

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

Thursday, May 25, 2023

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: Prior to starting with routine proceedings, I am going to take this opportunity to do—make a special statement. Part of the reason is because we had a little baby that was really active a few minutes ago, who is now sound asleep, but, well, I guess we'll see how long that lasts.

But I would like to draw everybody's attention to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today Michele LaPointe-Dixon; her husband Anthony Dixon; daughter and son-in-law, Marisa and Victor Toth; and son and daughter-in-law, Nick and Sam Thompson; along with their son and Michele's grandson, Cooper; Michele's sister, Patty Sansregret; and her best friend, Lisa Branconnier; and her favourite retired co-worker, JoAnn McKerlie-Korol.

After 31 years with the Legislative Assembly, Michele will be retiring as the Speaker's office administrator on June 30th.

Michele started with the Legislative Assembly in the Clerk's office in February of 1992 as a sessional employee. She went on to become a full-time employee in the Clerk's office in 1997, until she moved to the Speaker's office in August of 2006. While in the Clerk's office, Michele spent many a day waiting for committees to be announced in the House, changing committee membership listings and assisting in calling presenters when meetings were announced.

Michele also spent many years organizing speakers and special events for each new group of interns. When she moved to the Speaker's office, she quickly became the right arm to every Speaker she has worked for. She is the constant in the Speaker's office and runs the office like a well-oiled machine.

Her knowledge of the office of the Speaker, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as a whole, the people who work in the building and the work that goes on in the House have made her an invaluable asset to every Speaker she has worked with.

She is exceptionally well organized, knows the role of the Speaker and is the heartbeat of the office of the Speaker. She has ensured that the office is always held to the highest standard and always looks out for the best interest of the Speaker.

She has a quirky sense of humour, a calm demeanour—usually—and is the voice of common sense and reason. She makes anyone that comes into our office feel welcomed and at ease.

Twenty of her 31 years were spent commuting two hours daily from Winnipeg Beach to the Legislature and back each day. So, when I tell you once she is determined to do something, she gets it done.

Michele has seen seven provincial elections, 13 by-elections, and the government change three times. There have been five different Speakers in her time and she has worked directly with three of them.

We had Hansard do a search for us of the past 30 years, and the word, order, has been used a remarkable 25,700—give or take a couple hundred—times. Considering we sit on average of 70 to 80 days a year, Michele says since she is retiring, she can say this: Do better and be easier on her boss.

Michele has been instrumental in many projects in the Legislative Building, from helping to get the mace case installed to helping with the design of Legislative Assembly staff service pins, as well as the new MLA pins.

She has organized Speakers conferences, visits from ambassadors and special guests from other countries, and did so with professionalism.

She has been my representative on the Legislative Building and grounds advisory committee, and secretary of the Legislative Building restoration and preservation committee.

However, the biggest project of them all was helping and seeing the creation of the Legislature portrait project located on the first floor that covers every Legislature since 1871.

Any person in any job can be replaced. However, losing the knowledge that comes with 31 years' experience is not as easily replaceable.

So, Michele, from all of us here, good luck on your retirement. We know you're enjoying looking forward to that time in your backyard with your family and we wish you the very, very best in your retirement.

And I think Cooper woke up.

And we have some other introductions, but I will save that for later in the afternoon.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage, 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 his statement.

Gimli Glider

Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I rise today to acknowledge this summer as the 40th anniversary and the board of directors of the Gimli Glider museum.

This small group of volunteers set out to create a museum to preserve an important piece of Manitoba's history: the story of flight 604. They have accomplished this and much, much more.

On July 23rd, 1983, flight 604 from Montreal ran out of fuel halfway to its destination of Edmonton, Alberta. It was seen by a few as it glided silently and ominously to make an emergency landing at the former Gimli Royal Canadian Air Force base. The runway had been converted to a motorsport race track and there were still races occurring on that very day, making the landing even more dangerous; 161 passengers and eight crew members were on the plane that day.

Captain Bob Pearson and First Officer Maurice Quintal safely landed the plane with no serious injuries and only minor damage to the aircraft, as it was given the famous nickname, the Gimli Glider.

In July 2008, the Gimli Glider was officially retired from its service. In May 2015, a small group of visionary individuals from Gimli set out to preserve the piece of aviation history. This led to the creation of the Gimli Glider museum, which officially opened its doors in 2017.

The museum provides compelling and interactive exhibits, which include authentic aircraft seats—which I tell you are very, very small compared to the seats now—from the same flight model and virtual simulator which allows visitors to try their hand at actually landing flight 604.

I've had the pleasure of visiting this awesome heritage museum in Gimli and it comes highly recommended.

The museum now hosts thousands of visitors annually from across Canada and around the world. This summer marks the 40th anniversary of flight 604, the Gimli Glider. And the board has planned a celebratory event on July 22nd at the very Gimli Airport where it landed. On the very runway where Bob Pearson and Maurice Quintal set out their emergency landing.

Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to dedicate the efforts of the board members of the Gimli Glider museum, and their dedication is so much so that they were supposed to be here today—however, I don't see them. I believe they are still attending a conference right now about museums in Winnipeg, so they were delayed on their arrival here, but I do want to acknowledge them for their work they are doing.

If you are out and about in the Interlake region, please take a moment and stop by the Gimli Glider museum at the Lakeview Gimli resort on 10th Street centre.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): On July 23rd, 1983, air clan—Air Canada 143 made headlines as what later became known as the Gimli Glider, when the Boeing 767 successfully executed an emergency landing in Gimli, Manitoba due to an unprecedented fuel measurement error, the aircraft ran out of fuel mid-flight, forcing the pilots to navigate a perilous situation.

The emergency landing took place at the former Royal Canadian Air Force base, which had been converted to the Gimli Motorsports Park. Now nearing 40 years from that day, it is crucial to recognize the remarkable skill and fortune which turned a potential catastrophe into a story of triumph.

The ability demonstrated by Captain Robert Pearson and First Officer Maurice Quintal, who maneuvered the massive aircraft safely to the ground without any engine power, exemplifies their exceptional skills and resourcefulness.

The events that unfolded highlighted the importance of effective communication and teamwork at all levels. The flight engineer and air traffic controllers played a crucial role in calculating and relaying critical information to the pilots before assisting them in their decision-making process and ensuring the safety of everyone involved.

The Gimli Glider incident served as a catalyst for change in aviation protocols and procedures that exist to this day. It prompted improvements in training programs, equipment and safety measures, underscoring the significance of learning from past experiences to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Taking a moment to acknowledge the Gimli Glider incident, it is truly remarkable that there was no severe injuries. The unwavering professionalism, dedication and ability to overcome adversity that was shown continues to inspire and influence the aviation industry today.

* (13:40)

Nearing the 40th anniversary, let us remember the Gimli Glider as a testament to human ingenuity and an unwavering commitment of safety. May we continue to learn from such an extraordinary event while we work to foster a safer future.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, it's important that we recognize today the Gimli Glider and its pilots.

July 22, 1983, almost 40 years ago, on a flight from Montreal to Edmonton, Air Canada Flight 143 ran out of fuel. It was above Red Lake, Ontario, and some distance from any airport. They looked at the possibility of landing in Winnipeg, but it was too far, and so Gimli was chosen.

The error on the fuel was a series of problems which arose, and cumulatively they led to this situation of the aircraft having not enough fuel. Gimli, at the time, was a former air force base. It had been used in the Second World War as part of the Commonwealth pilot training program. The base since had been converted to a racetrack complex with a road racecourse, a go-kart track and a drag strip.

Captain Bob Pearson, an experienced glider pilot, and his co-pilot, the First Officer Maurice Quintal,

managed to land the plane, a Boeing six-767, successfully, and by great good fortune, those at the racetrack at the time escaped injury.

There is now a museum in Gimli to recognize the remarkable landing of the aircraft in Gimli. It is interesting to note that several attempts by other crews, who were given exactly the same circumstances in a simulator in Vancouver, all resulted in crashes. What was achieved at Gimli was exceptional skill by the pilot and co-pilot, and is a historic event for all of us to remember.

Merci. Miigwech.

Madam Speaker: Further ministerial statements?

The honourable Minister of Families (Ms. Squires)—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.

Gender Equity Manitoba

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Gender Equity): I am honoured to stand before you today as the first minister in Manitoba responsible for Gender Equity.

On Tuesday, we announced that the Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat, the Family Violence Prevention Program and the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council have undergone changes to better reflect the needs of Manitobans and our commitment to inclusion, diversity and equity in the province of Manitoba.

The secretariat, known as Gender Equity Manitoba, will expand to address the concerns and issues of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community. We recognize that there is an increasing need to provide community-specific services to this community.

Gender Equity Manitoba's enhanced mandate will provide a more consistent and dedicated response on issues involving the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, and we look forward to collaborating with the community and all those who are dedicated to supporting gender equity across Manitoba.

The month of June is dedicated to the celebration and commemoration of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community, and Pride Winnipeg annually organizes many amazing events across the city that provide individuals, families and friends a place to celebrate as either members or allies of this community.

On Tuesday, we had the pleasure of announcing that Gender Equity Manitoba will be providing Pride Winnipeg with a \$250,000 annual grant through our new granting initiative. This grant will allow Pride Winnipeg to hire two staff and support Pride activities and events in the many communities across Manitoba throughout the year.

We will be at Memorial Park tomorrow at 1:30 for the raising of the Pride flag as the kickoff event for this year's festivities. We look forward to seeing many of you there, and I wish everyone a happy Pride.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Every June, we celebrate Pride Month here in Manitoba, and in many countries across the world.

Pride Month is a time to celebrate and acknowledge the 2SLGBTQ+ communities' historical and ongoing fight against discrimination.

The origins of Pride Month can be traced back to the Stonewall Uprising in New York City in June of 1969, where trans, Black, Latina and other LGBTQ community members fought back against discriminatory police raids. This incident led to days of riots and sparked the gay rights movement in America and across the world.

The first Pride parade in Winnipeg happened 35 years ago as an impromptu celebration over the NDP government's decision to include sexual orientation in the Manitoba Human Rights Code.

Pride Month is a celebration of our community. Unfortunately, this year we're still angered by attempts being made to silence 2SLGBTQ voices by banning books from libraries across Manitoba.

Our community members have been bravely standing up to these hateful attempts to erase our stories and we celebrate the victory in Brandon. But the PC government and this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) have been notably silent in this fight.

Instead of having a government that celebrates the 2SLGBTQ community and takes action to stop hate—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Ms. Naylor: —and discrimination, we have a Premier who didn't even walk in the Pride parade last year.

Manitobans deserve better. They deserve a government that is willing to stand up for what's right when human rights are threatened.

To all members of our 2SLGBTQ+ community know that the Manitoba NDP will always support you—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired. [interjection] Order.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been requested for the member to complete her statement.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I ask for leave to speak to the ministerial statement.

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

Mr. Lamont: I proudly rise today to recognize June as Pride Month in Manitoba and across the world. Here, in Winnipeg, Pride starts tomorrow and will run until June 2nd with the Pride parade.

I'm proud to say my friend Jim Kane marched in the first Pride parade in Manitoba. But not only throughout June, but every month, we proudly stand with the 2-S-L-G-B-L-G-B-2-coo-plus community. We honour and recognize their resilience and ongoing pursuit of equality and acceptance.

I remember the bitter fight over same-sex marriage. I remember Jean Chrétien saying we don't have referendums on minority rights. While great strides have been made to finally recognize same-sex marriages, equality and diversity rights in Canada, I would be remiss not to mention how much more work needs to be done to ensure safety and acceptance of the community.

Just this week, an attempt to ban inclusive, diversity, fact and reality-promoting books in libraries was rejected. It was a direct attempt to silence the community in Brandon while really labelling and levelling terrible accusations at allies.

A school in Winnipeg had its Pride flag stolen, along with 2-S-L-G-B-2-Q-plus and Indigenous books. We must condemn these acts and recognize that this reflects why we have to continue to keep fighting. And recognize the universal humanity of all people involved.

I was very vocal in my opposition against this proposal. Thankfully, due to extraordinary popular support, Brandon School Division trustees voted down the book ban, but the vote was not unanimous.

I do think the PC government could've shown more leadership in making their position clear.

We need to do more to support and uplift individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities as we see a rise in hateful rhetoric from the far right.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

An Honourable Member: Leave, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: The member has requested leave to complete his statement. Does he have leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Lamont: This rhetoric is harmful to a community in which many—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —who already feel they are on the outskirts of society—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: They are human beings worthy of dignity and respect. Manitoban Liberals vow to do our part in continuing to be proud allies in celebrating all Manitobans.

Together, we continue to champion love, respect and equality for all, not just during Pride Month, but every day of the year. Happy Pride, Manitoba.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Marine Museum of Manitoba

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): I rise in the House to bring awareness of a unique museum located in Selkirk, Manitoba.

For many years, travel by boat, ship, barge and canoe were the main methods to transport goods, mail, teachers, doctors, nurses, tourists and residents to all northern communities around Lake Winnipeg.

* (13:50)

In 1972, 51 years ago, the Selkirk Marine Museum began the process to preserve and exhibit this unique history. Canada's only prairie marine museum, it hosts six ships that once navigated Lake Winnipeg. Visitors are free to climb on board, explore the ships and have a hands-on experience, feel what it was like to stand on the decks of the 125-year-old S.S. Keenora, built in 1897, the Bradbury, the Chickama, the Lady Canadian, the Peguis and the Joe Simpson. Without the preservation of these ships, a unique piece of Manitoba's history would be lost.

Thanks to the ongoing support from our provincial government, the museum is able to continue to

provide restoration and new programming. It is an exciting day-trip destination for the entire family, not just nautical enthusiasts and 'historians'.

This year, evening tours, historical tours and themed birthday parties are offered. During the year, the museum hosts an authentic dinner, where guests are served one of the traditional dinners that passengers once enjoyed while travelling on the Keenora. Visitors can also enjoy a pancake breakfast, a model boat show, a Halloween haunt throughout the season.

We invite all Manitobans and tourists to attend our museum and enjoy experiences that are unlike any other, building a sense of connection, belonging and pride that honours Manitoba's marine history. The general manager of the Selkirk Marine Museum, Shaylene Nordal, was—devoted 20 years to preserve our nautical history.

We are extremely proud of her efforts and results, and I ask my Chamber colleagues to please rise and 'recognize' Shaylene Nordal.

Education System Funding

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has been cutting public schools for years.

Now we've learned that they have a plan to cut school funding by millions of dollars for thousands of kids, including a \$2-million cut to Winnipeg School Division, if they are elected this fall. We can't—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Marcelino: —afford to give the PCs another chance to cut schools. Manitoba kids deserve the best. That means small class sizes and a teacher who can give each student the one-on-one attention that they need. It means a classroom with EAs and resources, plus a warm meal for kids who need it.

I've recently spoken to teachers who were told that all social worker positions will be cut for their school this coming fall. Social workers are essential in providing support to kids so they can be safe and have the resources that they need to do their best at school.

I've also recently heard from three IB high school students who are devastated that their school will not be able to provide international baccalaureate programming next year. One IB student said to me, why are they doing this to us when we have only one year

left to graduate and we've been working so hard to succeed?

The PC government promised the development of a new education funding model, but now they've delayed the release until after the election.

The Manitoba NDP has obtained a slide deck marked confidential, for the funding model review team, that shows a difference between current funding levels and the model's new levels for each—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Marcelino:—school division.

Some divisions will see their annual funding cut by millions of dollars. Seven Oaks School Division, cut by \$11 million; St. James-Assiniboia, cut by—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Marcelino:—eight point five million; Winnipeg School Division, \$2 million; Louis Riel cut by \$10 million; Lord Selkirk cut by \$7.5 million; Interlake School Division—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Marcelino:—cut by \$3 million.

I'll say it again: our Manitoba kids deserve the best public education that we can provide for them.

As a parent of two young boys in a public school, I'm happy to be proved wrong. Prove it to me and release the new education funding formula today.

Arborg & District Multicultural Heritage Village

Hon. Derek Johnson (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, today I would like to recognize and express my sincere gratitude and admiration for the individuals involved in the creation of the Arborg and District Multicultural Heritage Village.

Nestled by the Icelandic River, this little village has transformed its empty field into a living testament of the rich cultural tapestry of the Interlake region.

Back in February of 1999, a grassroots organization held their first meeting, with the ambitious idea of constructing a heritage village.

Three months later, the Arborg Heritage Village was incorporated, and since then, Pat Eyolfson, along with the dedicated board of directors and volunteers have embarked on an extraordinary journey.

With the village now spanning 20 buildings over 12.9 acres and nearly a quarter of a century later, the

Heritage Village serves as a tribute to the diverse cultures that have called Arborg and its surrounding area home throughout the years.

With each building and its contents representing Icelandic, Indigenous, Ukrainian, Polish, along with many, many more, visitors are granted a glimpse into the rich heritage that has shaped our community and the Interlake region. Completing such a monumental project is a testament to the unwavering dedication and perseverance of the board of directors and volunteers who have poured over 55,000 volunteer hours into this endeavour.

The heritage village has not only become an economic driver in our community, but also a gathering place where cherished memories are made. Madam Speaker, I ask my esteemed colleagues to join me in extending a heartfelt appreciation to Pat Eyolfson, the board and every volunteer who has contributed to the preservation of this unique chapter in Manitoba's history.

Their collective efforts has ensured that the Arborg and District Multicultural Heritage Village stands as a beacon, showcasing the beauty of diversity and the power of community spirit.

Venture Capital Fund

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): Madam Speaker, since the establishment of the PC venture fund in April 2022, this fund has been plagued by questionable decisions and a complete absence of results.

First and foremost, it's alarming that the board appointed by the PCs to oversee the fund lacks any experience in venture funds. This raises serious doubts about their ability to effectively manage the fund and make informed decisions. To add to the growing list of concerns, no investments were made from this fund in all of 2022. Despite the allocation of substantial financial resources, not a single Manitoba company has received support or created a job since the announcement of the fund in 2018.

Instead, the only transaction involved was granting \$25 million to Westcap Management Ltd., based in Saskatchewan and run by Grant Kook, to establish a venture capital fund for Manitoba businesses.

The decision to have a Saskatchewan-based firm administer Manitoba funds raises eyebrows regarding their commitment to our province's economic growth. Grant Kook is a controversial figure who has administered a similar fund in Saskatchewan and lost a significant amount of Saskatchewan taxpayers' money.

It is alarming that this PC government would entrust Manitoba funds to someone with a record of such failure. It is evident that the PC government—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliw: —failed to safeguard public funds and ensure accountability. The—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliw: —Connect Manitoba Growth Fund, which focussed solely on established companies, does not support new or emerging enterprises, hindering the growth of our local economy.

As elected representatives, it's our duty to hold this government accountable. The lack of transparency and apparent financial gains of individuals connected to this venture fund raises red flags.

Manitobans deserve better. We must demand answers and put an end to this reckless mismanagement of public funds.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Red River Ecological Corridor

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, establishing and providing stewardship for ecological corridors in Manitoba is needed. Protecting islands of habitat is not enough. We need to provide corridors so that wildlife, including mammals and birds, can have paths to move from one habitat to another.

For two years, I've been involved in looking at designating an ecological corridor along the Little Saskatchewan River in southwest Manitoba. An ecological corridor along a river with varied landholders, including many farmers, needs to involve people in the corridor in decision-making, and will require funding.

* (14:00)

Fortunately, the federal government has already announced it will provide such funding. On May 7, I hosted a forum to look at the potential for an ecological corridor on the Red River to the US border to Lake Winnipeg.

Steve Strang, former managing director of the Red River Basin Commission, provided a perspective on the Red River north of Winnipeg. John Orlikow, city councillor for River Heights-Fort Garry, talked of the situation within Winnipeg.

Ryan Sheffield, manager of the Pembina Valley Watershed District, spoke of activities needed to work with farmers, the tame—same time enhancing natural areas while supporting the farmers.

Myrle Ballard, director of Indigenous science with Environment and Climate Change Canada, spoke of the need to involve the Indigenous community early on. Will Goodon, a minister with the Manitoba Métis Federation, spoke of the importance of ecological corridors and the ties that Métis have with the land.

An effort is now needed to work with all stakeholders to knit together the existing efforts to have a designated ecological corridor along the Red River in Manitoba.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: We have a number of guests that I would like to introduce to you today.

First of all, I would like to start by introducing a special guest of the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith). We have here her daughter, Makena Smith, who is pregnant with her first child and the member's first grandson. And they've joined us in the gallery today. So, we would like to welcome them here.

Also seated in the public gallery, we have with us Leanne Rowat, the former MLA for Riding Mountain, and councillor Darlene Jackson from the municipality of Riding Mountain West. And we welcome you here.

And we also have guests in the loges today. In the loge to my right, we have Cliff Graydon, the former MLA for Assiniboia. And in the loge to my left, we have the former MLA for—*[interjection]* What did I say? Assiniboia. I'm jumping ahead. Let me start again.

In the loge to my right, we have Cliff Graydon, the former MLA for Emerson. And in the loge to my left, we have Ron Kostyshyn, the former MLA for Swan River, and Steven Fletcher, the former MLA for Assiniboia. And on behalf of all members, we welcome you back to the Manitoba Legislature.

And in—seated in the public gallery, from Riverdale School, Swan Valley church, we have 14 grade 7 to 9 students under the direction of Tom Penner. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk). And we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature as well.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Rural Paramedic Services Response Times and Staffing

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Today is the two-year anniversary of the death of Krystal Mousseau. Krystal's life mattered. Her family deserves justice.

I wanted to take a moment to honour this anniversary, a solemn event that marks the failure of our provincial health-care system to deliver Krystal the care that she needed.

On the subject of health care, yesterday we proved that the Premier has cut 87 rural paramedic positions since she took office. Today, we learned from the Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals that ambulance response rates are now taking 30 per cent longer in the Interlake and Prairie Mountain regions. Two are connected. When you have fewer paramedics, it takes more time for ambulances to respond in those regions.

Will the Premier tell the House why she cut 87 rural paramedics in Manitoba?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Madam Speaker, our hearts go out to the Mousseau family on the tragic loss of Krystal Mousseau. And certainly, from this side of the House, we want to send our condolences to the family as well.

On the issue of paramedics, Madam Speaker, I was pleased yesterday to join the mayor of Winnipeg on an announcement of \$54 million for ambulance service in the city of Winnipeg yesterday. That includes two more ambulances, as well, including 20 more paramedics on the front lines of ambulatory services here in the city of Winnipeg.

We were welcomed with the chief of the fire and paramedics, Madam Speaker. We were—we also welcomed those fire paramedic staff who work there on the front line. This was a well-received announcement yesterday.

And we recognize there's more work to do. We'll continue to work together to ensure that those ambulatory services are there for Manitobans.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, I can tell you the Premier's announcement was not well received in rural Manitoba, particularly coming on the same day

that we unveiled that this Premier, since taking office, cut 87 rural paramedic positions.

Not only are the wait times increasing—and I'll table the documents that prove the case—but the number of vacancies has increased as well. Not only fewer paramedics working there to respond to scenes, the vacancy rate has increased by 30 per cent.

So, this is a policy choice being made by this Stefanson government: fewer paramedics working in rural Manitoba because of their decisions. And, again, the five years with no contract for these health-care heroes, that only exacerbates the cuts that the Stefanson government has made.

Will the Premier tell the House why she continues to cut rural paramedic services in Manitoba?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, the only thing we cut were the incredibly high fees that Manitobans were faced to pay for ambulatory services in Manitoba. In fact, we cut those by 50 per cent. That makes it much more affordable for Manitobans for—to seek those services that they need when they most need it.

What I will say, of course, is that this issue remains in collective agreement negotiations right now, Madam Speaker. We are confident that those negotiations will come to a final resting place to ensure that those individuals get the—to ensure that there's a fair deal reached by—for those paramedics.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, I just want to be clear. The fact that the Premier cut 87 rural paramedic positions since taking office as Premier, that is not the subject of negotiations. She's just trying to distract and avoid answering a serious accountability question.

If you talk to people in rural Manitoba, they'll tell you that they're waiting too long for ambulances, and the reason why they have to wait so long is because these EMS services are short-staffed. We don't have enough paramedics working in rural Manitoba, so when one ambulance has to respond in community A, they don't have enough resources to then respond to that second call coming in from community B.

I'll point out that the members for Lac du Bonnet and other rural constituencies are not raising this issue. They're not fighting for ambulance services in their community. All they do is they come here and heckle. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: The question that the Premier needs to answer to the people of rural Manitoba is, why has she cut 87 paramedic positions working in their communities since becoming Premier?

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition continues to put false information on the record in the Chamber.

The fact of the matter is we recognize that there is a shortage of health-care workers in the province of Manitoba, nothing that's unique to Manitoba, but, of course, right across our country. That's why we've invested more than \$200 million in a health human resource action plan to attract more than 2,000 health-care professionals, including paramedics, to the province of Manitoba.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Before proceeding to the next question, we have some more students in the gallery, and I would like to introduce them to you before they leave.

We have 25 students—or around that number—from École Edward-Schreyer School in Beausejour, with teacher Elana Spencer [*phonetic*], assistant principal Jaymi Witzke [*phonetic*]. And we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature. And I should mention that they reside in the constituency of the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko).

* * *

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

Education Property Tax Out-of-Province Corporate Rebates

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): On the subject of schools, with the students in the audience, you know, we've long called on this Premier to stop her practice of giving cheques from money that was meant for the K-to-12 system, and sending that out of province to billionaires.

The Premier actually said that Loblaws—hugely profitable company, would go out of business if she didn't give them a cheque for \$327,000, taking—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —that 300 grand from revenue that was meant for schools.

* (14:10)

But this isn't the only giant billion-dollar, out-of-province corporation that's receiving PC government largesse. I'll table these documents that—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —show that Walmart, at just three locations alone, is going to receive a cheque for close to \$110,000.

Just imagine what \$110,000 could do at your local school, and then ask the Premier why she insists on taking money away from those K-to-12 institutions and sending it out of province to billionaires.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): I certainly welcome any question from the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite when it comes to affordability.

And I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition that he voted against an increase to the basic personal amount from just under \$11,000 to \$15,000, Madam Speaker. And that takes more than 47,000 low-income Manitobans off of paying taxes in Manitoba. That is making a real difference in the lives of those Manitobans.

Why did the Leader of the Opposition vote against that?

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, I can appreciate that the PCs are practising for their turn asking questions, but I'll remind the Premier that the topic of the day here is education.

Again, while the Premier is giving out these cheques to out-of-province, billion-dollar corporations like Walmart, which we've just shown is tapped to receive \$110,000—again, that's 110 grand—being taken from money that should be funding public schools in this province.

At the same time, Manitobans are probably wondering: How are the PCs going to pay for this? Well, as our colleague from Notre Dame showed, they're going to pay for it with the new education funding model that is going to cut millions of dollars from school divisions right across Manitoba.

We say it's the wrong approach. Where the PCs want to send cheques to billionaires, we say, why don't we invest that in Manitoba school children instead?

The question for the Premier to answer is, why is she sending these cheques out of province to billionaires?

Mrs. Stefanson: If the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite cared so much about the education of our children in this province, then why did they vote against our \$100-million, 6.1 per cent increase to the education budget this year, Madam Speaker?

Those are real investments for our children and for their education in the province of Manitoba, Madam Speaker. If he cared so much, why did he vote against it?

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, schools across Manitoba are being forced to cut teaching positions. They're being forced to cut teacher-librarian positions.

At the same time, these billion-dollar, out-of-province corporations, you know what they're doing? They're making bank. Loblaws—\$426 million in profit in just the first three months of the year. They got 300 grand taken from schools from this Premier.

Walmart announced that, in those same first three months of the year, they earned \$141 billion in top-line revenues—\$141 billion in top-line revenue, and yet this Premier wants to take \$110,000 away from struggling schools in our province and to send that cheque out of province.

It simply doesn't make sense. We need to invest in young people. We need to invest in education. We need to invest in youth in Manitoba.

Why does the Premier, on the other hand, want to send resources that could go to them, out of province to billionaires?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition says that we should be investing in education. That's exactly what we're doing: \$100 million more in the operating budget for school divisions this year alone.

Every single school division saw significant increase in their operating budget this year alone, and almost a 23 per cent increase since 2016 when we took office. That is more, Madam Speaker, not less. That's the operating funding.

We've also invested in the capital side of things, for 23 new schools, Madam Speaker. Under the Leader of the Opposition, the NDP, those students were being taught in portable units.

We believe they should be taught in classrooms, Madam Speaker. That's why we're making those investments.

Gender-Affirming Health Care Changes to Press Release

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, gender-affirming health care is just that: it's health care.

And this week, we saw the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) announce a Gender Equity Manitoba Secretariat. And the backgrounder was posted online, and it included details on funding for Clinic Community Health Centre and the Gender Diversity and Affirming Action for Youth program.

But neither the Premier nor the minister mentioned this during their announcement or anytime since then. Now, a new version of the backgrounder has been posted online, and that backgrounder removed the information altogether.

Can the Premier explain why her government deleted this funding announcement from their press release without telling Manitobans?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Gender Equity): Our government was very proud to announce the establishment and the enhanced mandate of Gender Equity Manitoba on Tuesday, along with a \$250,000 annual commitment to Pride Winnipeg, so that we can ensure that Pride is organized.

That is something that they never did when they were in government. Pride had come to that government year after year after year and asked for annual funding, and they got nothing from that side of the House.

On this side of the House, we stand for gender equity, we stand for an inclusive society and we were very proud to announce Gender Equity Manitoba.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) has so far refused to take responsibility for gender-affirming health care. I'll table the original version of the backgrounder that included these supports, along with the current version where it's been scrubbed clean from the government's website.

Earlier this week, the Health Minister refused to share the current wait times for gender-affirming

surgeries and procedures. Either she doesn't know or it's not her priority; both are unacceptable.

Will the Health Minister tell us the wait times today and explain why her government deleted their funding announcement for gender-affirming health care?

Ms. Squires: I can appreciate that the member has their facts wrong. This is a program that has been established in the province since 2009, and I did already commit to them that I would—I took the matter under advisement during Committee of Supply because I did not have the backlog that they were asking for, and I committed to getting that information.

When I have that information available, I will be sure to update the House, including that member.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, it's clear that this government is in chaos. I mean, why else would they publish an announcement, not talk about it and then delete it? Gender-affirming health care saves lives and should be a priority for this government, not buried at the bottom of a different announcement and then deleted altogether as if it never existed in the first place.

Health care for 2SLGBTQ+ communities is the responsibility of the Minister for Health, yet she somehow, some way, continues to refuse to be the one to speak to it.

Will the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) stand up in this House and say whether her ministry is responsible for the delivery of gender-affirming, life-saving health care in Manitoba?

An Honourable Member: Shameful.

Ms. Squires: So, I can appreciate that the members opposite are very unhappy that it's our government that established a Gender Equity Manitoba with enhanced mandate for it.

What I cannot tolerate is that the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine), sitting in her place, calling me shameful. As the first gender-affirming minister in this province, to sit there and call me shameful—*[interjection]* And she's shouting me down at this very moment. At this very moment, that member continues—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: —to shout me down.

In addition, she voted against our investments; she voted against \$250,000 for Pride, and now shouts me down and calls me shameful.

I ask that member to apologize and to stop calling me shameful. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

* (14:20)

I'm going to call—I'm going to ask everybody to show some more respect in this House, to be more civil to each other.

And we are here in a wonderful democratic institution, we are supposed to be models for promoting democracy. And when we see this level of heckling that can occur, which sometimes goes beyond heckling to shouting, that really is crossing a line.

So, I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please. Do better.

PC Party Election Campaign Co-Chair Comments Regarding Education System

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Last night, the PCs held a party event attended by the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson). The PC's election campaign chair, Candice Bergen, spoke at the event and showed us what the PCs say behind closed doors.

According to her, so many young people are either disengaged, they're entitled. Many young people have been brainwashed in university or even as children at school.

This is a shocking statement, Madam Speaker. It shows what the PCs really think of public education in our province. On this side of the House, we know Manitoba educators do not brainwash our kids.

Will the Premier be clear: Who does she think is being brainwashed and by whom?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): I'd say it was exciting to see 100 young people from across our province gather in the people's building last night to talk about governance, to talk about politics.

These are young people that are committed to their communities, they're clearly committed to our province, and we should be celebrating young people that are taking this initiative. And I want to thank them for coming and joining and have the conversation about politics.

What is shocking is that the opposition would say this was a bad thing.

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

Ms. Naylor: Thank you to the minister for confirming that a private party event was being held in this building last night.

The PC's campaign co-chair, Candice Bergen, thinks that Manitoba's young people have been brainwashed as children at school. That is a despicable attack on young people, on their families and on educators. And we know that similar rhetoric has been used to justify discrimination against the 2SLGBTQ+ community.

These comments came just one day after the Brandon school board rejected a book ban in our province.

The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has shamefully refused to condemn banning books, but will she do the right and condemn her campaign chair's comments today?

Hon. Kevin E. Klein (Minister of Environment and Climate): After over a quarter of a century in the media, I've seen dirty politics and mud-slinging far too often. I myself have been a victim of mud-slinging, false statements and dirty politics—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Klein: —by members of the NDP and by the Leader of the Liberal Party and by their candidate in Kirkfield Park. And I think that they know, like everybody else in this city knows, we will not tolerate dirty politics.

It is time to be grown-ups. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Klein: It is time to—for—it is time for politicians to stand on what they know and what they think. Mud-slinging is nothing more than a form of insecurity and bullying, and it has to stop—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired. *[interjection]* Order.

The honourable member for Wolseley, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Naylor: There is a difference from what the PCs say in public and what they say at private—to their members at these events. And the member for Kirkfield Park knows that because he was there.

The PC campaign chair says that children are being brainwashed in our schools. That's what they

think of public education in Manitoba. This despicable rhetoric is not new. It's been used recently to attack 2SLGBTQ+ community and undermine our public education system.

The Premier needs to be clear. She said nothing to meeting yesterday—she said nothing at the meeting yesterday; neither did that member. But Manitobans deserve answers, and educators deserve answers.

Will the Premier unequivocally condemn Bergen's remarks today? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I might be relatively new here, but I'm not stupid and I wasn't born yesterday.

When someone stands up in here day after day and puts false, misleading information on the record, that's bad. But what's worse is that it's dangerous, harmful, hateful, violent, disrespectful and misleading narrative in the public.

I myself, the Premier, the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires) and—the Minister of Advanced Education, the Minister of Education—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —have all stood up and condemned violence and hatred towards all communities, including the 2SLGBTQ+. We've all said there's no book ban, and yet, day after day, the members of the opposition and the member from Wolseley put false, misleading information on the record.

Would they stand up immediately and apologize to all of Manitoba for what they are doing?

PC Party Election Campaign Co-Chair Comments Regarding Education System

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): Let me reiterate: the PCs' campaign co-chair Candice Bergen showed us what PCs really say behind closed doors.

Last night at that event they attended by the Premier and six ministers, Bergen said that young people are entitled, brainwashed at school.

The PCs have repeatedly disrespected young people and their educators, but this is really a new level, and it's concerning. What will this PC government do to public education if this is what they say behind closed doors?

The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) needs to be clear: Does she agree with Candice Bergen that educators brainwash children in Manitoba?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): It gives me great pleasure to stand in the House today.

And again, I will get to the member's question right away, but I would like to congratulate and welcome all the great students from École Edward-Schreyer School in Beausejour, under the leadership of teacher Elana Spence, a good friend of mine, who we taught together for quite a few years.

So, welcome to the Manitoba Legislature. You're seeing what happens when one side puts false information on the record and the other side puts the facts on the record, Madam Speaker.

I'll answer the member's question in my next answer.

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

Mr. Altomare: Let me reiterate again, that her own campaign co-chair Candice Bergen said that young people are entitled, brainwashed, and at university and at school, that this is what's occurring.

This demonstrates how the PCs operate. They say one thing to the public and something totally different behind closed doors.

That's why they're worried about the—are—we are worried about their secret plan for funding public schools. They won't even release it. They won't even talk about it. They—we don't even—I don't even know if they know what they're going to be releasing later on after the election.

So, will the Premier explain, who does she think is being brainwashed and by whom?

Mr. Ewasko: Madam Speaker, Manitoba's K-to-12 education system is based on the philosophy of inclusion, which aims to make every individual feel accepted and safe in our K-to-12 education system.

The member opposite, just the other day, and the rest of his colleagues in the NDP side, voted against \$100 million, a 6.1 per cent increase to the K-to-12 education system, which would continue to make sure that the success of all students in this great province of ours, no matter where they live, their cultural background or their personal circumstance, they can achieve success in this great province of ours.

The member should stand up and apologize to those students and all the students in Manitoba for voting down \$100 million.

* (14:30)

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

Mr. Altomare: The PCs have zero credibility, and they know it. And when it comes to public education, it even goes lower than that, Madam Speaker.

Their campaign co-chair, Candice Bergen, said that young people are disengaged, entitled and brainwashed in our very own school system. How despicable is that? And we're worried here on this side of the House that the PC plan to—for public education when they believe that teachers are brainwashers.

Instead of standing up for young people, the Premier refuses to denounce these very comments that were said last night. The Premier needs to do the right thing right now, Madam Speaker, and unequivocally condemn Bergen's remarks.

Will she do so today?

Mr. Ewasko: Madam Speaker, it's actually unbelievable that the member from Transcona, an educator himself, would stand up and put these words on the record. He knows that he's speaking from the self-serving talking points of his leader, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew). It's shameful.

On this side of the House, 23 per cent increase to education funding since we took office in 2016, Madam Speaker. We are funding education at record—astronomical—levels in the province. The largest percentage increase in over 40 years.

We don't want to go back to the dark days of the NDP, Madam Speaker. We want to see success for all our students in Manitoba.

PC Party Election Campaign Co-Chair Comments Regarding Education System

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): As I've said many, many times, when people show you who they are, believe them.

The Premier and several of her Cabinet ministers attended—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: —a PC—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

MLA Fontaine: The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and several of her Cabinet ministers attended a PC party last night where their election campaign co-chair, Candice Bergen, called young Manitobans disengaged, entitled and claimed that they have been brainwashed in our schools and universities.

This is simply outrageous. Candice Bergen is attacking Manitoba's next generation of leaders. She's attacking Manitoba families and she's attacking our educators.

Now we know that the Premier can't bring herself to stand up and talk—stand against banning books, but will she stand up and condemn these outrageous comments from her campaign co-chair today?

Hon. James Teitsma (Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services): Madam Speaker, the member for St. Johns sometimes puts some horrible things on the record. And I would say, she's even worse in her heckles.

And one heckle I think all of us could hear loud and clear just a few moments ago was when she shouted: No one on the NDP will be apologizing. No one will be apologizing; that's her position.

To be clear, she is saying that her leader won't ever be apologizing for making hurtful and hateful lyrics. She won't—he won't be apologizing for making misogynistic and homophobic tweets.

Will he? I'll give him an opportunity today—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —to stand up and begin to apologize. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

MLA Fontaine: This kind of rhetoric from the PC campaign co-chair is the same that we've heard from people trying to justify discrimination towards our LGBTT2Q community here in Manitoba.

Candice Bergen said, and I quote: So many people are either disengaged; they're entitled; many young people have been brainwashed in university and even as children at school. End quote, Madam Speaker.

How out of touch and outrageous is their campaign co-chair? This shows exactly what the PCs think about public education in our province.

Will the Premier tell us if she agrees with Candice Bergen and her co-chair that educators are brainwashing our children?

Hon. Kevin E. Klein (Minister of Environment and Climate): I'm sure everybody at home in Manitoba watching this knows quite clearly what election propaganda is. I spoke at that event to these young people. I was one of the speakers. And we thanked the young people. We wanted them—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Klein: —to become engaged in the political process because we believe that they are our future, that in the past, politicians didn't want to listen to young people. We have a Premier that is listening to young people, who wants them involved, wants them engaged and wants them to be a part of the political process.

That's what we're doing; we're not playing election propaganda and putting false information on the record day after day after day after day.

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

MLA Fontaine: There's a video, Madam Speaker. There's an audio of Candice Bergen uttering those words to youth.

So, I don't know what propaganda the member—the star candidate—seems to think that we're putting on the record. But the thing—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: —with—that the PCs say one thing to the public, and then behind closed doors they'll say an entirely offensive, outrageous thing. The PC campaign co-chair said educators in Manitoba are brainwashing children.

We know this PC government has undermined our public school system, but these—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: —comments are a whole new level of disrespect for young Manitobans and our educators.

The Premier needs to do the right thing and condemn these wild accusations—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Members opposite really want to spend their time focusing on campaign co-chairs and what may or may not have been said.

I think that they should really spend some time looking at their own leader. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: Their own leader is the only leader of an opposition party who has publicly supported any kind of a ban.

When asked, would you have banned the song *Baby, It's Cold Outside*, he responded, yes, I would have. It's not cool when you have a woman singing what's in this drink, and there's a guy pressuring her not to go home. So, I don't think that's part of consent culture, and he would ban it.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to table this article where he publicly supports bans on words.

Judicial Appointment of Former Attorney General Concerns Over Residential School Position

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): We were shocked but not surprised to learn that this PC government is—has decided to appoint somebody who flat-out denies the documented history of residential schools to the board that will pick masters to serve in our justice system.

As I table, a former PC Attorney General, Jim McCrae, has co-authored denials of the harm of residential schools with Tom Flanagan, Stephen Harper's former chief-of-staff, citing research from a conspiracy theorist and tagged as a hoax.

For decades, at the residential school in McCrae's hometown of Brandon, First Nations children from all over Manitoba were forced to work unpaid in fields, poorly dressed in cold weather, and so many children died that principal Reverend Thompson Ferrier asked for a larger cemetery.

None of this is in question. Courts are about facts and evidence.

Why did the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) appoint Jim McCrae, who denies the facts and evidence of residential schools, to select people to serve in our courts?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I've not had the opportunity to look at the information that the member has tabled, but certainly our government's record and our comments on residential schools have been clear, and the harm—and we have a long and a strong history when it comes to reconciliation.

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

Mr. Lamont: Madam Speaker, these are the facts: that same principal of the Brandon residential school, Thompson Ferrier, said that First Nations children had evil tendencies. He went further: both church and state should have as a final goal the destruction and end of treaty and reservation life.

Now that statement was quoted verbatim and favourably in a book by CCF founder and NDP hero J.S. Woodsworth, who lived in Brandon and whose father, James Shaver Woodsworth, was in charge of every Methodist residential school across the west.

A century later, we're still hearing the same denials from Jim McCrae, of what was then called the national crime, which boils down to one thing: denying the mistreatment and dehumanization and deaths of Indigenous children.

Why did the Premier appoint someone who is denying a national crime?

* (14:40)

Mr. Goertzen: Our government has been clear about the harms of residential schools. We've taken significant efforts when it comes to reconciliation. We have strong relationships with Indigenous leaders right across the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we'll continue along that path.

Individuals With Lymphedema Medical Coverage for Treatments

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Madam Speaker, Amanda Sobey, who is here with us in the gallery today, and others, have a petition to the Premier signed by nearly 1,000 individuals to properly help those with lymphedema.

They call for the Province to recognize lymphedema in its entirety and to fund its treatment, including recognizing manual lymphatic drainage as a medical treatment; providing full coverage of medical-grade compression garments, as Saskatchewan does; ensuring all health professionals are well trained in lymphedema and moving to have lymphologists as a subspecialty separate from vascular specialists.

Why has the Premier completely failed to act on any of these recommendations?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): It gives me great pleasure today to stand up and answer the member from River Heights' question, and I'd like to welcome Ms. Sobey here for the Chamber today and asking questions in regards to her lymphedema.

As the House knows, many, many years ago, I had the pleasure of bringing forward a private member's bill to acknowledge Lymphedema Awareness Day, which is March 6th of each and every year. And every year prior to that and since then, I've attended their conferences and their professional development sessions.

We know on this side of the House that there was a lot of inaction on the 17 years of the NDP.

But on our side of the House, we're actually having those conversations with the Health Minister, we're having conversations with the deans of nursing and physicians within the post-secondary institutions, to try to bring to light—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Provincial Park Infrastructure Investment Announcement

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Yes, Madam Speaker, there's one thing that everyone in this Chamber can agree on: Manitoba is a beautiful province. The beauty of our province is best exemplified by our provincial parks.

Could the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development provide more insight into the historic, multi-year investments towards our gorgeous provincial parks?

Hon. Greg Nesbitt (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development): Thank you to my friend and colleague from Swan River for letting me speak about one of the treasures of Manitoba, our provincial parks.

Last week, I was honoured to announce the largest capital investment into our provincial parks in the history of Manitoba. We are injecting \$220 million over 10 years into our parks, with \$22 million being allocated this year alone.

That means park users will see an increase in yurt capacity, new and improved campsites, upgrades to washroom and shower facilities, plus new and modernized campsites, docks and boat launches.

Our government has heard that Manitobans want more opportunities to experience parks, and this investment shows we are listening.

I encourage everyone to get out to a park, see the stars, blaze the trails and reconnect with this great province.

Wildfire Evacuation Orders Community Preparedness

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): A wildfire caused the communities of Pimicikamak and Cross Lake to call for an evacuation of the communities' 7,000 residents.

Last night, residents were given three hours to pack their belongings and get to Thompson or The Pas, only to find there were not enough accommodations available. Many people, it's been reported, spent the night sleeping in their cars or on buses.

While the evacuation order has since been rescinded, can the minister please tell us what's been learned from this evacuation—because clearly there was problems—so that communities are better prepared for any future evacuations?

Hon. Doyle Pivniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I just wanted to let the member know that, when it comes to our EMO staff, they've been—they're dedicated, especially during floods, during forest fires.

And especially this forest fire, they're out there working with Indigenous Services Canada, Red Cross, to making sure that evacuations are done properly, making sure that we take care of our First Nations, especially in northern communities like Cross Lake.

And we make sure that we have accommodations for them, Madam Speaker; we work with the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires) to—making sure that accommodations are given out to First Nations communities.

We are working together as departments, so as government. That government—the NDP government didn't do in the past.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Louise Bridge

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Over 25,000 vehicles per day cross the Louise Bridge, which has served as a vital link for vehicular traffic between northeast Winnipeg and the downtown for the last 112 years.

The current structure will undoubtedly be declared unsafe in a few years as it has deteriorated extensively, is now functionally obsolete, and therefore none–more subject to more frequent unplanned repairs and cannot be widened to accommodate future traffic capacity.

(3) As far back as 2008, the City of Winnipeg, City, has studied where the new replacement bridge–
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maloway: –should be situated.

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

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

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

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

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

(9) More recently, the City tethered the Louise Bridge replacement issue to its new transportation master plan and eastern corridor project. Its recommendations have now identified the location of the new Louise bridge to be placed just to the west of the current bridge, not to the east as originally proposed.

(10) The City expropriation process has begun. The \$6.35-million street upgrade of Nairn Avenue from Watt Street to the 112-year-old bridge is complete.

(11) The new City administration has delayed the decision on the Louise Bridge for a minimum of

one year, and possibly up to 10 years, unless the Province steps in on behalf of northeast Winnipeg residents and completes the overdue link.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to–whoa; it's here–to recommend that the City of Winnipeg keep the old bridge fully open to traffic while the old bridge is under construction.

* (14:50)

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

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

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

And just–could I have everybody's attention, please. And I particularly would like to draw the attention to the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) and our guests.

Guests are not to be, I guess, working the room and saying hello to everybody. They're welcome to come and sit in the loge, but once the proceedings are finished, we do ask our guests to have their conversations in the hallway. So, we would appreciate the member's co-operation. Thank you.

The next petition is the honourable member for Transcona.

Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): 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.

Mr. Andrew Mickelfield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

(4) Manitoba has many good bilingual programs in public schools for children and teens available in other languages, including French, Ukrainian, Ojibwe, 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 would help cross-cultural friendships, relationships and marriages and prepare young people to be multilingual professionals.

We therefore 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 right here in Manitoba.

And this petition, Deputy Speaker, is signed by many Manitobans.

Construction Wages

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Marisa Backé, Ben Strath, Jason Manning and many other Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other petitions?

According—in accordance with our rule 133(6), when petitions are—okay, well, they are deemed to be received by the House.

So, grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, order, please.

As indicated by the filing of notice yesterday, we will now proceed with consideration of an opposition day motion, sponsored by the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare).

For the information of the House, as today is also the deadline day for report-stage amendments on specified bills, at 4 o'clock we will be interrupting proceedings to consider those RSAs.

If the opposition day motion is not concluded by that time, we will set it aside and return to it after the RSAs have been dealt with.

The honourable member for Transcona, to move his motion.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial government for trying to hide its new education funding model that would severely impact the funding by millions of dollars for school divisions like Pembina Trails, Seven Oaks, Louis Riel, Red River Valley, Lord Selkirk and many, many more.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just need to ask the member for Transcona who the seconder was.

An Honourable Member: Concordia.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Concordia, thank you. Okay.

Motion presented.

Mr. Altomare: It's an honour to be up here and debate on this serious opposition day motion this afternoon. This—these are one of the many mechanisms we have here in Manitoba Legislature to get serious issues brought to the floor of this Chamber, and to have robust debate and robust conversation about what is important to Manitobans.

After health care, education is the second most important piece that Manitobans talk about on a very regular basis. It's a part that really defines us as a province. And like I said earlier, I'm very happy to be up here to talk about the responsibility that governments have to ensure stable, predictable funding for public education.

I will say this, that for the seven years, it's certainly been very predictable: predictably low and predictably underfunded, consistently. And right now we're beginning to see and feel the impacts of how this is cumulatively now severely impacting public education in Manitoba.

This government likes to say that it's funded it properly throughout the past seven years, but clearly what has happened to the system indicates that it has not been doing that. School divisions have been struggling.

We knew, when this government was first elected in 2016, that it was going to have a severe impact on one of these really important stewardship pieces that government has, and that is stewardship over the public education system.

We call its stewardship, Deputy Speaker, because stewardship implies partnership: partnership with local communities, partnership with families and partnerships with Manitobans writ large. It's a very important piece that we can't diminish; that partnership is important.

So, what did they do right away? They came in with bill 64 that wanted to destroy that partnership completely. And actually, Deputy Speaker, a model that is very much taken from that Shared Health model.

Can you imagine a Shared Health model that would have been forced upon a public school system without any accountability, without any of the local voice or local choice in any of these matters? And we see the disaster that is our public health-care system would have been imparted on our public education system. Just imagine what that would look like right now. And I think we can, because we see a clear example in our health-care system.

* (15:00)

These last few years, Deputy Speaker, borne witness to funding that is neither predictable or stable. School divisions right now, because of bill 71—which was introduced after bill 64—bill 71 has absolutely tied the hands of local school boards in making decisions that can positively impact their families, their kids and their communities.

What has bill 71 done? Well, it's tied the hands of school boards. Actually, all school boards do now is that they decide where they're going to cut next.

Why is that? Why is that? Because they do not have stable, predictable funding in place for the public education system. That is something, as stewards, as provincial government, as MLAs here in this House, we have to take very seriously and ensure that we are a predictable partner that school divisions can rely on; a predictable funding partner and a predictable partner that shows leadership in particular areas that really impact Manitobans.

So, let's talk about some of those leadership pieces and what this funding model, this proposed funding model that we uncovered a week ago, shows where the priorities are. This particular funding model

that we exposed shows that the cuts will continue, Deputy Speaker. If there is anything predictable, like I said earlier in my previous comments, is that the funding will not be sustainable for school divisions to operate in the way that they need to, especially when we're coming out of a pandemic.

Here's the other piece that I found interesting, and I will say this: that during the pandemic we had the remote learning centre, a very successful piece that was put in place, I will say, by this government in response to the needs of students and families, especially those that are immunocompromised, those kids that have a difficult time in a regular classroom setting.

But as soon as we come out of it into the shadow of the pandemic, they cut the remote learning centre despite the demand and the need for those kind of services, Deputy Speaker.

So, when we talk about a funding model that needed to reflect what students and families really needed, here was something that was actually being used and also communicated to the government that is something very necessary to continue on.

I think this would have been an opportunity to show that, through some of these lessons that were learned throughout the pandemic, we can apply to certain pieces and certain supports and resources that kids really needed.

And I know families really appreciated, Deputy Speaker, having the services of the remote learning centre, because it also took into account kids that have a difficult time being in a regular school setting. So here was a support that was doing what it was intended to do: work in partnership and in stewardship with school divisions that don't have the resources right now to provide remote learning, or provide learning that doesn't happen in a traditional classroom.

What this funding model shows, Deputy Speaker, is that that wasn't thought of at all, and that a support that was put in place that was actually quite—delivered on its main mission, but was cut without any real consultation, without consulting those that were impacted the most. And that's what this funding model will continue to do. It'll continue down this road of cuts and unpredictable funding that has absolutely stymied local school divisions.

I've said before, bill 64 is certainly very supported by bill 71 and now by this funding model that was released and made public last week. It's unfortunate that we have to do these things, these pieces, when

really the Department of Ed and the minister should be out there consulting and saying, this is who we're meeting with, and through meeting we're coming up with a formula that's going to meet the needs of kids because we know, coming out of the pandemic, those needs have greatly shifted and greatly changed.

I've said earlier, a perfect example of that was the remote learning centre. That is something that was created that was actually fulfilling its purpose and came to morph into something better and more necessary for kids that really appreciated that support.

And I know families have reached out to the Department of Ed regarding the remote learning centre. They've certainly reached out to me. I know they've reached out to the minister, too, and I hope that that type of communication, that type of real public consultation, is going to be taken by the department and there will be an announcement that will take care of that particular need, Deputy Speaker.

But back to the funding model and back to how it's connected to bill 71. We know that part of bill 71 is something called the Property Tax Offset Grant. Nowhere in this new funding model does it indicate that that grant's going to be there or even be sustainable in what it's supposed to do.

Because right now what's happened is that we've had two school divisions, Deputy Speaker, based on this funding model and based on the PTOG, that have completely decided they're not going to take the Property Tax Offset Grant because they want to invest in kids, their families and their communities. They're going to forgo it because they know that they can go to the people that are in their area, and they know that they're going to want to invest in their children and community.

What this particular funding model shows—and their unwillingness, really, to talk about how they're going to fund public education—it shows really what is going to be happening as we move forward.

In this election year, Manitobans will have a decision to make. But it'd be great if we can make an informed decision, if Manitobans had in front of them, Deputy Speaker, the proposed funding model so that we can say, yes, does this meet our needs? Maybe, maybe not. Here's how we can improve that. Here's how we can add our voice to something that is really consequential.

That—I've said many, many times and I know many MLAs in this House believe that a robust, fully funded public education system is something that

draws people to Manitoba. So when we talk about having people come here to live, work and to raise their families, it's really important we have a fully funded, fully resourced public school system that everybody can be proud of, that we could all say, as 57 MLAs, we had a role in ensuring was properly funded.

Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): It gives me—again, it's an honour to stand up and put some factual information on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's unfortunate, though, that I have to stand up and put factual information on the record when my friend from Transcona, the critic for Education, who should be standing in the House and advocating for student success in this great province of ours, for him to stand up and put forward an opposition day motion with so many inaccuracies, it's actually laughable.

Matter of fact, the information that was tabled not that long ago by the official opposition—I mean, this was a, you know, a funding model review, a slide deck of proposed funding under an old and a new model. And that was brought forward to our government. Matter of fact, it was brought forward by the funding model review team, which—that model was rejected, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The member from Transcona speaks about going out and having conversations with education stakeholders. Well, that's exactly what we're doing. Actually, our education partners across this great province of ours are constantly, on a day-to-day basis, being appreciative to myself, the department and our government for having the collaborative approach that we do have. They're saying they don't want to go back to the dark days of the NDP government where everything was decided behind closed doors, the shadows of darkness, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

They made decisions in the NDP caucus, when they were in government, that absolutely had no regard for any student success. They underfunded education.

* (15:10)

They made sure—matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here comes a little bit of a history lesson: when the NDP took over power in, you know, 1999 and the early 2000s, our students in Manitoba, they were testing in numeracy and literacy; we were finishing third in this great country of ours, in Canada.

As the NDP continued along their modes of—I don't even know what they were doing, the multiple different Education ministers that—the failed Education ministers under the NDP government, you know where our students ended up in 2014 and 2015? Last. Last in numeracy, last in literacy, last in science.

That is the record of the dark days of the NDP.

So, what did we do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we came into power? First of all, we needed to make sure that we were funding education. Secondly, we needed to make sure that we were actually going to go and do some more collaboration and consulting with Manitobans about education.

So, we did a K-to-12 commission, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We had a committee. We had them go around and speak to Manitobans, 30,000-plus Manitobans.

Something that the NDP could have done, they didn't do, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They were happy with the fact that under their misguided, failed Education ministers, they saw that our students had dropped from third in the country to dead last and further behind ninth.

That is not good enough for our great students in Manitoba.

So, we're taking a different approach. We're actually consulting with Manitobans. What do they see? What do they need in the K-to-12 education system? Mr. Deputy Speaker, 30,000 Manitobans came out, gave us advice.

K-to-12 commission—first commission on education in this great province of ours since 1959, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Shame on the NDP's former government, the dark days of the NDP, who didn't even think about actually going outside these walls and actually having consultations with the experts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But we on this side of the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we're priding ourselves on actually going and having those conversations.

The deck—the slide deck that the member had tabled a couple weeks ago was rejected by our government. So that's why we are going out and we are having those conversations with each and every school division in this great province of ours, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make sure that we get the funding model right.

You know—you want to know why? Because school divisions have been calling for this for 20-plus years, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Not one of those members on the NDP side ever stood up—and even the new members, where were they? They were going to these leadership contests and they weren't saying a word. Matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they would stand up and they'd applaud for Greg Selinger, the individual who appointed those failed Education ministers and saw that our education system had taken a turn for the worst.

Well, the member from Transcona wants to talk about funding. Well, I know that the member from Transcona talks about \$100 million, a 6.1 per cent increase, as crumbs—as crumbs, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

It's unfortunate—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —that the member from St. Vital—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —wants to talk or whatever else, or heckle from his seat, but he'll get the opportunity to speak and I know that he's probably up and speaking so it's all good, Mr. Deputy Speaker. [*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: So, \$100 million, 6.1 per cent increase this year alone. That doesn't even take into the account hundreds of millions of dollars that are going towards capital, building new schools.

We're building new schools where the NDP failed. They didn't bother building. Matter of fact, they had no foresight. They were only interested in their own partisan rhetoric, Mr. Deputy Speaker

So, going to the member's opposition day motion here, so, I do want to share with the House that since our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) from—the MLA from Tuxedo has taken over, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let's talk about funding in the last—just in the last three years alone, not counting since we formed government, that we have increased education funding by the tune of 23 per cent.

I hope that the member from St. Vital stands up and applauds for that 23 per cent, because I know that the member from St. Vital does not agree with his member from Transcona about that \$100 million is crumbs. He knows that \$100 million is going to fund

and to help create successes for not only the school divisions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but also for all of our students.

So, in the opposition day motion, the member from Transcona mentioned St. James-Assiniboia. So, the last three years, St. James-Assiniboia received, in the school year of '21-22, 12.7 per cent, that's over—a \$4.5-million increase. The following year, '22-23, 7.9 per cent, that's over \$3 million increase. This year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 8.1 per cent increase.

These are not crumbs, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We on this side of the House have faith in the electoral process, the democratic process here in Manitoba.

We know that those school divisions are taking those funds and making sure that they are using those funds to address the priorities within their school divisions and in their school communities. It is unfortunate that the member from Transcona does not have faith in those elected officials.

Matter of fact, the member from Transcona sounds a lot like a couple of those failed education ministers under the former NDP government, where they thought that they should micromanage everything, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The second school division I want to mention is the Pembina Trails school division, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In the school year of '21-22 they got a 13.1 per cent increase, almost \$8 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The following year, just over \$8 million, to the tune of 12.2 per cent, and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year alone, within that astronomical funding that we've given again this year, over \$10 million, 13.2 per cent increase.

These, again, are not crumbs. We want to make sure that the schools are well funded, the school divisions are well funded, and we want to make sure that students all across this great province of ours, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are experiencing success, no matter what their cultural background is, where they live or their own personal circumstance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to hearing more false information get put on the record by the members of the NDP—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Before recognizing the member for Point Douglas, I unfortunately have to acknowledge a clerical error that requires the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare) to re-read a slightly adapted version that—I'm sorry, the correct version of the motion that he previously read.

So, I recognize the member for Transcona, to read the correct version into the record.

Mr. Altomare: I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial government for trying to hide its new education funding model that would severely and negatively impact the funding by millions of dollars for school divisions like Pembina Trails, Winnipeg, St. James-Assiniboia, Seven Oaks, Louis Riel, Lord Selkirk, Interlake and much more.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes. It has been moved by the honourable member for Transcona, seconded by the honourable member for Concordia, that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial government for trying to hide its new education funding model that would severely and negatively impact the funding by—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense? I'm—okay. Severely and negatively impact the funding by millions of dollars for school divisions like Pembina Trails, Winnipeg, St. James-Assiniboia, Seven Oaks, Louis Riel, Lord Selkirk, Interlake and much more.

Okay.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I want to thank my colleague for bringing this forward and bringing this attention to what this government wants to hide.

And what they've been told is an election-losing budget, and have been told to hold off on this until possibly, maybe slim little chances that they get re-elected. But we know that Manitobans aren't fooled by this government. We know that they are in tune to what they're doing to our education system by what they've done to our health-care system.

* (15:20)

Our students in this province deserve the best quality education possible. And they have a minister who is an educator that should know what good

quality education is. That—small class sizes: this government went from 20—teachers are telling me they have well over 28 students in a classroom.

And that Education Minister knows what happens when you have too many kids in a classroom and one teacher. Kids fall behind. They don't get the proper attention that they need. Many times, kids don't even get the extra supports because of what this government has done to our education system.

Seven Oaks School Division—and I know the members opposite don't like to hear about the cuts that have been—that have had to happen under their government that have resulted in less services to kids. Classes are struggling with less EA time. Kids with exceptional needs are struggling because one EA has to help the whole classroom when often a student may need full-time EA support.

And teachers are being run off their feet. They've come back from COVID this first year and they're barely making it to the end this year. They've had struggle after struggle because this government hasn't come to the table and kept up with the resource support that they had within the pandemic. And the member from Transcona talked about it, you know, the learning lapse that happened. The pandemic provided extra support, but this government has pulled all of that support.

They've cut supports even further and now we know what it's going to look like if, you know, they were to be re-elected, which we know is not going to happen because Manitobans aren't happy with what they're doing. They continue to cut, cut, cut.

And, you know, the member from Lac du Bonnet talked about, you know, some of the services and the successes. Well, I can tell you, Deputy Speaker, the swim program is needed for students. We have so many newcomers that are coming to Winnipeg, here, to Manitoba that don't know how to swim. We've seen drownings in our great province, here.

This valuable resource in our school divisions helps students learn how to swim so that if they go to one of our beaches here in our province, that they have the skills to be able to survive if they become—you know, in a situation where they find themselves in need of those valuable skills. The skate program: learn to skate. So many kids don't have opportunities to learn how to skate.

And due to these cuts—like, look, \$11 million from Seven Oaks School Division. That's a lot of money. That's making divisions make hard choices.

And what the Education Minister said: Well, school divisions need to prioritize.

Well, school divisions have prioritized. They've prioritized busing for students to get to and fro from school. Many kids live far, far away and don't have, you know, someone with a vehicle to get them to school. So that means higher truancy levels because kids can't get to school. That's what this government is promoting: kids not getting to school.

And I think about, you know, the member from Radisson and speaking about nutrition programs and saying, oh, we shouldn't be feeding kids in school. Absolutely, we should be feeding kids in schools. As a teacher myself, I bought a fridge. I had it in my classroom—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith:—kids would come in and they—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith:—you know, often didn't have breakfast—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith:—at school. Maybe they got up late.

And I hear the member from Radisson chirping over there, and I'm sorry that—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith:—we have differing opinions here, that, you know, on this side of the House, we think that kids should get nutritious meals in school and that schools should be investing in that.

While this side of the House—or that side of the House doesn't think that, you know, offering those at schools—especially lunch programs as well. I was one of those kids that went to school extra early because I came from a low-income family, one-parent family with three kids; often didn't have, you know, breakfast or even a sandwich to take to school. What did that mean for me? If that lunch program wasn't there, I wouldn't go to school because I didn't have a lunch, because I was embarrassed to sit there with my other, you know, students without a lunch.

But this, providing food in schools, allows every kid to feel equal in a school where, you know, maybe it's not a low-income area. Maybe you're in the south end and you're living in social housing over there, and you're struggling, or you're a low-income parent that's struggling with one job and has their kids in daycare

and doesn't have enough money to, you know, have breakfast.

Schools are prioritizing, and that's what this government needs to understand, is they are doing the best they can with what limited resources that this government has given them. And they've continued to cut, cut, cut, which has resulted in schools having to make tough decisions, which has resulted in less teachers in the classroom, has resulted in less EAs in the classroom, has resulted in now social workers not being in schools.

Social workers play a valuable role, I can tell you that, Deputy Speaker. Working with, you know, social workers in school divisions—make sure that students have the supports that they need. And I think about—I was just at a school, in the library, and I was presenting in the library to the students on Red Dress Day. And the librarian came over to me; she said: I've been working in the education system for 45 years and my position has been cut to half time as a result of this PC government.

Imagine that. Someone who loves, loves their job, and they do such a tremendous job, reading to our kids, making sure that they have access to the resources that they need, and then, you know, you have a government that wants to limit what kids have in their schools. We haven't had a premier stand up and, you know, speak against it, but we need well-funded schools.

And I want to go back to all of the cuts. So, \$10 million from Louis Riel School Division—\$10 million. And I think about the overages in Project Nova—\$200 million—and that Education Minister was saying, oh, \$100 million. Well, look at what, you know, MPI—\$200 million over budget. Imagine what that could do for the education system.

You look at St. James-Assiniboia—\$8.5 million. Imagine how many—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith:—teachers are going to be—have to be cut from that school division. Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$4.5 million from Pembina Trails School Division; over \$2 million from Winnipeg School Division.

Many of the schools I represent are in the inner city, in Winnipeg School Division, and I know they need more resources. I know that there's students that are struggling to get to school. I know that myself, you know, as a student growing up in the North End, I had

a truant officer often come to my house to get me to school, and those are valuable services.

Social workers, they often do that as well; go and work with the family and figure out, you know, how can we get this student to school, what is it that they're lacking to get them to school, and how can we, as a community, ensure that our kids are getting to school and being educated.

I think about, you know, some of the programs that have been cut in their last year for kids that are going into post-secondary, you know, some of our trades. School divisions are now thinking about scaling back how many kids are going to be able to go through these programs. There's a real big need in our province for trades, and we should be infusing more money into our school divisions to ensure that those students that come out of the school divisions are being employed right here in our province.

We have too many companies that are coming from other provinces when we should be, you know, growing our own here in Manitoba and making sure that our schools have the resources to do that. So when you see \$1.5 million being cut, like, from school—Flin Flon School Division; \$2 million from Borderland School Division; \$8 million from Lord Selkirk School Division; \$4 million from Pembina Trails School Division; and then \$2 million from Southwest Horizon School Division; and nearly \$8 million from Sunrise School Division.

This results in fewer EAs, fewer teachers, fewer services. Kids aren't getting to school on buses, and certainly we need to be supporting, and this government—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

* (15:30)

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I'm happy to put some words on the record with respect to this very poignant and very topical and very critical opposition day motion brought forward by my colleague, the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), to discuss education, discussing the funding around education and the proposed funding brought over by this PC government.

I was listening to the member's comments, which I think were very insightful, about the future of education, the importance of it and his experiences being an educator for a number years—number of years.

And I heard the minister's comments, as well, in regard to, you know, his attacks on us and attacks on the former, past Education ministers.

And I think that it's very enlightening to see the difference. That a member on our side, the member for Transcona, is looking to the future to see how we can invest to make our system better. Meanwhile, we have a Minister of Education that seems to be so caught up, twisted himself into knots, sick and tired of the past—things that happened in the past, but he seems unable to focus on actually doing the job of educating our kids who are in the school system today, making sure they're set up for the future of our province.

And so, I would urge the minister to reflect on those comments and the difference between the two comments and ensure that his mindset, his department's mindset are on the right priorities, on the priorities of educating the young people in Manitoba.

Now, when I think about—specifically around their funding for education, and I look at the approach that this current PC government has been taking, I can't help but wonder where they start off when they come up—when they say, hey, today's going to be our discussion about how we fund education in Manitoba. Where is their starting point?

Well, it seems to be that their starting point starts with the out-of-province billionaires. It seems that they start with them. They start with the out-of-province billionaires and say, well, how much money do we need to send out of province? Okay, let's figure out how much money we need to send to the head of Loblaws and Superstore and how much we need to send out to the head of Walmart, the billion-dollar companies that are not based in Manitoba; let's figure out how much we can send to them. Let's take that money right out of the classroom for kids. Let's take that money out of our education system and send it out of province.

Once they've filled up that bucket for out-of-the out-of-province billionaires, seems like their next priority seems to be the wealthiest Manitobans, the wealthiest corporations. And then they figure out, okay, well, how much money can we take out of our education system to put into the wealthiest, largest corporations, like the owners of Polo Park and some of the largest real estate owners in Manitoba.

And then they say—after they figure out how much money they're taking out of our education system to send off to the wealthiest here, they then look at saying, okay, well, this seems to be how much money

is left. And whatever's left at the end of the day is what they put into education.

And I think that's why we're seeing a funding model that has been presented here, that outlines cuts across the board: \$11-million cut for the Seven Oaks School Division, \$10 million cut from Louis Riel School Division, \$8.5 million cut from St. James-Assiniboia School Division, \$4.5 million cut from Pembina Trails School Division, over \$2 million cut from the Winnipeg School Division, over \$2 million cut from Border Land School Division, over \$1.5 million cut from Flin Flon School Division, nearly \$3 million from the Interlake School Division, nearly \$8 million from Lord Selkirk School Division, over \$4 million from Pembina Trails School Division, over \$2 million from Southwest Horizon School Division.

Now, this is what happens when you start off the process of education funding by looking at how do we get money into billionaires' hands first, and then, at the end of the day, you end up with cuts in the classroom.

Now, how does that actually impact students? How does that actually impact the welfare of the minds of young people who we're trying to educate and set up for success into the future?

Well, let me tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I've spoken with educators. I've spoken with assistant superintendents, superintendents, I've spoken with EAs, talked to students themselves and they all feel the cuts in their classroom. They feel it every single day. They know they feel it when they take a—have to take a day off for, whether it's sick, or for one reason or the other, and there's not enough funding for their division to pay for a substitute.

They feel it when, in a classroom, they used to have an EA or two EAs to support them in the classroom. Teachers feel it when now they don't have any EAs in their classroom.

They feel it when there are newcomers into their school who speak another language. There used to be someone in the classroom to support them, used to be someone to help them adjust to learning in either English or in French. And now, because of the funding cuts in our education system, there's no one there, and it makes it more challenging for those students to learn, putting them behind the rest of the class.

Now, that's the real impacts of some of these funding cuts, some of these funding choices that this PC government has made.

Now, the minister, in his comments, made a remark that they had a funding model review team who did some work—obviously this must have taken several weeks or months—perhaps even longer—to put forward a model of what the funding would look like. And he admits that what we presented, what was tabled by the minister—by the member from Transcona and the cuts that I listed out just moments ago, that that was part of a slide, that that was prepared by the funding model review team.

And so, obviously, this was a funding model review team that was set up by this PC government, by perhaps this minister himself. Was this review team handpicked by the minister to set out and do the work of creating a new funding model? Well, if it was, and this is what they came with, then really the minister is the one who's asking for these sort of cuts.

So, for him to shy away from it or claim that it's been rejected seems like such a false narrative. And I suggest, and, you know, I'd love to hear confirmation or a rejection of this notion by the other side, is to whether this is the funding model that's going to be brought back in the event that they have another term in office.

I mean, is this funding model review team still at work? The minister says that they're still listening to Manitobans. So, is this same team, the same team who brought forward a \$10-million cut to the Louis Riel School Division? Are they still the ones who are at work trying to make a new funding model that, of course, conveniently won't be released until after the election?

But is this same team at work making another funding model review? And I don't think it gives us any confidence; I don't think it gives Manitobans any confidence that any funding model that the PC government brings forward would be any different than this, because they have a track record, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have a track record of underfunding education in this province. And it's only serving themselves to the detriment of the kids, the detriment of students, the detriment of educators, administrators and all those who care about education in our province.

And so, it's quite perplexing to hear the minister try to run away from this review when it was him himself who set it up, who asked for the funding to be reviewed for this new model to get created in the first place. And I wonder, I think the big question that a lot of us are asking, a lot of Manitobans, a lot of parents are asking themselves is: if it wasn't an election year,

if they weren't so concerned about their own jobs, would they have just have moved forward with this funding model? Or is it only because that we're in an election year that they chose to temporarily back away from this funding model and are fully willing to implement this after the election?

I think it's a huge concern. It's a massive concern that teachers, parents, students have about what the future of education might look like if this government, this PC government, has an opportunity to inflict this type of damage in our education system. So, it's a huge concern.

On this side of the House, we want to take a vastly different approach to education, one that involves listening and working with students, teachers, administrators, to find out their core concerns, how we can best address them and how we can fund them in a way that represents a way for them to find solutions for their issues and educate kids in our education system so that they can reach their highest potential.

* (15:40)

We will be able to do this after the next election. I know Manitobans will be looking at the education system as a key choice in their election decision making in the fall, and we know we can present the best possibilities for Manitobans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Could you please canvass the House for leave to allow the sponsors of report stage amendments to be considered this afternoon to make a speech up to one minute long, using the timer clock, on each of their own amendments, despite the fact that our rules do not allow for speeches on these amendments?

For clarity, only the sponsors will be allowed to speak to their amendments; no other members will be allowed to speak on any of the amendments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, is there leave to allow the sponsors of the report stage amendments to be considered this afternoon to make a speech up to one minute long, using the timer clock, on each of their own amendments, despite the fact our rules do now allow for speeches on these amendments?

For clarity, only the sponsors will be allowed to speak to their amendments; no other member will be allowed to speak on any of the amendments.

Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

I now recognize the honourable member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I won't spend too much time talking about this.

I do want to mention it's unfortunate that this is what's taking up this afternoon's time in the Legislature.

Underfunding of education is incredibly important. We agree that education's being underfunded. We recognize that there are lots of school divisions that are laying people off, facing cuts, running deficits because there's a huge variety in the amount that funding has been increased when inflation is high. The amount of federal funding to this government is up by over \$1 billion this year, over 16.8 per cent, and some places are only getting 2 per cent increases.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And, again, it's unfortunate, because there is actually a lot of important legislation that we're going to be talking about at some point later this afternoon, and we're going to have no opportunity to debate that at all because we're talking about this, and there are lots of important and serious fact-based debates we could be having.

The problem with this is that this—the idea that this is a hidden plan—and believe me, I am not defending the government—but this is not a hidden plan because if you look right at the top of it, it says—sorry—'22—the year that it applies is 2022-2023; that's the fiscal year. That fiscal year has already passed; it's over. This is not a plan for something that's going to happen in the future; this is a plan for something that was considered and maybe would happen in the past and never happened. So, this is a make-believe debate in a province that has lots of very real problems.

So, it's unfortunate that we're talking about this because there are real other plans we could talk about. You know, there was a health report that was concealed which showed that the government could've done something a year ago for all sorts of issues in health care and didn't do that. This is not it. It says sub—it says 2022—twenty—2023, sorry. That fiscal year ended on March 31st, two months ago. It says subject to change based on factors outlined on slide 21. We do not seem to have a copy of slide 21. So—and when

we look at the government's numbers, they don't actually match up with this.

So, with that, I'll just say it's unfortunate. We could be talking about really substantive issues, having debates about the bills that are coming forward and about the report—very important report stage amendments that are going to be coming up with a number of these bills. It's unfortunate that the official opposition has chosen to waste the House's time with this motion today.

Thank you very much.

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I realize that the member from St. Boniface thinks talking about school funding is a waste of time. On this particular party, we don't believe that talking about school funding is a waste of time.

We think it's a very important topic that should be discussed, and we think that when the government tries to hide what their plans are when it comes to school funding is something that should be fleshed out and discussed once it sees the light of day, which this plan did, I'm sure much to the government's chagrin, which is why it didn't get implemented because they realized at some point in time, they figured out—or somebody told them, they may not have figured it out—that this was another bill 64 in the making, which would have guaranteed their downfall in the next election. It's kind of guaranteed anyway, but this would have been the final nail in the coffin to sink their ship, to realize that so many school divisions—so many school divisions that are already struggling because of this government's funding and shortage of funding, freezing funding, not even recognizing that there's something called inflation that affects funding—so many school divisions are already suffering.

The fact that this government came up with this report that suggests that there would be further cuts to that funding. And, the member from St. Boniface pointed out that, yes, the date on that has come and gone.

But here's what Manitobans need to ask themselves, and it's a very serious question: Do they trust this government not to bring this same funding level back—or, possibly something worse—if, heaven forbid, they should win the next election?

And I think most Manitobans are smart enough—well, in fact, I believe pretty much all of Manitobans are smart enough to not trust this government based on their track record. Based on their track record of underfunding, cutting, pretending that everything's

lovely; talking about astronomical funding levels, which aren't astronomical; making big announcements, which this government loves to do, but then not living up to those announcements, not actually funding things the way they're supposed to be.

Now, I've listened to several members talk about what's happening with the funding in their particular school divisions and in some of the Winnipeg and southern school divisions. But we also know that in there was a \$1.5-million cut to the Flin Flon School Division. So, what does that potentially mean for them?

Well, we already know that northern school divisions struggle to attract teachers because it costs more to live in the North. And, quite frankly, a lot of teachers don't want to go to the North because some of them see it as a career-limiting move, because if they get stuck too long in some of these northern divisions, in their minds it's seen as holding them back for future advancement.

So, what do school divisions like Flin Flon need? Well, they need sufficient funding to make sure that things like the negotiated collective agreements that this government tried to do away with bill 64, we need to make sure that some of those additional bonuses for northern teachers are maintained and, in fact, not just maintained but increased.

We know that, whether you're a teacher or the janitor at the school, all of your costs in the North have gone up exponentially compared to costs down south. A teacher in Winnipeg may only have to drive a block or two to get to school, whereas many of these teachers—I'd look at places like Sherridon, for example. Now, Sherridon is part of Frontier School Division that did—according to this secret document, was in line to receive an increase. But would it have been an increase sufficient to pay teachers in Sherridon a proper salary remuneration to account for the fact that if they need a loaf of bread, they have to drive two and a half hours to get it because there is no stores in Sherridon anymore? So, teachers have to try and plan ahead, as do other folks that live there that this government also chooses to ignore.

We know from talking to the Flin Flon School Division previously that they were already so short of funding that they were trying to change schools around so that they could combine some of the services for classes, if you will.

* (15:50)

People that moved to specific neighbourhoods so that they could be close to the school where their children went were all of a sudden being told, because of this government's funding cuts, that their kids wouldn't be going to that school anymore. They'd be going to a school across town, where there was no hope of them actually procuring services for after-school care or lunch care or any of those things.

So, I don't know which minister wants to stand up and say how cutting funding to that division is going to help that division meet the needs of parents, of kids in that division.

And I know one of the members opposite doesn't believe that kids should get fed at school, just because he's well-off enough that he can afford to make sure his kids get school lunch, get breakfast in the morning.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

But, in the North—in a lot of communities, not just the North—there are many families that struggle to meet the basic needs because their income level hasn't kept up with inflation. So a school lunch program is an essential thing so that kids can learn and get ahead.

Now I realize that this government really doesn't care if northern kids get ahead; otherwise, they'd have done something about Internet and they'd have done something about cell service for all those northern communities, that they've managed to fumble that so badly that nothing has changed under their watch.

Cranberry Portage, for example, the fibre network runs right through the community. Does go to the Frontier Collegiate there, but it doesn't go to anybody's home, so kids can't keep up. And we saw that during the pandemic, that there was no way that they could be doing their school work at home the way kids in the city could. So, while Frontier did get a boost in some funding and was able to convince MTS to tie them in, seeing as the line was right there, we know that whatever they got under this proposal would not be sufficient.

How many schools in Frontier School Division are already running without the required number of teachers because they can't afford to pay them? They can't afford to pay them enough to attract them; they can't afford to pay them enough to make sure that the exorbitant cost of living in those northern communities is recognized in the teachers' salaries. So, while the government did recognize that maybe Frontier deserved a little bit, it wasn't enough.

So, the question becomes, once again: Do Manitobans trust that, if this government—if this PC government, if this Stefanson government—gets re-elected, that they won't bring back a plan like this that underfunds school divisions at the same time they're cutting cheques to millionaires and billionaires, which takes money directly out of school divisions' ability to pay their bills?

We know that the Flin Flon School Division is going to be in trouble because of the grant-in-lieu funding that's gone down. So, thank goodness, we caught this in time to be able to stop it. This—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I appreciate the opportunity and being able to rise this afternoon. And I'm going to choose to look at this piece of legislation in an optimistic way, as I love being able to stand in these Chambers and speak to education here in the province of Manitoba.

And I see Education as one of those departments that really make being an MLA one of the best jobs in the world, because of the roles we get to play within schools within our communities.

I know, in the community of Tyndall Park alone, I've got Waterford Springs School. I've got Meadows West School; Stanley Knowles School; Prairie Rose; Shaughnessy Park; Tyndall Park school; and Garden Grove School. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that we even have another school coming to Tyndall Park, which is exceptionally exciting.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I choose to talk about the schools because all of us MLAs have opportunities to go into the schools quite frequently throughout the years, and I know many of us go into the schools in February to celebrate I Love to Read Month.

And again, this is one of my favourite things to do as an MLA. It's such an opportunity to get into our communities, to get into the schools to hear from the students firsthand.

And you know, one of the things I always share and I say to all the students is—and pretend you're one of the students, Mr. Deputy Speaker—I'll say to you: you're my boss. Technically, it is my job to represent you inside of the Manitoba Legislature, and it's such an honour to be able to do that.

And I often talk with the students about what provincial issues are, and we'll talk about municipal issues and federal issues as well. But children love to

learn what they actually have a lot of say on here in the province of Manitoba.

You know, I've talked to students for—maybe not hours—but for quite a long time about extending gym classes, for example. They seem to all love gym class, so it's always a hot topic.

And I've learned a lot from students during I Love to Read Month about YouTube channels and how they all—a lot of students now, they want to be what's called a YouTuber. This wasn't even a career when I was still in school, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, I Love to Read Month is just one of the opportunities where many of us MLAs get to go into the schools within our communities.

Another one is graduations. And graduations and farewells, they're coming up quickly. It allows for us to go and congratulate so many of the students who are moving on to different paths and different schools. I know some of us, we do scholarships for students as well. We try to help them get a foot up for different opportunities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know over the last couple of years, I've even had the opportunity to go into schools on the day of Truth and Reconciliation. And I reflect really fondly on this past year where I had the opportunity to go into Meadows West School specifically, and all of the children were in the assembly—or in the gymnasium for a big assembly.

And they were sitting on all four sides: north, south, west and east, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And they all took turns talking about their commitments for Truth and Reconciliation. It was incredibly heart-warming and inspiring, and I think we could take a page from what they do in the schools and talk about that here inside of the Manitoba Legislature.

Now, I only have a couple of minutes remaining; I know we need to move on here at 4 p.m. But I did just want to say that we need to be respectful of our teachers.

Our teachers have done so much for us, not only over the last few years but we think about the pandemic in particular, and the flexibility and their adaptability. Oftentimes, teachers were having to pay for school supplies out of their own pockets.

We can think about groups, like the Manitoba teachers' association, like MAFTI, Manitoba Filipino teachers' association. We can think about the Child Nutrition Council. All of these groups and

associations have big roles within education here in the province of Manitoba.

And there's a lot more we can be doing at a provincial level to be supporting them, to be showing our respect to them and ensuring that children here in Manitoba have the best education available to them, have a safe place to go for their education here in Manitoba.

And those—these are just a couple of things that I would love be able to elaborate a little bit more on, but I would leave my remarks at that here this afternoon.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair, for the opportunity to share a few words on the opposition day motion of the day here today that we have brought forward, that is condemning the government for trying to hide its new education funding model.

And the thing—the conversation that's been happening over the last couple of weeks is exactly that. It—Manitobans feel that this is now kind of the hidden plan of the PCs and I'm sure somebody's left it on the fax machine over there somewhere and they're wondering who—how it got out.

But the fact of the matter is, Manitobans had the right to know. Manitobans have always had the right to know. Educators have the right to know and students have the right to know exactly what this means for their schools, for their constituencies, for their areas and their communities.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's devastating. The cuts that are—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Keewatinook will have nine minutes remaining.

* (16:00)

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously indicated, the time being 4 p.m., I'm now interrupting this debate to put the question on the remaining report stage amendments.

Okay, in accordance with our rules, these report stage amendments will be considered without further debate or amendment, with the exception of the leave request which I will get to in a second.

As well, the House will not adjourn until all of the applicable questions have been put on the report stage amendments for the remaining specified bills, and, in accordance with our rules, all matters of privilege and points of order are deferred until after these actions have been concluded.

If I can just ask a page for a glass of water, that'd be great.

For each report stage amendment, the sponsor will move the motion and have one minute to explain its purpose, after which the Speaker will put the question immediately.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So, I will now call the report stage amendments in the order listed on the Order Paper, beginning with clause 4 of Bill 10.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education and Training (Mrs. Guillemard),

THAT Bill 10 be amended, in the part of Clause 4 before clause (a), by striking out "January 1, 2023" and substituting "January 1, 2022".

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The report stage amendment is in order.

The honourable Minister of Finance, with one minute.

Mr. Cullen: This is in terms of the social responsibility fee for cannabis retailers which has been set at 6 per cent. The original bill was intended to eliminate that 6 per cent. What this amendment does is make that retroactive to January 1st of 2022.

Retailers came to committee and were heard loud and clear that they wanted support in the industry. Our government is continuing to support the retail of cannabis through the private sector, and this will provide them close to \$10 million in, I will call it, relief from the 6 per cent fee.

So, I'm sure the retail community will be quite happy to make this—allow this resolution to pass.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? *[Agreed]*

I declare the amendment carried.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now move to the first report stage amendment on Bill 23, clause 4(1)(j).

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 23 be amended in Clause 4(1)(j) by adding "or severely impaired adaptive behaviour despite the individual in question having an intelligence quotient score over 75," before "but" in the proposed definition "intellectual disability".

Motion presented.

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thanks. I was just so enjoying the reading of it, I didn't hear it, sorry.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this amendment is added so that the—there will not be discrimination on the basis of age.

We have experienced individuals who've come forward where all the evidence suggests that it probably arose before age 18, but it's been hard to prove definitively.

We also think that ending discrimination on the basis of age will eliminate the risk of a human rights challenge on the basis of age discrimination.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank the member.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On division. *[interjection]*

The honourable member for River Heights, I need to acknowledge you before you—*[interjection]*

The honourable member for River Heights, please go ahead.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On division. It is defeated on division.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now move to the second report stage proposed amendment to Bill 23: that Bill 23 be—the honourable member for River Heights.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 23 be amended in Clause 4(1)(j) by striking out "both of which manifested before the age of 18 years" in the proposed definition "intellectual disability".

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

THAT Bill 23 be amended—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: This is an amendment which deals with the intellectual disability and includes a—impaired adaptive behaviour, as I have raised in the Legislature in petitions previously.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

The amendment is accordingly defeated.

We will now move to the first report stage amendment to bill—proposed—the honourable member for River Heights.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The second report stage amendment—proposed amendment to Bill 23 is defeated on division.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now move to the first report stage proposed amendment to Bill 32.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 32 be amended in Clause 3 by adding the following after the proposed clause 2.1(4)(a):

(a.1) of having existing supports continue without interruption and all supports needed to address the child's physical and mental health and any special needs of the child be provided;

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

THAT Bill 32 be amended in Clause 3 adding the following after the proposed clause 2.1(4)(a)—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: The goal of this amendment is to ensure a smooth transition, and that there are no gaps in services for—during the changeover to the new framework.

* (16:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

All those—[interjection] I declare the amendment is defeated.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is defeated on division.

We now move to the second report stage proposed amendment to Bill 32: that Bill 32—sorry, the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 32 be amended in Clause 3 in the proposed clause 2.2(a), by adding "ensure that the child achieves developmental milestones and" after "in order to".

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights—the motion is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this amendment is to make sure that it's clear that one of the goals of caring for a child who is in the care of Child and Family Services be that the child achieves developmental milestones.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is accordingly defeated, on division.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now move to the third report stage proposed amendment to Bill 32.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 32 be amended in Clause 21

—by adding the following after the proposed clause 13.2(5)(j):

(k) the supports to address the child's mental health, health and—educational—needs.

—by adding the following after the proposed clause 13.4(4)(f):

—the supports to address the child's mental health, health and—educational—needs.

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

THAT Bill 32 by amended in—be amended in Clause 21

(a) by adding the following after the proposed clause 13—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

The honourable member for River Heights—[interjection]

It is in order—the amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this clause is added to ensure that for a child in Child and Family Services' care, that the supports to address the child's mental health, health and education needs are provided.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The amendment is accordingly defeated.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I need to call the amendment. I—yes, the amendment was defeated.

Okay, we're now going to move to the fourth proposed report stage amendment to Bill 32.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 32 be amended in Clause 55 by adding the following after the proposed subsection 28.1(3):

Agreement may be—in-general in application

28.1(4) For certainty, the Advocate may enter into one agreement with a person or entity in respect of all reviews or investigations under this section.

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

THAT BILL 32 be amended—to—Clause 55 by adding the following after the proposed subsection 28.1(3):

Agreement may be—in general—may be general in application

28.1(4) For certainty, the Advocate may enter into one agreement with a person or entity in respect of all reviews or investigations under this section.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this clause is added at the request of the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth. She specifically requested that there be the possibility of having a single agreement with an agency or organization such that there wouldn't need to be individual agreements with every child that was involved.

This is a may; it doesn't mean that her organization has to do this, but it allows it to happen and

would greatly facilitate the work of the children's advocate.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment—I already mentioned the amendment is in order.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost, or defeated.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now move to the first report stage proposed amendment to Bill 35.

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

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

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause 8 by replacing subclause (a)(iv) of the definition "professional misconduct" in the proposed section 8.1 with the following:

(iv) psychological harm to the pupil or child, where the act

(A) discriminates unreasonably on the basis of any characteristic referred to in subsection 9(2) of *The Human Rights Code*,

(B) could reasonably be expected to have a lasting, harmful effect on the pupil or child, or

(C) is part of repeated conduct that could reasonably be expected to cause the pupil or child to be humiliated or intimidated;

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Ms. Lamoureux: This amendment is amending significant emotional harm in the definition of professional misconduct. We replace significant emotional harm with psychological harm, with three factors, because we want to see a more objective ruling on this type of harm. We don't want to have a situation where significant emotional harm is ruled upon in a subjective manner, which could damage the reputation of a teacher.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The amendment is accordingly defeated.

I see two people standing.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): On division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is defeated on division.

* * *

* (16:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The—we will now move to the report—the second report stage proposed amendment to Bill 35.

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

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause 8 by adding the following after the proposed clause 8.12(1)(c):

(c.1) the complaint or report discriminates unreasonably on the basis of any characteristic referred to in subsection 9(2) of *The Human Rights Code*;

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

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause 8 by adding the following after the proposed clause 8.12(1)(c):

(c.1)–

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense?

The amendment is in order.

Ms. Lamoureux: This amendment adds to the legislation that the commissioner may decide not to take further action on a complaint if the commissioner determines that the complaint discriminates unreasonably on a teacher based on characteristics set out in 9(2) of *The Human Rights Code*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The amendment is accordingly defeated.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is accordingly defeated on division.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now move to the third report stage proposed amendment to Bill 35.

Ms. Lamoureux: I move, seconded by the member for River Heights,

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause 8 by adding the following after the proposed clause 8.19(1)(c):

(c.1) the complaint or report that—had—led to the investigation discriminates unreasonably on the basis of any characteristic referred to in subsection 9(2) of *The Human Rights Code*;

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park, seconded by the honourable member for—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

Ms. Lamoureux: Similar to my last RSA, at the conclusion of an investigation, the commissioner may decide not to take further action on a complaint if they determine that the complaint that led to an investigation was made from a place of discrimination based on characteristics set out in The Human Rights Code.

RSA two and three will give the commissioner the discretion to help prevent teachers from being targeted by complaints that may be discriminatory based on characteristics set out in The Human Rights Code.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The amendment is accordingly defeated.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is accordingly defeated on division.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We will now move—yes.

We will now proceed with three report stage amendments for the—from the member from—for River Heights.

Let's start with the first report stage proposed amendment to Bill 35.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause 8 by striking out ", but not limited to," in the part before clause (a) of the definition "professional misconduct" in the English version of the proposed section 8.1.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the reason for this amendment is that the words, but not limited, to could be interpreted very, very broadly, and it is designed to make sure that what is addressed is professional misconduct and not a whole range of other items.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Amendment is in order.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

The amendment is accordingly defeated.

Mr. Gerrard: On division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is defeated on division.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now move to the second report stage proposed amendment to Bill 35, brought forward by the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Mr. Gerrard: I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause 8

—by adding the following at the end of the proposed—subsection—proposed section 8.11:

This—commissioner must not take further action on the complaint or report if it was made anonymously and must, if reasonably practicable, notify the person who made the complaint or report that no further action will be taken.

—by adding—(b) by adding "is prohibited from taking further action under section 8.11 or" before "decides" in the proposed clause 8.14(1)(a).

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

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause 8

(a) by adding the following at the end of the proposed section 8.11:

The commissioner must not take further action on the complaint or report if it was made anonymously and must, if reasonably—practical—practicable—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: The intent of this amendment is to ensure that if it's an anonymous complaint, it is not proceeded with.

The concern is that these may be anonymous complaints which are frivolous and, if they don't have a person attached to them, that they should not be further evaluated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the amendment defeated.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is accordingly defeated on division.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We now move to the third report stage proposed amendment to Bill 35, brought forward by the honourable member for River Heights.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause 8

(a) by adding the following after the proposed clause 8.29(1)(d):

(d.1) determine that the investigated teacher requires reasonable accommodation because of a physical or mental disability in order to carry out the professional responsibilities of a teacher;

(b) by replacing the proposed subsection 8.32(3) with the following:

Exception

8.32(3) In any of the following circumstances, the commissioner may decide not to make the written decision public or may direct the director of certification to make public only a summary of the decision that excludes all identifying information:

—if the commissioner considers—(a) if the commissioner considers that making the decision public would cause significant hardship to a person who was harmed, abused or exploited by the investigated teacher;

(b) if a finding has been made under clause 8.29(1)(d) or (d.1);

(c) if the commissioner considers that making the decision public is otherwise not in the public interest.

(c) by adding "or (d.1)" after "made under clause 8.29(1)(d)" in the proposed subsection 8.32(4), as amended—by the Committee—or—as amended at Committee.

* (16:30)

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

THAT Bill 35 be amended in Clause—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense. The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the amendment does two things: one, it ensures that there's an attempt to provide reasonable accommodation with a teacher with a physical or mental disability; that a teacher who is in a wheelchair is allowed to continue with appropriate accommodation; a teacher who has lymphedema can continue with accommodation; that a teacher who has a reading disorder—for example, dyslexia—can have reasonable accommodation in order to carry out professional responsibilities.

And the second part of this is to make sure that there's reasonable privacy protection for teachers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the amendment defeated.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is accordingly defeated on division.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That ends the proposed report stage amendments for this afternoon.

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

(Continued)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously indicated, we will now resume debate on the opposition day motion, sponsored by the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), which is standing in the name of the honourable member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie), who has nine minutes remaining.

The honourable member for Keewatinook, to continue.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Chair, for the chance to continue on with sharing a few thoughts on the opposition day motion of the day, which is condemning the government for trying to hide its new education funding model.

And as I ended off with my comments a little earlier in the afternoon, it was about hiding, and about what this model is intended to do.

This model is intended to kind of take away from the inability of this government to actually properly fund our education system here in Manitoba, and Manitobans and students and teachers and education professionals have the right to know exactly what this means for them. And I know that when this came to light, it was something that the government was, oh, don't worry about that; that's not going to happen.

Well, the simple question is, well, what is, in fact, going to happen? And then there's been no alternative, because we know this is, in fact, the intent. This is, in fact, the intention of this government. And the fact that they're now trying to kind of delay and hold off disclosing exactly what the plan is until after the election is again trying to kind of pull one over on the people of Manitoba. And that is just shameful.

Just reading through the list, Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$11 million from the Seven Oaks School Division; \$10 million from the Louis Riel School Division; \$8.5 million from St. James-Assiniboia; \$4.5 million from Pembina Trails; over \$2 million from Winnipeg School Division; over \$2 million from Border Land School Division; over \$1.5 million from Flin Flon School Division; nearly \$3 million from the Interlake School Division; nearly \$8 million from Lord Selkirk School Division; over \$4 million from Pembina Trails; over \$2 million from Southwest Horizon, and nearly \$8 million from Sunrise School Division.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is significant. And we—time and time again, you talk about the front line in the classroom, at the bedside. So, when we talk about

education and the front line and what this means to the classroom, this is devastating.

But again, it's not something that's being advertised by this government because they simply don't want this to be known. They don't want this to be known because they're going to try and trick Manitobans into giving them another term. And we know what their real intent is: to again, carry on that legacy, carry on that legacy of cutting education, of cutting health care.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, time and time again, we've referred this kind of—the architect of these cuts is—has been Brian Pallister, and again it's a name that just doesn't want to be mentioned in this building. But the fact of the matter is, that's exactly what this is. This is the blueprint of Brian Pallister. And the minister stood up and talked about failed Education ministers in the past. But there's also four Education ministers failing under this current government, and that's the reality also.

Again, another question that was asked: When did you all of a sudden hate bill 64? And no response. No, kind of, oh, we're going to flip the page. All members opposite voted in front of—in favour of that. They brought that forth and they carried that forward, and they were the champions of bill 64. Then, all of a sudden, they're not.

Because, what happened, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Manitobans spoke out. Manitobans' voices wanted and needed and made themselves heard. And this funding model is not reflective of those voices. It is clearly not reflective because what school division is going to agree to this? What community is going to agree with this? What educator is going to agree to this? And the fact of the matter is none of them would because this is a significant lack of investment in education.

I know government wants to say that we're doing record this, record that, but, at the end of the day, it's always a net loss with this government. There's no gain, there's no positive spin they could put on this. In fact—they're severely cutting education and they have since day one.

And now you're seeing the cumulative effects of all that going forward. And now they're trying to come out and say we're going to do this, we're going to do that, nothing but announcements. And now they're even announcing past their due date. So, their due date is October the 3rd and they're—now they're trying to make announcements past that.

But, again, the reality is this here is the plan. This here is this government's plan. And I know they hated the fact that this came out, you know, and I'm sure they're trying to wonder who left it on the fax machine, you know, who—whatever did and how did that get out there, rather than answering for this.

And that's what needs to be said. That's what needs to be addressed to Manitobans, is exactly what the plan is, because right now this is the plan that's there. This is the plan that Manitobans see and this is the plan that Manitobans know that this government is trying to bring forward here in Manitoba.

So, they're going to get out there time and time again, week in, week out, and make these announcements that are nothing more than that. But the reality is this is their plan, their plan of cuts to every school division here in the province, and this is going to affect every student.

And there may be individuals that, if you have family that are in one community or one school division, but it's almost a guarantee and a given that you have family or extended family, friends, or whatever loved ones that are in other school divisions, that—other areas of the province that are affected directly by this situation and are going to be directly affected by this cut.

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, what does this mean? This means continuing and rising ratios in the school. We have school divisions now that are—the reality is, on paper, this government wants to say the ratio is going to be, oh, 12 to one, 14 to one, 15 to one, but the reality is you're in 20—the high 20-to-one ratios in these schools because of situations just like this, because of chronic underfunding just like this.

And this is the plan. Make no mistake about it, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is the plan that's being brought forward. And this is the plan that was trying to kind of stay silent. Let's whisper this out there because it's not really something we want to be able to advertise because this is the failure. This is an absolute failure by this government.

And they know it. That's why they're—that's why the delay. That's why the hesitation to bring this forward and have these discussions and, instead, try and re-announce the same announcements over and over again, try and reaffirm the announcements, try to, again, advertise the announcements.

Why not better use that money in schools? Why not better use those funds that you're using for whatever you're trying to do to promote yourself to

actually make it to the classroom so we can have more positive outcomes in our school?

The reality is, under this government, that is significantly declining and it's progressively gotten worse since 2016. And now, they—they're—like I said, they're going past their due date, so this is all going to catch up to them, and they know it. They know, in October of this year, that this is going to become a reality for them.

So, this is the reality they're putting forward because they have no alternative but to do this. They have no alternative but to say, we're going to do these record announcements but not actually record investments. Because, at the end of the day, it's always a net loss with this government.

There is no positivity, there is no moving forward. We're not only not moving forward, we're moving backward. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all this is doing, all this motion today is doing is just calling that out. It's calling this government to account. It's telling them, be responsible, be accountable to the people of Manitoba.

And if this is the model that's not there, then show us the model. Show us what's there because, right now, this is the document that you have. This is the document that you're working from. This is your blueprint for education here in Manitoba.

If you happen to receive another term, we know what's going to happen here. Again, they're not—this is something they're not going to announce, something they're not going to talk about today because they know what this means. They know what this means for Manitobans. They know this means hurtful cuts to the education system here in Manitoba, and Manitobans will not stand for that.

So, as legislators, it's our responsibility to let Manitoba know the reality of what this government is doing for them and what this government is not doing for them; how this government is hindering them; how this government is hurting the education system.

* (16:40)

And that's what this model does. How this government believes cutting—just in the list that I announced—almost \$64 million to the education system. How can they understand that that's a positive thing?

Again, a net loss at the end of the day. And every aspect of this government is always a net loss. They're going to come out and announce an election. Yes,

we're going to do this, we're going to do that. You know, a record—we're going to double whatever we're going to do.

But the fact of the matter is, you quadrupled the cuts, so doubling anything really doesn't matter because it doesn't have the effect, and Manitobans have the right to know, and we've continually asked that of this government.

Show the model, because right now, we know what this model is and we know what this model means to the education system, and it's devastating under this government.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I want to start by thanking my colleague, the member from Transcona, for bringing forward this important motion today, which of course condemns this PC government for working to hide their new education funding model.

You know, my colleague from Notre Dame earlier today stated something—I thought she did a great job stating this really clearly—that Manitoban kids deserve the best education we can give them.

They deserve the smallest classroom sizes we can give them, so we can assure that they get the support and attention that they deserve. They deserve to go to schools that have the EAs that they need to make sure that they can get the help they need if they can't get the support they need from their teacher or they need access to psychologists and social workers.

They deserve to have access to those supports. And they deserve to have access to great programs that will help them thrive and reach their fullest potential. Programs like IB programs that, unfortunately in St. James, have now been cut due to this PC government's cuts to education.

And, of course, again, as my colleague from Notre Dame stated earlier, they deserve to be able to go to school and get access to a warm meal if needed, so that they can learn and not go to school hungry. That's critical.

Unfortunately, over the last seven years, this PC government has made it clear that they don't agree with these assertions. They don't agree with those statements. And instead, they made it clear that they are far more focused on cutting education and reducing investments in our kids than they are in helping them to become all they can be.

Now, PCs don't like to hear the facts. When we start talking about their cuts to education, there's

always a lot of moaning and groaning on the other side. And I understand; it's hard for them to hear the truth about the impacts they've had on kids in this province.

But it's important that we do speak the truth in this Chamber, and so here's the truth: for the last three years—or, for the three years prior to 2022, the Province's core operating funding for education was cut by \$36 million. That's a fact. And, in 2016, the Province used to pay 62.4 per cent of operating costs for education, and in '21-22, that has now fallen to 56.4 per cent.

So, that's the reality when it comes to education funding in Manitoba. That's the reality that our kids are facing. That's the reality families are facing when it comes to education under a PC government.

Cuts, cuts and more cuts. And that brings us to the matter at hand here today, which is that after years and years of cuts to our education system and disinvestment from our kids, the PCs are clearly taking—*are* planning on taking an even bigger step in making cuts from education in Manitoba.

And we have the proof of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We've brought that proof forward in the form of a document which we did bring forward in this House, and of course we raised in media, and I thank my colleague, the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), for raising that concern and helping Manitobans to get a better sense of what this government was planning.

And we know this government desperately tried to hide that education funding model. We know that they really did not want Manitobans to get a line of sight on their plans. And the reason is because that document that we brought forward spells out, in no uncertain terms, exactly what it is that this government intends to do, which is to make further cuts, devastating cuts, to school divisions across the province.

Here's what that document tells us in no uncertain terms—and I'm going to steal the note here from my colleague: Under the new model, the PC cuts would include \$11 million in cuts to Seven Oaks School Division; \$10 million in cuts to Louis Riel School Division; \$8.5 million in cuts to my local school division in St. James; \$4.5 million in cuts from Pembina Trails School Division; over \$2 million from Winnipeg School Division; \$2 million from Border Land School Division; \$3 million from the Interlake School Division; \$8 million from Lord Selkirk School

Division; \$4 million from Pembina Trails School Division; and over \$2 million from Southwest Horizon School Division.

Cuts, cuts and more cuts; more of the same. This won't surprise Manitobans because they've seen this over the last seven years, but getting a line of sight on this document that we revealed that shows their plans going forward should make Manitobans very nervous.

And I know when I speak with Manitobans in my community that they are deeply concerned about this government's plans and what they're learning, and what's been revealed in that document. You know, these cuts to our education system, these proposed cuts, are going to do untold damage. And we know that our system, of course, has already sustained years and years of cuts under this PC government. These proposed cuts will only compound damage that they've created over the last seven years.

And I want to talk briefly here about some of the realities faced by school divisions as a result of their cuts over the last many years, starting with Seven Oaks. We know recently that divisional leadership made it clear that they're needing to look at reducing between 25 to 50 teaching staff in that division. That's a shocking number of teachers.

We know that due to budgetary shortfalls and growing enrolment that they're being forced to examine other potential cuts to other key programs, swimming programs and other programs that offer basic life skills to students in that division.

Hanover School Division: they've cut—or, they intend to cut 10.5 teaching positions and \$290,000 from their maintenance budget.

More on the impacts of PC cuts to education: in River East Transcona they're being forced to go to the bank to ask for a loan to cover some of their costs. This PC government, because of their cuts, are forcing school divisions, now, to go to banks, financial institutions, to beg them to give them loans so they can continue to meet the needs of their students. Interlake School Division had to cut 6.4 teaching positions, and more staffing cuts to come.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's absolutely mind-boggling; it's mind-boggling that in an era of growing enrolment and growing needs for our kids, when our needs for our kids have never been greater, that this government is forcing school divisions to cut teachers. That's unconscionable. It's absolutely ridiculous.

And what they're doing while division—what are they doing while divisions are being force to make

these cuts? They're writing huge cheques to some of the richest people in the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As my colleagues have shown, they're writing huge cheques to Galen Weston; they're writing huge cheques to the owners of Walmart; they're writing huge cheques to the owners of—the Koch Brothers; they're writing huge cheques to a number of huge out-of-province companies, all while they force some of our school divisions to go to the bank to beg for money so they can meet the needs of their kids in their division.

That is enraging to Manitobans. And I know when I speak to—with folks in my own constituency, in every corner in St. James, and they hear about the fact that this government is sending those huge cheques to these big corporations—out-of-province corporations—and using dollars that were supposed to go to fund education, that makes them very angry, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And something tells me that this government is going to pay a very big price when we come to October, for this and a number of their other terrible decisions that they've made. Our education system can't sustain any more cuts, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We know when we listen to teachers, we know the strain that they've been placed under as a result of the decisions that this government has made. You compound that with the impacts of COVID and the stress and struggles they went through, the stress and struggles they were forced to undergo as a result of this government's attempt to ram through bill 64—and the trauma that that put people through—we know that they can't sustain any more of these cuts.

And we know that our kids have also been pushed to the limit. And now this government is proposing—and we're already seeing, as I've outlined, in a number of divisions—bigger and bigger and bigger classrooms. Because what do divisions do when they have cuts? Most of the expenses, of course, are related to staffing and paying teachers' salaries. The only way to make do, the only option they have, is to cut teachers and make those classrooms grow and grow and grow.

Our kids deserve better. Our kids deserve much better; they deserve a government that truly values education, that values investment in education, that values the work being done by our teachers, by our educational assistants.

* (16:50)

And we deserve a government that sees the potential in every kid to do something great.

Manitobans will not get that from this PC government. Our NDP caucus will continue to fight for kids in this province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I'm grateful to be able to stand and add a few words on the record on this very important opposition day motion to condemn the government for trying to hide its new education funding model.

It's been a little bit of a theme in the Legislature today, what—you know, what words get said behind closed doors, what secret plans get put in place and how the PCs actually try to present themselves publicly during this election year.

So, just as the PCs don't want voters to know that, you know, key leaders in their organization believe that educators are just brainwashing their kids, they also didn't want the secret funding model to get released. But it has, and so it's important that we have this opportunity to bring attention to it and to be able to discuss clearly.

I know many of my colleagues have outlined all of the various cuts that have been made. But I think it's important just to quickly review that under this new model, the PC cuts would include: \$11 million cut from Seven Oaks School Division, \$10 million cut from Louis Riel School Division, \$8.5 million cut from St. James-Assiniboia School Division, \$4.5 million cut from Pembina Trails School Division, over \$2 million cut from Winnipeg School Division, over \$2 million cut from Border Land School Division, over \$1.5 million from Flin Flon School Division, nearly \$3 million cut from Interlake School Division, nearly \$8 million cut from Lord Selkirk School Division, over \$4 million cut from Pembina Trails School Division, over \$2 million cut from Southwest Horizon School Division and nearly \$8 million cut from Sunrise School Division.

We all know these cuts means fewer teachers, fewer EAs, more students in classrooms, less support for parents and families. But it also means lots of important things that happen in the school system could be cut.

We've seen the loss of librarians in the public school system across the province in a wide variety of school divisions. A loss of librarians means a loss of the knowledge—the exact type of person we need to make really good decisions about what kind of books are in public libraries. And we've also seen cuts to

nutrition programs. We've seen cuts for other activities and so, I'm grateful that I have the chance to highlight that today.

And I want to thank my colleague for bringing forward—my colleague from Transcona—for bringing forward this very important motion. And thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other members wishing to speak?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, please.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

Order, please.

For the information of all members, for those who are with us virtually, we are required to conduct votes in a different manner than during normal sittings. So, for members in the House, will—the vote will be conducted in a manner similar to previous practice. For this part of the vote, those in favour will stand to be counted first, following—followed by those against.

Once the page states the name of the member standing to be counted, the clerk will acknowledge that the member has voted by repeating the member's name rather than saying aye.

Once the count in the House is complete, we will conduct an alphabetical roll call of members participating virtually. For this step, the page will call each remote member's name alphabetically, and then each

remote member must audibly state their vote, responding with either I vote yes, or I vote no. The clerk will then respond with the member's name followed by yes or no.

Finally, after the bells stop ringing for any vote, the moderator and the table will need to take a moment to verify all members listed as remote are actually present, on screen and in their seats, and therefore eligible to vote.

Just got to get something organized here.

The motion—the question before the House is the motion put forward by the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare), seconded by the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial government for trying to hide—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense? Do the members want the motion read?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial government for trying to hide its new education funding model that would severely and negatively impact the funding by millions of dollars for school divisions like Pembina Trails, Winnipeg, St. James-Assiniboia, Seven Oaks, Louis Riel, Lord Selkirk, Interlake and much more.

* (17:00)

We will now proceed with the vote.

Division

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

Yeas

Altomare, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliv, Wiebe.

Nays

Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Goertzen, Gordon, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Khan, Klein, Lagassé, Martin, Michaleski, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 18, Nays 28.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion is defeated.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 25, 2023

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