey, this is something do we not only need now, but when we get past the pandemic, we should be able to continue to do business in this way.

And this is part of that. So there was consultation, but also there was proactive individuals coming to government.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I was hoping that the minister could share if he's at all nervous that this legislation that could weaken the M-L-L-C's ability to sell liquor is going in the direction of privatized liquor sales.

Mr. Goertzen: So this particular piece of legislation isn't related to MLCC in particular. It's more about how businesses can operate. So, for example, you might have a beverage room right now under our

regulations who are required to have, you know, daily live entertainment or some kind of unique hospitality experience, or as I mentioned before, rooms—like, hotel rooms that are attached to them, which really aren't related at all to the safe consumption of alcohol. Those things aren't particular to how to consume alcohol safely.

So by changing the regulations, it'll allow for more options. Some of them are already operating, but they operate in a pretty difficult regulatory way. But it's not specific—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The minister's time has expired.

Ms. Naylor: Bill 7 fails to transparently set out clear guidelines and legislation, and instead it opts to set liquor service licences through regulation.

Why is this?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, I would disagree respectfully with my friend on the proposition that she puts forward. I think, in fact, what we have now is such a difficult regulatory environment when it comes to the licensing of liquor that it—that that itself isn't transparent. It is very, very difficult for people to understand how they would apply, where they would fit under the regulatory scheme as it currently exists and how they would operate.

And so sometimes there are workarounds that are created to allow things like the pop-up Beer Can, as an example, to be able to operate, but it's a work around current regulations. And that is far from transparent. So ensuring that we change the regulations and streamlining them makes it more transparent, not less.

Ms. Lamoureux: I'm hoping that the minister can just help me better understand if the government has a role or a responsibility in ensuring that those who are ordering alcohol are not underage.

Mr. Goertzen: There is a responsibility, of course. The responsibility is somewhat subrogated out to the individual organizations that are serving or selling liquor. So whether that's the Manitoba liquor commissions, or a restaurant, or another entity that is serving alcohol, the member will know there is an age restriction and there are a variety of different forms in which those are ensured that those are happening.

I've spoken to her in the past about individuals who go into organizations and try to purchase liquor even though they're underage, but they're doing that on behalf of sometimes the liquor commission to

ensure that there's compliance with the rules. There are other ways, I'm sure, that that is—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The honourable minister's time has expired.

Ms. Naylor: I had raised the question about making these changes under regulation instead of legislation, and I'm wondering how many different kinds of liquor service licences the government plans to establish through regulation.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, and I'm happy to provide, I think, at committee as I often do, more detail on some of the questions that are asked by members. I can say this with clarity, and that—there are too many, at this point, different forms of licences, and some of them which have nothing to do with the safe consumption of alcohol. And this isn't about trying to add on a variety of different licences; it's really about streamlining them so it's not so complex and so difficult for those who are trying to get into this industry to actually navigate around the regulations.

So I can provide for the member at committee the numbers that currently exist, and explain to her why that is so complex in the current system and how we want to streamline it.

* (15:30)

Ms. Naylor: Can the minister explain how much notice will be given to the public before new liquor servants—service licences are established?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, and ultimately there is a process through the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority, which is a part of the Department of Justice, so there's the liquor retailing side through MBLL, which is under a different ministry. The LGCA is under the Department of Justice, and that's more the enforcement end, if you want, or ensuring that the regulations are followed.

So they would get an application through the L-C-G-A and they would go through the process they need to go through. Sometimes there's hearings that are involved, so it may not be the same for every application because it depends if individuals come forward and want to speak to the applications, but those would also—we can certainly ensure that L-C-G-A—oh, LGCA—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The honourable minister's time has expired.

Ms. Naylor: This builds a little on the question from my colleague to the left, but will the government be

introducing any additional methods for verifying the age of people who are ordering using an online ordering app—ordering liquor—sorry—using an online app?

Mr. Goertzen: I really thank the member for the question, along with my friend from the Liberal caucus, as well. I think that's an interesting area of discussion. As technology changes, it may become more difficult to ensure that individuals are of the appropriate age to purchase liquor than the traditional way when they're walking up to a counter location.

So, I will confer with officials at LGCA to see what sort of initiatives they're currently doing, but those that they might also be planning to ensure that there are those who are ensuring that the appropriate age is met for those who are purchasing liquor, because I also, like the members opposite, want to ensure that that is the case.

Ms. Naylor: Will the government be introducing any additional training, safety measures or accountability measures for drivers who are working for any number of private companies delivering alcohol to people's homes?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, I think that there's an ongoing process when it comes to training and safety, that whether it's on the side of liquor delivery or liquor service. I know even our department regulates casinos. And I had the opportunity recently to tour one of the casinos in Manitoba and hear the different training that goes on to ensure that individuals aren't overconsuming and gambling, but also on that site there's liquor that can be purchased as well. So to hear about how individuals are continually trained to ensure that there's not overconsumption of a lot of different things that can affect people or to harm people.

So, I can assure the member that we are always looking—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The honourable member's time has expired.

Ms. Naylor: We know that this government has introduced a number of, you know, both looking at both legislation as well as regulation that raised great concern for us about additional privatization and this in regards to the liquor sales in Manitoba.

So, does the minister plan—I know he's not the minister of this department, but will his government stop pushing for more privatization?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, the member said that I'm not the minister for this department. I am the minister for my department, but I think what she was just trying to articulate is that the retailing end of liquor rests within a different department, and I know that if she wants to pass this bill quickly today then she'll have an opportunity later this afternoon to ask the minister responsible exactly that question.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Hearing no further questions, debate is now opened on this bill.

Debate

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): My understanding is that this bill amends the liquor, gaming, cannabis control act to eliminate specific categories of liquor service licences established in the act, and that the different types of liquor service licences will now be established through regulation instead of legislation. The ability to sell liquor with food that is purchased for delivery or take-out is no longer restricted to specified categories of liquor service licences.

So, the current liquor service licence system can be complicated, with some businesses falling into grey areas. And we've seen that; I've certainly seen that in my own constituency when it comes to temporary businesses or seasonal ones, pop-ups, that type of thing. And we certainly saw how important those were in our communities during the pandemic in particular. But also, it's signalled a bit of a change of how folks are doing business today.

However, rather than transparently setting out clear guidelines and legislation, the PCs' approach is to set guidelines through regulation—basically at the whim of the minister—and it's really unclear why they're taking this approach. And it's a difficult one for me to get behind because, you know, the Manitobans that I talk to don't have a lot of faith or trust in this current government, so allowing things to just be—decisions just to be made by the minister and not to have to come into these chambers for legislative changes is kind of scary for people. They don't understand why there can't be more transparency on this issue.

We know that, you know, for some time now, the PCs' approach to liquor in Manitoba has been undermining the public liquor system and pushing for more privatization. This is a public liquor system that works; it creates hundreds of millions in revenue and provides many Manitobans with good-paying jobs, and reinvests that money in addictions programs.

So, we are concerned about the lack of transparency from the PC government in Bill 7. We think that Bill 7 follows a general trend from the PCs of putting forward legislation that is scarce on details and leaves much up to the minister through regulation. And this allows the minister to make changes at a whim, without having to bring them through the legislative process and answer questions on the changes that they're making. And we think that Manitobans deserve to know why changes are being brought forward, and this trend toward specifics being left to regulation reduces transparency.

I also have additional concerns that—I'm not confident that all of the safety issues have been looked at and addressed. I'm not confident that this government's done any real, like, research or looking at the data about the wider societal impacts of some of these changes. Some countries have started to do this; I mean, you know, the delivery of liquor on such a wide scale, the way that it's happening now in the last few years, is different for Manitoba, and it's different for a lot of places as well.

So I did look at some studies in other parts of the world. In one study in Australia, almost a quarter of 18-to-24-year-olds who ordered liquor were not checked for ID. And, you know, I don't want to see something like that replicated here. Obviously 18-to-24-year-olds can order liquor at home, but most of them look young enough that one would expect them to be checked for ID.

In fact, my understanding is that everyone should be checked for ID, and I know that there are good, responsible drivers out there who take that time and make sure, regardless of the age of the person at the door. But the data's showing us that this isn't consistent, and I've certainly also heard stories from other jurisdictions in Manitoba where that's not happening, where the order—the wine bottles and beer—are literally just dropped at the door.

* (15:40)

Another study from—this one from the centre for alcohol research at La Trobe University, indicated that 28 per cent of people using rapid alcohol delivery services were—reported that they drank well past the point that they would normally have stopped because of their quick access to alcohol, particularly at a time, you know, if they're already inebriated, perhaps not making the best decisions for their health or well-being or their families. And in that study, it was a higher number—a full 36 per cent of people—reported that their ID was not checked at the door.

So, I know that these stats don't come from Manitoba; they don't even come from Canada, but I think what they show us is that a real effort needs to be made by government to ensure that the rules and the legislation we do have in place about people's safety with alcohol use, about underage drinking, and, you know, just that needing to show your ID at the door, and that the person who orders the alcohol is the one to receive the alcohol.

So, I haven't heard enough today to indicate how these concerns are going to be addressed in Manitoba, and certainly I know that we've had other conversations in this Chamber about the safety of drivers as well, and that's why I ask that question. How do we know drivers are safe when they go into certain situations where a lot of alcohol is being consumed, and how do we know that they're also being responsible and accountable, especially when there's a lot of pressure? Because a lot of these, you know, gig employees are under more and more pressure to get out and deliver things faster.

And I—you know, I have a daughter who is in her early 20s, so I can say for sure that there's been a lot of use of those kinds of delivery services in our home, and she complains probably every third order about a mistake that is made. So what happens when, instead of, accidentally, you know—when the driver drops off some dessert product when they actually ordered poutine from somewhere? What happens when the driver shows up bringing the liquor to the wrong address?

And, you know, at one time drivers really went from the restaurant to the house, but now there's so much pressure on drivers to meet their quotas, to get where they need to get, to try to make a little bit of money so that they're often picking up three or four orders on the way. And that's—you know, if you're not—if you don't promise a big tip, your order doesn't come for quite a long time and sometimes it's absolutely the wrong order.

So there are some real risks that have to be managed that I have not heard the government address.

I also want to mention that there are advocates who have asked for a restriction on alcohol delivery time frames. So, at one time—you know, we've had alcohol delivery for a long time from—through the Liquor Mart services. But the way that system worked is that there was a time frame for delivery. I don't remember what it was, but I think it was like kind of a 4-to-7-p.m. time frame. Orders had to be placed

before noon that day. So, you know, if someone was planning a dinner party or they knew that when they got—they were coming home from work and they didn't have time to stop at the liquor store, they could arrange for an order that evening.

But this kind of instant delivery means that there are more risks in terms of people having difficulty managing their own alcohol consumption, and so some of the advocates have called for a delay in the time frame that would, you know, be a lot more like what the process used to be.

So, if someone is calling up, rather than having instant wine or beer delivery, they're asking for a two-hour mandatory delay before alcohol orders can be delivered, and, in some cases, advocates are asking for that across the board. In other cases, advocates are asking for that when only liquor or alcohol of some kind is being ordered versus, you know, pairing a bottle of wine with a full dinner from a restaurant.

So I think I'm just concerned that the government hasn't spent enough time looking at this. And because they're not going to make changes around this type of thing through legislation, there's less opportunity for the public to look at these things and respond to them. There's less opportunity for us to debate these concerns and bring attention to them in this House.

And I think that also, you know, brings us back to the issue, what we've had to talk about in this House so many times is the whole focus on private—the risk of privatizing more and more liquor sales in this province.

You know, the research shows us that our public liquor system works, and it works well. Our public 'listric'—liquor system saves the government money and creates hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue.

And Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries employs approximately 2,000 people who bring a wide range of backgrounds, skills and experience. They pride themselves on hiring talented and passionate individuals who are part of a diverse workplace that represents the vibrant communities that we serve. Knowledgeable Liquor Mart staff ensure the retail experience for customers is convenient and socially responsible.

And Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries generates thousands of additional direct and indirect jobs in the provincial economy. Liquor products directly support important business sectors in Manitoba, including the retail, hotel and restaurant industries. MBLL Liquor Marts generate millions of dollars of—in spinoff economic activity per year for other businesses.

MBLL's core mandate is to provide revenue to the government of Manitoba to support provincial programs and initiatives in areas such as health care, education, social services, housing and infrastructure. Every dollar earned in profit is to be invested back in the province. Privatizing liquor sales reduces government revenue. I'm not sure why we would want to do that, especially when this government is struggling so much to meet the needs of Manitobans, or just refusing to.

But these revenues directly contribute to programs to reduce addiction and to invest in treatment. MBLL is required to invest 2 per cent of its annual net income in social responsibility initiatives such as alcohol-related consumer info, research and treatment. Private liquor retailers are not required to do this.

The direct and indirect social costs of alcohol are shouldered by government and, therefore, by Manitobans, regardless of whether alcohol sales are public or private. So, we shouldn't be giving up millions of dollars that can be used to address this issue.

In 2016, research done by CCPA on BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba found that Manitoba had the strongest position in retaining the revenues generated from alcohol beverage sales.

And at the same time, Manitoba had a more balanced approach. Manitoba had the second lowest in impaired driving rates and consistently had the lowest per capita expenditures on alcoholic beverages. Manitoba had the highest revenue and net government income per capita from its sale of alcoholic beverages. And it wouldn't be wise to throw this money away.

In recent years, MBLL had contributed over \$600 million to the public purse—money which was invested in education, health care, infrastructure, housing and other crucial services. Private liquor systems require more public spending to ensure private retailers are compliant, which does not happen in a publicly run system. These higher costs can mean higher and more variable prices than our current public system. And not only do hundreds of government employees stand to lose in this situation, but Manitobans can expect to see price hikes.

About 70 per cent of liquor products sold in Manitoba are already purchased from private vendors, and the PCs are setting the stage for further pilfering of sales from our existing Crown corporations.

Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries' core mandate is to provide revenue to the government of Manitoba to

support provincial programs and initiatives in areas such as health care, education, social services, housing and infrastructure. Every dollar earned in profit is to be invested back in the province. When Conservative governments mix private with public, the private seems to make off with the public benefit, and we cannot let this happen with liquor revenue.

* (15:50)

We know that public Liquor Marts are performing very well. Customer satisfaction surveys rate front-line staff at public Liquor Marts as extremely professional and very knowledgeable about the products they offer.

I'm just—I'm going to wrap up my remarks and give other folks on my side of the House the chance to address this. But I just—before I do that, I just want to come back to the importance of the government making sure that the safety is addressed, the safety for drivers, the safety—you know, that we're not having underage kids easily—even more easily being able to access liquor.

And that—you know, how do we know that drivers that are just trying to carve out a living through a whole bunch of small gig jobs, how can we count on them to—or know that they have the training, experience or knowledge to be able to do the right thing and make the right call if they arrive to deliver alcohol in a situation where it shouldn't be delivered, right? And what's the cost to them? What happens—how does the company they work for punish them if they don't actually make that delivery on time? What happens then and what happens to that product?

So, I think there's a number of questions that have to be addressed, and I also—sorry, when I talked about that scenario, I also worry about the safety of a driver arriving into a situation that he knows or she knows that shouldn't deliver that product, but how do they—being able to assess their own safety in that situation, what happens if they refuse to drop off a product that, you know, a client has already perceived themselves to have paid for?

So, I encourage the government to revisit some of these safety issues to make liquor consumption and liquor delivery in the province much safer than it—I think it might be as outlined in this bill.

And on that note, thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to address this today.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to rise and speak this afternoon to Bill 7, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act.

In short, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it ensures that all liquor services—so whether that be through a restaurant or hotels or the mom-and-pop little shops—that they would have licences to be able to sell alcohol when people are ordering takeout or when they are having delivery. And this includes whether it's SkipTheDishes or DoorDash or delivery off websites or calling to the restaurant or the hotels, wherever the services are coming from.

And I do believe it is a wonderful idea in order to be able to support businesses, especially in such a time where businesses need the support. But I want to recognize that this also points out the lack of supports that these businesses were actually given throughout the pandemic.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Province brought forward the Manitoba Bridge Grant during the pandemic, and as the grant was up and running and taking applicants, there were flaws in it. So many businesses weren't even being taken into consideration, and there were no other programs. And there were so many other things we could have been doing throughout the pandemic that our Province didn't do.

And that's why we could turn that around, we could be doing more now and that this is just one way of doing it. And I think it needs to be further explored, and I think we should be looking at other ways to be helping small businesses.

I know in the press release that this government sent out back on November 29th, it really—it boasts about this is the way to help small businesses post-pandemic. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many ways to help small businesses, and we should be looking at that. We should be looking at ways we can invest more in small businesses, give them a leg up, make sure that all those small businesses that had to close their doors during the pandemic are being taken care of in other ways.

We also need to be careful that those who are purchasing, whether it's through these online apps, whether it's through calling the restaurants, making orders online, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that those who are purchasing are not under 18 if alcohol is included in the order. I think about how often our interact cards now have the ability to work as Visas and Mastercards, I believe, as well.

And that means people who are under 18 can, in fact, use their Interac card to purchase food online. How are we making sure that those who are ordering are not underage and receiving alcohol?

And I really—I appreciate the conversation I was able to have with the minister responsible earlier today, as he shared a little bit with me about how here in Manitoba we actually have some folks who are underage who are intentionally trying to order to see if they can get away with it, to make sure that prevention is in place, to make sure that drivers and delivery folks who are bringing the food and the alcohol to people are, in fact, checking for ID, checking to make sure that people are above legal age if they are ordering alcohol with their food.

And I think we just need to be very aware of that if we're going to be opening this up more, having more access to alcohol, that people are, in fact, being carded. They're making sure that those who are ordering the alcohol are of legal age.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that throughout the pandemic and even sometimes now, I believe that some services like SkipTheDishes, for example, they are doing contactless delivery. So how are they checking the ID of a person or the person who is picking up the food on the other side of the door, if they are leaving the food and then walking away? And, again, it's not to say that this is a bad idea, but I think these are really important questions that should be addressed and answered before we can move forward with the legislation.

I also think that we need to be considering just how this is going to affect and possibly weaken the M-L-L-C's ability to sell liquor. It can be a little bit nerve-racking that this idea could be moving towards privatization, and we just need to make sure that we're keeping it above board, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'd like to make sure that when this bill goes to committee that we have representatives from not only restaurants and hotels and the consumers, but also from MLCC. We need to make sure that we're considering all of the players and all the factors that are really involved in this legislation.

So I look forward to this legislation going to committee, to hearing from the public, to hearing what people have to say before we—it goes to third reading.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): It gives me great pleasure to rise in the House to offer some words on Bill 7.

We know any time this government goes to make changes in liquor or in the MBL side generally, that we need to watch very, very carefully. And this bill, even though the changes it proposes are not huge in scale, is no different.

They've brought forward some changes here—are proposing some changes that will potentially have a significant impact on Manitobans, so it's good we have this opportunity to have a discussion here, to have this debate, and I'm happy to offer some thoughts and some of my concerns about the legislation as written.

So, this legislation proposes, as we know, two main changes to relevant legislation. The first is that it proposes to allow liquor licences and to determine how they're allocated at a regulatory level. So to no longer allow us and the Legislature a purview over that and to have those decisions be submerged at a level over which we have no insight.

The other change that it proposes is to allow for the broader scale delivery of liquor from restaurants without limiting them based on the type of licence they have.

The first change I really want to focus on here is the latter, is this proposal to change who can deliver alcohol and how we go about governing it.

I think the first thing to say here is we know, in having some discussions with restaurants in this province, certainly there is an interest in seeing an increased ability to deliver alcohol. Obviously, that promises to create business opportunities for small businesses. There are some positives there that are clear and we can certainly see that in the context within Manitoba, especially our restaurant sector and a lot of small businesses, over COVID were really hammered. And they were hammered in a particularly bad way because this government failed to provide them with the supports that they needed to ensure they could keep their doors open or could continue to keep people employed.

* (16:00)

So we know how hard small businesses got hit due to the lack of support they received from this government, and that was really shameful to see. So there is, of course, you know, at this point in time an understandable desire from restaurants and those smaller businesses that may come to be in a position to deliver alcohol, to see this opportunity to expand, to support their bottom lines. So, we understand that,

and it is, of course, important that we listen to them and their perspectives.

But there are, as my colleague identified here, some very serious policy concerns that we need to discuss here in relation to expanding the ability for restaurants and others to deliver alcohol in this province. And, of course, the main one that's—that should be obvious to everyone—and I'm sure others on the other side are thinking about this as well—are those safety-related concerns. If we have, you know, a complete opening up of the ability to deliver alcohol to people's homes, there are a lot of real risks that are being created in doing so. And, unfortunately, today we didn't hear from the minister, nor does this legislation spell out how government intends on mitigating those safety risks which they're generating by opening up the door to an expanded sale of alcohol—or, sorry, the expanded delivery of alcohol to people's homes.

You know, question we should be asking ourselves is, what happens at 1:30 in the morning when that delivery driver who's, you know, showing up on that doorstep, is being put in that position. What kind of protections are we ensuring that they—they'll have to ensure that they can work in a safe environment, that they know when they head out to work that night, when they're doing their delivery—that delivery job, whether it's in the gig economy or any other kind of delivery service with a restaurant—how safe are they when they head out in the car to deliver those products.

So, that's a really important question, just a basic policy question. And, again, we haven't seen the government identify anything that they're going to do to make sure that those workers are safe on the job.

The other piece of this, of course, is the safety of Manitobans, and what we're doing when we open up the sales of alcohol and we broaden this—these delivery services in offering the opportunity for Manitobans to much more easily get access to alcohol at any time of day. My colleague referenced some of the discussions in other jurisdictions, where they talked about placing some limits in terms of when alcohol can be delivered; maybe the—a certain time of night, capping it off, or perhaps looking at creating a delay so, if you were to place an order, it doesn't come instantaneously.

Not to suggest that these are the changes that should be proposed, but these are the kind of things that we should certainly be considering when we're talking about making these kind of changes. And it comes down to ensuring that Manitobans are kept

safe—of course, not only those delivery drivers, but also those Manitobans who are given that easier access to alcohol. How are we protecting them, and how are we empowering that delivery driver, or that restaurant, to ensure that they're not serving somebody who's already far too inebriated to be accepting more alcohol? Critical, critical questions we need to be asking here.

The other major change, of course, that this legislation brings forward is this proposal to change the way we approach licensing. So, right now in this province, changes to liquor licensing happen through legislation; that means it happens here under our purview as legislators, and we all have that opportunity to determine whether or not the changes that are being proposed serve Manitobans well.

Well, what the government is effectively proposing here by saying, we're going to move that decision making from this body down to the regulatory level, is to say, trust us. Trust us, we're going to do what's right; you don't have to worry about it, we're going to make sure that the decisions we make at the regulatory level will keep Manitobans safe, will ensure we're not over-serving, will ensure that we approach this in a way that makes sure the benefits of alcohol sales continue to benefit Manitobans financially. Trust us.

And, I think, you know, it's clear that Manitobans have more than a few reasons why they may not be willing to trust this government when they say those words, trust us. We could say—see that in other examples of changes they've made at a regulatory level—why we may be very concerned about them asking us to just trust them when it comes to making these changes.

One example I'd like to raise here is the way that this government weakened health and safety regulations. So, again, they took regulations around health and safety, and they weakened health and safety regulations by changing some of the practices around hearing, and protecting hearing and ensuring that workers' hearing was protected. Just a—you know, one example of what this government does at a regulatory level that's concerning, and that example's a great example of how they scaled back and rolled back workers' safety regulations.

We also know that several years ago, under this government, they made changes to construction worker wages at a regulatory level. Again, trust us. We're going to make the right decision if you just let us deal with this at the regulatory level. And what

happens? We see them weaken health and safety regulations. We see them go ahead and lower worker wages.

So, again, we've got a significant concern about what this government's proposing and this ask of us all here in this Legislature to say we're not going to be transparent about this anymore; we're not going to let Manitobans have a clear line of sight on who we give liquor licences to. We're just going to make it better; we're just going to go ahead and make it better. Just trust us. Serious concerns and reasons why that's something that I think gives most Manitobans pause.

So that's a real concern, is this lack of transparency. Why can't we just have this debate here? Why can't the government bring forward their proposed changes to liquor licensing right here in this Chamber so we can all have a discussion about that and a debate about it so all of us, as representatives of Manitobans across the province, can have a line of sight on what they're actually proposing? Because right now, it's—again, we just have no ability to have any sense of where they're planning on taking things, and we've got a lot of reasons to be worried about that.

That is especially true when it comes to liquor sales, and we know why. Because we've seen—again, this isn't, you know, just sort of rhetoric on our side of the House. We've seen this government now, multiple times, bring forward bills that reflect their desire to privatize alcohol sales in this province. That's the mindset that this government is coming from.

So, again, we're saying—they're saying on liquor sales and licensing: trust us; we're going to take care of it. And at the same time we're seeing them, year after year, come forward with a program of trying to privatize liquor sales in Manitoba. And, of course, we know—and I'm looking forward to having this debate—we know that they're—we've seen it—it's—they're introducing Bill 9, which is, again, you know, it's a continuation of the same focus that they've had on privatization.

We know how eager this government is to privatize. We're seeing them do it, of course, across our health-care system. We're seeing them continue to propose more and more private solutions across multiple areas of government.

Of course, as the Hydro critic, I've spoken a lot about what this government has done to work to privatize our fibre optic network that's Manitoba Hydro-owned in this province, to give the profit-making opportunities over to Xplornet, so privatizing on the

broadband side. We saw them privatize Teshmont, which was a Hydro subsidiary. So we know how hungry they are to do that.

So that really, really needs to give us pause when we talk about handing this government that kind of power. And, you know, that's especially important when we think about, on the liquor side, you know, and what they might do here with Bill 7 and these changes that they're proposing, about if this somehow—these powers are used to make changes that, again, further some kind of attempt at either complementing their Bill 9, which is going to, you know, fast-forward privatization by handing—making each beer vendor into a miniature Liquor Mart.

How does this bill service those interests? What does that put at risk for us as Manitobans? We've seen—we have \$310 million a year in profits that are generated through our Liquor Marts through liquor sales—\$310 million a year—and we know that those funds are used to help pay for health care; they're used to help to pay for education; they're used, very importantly, to help pay for social responsibility concerns, ensuring Manitobans are kept as safe as possible if they're going to choose to drink, and sharing important information, so we know those dollars that are generated are important.

How does this bill threaten that? We don't really have total clarity on that, Mr. Speaker, because—Mr. Deputy Speaker—because we can't see it; we're lacking transparency on what they're seeking to actually do here. That makes us very concerned on this side of the House.

So, you know, in concluding here, I want to say, looking at this bill, looking at opportunities to change licensing is an important exercise. It is a complicated system. If you're a 'restauranteur', it is a very challenging system to navigate. We should be working to make that easier for small businesses, there's no question about it.

* (16:10)

But there's a good reason to think that, with this current government—or, a good reason to be concerned that, with this current government, we should be approaching that very carefully. We should be approaching those changes in a manner that ensures total transparency so Manitobans can know exactly what's being done here, it's not being done in the dark of night, they're not able to simply make quick changes on the regulatory side and all of the sudden have Manitobans

wake up to realize that somehow we're fast-forwarding privatization. It should be done transparently.

And if we are going to make these changes to allow for, you know, a much broader approach to liquor delivery in Manitoba, we need to put the interests and the safety of Manitobans and Manitoban workers first. And this bill shows no evidence that this government has thought through those concerns.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a chance to put a few words on Bill 7, the liquor, gaming, cannabis control amendment act.

There's a number of concerns, and in listening to the presentations that are given here by the members opposite—the Q & A part of it, the debate—in which the minister talked about being proactive on these kind of things and people sought out the government to make these changes and they sat back and they waited for those kinds of engagements to happen, rather than getting out there and being proactive to actually get out and engage Manitobans and hear what Manitobans wanted—want to see in terms of these kinds of amendments.

And I'm sure the minister did not hear that we want to see a lack of transparency, we want to see safety concerns kind of ignored, we want to see regulations done at—behind closed doors, rather than come to the public and ask the public what needs to be done, what's best for the public, what's best for Manitobans. And that just simply doesn't exist, but that's kind of been the method that this government takes time and time again on a number of different bills, including Bill 7.

When you first read these kinds of things, you think about what does this mean for Manitobans—what does this mean for everyday Manitobans. And quite honestly, a lot of this, too, begs a lot of those questions.

Safety: you've heard my colleagues talk about safety and the concern for safety in whatever may happen. And, in this case, in Bill 7.

So now, having that opportunity to have products delivered. So what does that mean for safety? What does that mean for the workers that are delivering, the workers that are on both ends of the transaction? What does that mean for safety?

Time and time again, you've—and there was a time that we looked at it as a crisis. Where we sought the

kind of—what was happening in our liquor stores, what was happening in our Liquor Marts. Now we have the safe entries. And we've—that was a crisis that we dealt with that was—there was something happening every single day. Every single day, safety was important for Manitobans, safety was important for these front-line workers.

So now, this is kind of a different potential version of a front-line worker. So then, what is the safety aspect that is there for them? How are they going to be safe? How are they going to be assured their safety each and every day, each and every delivery, each and every time they go to work, knowing that they're going to be safe during pick up, during drop off and every time in between? And some of that just doesn't exist here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And there's so much unknowns in this piece of legislation. But then again, like I said, that's kind of the method that this government takes. There's a lot of unknowns. There's a lot of, just trust us, we know what's best. When we bring forth legislation, we should have all the answers. We should have all the Q & As answered. We should have every aspect covered, every aspect and every concern addressed. But instead, what we have in this legislation here in Bill 7, and on a broader spectrum, all legislation that this government brings forward, is a lot of trust us.

And quite honestly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no trust. Manitobans have no trust in this government. They have no trust in the legislation that they bring forward.

They sit there and talk about, like, they have the best interests of Manitobans at heart, but that's simply not the case. And when I say—the question that arises when legislation comes forward, is it truly thought—is all of Manitoba truly reflected in these discussions. And in particular, and I want to be able to speak for my constituency when it comes to Bill 7—is how does this affect my constituency? How does this affect my communities? How does having these kind of aspects and this kind of delivery service and this kind of safety aspect not addressed help and benefit my community?

And quite simply, it does not. In fact, it makes it a lot worse. It exasperates that issue, that safety concern. Because we do have those issues; we have a number of safety concerns over a broad spectrum of ideas, but at the same time, this now really plays into that part, and really kind of begs the question, is safety really the focus of Manitoba? Is really—is safety really the focus of this government? Are they really, truly looking out for all of Manitobans?

And I don't see that in Bill 7. Because there is the physical safety aspect of it, but there's the safety aspect of what this entails and what we do through our liquor stores, through MBLL and the kind of programs that, then, potential loss of revenue means for that. Because there's also that, and that's a true reflection of what I see in my communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And that's what I would see significantly being brought down in my communities with Bill 7, is that now, those social programs that now come into play, that some communities depend on, they depend on each and every day to help with addictions, to help with a lot of social issues and social programs, now those will—may be eliminated. You know? Maybe to the government, 2 per cent may not seem like a lot, but 2 per cent of nothing is nothing.

So that's the concern that I have also with my communities, and in particular, northern Manitoba is—they may not see the impacts of the delivery service, they may not see the convenience of the delivery service, but they will see the impact and the loss of revenue in those social programs that are going to come because this government is on the path to privatization.

They have three words that this government always uses: it's defund, criticize, privatize. And that's what they use across all spectrums and all programs, and Bill 7 is another example of leaning in that direction. So now we're going to see, now, that privatization move a little bit away, a little bit more increased, so now we're going to be less public, and less public also means less impact—less positive impact for our communities.

And what does that mean for us in northern Manitoba? What does that mean for us in central Manitoba? What does it mean for us at urban areas?

We know what that means for the city of Winnipeg; we know what that means for constituencies here in Winnipeg, but overall in Manitoba, what does this impact have? It has a very negative impact because that social fee that's going to be collected to be able to put into social programming will no longer exist.

It may be reduced, you'll see it reduce slowly, slowly, slowly until it's gone. Until we sit here and debate the fact that that program doesn't exist anymore, that there's no money to put those programs in place and there's no money to be able to say we have these social programs because we don't have that

revenue anymore because they privatized that potential revenue. And privatizing that revenue doesn't mean that program is here for all of Manitobans anymore. It means it's there for, again, the private sector.

So, we need to have those discussions, and that's what I—when I talk about answering all the questions. So if that's going to be something that's going to be eliminated in Bill 7, if the social responsibility of this government is going to be eliminated in Bill 7, what's going to be the offset? I'm not hearing that in terms of what's their—what's the option? What's the alternative? That's just non-existent. Because it's, again, an afterthought. We'll deal with this today, we'll figure out the details later.

Well, I'm sorry, but that's not the way this needs to work. All those details need to be worked out today, and all Manitobans need to be assured that those details are worked out and their best interests are carried forward and brought forward in all of this legislation.

So, there's just too many unknowns, but that's the way this government operates, and Bill 7 is a perfect example of that, creating that unknown. Here, we're going to bring this forward, trust us.

Well, there is no trust. Manitobans do not trust this government to do the right thing. They not—do not trust this government to be socially responsible to Manitobans. They not trust this government to help with the social issues that are troubling all of us. And when I say all of us, it's all of Manitobans. Not just a certain demographic, not just a certain area of the province or of the city, but all of us.

So, I stand here on behalf of my constituency in northern Manitoba in saying, what does this mean for my communities? What does this mean for my constituency? And this takes away. This does nothing but take from those communities.

And there's an opportunity, there's a definite opportunity with this government to do the right thing, to bring forward those pieces of the puzzle that are missing in this legislation, to say that if this is eliminated, oh, there's something there. You know, not just to sit there, we're going to have more announcements come forward, we're going to do this, we're going to announce more money that's actually not going to hit the doorstep, we're going to have—announce more money that's not going to get there. At the end of the day, for every two announcements that come out of this government, one resignation comes from this government. And that's the reality of what's

been happening here, and that's the announcements that people are used to hearing.

* (16:20)

So, what does this mean for us? What does this—what does Bill 7 mean? It means that they're asking Manitobans to trust us because we're going to do the right thing behind closed doors. We're going to do the right thing, because we know what's best. There's no obligation here to consult; there's no obligation to have those discussions; there's no obligation to be proactive with, say, any potential changes, any kind of detrimental programs that are going to be affected in that way; and what are we going to do to offset that. It just doesn't exist in this.

And, again, this is something that has the opportunity—and time and time again since I've been a part of this Chamber, I see government has the opportunity to do something—but again, always just wanting to do the bare minimum at the expense of all Manitobans, at the expense of the most vulnerable demographic in Manitoba. Because that's just simply not who makes up members opposite.

And that's unfortunate, because that truly is what a government should do to look out for all Manitobans, no matter where they are, no matter where they reside, no matter what their social standing may be. And this doesn't do that.

In fact, this, then, hinders that ability of that demographic and that social aspect of Manitoba to be pulled back, to be held, and stopped and paused, and not be able to be encouraged. And by doing things like this—the steps and the levels towards privatization—again, takes us down that path of something Manitobans do not want, Manitobans do not need.

But at the same time, the government is saying, oh, we know what's best. We're going to pull back the curtain one day and, boom, all will be revealed. This is what we do. This is fantastic. This is what we told you we were going to do because we know what's best. Without having those conversations, without having those social conversations with all of Manitoba. Without having that ability to get out in every community in Manitoba and see how this impacts you.

And I'm not talking about getting in there to one home where there's, you know, five residents there, five adults. I'm talking about significantly large geographic areas of Manitoba that weren't even brought into this discussion, but will be absolutely

feeling the effects of this, feeling the effects of the privatization path that this government is going down.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's just shameful for this government to say, we're going to do what's best for you, but we're not going to consult you on that. Instead, we're just going to take, take, take, and we're going to announce big announcements, say we're going to do this, we're going to do that; and at the end of the day, all those announcements that the government may make is a net loss. From 2016, 2017 to today, it's all a net loss. There is no bonus, there is no the biggest ever kind of commitment they're going to do; it's all a net loss because it's recovering—trying to recover from cuts and cuts and cuts and privatization.

And that's just shameful, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Thank you.

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It's a pleasure to rise in this House at the start of session to talk about really important issues that are affecting Manitobans. You know, we should be talking about health care. We should be talking about infrastructure. We should be talking about a lot of things, but we're talking about liquor sales. Because that's—seems to be where this government's priority is today, is on liquor sales.

It's not on providing health care. It's not on making sure that Manitobans can afford to live in this province. It's going to make sure that Manitobans will have more access to liquor to spend their money on, which is the wrong focus, right? It's the wrong focus at this point in time.

And, certainly, I understand the—some of the businesses are hopeful that liquor sales will keep them in business because other than that, this government has ignored them pretty much through the pandemic, and other issues that small businesses have had.

And we hear a lot about, well, is this a step towards privatization of liquor sales. Well, of course, the answer's yes. And while the minister will, oh, no, no, this has got nothing to do with privatization—trust us. We've heard that thrown around a few times.

Well, we can't. We can't trust them to have the best interests of all Manitobans.

So, does this bill specifically talk about privatization? And the answer is no. But it's a step along that path. Everything this government does, whether it's in health care, liquor sales, Manitoba Hydro, everything they do is a step along the path to enriching their friends in the private entity and to destroy perfectly good public services.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Certainly, Manitoba liquor, lotteries and cannabis is a prime example of a good public service that provides a product to people, which, unfortunately, is an addictive product. But, along with that, it also provides a certain amount of money to two streams.

One, it provides profits that it makes to the government to support health care, to support education, to support all the social programs that government should be responsible for—although, to be fair, this government believes that they shouldn't be responsible for any social programs. We see that with things that they've refused to even listen to or to investigate to see if it's worthwhile putting in place. We see it with their destruction of Manitoba Housing; we see it with their destruction of Manitoba Health.

The other thing that profits from government liquor sales goes to is the fund that's set up to address addictions issues. Now, certainly, we know from past experience that, under this government, that fund hasn't always been used. It hasn't always gone to direct—where it should have been to help people with addictions. But to do away with it altogether is certainly the wrong answer. To just say, well, we're going to make licensing just a little bit easier, which businesses are happy with, and I understand that. But does it make the other side of the coin easier?

I live in a border town. We've just seen the Saskatchewan government shut down all government liquor stores, sold the licences for an immediate profit, going to sell the buildings for another immediate profit. But in the process, the long term is going to be all that revenue is now no longer available.

So what do we see taking place there? Well, already in the town of Creighton we see that because they've changed some relatively minor liquor licensing rules there, the local hotel is going to be able to sell wine, hard liquor, in the off-sale. So it'll make it just that much easier for people to get access to hard liquor after hours—after what normal, traditional business hours would be.

Is that going to be a good thing? Well, it might be a good thing for the business because they're going to be able to sell, particularly at closing time when people are bailing out of the bar and looking for a party to go to, that they'll be able to buy a bottle of whisky now. They'll be able to make sure that the party really keeps going, which will lead to more problems, there's no doubt about that.

Is that the path that this government is going down in Manitoba? Well, they haven't outright decided to shut down liquor sales. Like I said earlier, this is a step down that path towards the privatization and the increase of problems that we see.

So, on the relative simpleness of the act that we're talking about, the Bill 7, Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act, it's going to eliminate specific categories of liquor service licence, and that's where the trust-us comments come in, Madam Speaker. Because they're just going to move all that to regulation, which has no public oversight. Regulation is passed, and then the public goes, oh, wait a minute, that's not a good idea. But it's too late by then. We've seen that. We've seen them change, for example, regulations around apprentices with no public oversight, with no ability for people to comment, no ability for people to come to a committee and say, no, no, that's wrong.

* (16:30)

So, now we're going to do the same with liquor sales. We're just going to create licences by decree from a minister. Depending on who's got the minister's ear on any particular day, I guess that will be the outcome of the licences that are going to be. So will the minister—well certainly, let's talk about the ministers in this government—will they be listening to addictions workers? Will they be listening to homeless advocates? Will they be listening to people that are dealing with the social issues?

And the answer's no, of course not. Because we already know they're not listening to them when it comes to things like homelessness and addictions and all those things that the government needs to listen and be involved in. So, will they be listening to those folks when it comes time to make regulations around liquor licences? And they want us to trust them.

And the answer, very simply, Madam Speaker, is we cannot. We cannot trust them. We cannot trust them to do the right thing in this regard because that's not the history we have with them.

So the oversight part should be a critical part when we're talking about any of these, whether it's liquor licences, whether it's cannabis rules—we need to be able to look at that in a public way and make sure that what's being proposed, what's being written, is actually the best for the province and for the people of the province.

That's one of the really basic parts of this Legislative Assembly is the public input that we have

at bills, where the public can come out when a new bill is being introduced and have their say, to make sure that their comments, to make sure their concerns are at least heard. By just doing things by decree at the minister's office or at the Cabinet table, all that oversight is gone, and then we only find out after the fact when we see things happening or see the downside of some of those things that are likely to come with some of these changes. Without the proper oversight up front, the problems may be exacerbated down the road.

So it's very important that we make sure that this piece of the legislation maybe needs to be amended. Maybe it becomes more amenable to what's going on if the minister says, wait a minute, you're right. What was I thinking? Should've known that just being able to do these things on a whim at the minister's office is not the right answer. That laws that are passed in this province should absolutely be scrutinized and open to the public to say, no, no, you can't do that. Should be open to the public to say that's a bad idea.

And, certainly, we have recent examples, Madam Speaker, where the public has been very vocal in opposition to some things that were bills, and that's the beautiful part of having it introduced as a bill as opposed to a regulation: public is aware of it. The public is able to stand up and stand together and say no, you must stop.

So, bill 64 comes to mind, the education reform bill that was completely misguided and wrong. And because it was a public piece of legislation, because the public was aware of what the government was trying to do, they were able to get involved, they were able to mobilize and they were able to say stop. This is wrong. And the government finally listened and withdrew that piece of legislation.

So, with these changes to the liquor licences and how they come about, the public won't have that opportunity. The public won't have the opportunity to see them ahead of time; they won't have the opportunity to really comment on them and make sure that they are the best use of a government resource.

And, really, we've talked about, any number of times, well, since I've been elected, about the government trying to do things in secret or not fully informing people of what's going on.

And this is another piece of their way of doing business that we've seen over and over again, whether it was when Pallister was the premier or the current

Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), that open and transparent is words they use but not actions they follow.

And that's the problem with this bill is open and transparent is missing. The oversight is missing. The ability for people who may be opposed to something is missing or the ability for people who may be in favour because it'll only be a select few that this government, in particular, is going to listen to when it comes to making those regulatory changes. There's no guarantee that they're going to miss—or listen to the majority of people until it's too late.

It's very unfortunate that this lack of transparency will be the downfall of this legislation, potentially when they could've proposed a piece of legislation that did make changes to the regulatory regime or that made changes to the licensing regime. But it could've been done in a very public way. It could've been done in a way that all members of the public had the opportunity to have their say in that. But that is, in fact, not what this bill is about.

So, does this bill say they're going to privatize liquor sales in this province? No, doesn't say that. But what it does do is leaves the door open for more places to have private sales, which will then take away from the profits of the government entities and then justify this government shutting the private—or the public entities down, because we see them doing that all the time with other departments, right? They starve them for resources; people get upset because the service isn't there, and then they decide, well, maybe if we just privatize it, then the service will be there. And people sometimes think that's a good idea until such time as they realize that now there's less money in the public system for everything that a public system should be responsible for doing.

So we need to be very cautious and wary of any piece of legislation this government introduces. And this is a very classic example of the small step towards the big picture that the government leading us towards. So I would urge the government to stop and think, to listen to what we've said on this side, and is there a better way of doing the licensing regime that will work better for people but will still leave it open in the public realm so that the licence regime is changed in the most positive way possible as opposed to behind closed doors in a minister's office.

So that's, I think, the basis of what I want to comment on this particular piece of legislation. So without further, I will cede the floor to someone else.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Happy to be speaking today to put a few words on the record with respect Bill 7. But before I do that, I know that this is our first day in session. It's the first day we're here having opportunity to speak in 2023.

It's been two months since the start of the year. A lot has gone on, and in particular it's been Black History Month in February. So, since this is our first opportunity to speak in this House, I wanted to wish you, Madam Speaker, all the members in this Chamber, and every Manitoban who's watching at home, happy Black History Month.

* (16:40)

It's exciting that we got a chance to celebrate that both in here—in the Manitoba Legislature—as well as around the entire community of Manitoba, and that there were so many people involved. So, a huge credit to the people who planned, organized and helped to celebrate Black History Month. I know there's still a few more events still to come, but I just wanted to put that on the record here that we're very happy to be celebrating Black History Month here in Manitoba.

With respect to Bill 7, I think it's important that we get to the issues that it really is proposing to change with respect to the changes of the liquor and lotteries act. And most specifically, this obviously discusses the changes around delivery of alcohol. And that is something that I know many Manitobans in my community and around the province are interested in discussing, and interested in seeing how we can use the, you know, some of the experiences of the past few years—for COVID, and people are far more comfortable and, you know, assuming that delivery services are going to be available for any product, whether it's a—you know, a food item, whether it's a good, you know, from a grocery store, you know, something you could buy online or from a local vendor—they're used to that service and to that good being offered via delivery.

And so, you know, I see the motivation for folks to want to see this with alcohol as well. And I want to make sure that that's going to be available for folks, but we also want to make sure that it's going to be done in a safe manner.

My first—though, before I dive into the safety aspect that we, you know, I'd like to discuss with this bill, I also want to talk about something that I don't think we've really fleshed out throughout the discussion and the debate we've had today. And I don't think the minister touched on it very much as well—

that ultimately, at the end of the day, it's—alcohol is still the No. 1 substance that's—that has addiction—addictive substance in Manitoba.

And it has a huge impact on the lives of many, many Manitobans. And so, if we're going to be proposing to change the way that alcohol is delivered, it should also be considered as part of that debate about the impacts of alcohol consumption in general. And without fully, you know, articulating what impacts this change to delivery might have on those who suffer from alcohol addiction, you know, I think that this debate would be doing a disservice to all of us in Manitoba here.

And so I was disappointed to not hear that aspect from the minister in his comments regarding the changes to this bill because, you know, many Manitobans do suffer from alcoholism; many Manitobans do suffer from addiction—from addictions in general, and knowing that alcohol is still the No. 1 most used addictive substance in Manitoba, it's important that we consider those ramifications of this change on those people in Manitoba.

Not only, you know, would that impact folks who are specifically, you know, addicted, but it could also deal with ramifications through our health-care system. We know that people who are looking for treatment or are looking for services, and who suffer from addiction or from—whether it's alcohol poisoning, or from other things—alcohol plays a huge role in that. It could be liver damage or other damage from overuse of alcohol, whether it's from a short period or from an extended period of over-alcohol usage.

You know, Health Canada put out guidelines on alcohol usage just in the past few weeks that made it very clear the dangers of using alcohol in any amount, and really put, you know, a warning to Manitobans—to not just Manitobans, but Canadians, about what a safe amount of alcohol is and how we should be considering our usage of alcohol in our daily lives. You know, their previous guidelines were talking about the amount of drinks you could have per week, you know, and the new guidelines are really talking about, maybe it's just one drink. Maybe it's less than one drink a week that you should be having and could be considered safe, or maybe we should just consider no amount of alcohol safe.

You know, and these are, you know, different thoughts for a lot of Manitobans, a lot of Canadians, who have maybe considered alcohol a safe thing, a fun past—a fun way to, you know, spend time and enjoy life. And I, you know, don't condone any usage.

I, of course, have used alcohol and I know many other members in this Chamber have, and so many Manitobans. But we need to consider the ramifications of using it, and the costs—the cost to your personal life, the cost to our society.

And, additional to that, Madam Speaker, it's, you know, important to think about the long-term impacts that this could have on families and communities.

You know, I know that I've heard—I've spoken with many Manitobans who have, you know, sadly shared stories with me of having someone in the family, someone close to them who was, you know, overused alcohol in a regular basis and how it negatively affected their lives. Whether it was, you know, that person, you know, having verbal or physical abuse on them or family members, or even just witnessing that, and the scars that it can leave on someone's life, particularly a young person's life, having someone as an alcoholic part of their family.

And as part of that—as part of this discussion on Bill 7, Madam Speaker, it's important that we consider these factors. Because, you know, I think, during the question period, when the member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor) asked the minister around what are the safety concerns, the safety issues that you're looking at in terms of making sure that the delivery—the expanded delivery of alcohol in Manitoba is going to be done in a safe and responsible manner. Well, the minister didn't really have those details fleshed out. He didn't have, you know, what exactly the types of steps, the, you know—that were going to be taken to ensure that safe delivery of alcohol was going to be taking place with respect to the changes proposed in Bill 7.

Now, I know for myself in St. Vital, you know, I can imagine delivery sales coming to houses in my neighbourhood. I can also imagine them being delivered in apartments. And I'm thinking about, in these different atmospheres, how, you know, it might be a challenge to go to an apartment building and ensure that you have entry to that building, to—you communicate with a person who actually is over 18, that that person is actually the one who is receiving the bill, both for the safety of the consumer and also the safety of that driver, that person who is actually delivering the alcohol.

And so in addition to all these safety concerns, which is, of course, now the second aspect that I'm bringing up, Madam Speaker, that we want to make sure that the people who are actually purchasing it are over 18 and the people who are actually getting the

alcohol are over 18. You know, these are really critical issues.

And so when this was brought up and asked—around these safety concerns was asked by my colleague, the member for Wolseley, of the minister, the minister said, well, I'll have to go back to the department and see what processes that they're doing and what processes that they are thinking about doing for added safety.

Now, I think that just goes to show that the minister fully acknowledges that there might be additional risks with this bill when it comes to safe delivery of alcohol in Manitoba. And with those additional risks is required an additional precaution or, at the bare minimum, additional transparency to tell Manitobans how he's going to be providing this [*inaudible*] and what his steps, what his process is for us to get there. And he's failed to do that in the debate so far today.

And I think that, for Manitobans, is a concern. It's a concern. It's a concern both because of the safety—individual safety, whether you're a driver or whether you're a consumer. Individual safety, community safety, because of the potential abuse of alcohol use in our communities. An additional concern because of the lack of transparency about what the minister's plan is to supposedly deliver additional safety measures for this proposed changes in Bill 7.

And without this transparency about how he's going to deliver additional safety measures, it leads Manitobans to a certain level of distrust; a certain level of distrust that we have—and by no fault of our own—about the changes proposed in Bill 7. And with that mistrust, leads us to, you know, say that is this something that we really need to do without full clarity on how we're going to ensure this process happens safety—safely?

And we don't just say this because we want to, you know, make Bill 7 out to be a big boogeyman type of bill, but we say this because of the track record that we've seen from other bills this government has put forward. They've consistently, for years, put forward legislation—[*interjection*]

* (16:50)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order.

I would ask the members for co-operation. If conversations could be taken to the loge. The conversations are getting louder. I know it's almost 5 o'clock, but if people could bring this down so that we can hear

the member in debate. I need to be able to hear what he's saying.

Mr. Moses: And so I said that we say that there's concerns because of the lack of transparency in the bill and the potential for mistrust when it comes to the idea that there would be additional safety measures put in place. We say that not just because of this bill specifically, but yes, because of this bill, but in addition to the fact that there's been many other bills in the past where the government has said we will, you know, do things by regulation, or we will look at ways to work with community or consult with it.

And then they fail to do that. They fail to actually do the work to consult with community or to do proper consultation or to actually put in this proper steps through regulation. And, at the end of the day, Manitobans are the ones who suffer.

And so I hear those concerns when I talk to Manitobans, when I talk to residents of St. Vital. I hear them, Madam Speaker, and I relay them here today because we have an opportunity. We have an opportunity through Bill 7, through this debate, to make a better piece of legislation, a piece of legislation that allows those who've gone through the experience of delivery of every service and every good through the course of the pandemic, people who are expecting that now with alcohol, but who are expecting that to happen in a safe manner to ensure that Manitobans are protected, that Manitobans can operate and live their lives, and enjoy their lives, enjoy alcohol, in a safe and responsible manner.

And, Madam Speaker, you know, without that sort of clarity, without that sort of transparency, without what that is going to look like for Manitobans, we have a lot of questions remaining with this piece of legislation that the minister has failed to respond to.

Now, I've talked about what that delivery of alcohol would look like in my neighbourhood, right, Madam Speaker? But that doesn't even begin to describe some of the challenges that people who live outside of the city in rural areas might also face when drivers are, you know, delivering alcohol long distances or challenges with highway—along the highways, along snowy conditions, maybe going into rural settings or northern settings, and the additional challenges that they may have in terms of doing this in a safe and responsible manner, travelling in-car with alcohol, right? You want to make sure that that is being done responsibly.

And I think that, you know, having safeguards would begin to suggest—that having safeguards around how we ID people who are receiving alcohol, make sure that their drivers themselves are very responsible and trained specifically with driving with alcohol in their vehicle, and making sure that the whole process, Madam Speaker, quite frankly, is done in a way that ensures the health and the safety and the well-being of the people of Manitoba.

So, Madam Speaker, I'd like to wrap up my comments and—by saying once again that, you know, the intriguing changes in Bill 7 are really going to the heart of looking at how we could ensure that these goods, the alcohol, is being delivered and disseminated across Manitoba.

But our concern and my concern is that it's done in a safe and responsible manner. We want all Manitobans to be able to enjoy this great province in the way that they see fit. We want them to be—enjoy it as community; we want them to be responsible for one another and responsible in their use of alcohol. But we also want to ensure that anyone who's dealing with this product in the respect of changes of Bill 7 is going to be doing it in a safe way.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Eric Redhead (Thompson): It's an honour to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 7. There's a lot of concerns that come up when we're talking about delivering a regulated product.

Safety comes to mind. First of all, you know, there have been times where we order through SkipTheDishes, and I'll give you an example one time. So, I had ordered a beverage—an adult beverage—through the app. My 16-year-old had answered the door. Now, you know, a responsible driver, someone who's trained to identify or ask for identification when providing this product to anyone, should know that if someone looks underage to ID them. Well, that didn't happen in this case. The alcohol was actually given to my 16-year-old. So, thank God, he's responsible. He's not a drinker. But when it comes to safety, these are the types of concerns that come to mind. And I don't see any of that being answered when it comes to safety for this bill.

You know, growing up in the North, there's—there can be a problem with certain individuals who have addiction issues, right, and making it easier for those individuals to access liquor can be complicated and can be risky.

And so I think, you know, we need to make sure that this is done in a responsible way so that people aren't being overserved, I think is a good way to put it.

But also, you know, we got to make sure that our communities are safe. And when we're delivering a regulated product, we have to ensure that it's delivered to the right person. You know, there's times where we order through these apps and we get the wrong meal, we get the wrong product delivered to the wrong place. So, I think one of my colleagues have brought up, what happens if you deliver alcohol to the wrong place and, you know, it's a bunch of underagers there? Can we guarantee that the driver, the delivery person, is going to be—make sure that the product that is being delivered is delivered to an adult, to someone over the age of 18?

Yes, so these kinds of things come to mind, but also, you know, I think businesses would like to see more people having meals and liquor in their own establishments rather than being delivered to homes. Businesses want to make sure that people are spending money in their establishments. And so, having this option for them to eat and drink at home through this delivery, I think, hinders that.

So—yes, so I think Bill 7 has a lot of holes in it and I think that we need to address those before we pass this bill. If it passes; hopefully, it doesn't pass. But that's where we are.

So, I want to keep it brief. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): It is an honour to rise here this afternoon, put a few words on the record with regards to Bill 7. And, you know, I think this is a great example this afternoon of how debate in this House can be effective in, you know, informing the government, in giving the government maybe some pause or some reason to look very closely at their legislation.

You know, I think some of the personal examples that we've heard have been ones that I think the government will hear probably more of when this bill does go to public committee. I think we're going to hear from the public that there are concerns about alcohol use and how it's distributed and some of the

concerns that people might have with regards to, you know, this being more accessible in some communities where alcohol abuse is certainly a concern. We've heard those personal examples here from members in the Chamber, but it's, again, I think we're going to hear more of that as this bill moves through the process.

I also take very seriously the concerns that were brought forward by members in this Legislature relating this bill, and connecting this bill, to Bill 9, which is, you know, I think I hear the minister opposite asking, well, let's get to the next bill. Well, Bill 9, of course, is a bill that talks about privatization, and this government's made no secret that privatization is one of the only aspects that they are eager to move forward on when it comes to legislation, and that's certainly where we know they're headed when it comes to alcohol sales.

So when I hear from members on this side saying we're concerned about Bill 7 because it could be a step in the direction of privatization of liquor sales in this province, folks are concerned, and we've heard that time and time again across this province. This is something that this government is willing to go headlong into at a time when I think most of us, as the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) pointed out, are concerned about alcohol abuse and—

* (17:00)

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When the—this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 28 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

CORRIGENDUM

On December 1, 2022, page 440, first column, the eighth paragraph should have read:

Mr. Reyes: Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$200 million to retain, train and recruit health-care professionals, over \$30 million to establish 289 nursing seats, 12 and a half million dollars for the nursing simulation and training centre to add 115 more nursing seats.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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