

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

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AL TOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Tuxedo	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 13, 2024

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Before we proceed to routine proceedings, there's some guests in the gallery that I would introduce.

First, I would like to draw attention to all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today 25 grade 9 students from Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, under the supervision of Jeremy Siemens, who are the guests of the honourable member for Wolseley (MLA Naylor).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

Further, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the loge, where we have with us today Len Isleifson, former member for Brandon East.

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to table the errata report '24-25, supplementary Estimates of Expenditure for the Department of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism.

The Speaker: Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Clean Slate Program

Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration): It is a pleasure to recognize the phenomenal work of the Downtown Community Safety Partnership.

The DCSP provides 24-7 assistance to our most vulnerable communities in Winnipeg's core. The outreach teams—MAC247, Connect and COAR—are building deep connections with residents and businesses while directly addressing the area's needs. Whether it be through safe walks and wellness checks or their advocacy for shelters and permanent housing, DCSP is helping to bring a sense of safety to area residents.

My neighbourhood of Notre Dame is lucky to be included in the DCSP's work through their new pilot project, the Clean Slate program. Created in response to the rising levels of street gang activity, the Clean Slate program assists young people exiting the correctional system through low-barrier employment opportunities.

In partnership with Notre Dame Powerline, the Clean Slate program helps achieve cleanliness and safety with community cleanups and related supports. For many, the Clean Slate program is their first job; it provides a strong foundation of life and employment skills, enabling them to excel in the workforce following program graduation. Notre Dame is grateful for this new initiative and appreciative of all the hard work they are doing in our neighbourhood.

I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Nicholas Candaele, Greg Burnett, the wonderful Clean Slate program members, Sayyum Singh, Nathaniel Fox, Ashton Duck, Devon Anderson, Zachary Desjarlais and recent program graduate Evan Duck.

I would also like to thank the incredible Downtown Community Safety Partnership team for their relentless work in improving safety in Winnipeg. I admire your dedication to improving life in our communities through respect and empathy. Together, we are redefining the meaning of safety and security and extending those things to everyone in the community. I can't thank you enough for what you are doing to help with our goals of a clean and safe Notre Dame.

And I would like to add the names of my guests to Hansard.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Sina Aiello, Devin Anderson, Sarah Baxter, Miguel Betti, Mitch Bourbonniere, Durst Bushie, Charlotte Cameron, Nicholas Candaele, Curtis Downey, William Dubery, Nathaniel Fox, Jessica Greene, Breigh Hicks, Jasmine Kole, Mwaniki Mbogo, Stanley Onabor, Liz Pilcher, Matthew Sanscartier, Jasdeep Singh, Taylor Sutherland, Megan Tycholiz-McDill, Glenda Vollrath, Maddie Zienkiewicz

Community Pastures Environmental Stewardship Award

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Honourable Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the Association of Manitoba Community Pastures for receiving The Environmental Stewardship Award at the Manitoba Beef Producers' annual general meeting in February.

TESA is a Canadian Cattle Association initiative recognizing the beef industry's outstanding stewardship efforts.

Provincial cattle associations announce a local winner each year that goes on to compete for the national award in August.

The AMCP is a non-profit organization managing 19 community pastures around Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Its mandate is to sustainably manage productive and biodiverse rangelands enhanced by livestock production.

All AMCP pastures have certified Environmental Farm Plans. Various practices and infrastructure types are used to manage the lands, including rotational grazing supported by sustainable stocking rates, prescribed burns as required, solar watering systems, livestock crossings, brush management controls and more.

This pasture system supports more than 350 pasture patrons bringing more than 40,000 head of livestock each year, including the Langford pasture in my constituency and close to my family farm. At more than 350,000 acres, these pastures represent some of the

largest intact areas of remaining prairie lands in Manitoba.

When more and more pasture and forage land is being converted to use-to other uses, these pastures provide many valuable ecosystem services, like carbon 'sequestration,' water retention and filtration, an important habitat for an array of plant, animal and bird species.

Beef producers and groups like the AMCP who manage cattle pride themselves on their rangeland stewardship practices and conservation efforts. Please join me in congratulating the AMCP for receiving The Environmental Stewardship Award from Manitoba Beef Producers, and best wishes as you compete for the national award.

Thank you.

Sagkeeng Oldtimers Hockey NIAHF Inductees

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): It is with great pride and admiration that I rise today to honour and pay tribute to the Sagkeeng Oldtimers.

The Sagkeeng Oldtimers hockey team had its origins at the Sagkeeng First Nation. With players ranging in age from 35 to 50, the players were from Ojibway and Cree First Nations throughout Manitoba.

In the era of the devastating impacts of the residential school system on Anishinaabe people, many survivors of the residential school system made up the roster of the Sagkeeng Oldtimers.

* (13:40)

The team joined the Canadian Oldtimers' Hockey Association in 1978 and played in international tournaments in the 1970s and '80s. And, Honourable Speaker, they not only played, but they won. They won two world cups and a Canadian Oldtimers National Cup.

The Sagkeeng Oldtimers have been honoured by the Hockey Hall of Fame with a display of their memorabilia and accomplishments. Members of the Sagkeeng Oldtimers, aside from their on-ice accomplishments, went on to great things in their lives on behalf of Anishinaabe people throughout Turtle Island: former national chief, Phil Fontaine, Ken Young, Ted Fontaine, just to mention a few members.

In speaking to the importance of being recognized by the Hockey Hall of Fame, former player Ted Fontaine, a highly respected elder, leader and author and residential school survivor, said: To have the

Hockey Hall of Fame recognize their club is significant. Hockey was a lifesaver for the boys on the teams that existed during the residential school era. In my mind, it has been my goal all my life to have some verification that we are here, in spite of residential schools and government policy trying to destroy Indian people. We are not going to disappear. We're now here in the Hockey Hall of Fame.

In March of this year, the Sagkeeng Oldtimers were also inducted into North American Indigenous Athletics Hall of Fame in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Honourable Speaker, it is with sincere gratitude that I honour the Sagkeeng Oldtimers today for their perseverance, dedication and determination to blaze a trail for all of us and to ensure our voices and our people will forever be heard. You have led and continue to lead the way for generations of Indigenous people.

Honourable Speaker, as we pay tribute to the entire team of the Sagkeeng Oldtimers, I humbly ask leave for a moment of silence for the members of the team that have passed on into the spirit world. I wish to include in Hansard the roster of the Sagkeeng Oldtimers that were inducted into the North American Indigenous Athletics Hall of Fame.

Miigwech.

Sagkeeng Oldtimers: Bob Boyer, Don Campbell, Paul Chartrand, Rene Desjarlais, Mercel Flett, Phil Fontaine, Ted Fontaine, Walter Fontaine, Ron Guimond, Norman Gunn, Dave Harper, Gerald Harry, George Hickes, John Hunter, George Kakeway, Joe Malcolm, Jim Neilson, Rene Norma, Jim Prince, Wayne Viznaugh, Gord Woo, Bernie Wood, Ken Young

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

A moment of silence was observed.

Recognizing Speech-Language Pathologists

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Honourable Speaker, it is an honour to rise and recognize the great work being done by three constituents in my riding of Fort Whyte, but also their colleagues across Manitoba.

As an MLA, it is our responsibility to advocate for the needs of our community. Today, I want to shed light upon a group of professionals known as SLPs, speech-language pathologists, whose work is crucial in ensuring the success of children who might be struggling with language and communication skills.

These dedicated individuals play an important and vital role in identifying and addressing speech and language disorders in children, ensuring that they have the communication and skills necessary to thrive academically and socially.

Today I would like to welcome three of my constituents: Sheri Hyra, a speech-language pathologist from Milestones Therapy; Danna Kaplan, a speech-language pathologist and owner of Milestones Therapy; Susan Moscovitch, executive director of Fort Rouge Co-op Day Nursery; and also family members who have seen the direct impact of speech-language pathologists have made on their lives.

Despite the importance of their work, they are facing significant challenges in providing timely and accessible services to Manitobans who need them the most. The reality is that there is a two-year delay in early intervention due to extreme limited availability of public-funded rehabilitation and service spaces. This delay not only impacts the individual child's development, but also places undue strain on our educational system as a whole. Every day that passes without intervention is a missed opportunity to unlock a child's full potential and set them on a path to success.

In light of these challenges, I want to 'thake' a—take a moment and express my heartfelt thank you to Sheri, Danna and Susan. Their dedication and tireless efforts in supporting our children and families deserve recognition and appreciation. Children are our future, and investing in their development in—is an investment in the prosperity of our community.

Honourable Speaker, I would ask that all my colleagues here today rise and turn to the gallery and recognize these amazing individuals for all the hard work that they are doing with our youth in our community.

Thank you.

Myles Haverluck

Hon. Ron Kostyshyn (Minister of Agriculture): Today I would like to honour Myles Haverluck who passed away in February.

Myles was a leader in the Dauphin community. He opened the Dauphin Clinic Pharmacy in 1979. The pharmacy's slogan was make life better, reflected his personal philosophy towards our community.

He understood the medical needs of the area and established much of the medical industry that we are grateful today.

Myles brought health-care professionals together, established the Dauphin medical walk-in clinic that recently celebrated fifty—the 50th anniversary.

Everything Myles did was about making Dauphin and area an incredible place to live. He helped open the Magical Horizon Daycare so that his staff and other working families were supported.

Myles was passionate about Dauphin and was known for bringing people together.

We are—he was very involved in different community projects, such as the Dauphin Countryfest, the Countryfest cinema, the Dauphin community foundation, Credit Union Place and much more.

Myles left his mark in Dauphin. He will be remembered for his hard work, compassion and service.

He's survived by his wife Bonnie, their three daughters and families. Daughters Kristen, Sara and Brenna continue their farm—their father's legacy in the health and wellness sector.

The Dauphin Clinic Pharmacy continues to strive today under the leadership of his daughters and a dedicated team which built—what he built.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

And thank you, Myles, for what you have done for the community of Dauphin.

Thank you so much.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Wildfires in Western Manitoba Support for Evacuees

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, a massive wildfire, more than 38 kilometers long, 12 kilometers wide, is moving quickly across northwestern Manitoba. It's forcing evacuations, destroying infrastructure and filling the sky over our province with smoke. Our thoughts are with all those affected, as this out-of-control wildfire continues to burn.

Can the Premier please share how many people are currently displaced and what supports are in place offered to those evacuees?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I want to begin with a tone of appreciation for all the first responders and wildfire fighters and law enforcement who have been working tirelessly over the course of the weekend to keep Manitobans safe.

There are a few wildfires in the northwest part of our province which have escalated quickly and led to the evacuation of Cranberry Portage, as well as some communities surrounding Flin Flon. And these RCMP officers, people with emergency measures, wildfire fighters have been working tirelessly through the weekend.

We know that in times like this Manitobans come together, and that's exactly what you're seeing today in the communities of Flin Flon, which you know quite well, as well as in The Pas and the Opaskwayak Cree Nation. They've opened their doors to hundreds of fellow Manitobans.

And our government is there standing up, a rapid response that includes staff from the Department of Finance, the Department of Health and the Department of Families, among others, to ensure that these folks that have had to evacuate quickly have the necessary supports and safety to offer some measure of reassurance during this difficult time.

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

Emergency Management Organization Funding to Combat Wildfires in Budget 2024

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): We'd like to thank the fire crews from Manitoba and Saskatchewan who are here fighting and trying to contain the fire, and we know that crews are coming from Ontario, are expected to arrive either today or tomorrow.

The people who respond to these emergencies are going to do their best. But they're operating in a reduced funding environment, which funding has been cut in half, Honourable Speaker.

In April, the grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs demanded the province rethink its budgetary cuts to emergency management funds. Quote: To cut emergency funding in half is an extremely dangerous and ill-advised decision that has serious implications for rural and First Nations. End Quote.

Has the NDP Premier, the MLA for Fort Rouge, reconsidered his cut and will he make more funding available to fight wildfires?

* (13:50)

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Our government is there anytime Manitobans need it, and we'll be there to keep people safe.

We have stood up a quick response and we're very grateful to the assistance that we're getting from other provinces. And as we speak to our municipal counterparts and First Nations leaders, we know that we're all coming together to support you during your time of need.

I'll invite the member opposite to consider whether now is the time for fear mongering. There's been no cut. This is an on-demand service; whatever resource is necessary to fight wildfires and to keep people safe will go out the door.

In fact, Budget 2024 on page 54 has an \$8-million increase to the preparations and equipment necessary to keep people safe during this wildfire season, just one way in which we're working together to help you and other Manitobans during their time of need.

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

Mr. Ewasko: Once again, the Premier stands up and puts misinformation on the record, Honourable Speaker.

On Sunday, the NDP member for—of Parliament for Churchill-Keewatinook Asi [*phonetic*]-Aski told CBC, I quote: We've known for some time that there's a high risk of a bad fire season and we're seeing it already. End quote.

So conversations were happening for some time with her NDP counterparts here in Manitoba. But the funding in Budget 2024 doesn't show a commitment to disaster preparedness or protection. In fact, funding for the office that co-ordinates the response to emergencies such as forest fires has been cut.

I'll table the budget page; emergency expenditures was cut by \$50 million, by 50 per cent; 27.1 in operating out of this Premier's budget. The budget to fight forest fires, flooding and other natural disasters have been cut in half, Honourable Speaker.

How does this Premier expect Manitoba to fight more fires with less funds?

Mr. Kinew: During times of need, some Manitobans step up. Some Manitobans band together to help their neighbours.

Others like the member opposite try to sow misinformation and confusion. I would urge him to reconsider his tone and indicate that for Manitobans who are going through a difficult time right now, they don't need an elected official trying to score cheap political points.

He knows full well, as well as everyone else on that side, that this is an on-demand service. When it comes to a wildfire response, any resource that is necessary will go out the door to help Manitobans. Any assistance that is necessary to support a displaced family will be there. We are shoulder to shoulder with First Nations and municipal leaders to help you, the people of Manitoba, during your time of need.

This is an essential service of government, and I would like to reassure that in spite of the shade being thrown by members opposite, whatever you need, you will get.

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

Political Parties and Candidates Election Spending Rebate Increase

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): It's unfortunate, Honourable Speaker, that the Premier is trying to make political hay out of this.

It's a fact that in his own budgetary document, the funds have been cut in half: 27.1 in operating for emergency expenditures. It's right there, black and white. Unfortunately, he must be doing some kind of NDP math again, Honourable Speaker.

I explained last week, Honourable Speaker, on how the Premier puts taxpayer subsidies to the NDP above education on priority list. We've also seen his public safety is low on the priority list. Today we hear that political subsidies are above firefighting on the priority list.

My question for Premier today is the same as last week: With all these great needs in our province, why is he prioritizing the subsidy that goes to his own political party over people?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): That was a very political intervention during an emergency moment in our province.

Again, the member's free to try and throw political stones from his perch in a glass house. But I'll ask him about firefighting services in his region. Who was it who said, and I quote: Perhaps the Province of Manitoba will help defray those costs, but there's a recent history of downloading responsibilities onto municipalities, too. For a rural department, it makes it tough. End quote.

Well, I'll eliminate the suspense and share with the member that that was the fire chief of Beausejour

Brokenhead, and that was during the dying days of the last PC administration.

We are stepping up to keep Manitobans safe. We're very grateful for law enforcement and first responders and wildfire fighters in the line of duty and in harm's way to help.

I would simply indicate to the member opposite that they made cuts during their time in office. We're restoring services to keep you safe.

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

Mr. Ewasko: It's unfortunate that once again this Premier is dodging and deflecting the question that's at hand today, Honourable Speaker.

We know that under the previous NDP government, and it's—looks like it's continuing under this leadership of this Premier, that a lot of our emergency services had to be purchased off of eBay. And it's unfortunate that this Premier is continuing in his old footsteps of Greg Selinger.

Honourable Speaker, 25 per cent from 50 per cent is the reduced political party rebate that we did. This NDP Premier wants us to make taxpayers' dollars as possible to go to his party by jacking up that percentage back up to 50 per cent.

Why does he not respect the taxpayer, and why is he prioritizing the subsidy that'll go to his own political party instead of cutting the money going to wildfire protection? It's simple, yes or no?

Mr. Kinew: I'd invite the member opposite to state on the record what he knows to be a fact: Any wildfire service or evacuee assistance that is necessary will be provided by the provincial government. He should say unequivocally if he believes that actually to be in risk. He won't even make eye contact for those watching at home. That's because he knows that the line of questioning he is undertaking today is disingenuous.

Worse yet, it is set against the backdrop in which hundreds of Manitobans have been forced to flee their homes. There is a time for political grandstanding, but I would welcome the member from Lac du Bonnet to reflect on whether or not this is that time. I would suggest no.

Now is the time to support law enforcement, first responders, wildfire fighters and Manitobans through this time of need. We will be there. Whatever service is necessary to fight fire or to support evacuees will be ushered out the door. And what's more, we've got

\$8 million further to repair the cuts under the PC time to wildfire services in Manitoba.

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

Emergency Management Organization Funding to Combat Wildfires in Budget 2024

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, the only one who is being disingenuous in this Chamber today is the Premier, the MLA for Fort Rouge. A massive wildfire in north—or, northern Manitoba is raging. We saw the clouds of smoke yesterday in our air. Hundreds of people were evacuated from their homes. They do not know when they will return or what they will return to.

The NDP government and Premier cut the emergency expenditures budget which provides for expenditures related to forest fires in half. The budget is meant to provide for environmental emergency response expenditures, disaster assistance and other related expenditures. The Premier cut that funding in half.

Black and white: Budget 2024 cut wildfire management funding by \$50 million. My question is to the Premier: Why?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Again, any service necessary to fight fire, support evacuees, will be there. It will go out the door. If there's a serious question in this regard, state the matter on the record. State, on the record, what you believe the concern to be.

They will not do so because they know that they are merely making political hay of an issue, trying to get themselves in the media on a day when Manitobans are suffering. We've seen many disappointing things from the PC government, and I would've expected a new leaf to be turned over after the retirement of Heather Stefanson. However, as we see on this day with this display from the member opposite, nothing has changed with the PCs. They continue to try and divide Manitobans and score cheap political points regardless of the impact it has on real Manitobans.

We take a different approach. We're going to help you, no matter what Manitobans need to fight fire, no matter what they need to be—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Death of Youth in CFS Care Request for Results of Internal Investigation

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, on February 11, Manitobans witnessed a terrible

tragedy that happened in the community of Carman, and I just want to take this opportunity to thank the Premier (Mr. Kinew) for his financial commitment to help the community heal during this difficult time.

* (14:00)

We know that Myah's call to her CFS worker went to voice mail, where she said she was not safe in her home.

On March 6, the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) promised the House and to the media the internal investigation reviewing all CFS contacts in the case of Myah-Lee would be completed by the end of April.

It is now May 13, so will the minister commit today to releasing the findings of the report?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Acting Minister of Families): I thank the member for that question.

I know the minister, on February 11—that was a tragic day in Manitoba. Again, I want to send our condolences out to Myah's family and all of the—those that were impacted in Carman. It's a great loss to the community, but I know it's impacted all of Manitoba, and Manitobans came together at a time when they needed it, and we continue to come together.

We want to make sure that something like this never happens again, which is why we are here as legislators to come together with solutions. So I invite that member to come with solutions, and let's, you know, figure out how we can get to a point where this never happens in the history of Manitoba again.

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, three months ago, on February 14, when speaking to the media, Myah-Lee's mother, Juliette Hastings, said, and I quote: I want justice for my daughter. I want justice for CFS to admit to me their mistakes. I want them to own up.

The Minister of Families is responsible for CFS, and it is her job to right what has been wronged.

When will the findings of the report be released to the public?

Ms. Smith: I know the Minister of Families is doing an amazing job and working, you know, towards making sure that something like this never again happens in Manitoba.

She's working with many front-line workers, organizations. I know MACY is doing a review, and I know that they—she initiated a review of the child—of the family and their contact with CFS to understand that there may have been—to look at opportunities to,

course, improve the system. I know that they also directed the department to work with the general authority to review all CFS contact leading up to the tragedy in Carman.

And we will continue to work together collaboratively as Manitobans and as legislators to again ensure that something like this never happens again. These—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Midland, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, since this Minister of Families has been appointed, she has been too busy to discuss children in care.

Myah-Lee Gratton was tragically killed under her watch. Children in care are in crisis under her watch. Foster parents are fearful to come forward about children in care under her watch. It is now May 13, and the minister has still yet to release the report into the CFS system that failed Myah-Lee under her watch.

Will this minister finally make the time for Myah-Lee and do the right thing and release the report publicly so Manitobans know that this will never happen again?

Ms. Smith: You know, I sat here and listened to that member across the way time and time again attack the Families Minister.

The Families Minister was a former kid in care. The Families Minister understands, because she's been a kid in care. The Families Minister is working with MACY. She's working with front-line organizations. She is working towards getting kids back to their families where they should be.

I suggest that member opposite gets on board and starts working with the Families Minister to ensure that something like this never happens again, instead of pointing the finger on the other side.

Surgical and Diagnostic Service Wait Times Request to Reinstate Out-of-Province Options

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Updated wait times were released late last week for surgical and diagnostic procedures. Wait times for cardiac, cataracts, hip, knee and MRI scans in Winnipeg are all up again, for the third month in a row.

It's now clear that Manitoba patients are paying the price of the NDP's short-sighted, ideological political decision making. Thanks to this NDP Health

Minister, patients stuck on a wait-list have no option to receive care faster while wait times here are too long.

Seeing these increased wait times, will the NDP Health Minister now admit their mistake and immediately reinstate out-of-province surgical options for Manitoba patients?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): What's becoming increasingly clear since this task force was launched in December is that its purpose is not to provide Manitobans with objective information on wait times, nor demonstrate with evidence how it's eliminating surgical backlogs. This is a political exercise meant to create the perception that it's making progress on reducing hospital wait times. That's a direct quote that was published in May of 2022.

Honourable Speaker, the previous government's approach sent almost \$40 million out of province to not address the backlogs in our own province. We're investing in improving capacity here at home and making sure Manitobans don't have to leave the country—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —for essential health care. And, in fact, what we're seeing right now is that Manitobans who've been waiting two or three years are finally—get their surgeries here—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Roblin, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Cook: Honourable Speaker, the task force provided over 80,000 surgical and diagnostic tests to Manitobans that were waiting in pain. We have called for the NDP to reverse their political decision to cut out-of-province surgical options many times, as have patients from all across Manitoba who are currently waiting in pain.

And now more Manitobans are joining in on that call. On Friday, Winnipeg Free Press columnist Tom Brodbeck called for the same thing, saying, quote: The NDP government should give patients the option again of travelling out of province for their procedures. There is nothing wrong with admitting error in government, and that would be the right and humane thing to do.

The—will the NDP do the right and humane thing and allow Manitobans to access the quickest care available, or will they continue to put politics ahead of patients?

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, the former lead for the task force made very clear to Manitobans that the previous PC government was driving up wait times before COVID. During the pandemic, our wait times in Manitoba were astronomically high, and it took them a year and a half to take any action whatsoever.

They spent millions upon millions of dollars to not even clear that backlog. The only thing worse than grossly mismanaging the health-care system and driving up wait times to record levels during seven and a half years in office is the PC Party's complaints that the current government isn't doing enough to clean up the mess they left behind. That's a direct quote from Tom Brodbeck.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Roblin, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Cook: I can see we're all giving Mr. Brodbeck his day in QP today. Sending some patients elsewhere for surgery alleviated their pain and gave many people quality of life.

The NDP took that away. The only explanation for doing so is the NDP government is ideologically opposed to out-of-province surgeries. Many of the procedures were performed at private clinics, which the NDP doesn't like. As a result, it's prepared to put its ideological beliefs ahead of patient care.

I know it sounds a lot like I'm quoting myself, but again, that's Tom Brodbeck.

The Minister of Health could help immediately by giving back the option to go out of province when wait times here are too long, but they refuse. So my question is simple: Why?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, the previous government had seven and a half years to clear the backlog. They didn't do that. They spent almost \$40 million sending patients out of the country.

In seven months, we've accomplished more in improving capacity in Manitoba than they did in seven years. We have the first-ever spine surgery program in Manitoba's history, an investment made by our government, something the previous government could've done in seven and a half years, but refused to.

But, Honourable Speaker, don't listen to my criticisms of the previous government's approach. Even patients who were serviced by the task force described the cost as, I quote, outrageous and lunacy, and said they were embarrassed.

Honourable Speaker, we will take no lessons from that member opposite.

Manitoba Hydro Special Adviser Salary Disclosure Request

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Honourable Speaker, this Finance Minister has chosen a new special adviser for Manitoba Hydro, but the recent April 24 order-in-council does not specify this new adviser's salary. To be clear, it is normal practice to report a salary for a special adviser, unless you want to hide something.

Can the minister tell Manitobans today what the salary of his new special adviser for Manitybo [*phonetic*]-Manitoba Hydro will be?

And, again, Honourable Speaker, it's a very simple question. I know the minister has dodged questions all question period. Can he please just answer this one? Will he stand up and tell us what the salary is of the special adviser?

* (14:10)

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): You know, for years, Honourable Speaker, Manitobans had a government that sought to do one thing with Manitoba Hydro, and that was privatize and raise hydro rates on Manitobans. Those days are over.

What's our government doing? We're working steadily to ensure we maintain hydro affordability, and we're working on developing our plan to ensure we have the energy we need to meet Manitoba's needs.

Again, for years, Manitobans had a government that sought to privatize, jack up their rates. We're doing the important work of ensuring hydro rates remain affordable, building for a better future. We're bringing on the talent to make sure we can do that, and that's not something we need to hide from, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Whyte, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, we know the Minister of Finance struggles with math, reading charts and now he struggles with answering simple questions.

Why will the minister not stand up and just tell us what the salary is of the special adviser unless he's hiding something?

This special adviser's on the record saying he wants to support high and rising carbon taxes. This special adviser wants to raise Manitoba's gas tax. This special

adviser wants to eliminate the PST exemption on home heating and this special adviser wants to rapidly phase out natural gas in this province.

Why will this Minister of Finance not stand up and tell us and Manitobans what the salary is of this special adviser?

MLA Sala: You know, again, Honourable Speaker, for years, for seven and a half years, the members opposite had an opportunity to move the province forward in hydro.

But what'd they do? Nothing. All they'd focused on was raising hydro rates on Manitobans and privatizing pieces of Hydro. That's their record. No vision, no plan, nothing for Manitoba Hydro. That's what Manitobans have after seven and a half years.

What are we doing? We're building for a better future. We're bringing on the talent necessary to do that. And we're going to make sure that we continue to keep rates affordable and build a better province for Manitobans.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Whyte, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, I am truly embarrassed for this Minister of Finance. He doesn't know how to do math, he can't read graphs and now he won't even answer a simple question. I can't wait to post this on my social media.

Honourable Speaker, this minister and Premier (Mr. Kinew) have already broken their promise to Manitobans. They said they're going to freeze hydro rates and now they're increasing them 4 per cent. Another broken promise by this NDP. It's not the first promise they've broken and it definitely won't be the last promise.

Will the minister simply come clean—it's a very simple answer. Just tell Manitobans what the salary of the special adviser for Hydro is, or what is the minister trying to hide? It's a very simple question. Will he please, please, for the people of Manitoba, answer the question?

What is the salary of the special adviser?

MLA Sala: You know, Honourable Speaker, one of the things that I know our government is most proud of is that, within a month of us coming into government, we had already unlocked \$500 million in investment with the federal government to advance energy in Manitoba. That's our record.

Seven and a half years, the opposite members did nothing. They didn't develop a single megawatt. Not one megawatt. And then they get in opposition, and we hear a lot of them doing this—a lot of yapping. What is that all add up to? They've done nothing for Manitobans.

We're getting the job done. We're moving the province forward. We're bringing on the talent to do it. And we're not going to hide from that fact, Honourable Speaker.

Increased Enrolment in Schools New School Construction Inquiry

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): First, the NDP Education Minister cut nine new schools in this year's budget. Now, he's telling school divisions that they're on their own when it comes to finding solutions to overcrowding in schools, and I'll table those comments that he made to the Winnipeg Free Press last week.

So my question for the minister is very simple. With student populations surging across the province, why is this Minister for Education abandoning school divisions?

Hon. Nello Altomare (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Well, I want to thank the member for that question. I also want to remind that member that we do have another elected body that sits below the municipal level, which is elected trustees.

Imagine having trustees in charge of looking after schools. Imagine having trustees in charge of figuring out where the space is so that—apportionate to the students in their school divisions. That's what we're doing. We're allowing them to do exactly what they were elected to do. He can stay tuned and see what and how the land lays after all the adjustments are made.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Jackson: Well, the minister wants to have a geography debate, but I'm talking about the historical fact that we have surging student populations across Manitoba schools. One of them is in the Louis Riel School Division, which is bursting at the seams. At Island Lake school in south Winnipeg, enrolment has jumped by over 300 students. Since this minister won't fund new schools and more classrooms, he is forcing Island Lake school to convert its library into classroom space.

If the minister won't fund new schools and more classrooms, will he at least be willing to build Island Lake school a new library to take over this space? Will he make that commitment to families in Lagimodière today?

MLA Altomare: Again, I do want to thank the member for that question.

We are building schools. As a matter of fact, we're building a new school in Sage Creek which is adjacent to Island Lake. And also, too, Honourable Speaker, there are schools within the Louis Riel School Division that do have space. They'll have to make their plans, assure that students get to the classrooms that they need to be in and to provide the supports that they need. That's exactly what they're doing.

I know the critic will be paying attention to that and I'm sure we'll have a question of follow-up and saying how good a job those school divisions are doing, providing services for their kids.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Jackson: Well, Honourable Speaker, our school divisions are certainly doing the best they can with this government and their very-hard-to-follow path. On the one hand, the minister says that they're empowered to make all the decisions; in the next minute, he's hauling a school division in here and telling them they don't have the final say when it comes to making decisions in their own jurisdiction. They can't get the straight story from this minister and neither can the rest of us.

Manitoba's school divisions are bursting at the seams, including in Brandon where the minister has cut the construction of two new schools. Under the previous 17 years of the NDP, not a single school was built in Brandon. In fact, the only time in the last 30 years when a school was built in Brandon was when Len Isleifson was the MLA for Brandon East.

Can the minister confirm: Are we returning to a desert for—

The Speaker: The member's time is expired.

MLA Altomare: I do love the reference to former members, with the emphasis being on former. Apologies, please.

But here's the piece that's important. As you know, that member knows in his own particular riding, we approved the expansion of a Brandon school. He very well knows that. Why? Because the school division

was talking to us, working together with this provincial government, providing the important services that students in our province need. For the very first time, they feel comfortable reaching out to their provincial government, who is going to be a real partner for schools, for kids and for communities throughout this beautiful province.

Health-Care Workers Competitive Wages

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): These questions come from a constituent who is a member of a public union. He, like many others, are concerned about health-care funding for both staff and facilities.

As a worker in our health-care system, he has expressed concern about health-care workers at the bottom of the pay scale, lacking a competitive living wage. In fact, 55 per cent of members in his union work in precarious or vulnerable types of employment that lack security or benefits.

Honourable Speaker, will the government support our health-care workers by legislating basic protections in place for precarious or vulnerable types of employments?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I thank the member for that question and for bringing forward concerns from valued members of the health-care system.

On this side of the House, our government respects all health-care workers; support staff, facility staff. As we've heard on the front lines of the listening tour, every single contribution to health care matters. It's also so important that folks know that our government is going to work with them and work with their unions as we move forward to make sure that their collective bargaining rights are respected, something that did not happen for seven and a half years under the previous government.

* (14:20)

Nurses' wages were frozen for years. Allied health-care professionals went five-and-a-half-plus years without a contract, and Manitobans suffered the consequences of those wages being frozen and disrespect. We're repairing those relationships and ensuring workers—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a supplementary question.

Long-Term-Care Facilities Operating Funding Levels

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Recent reports have surfaced that health-care facilities have been facing frozen operational funding for over 15 years. That's under both the NDP and Conservative consecutive governments, Honourable Speaker.

Facilities should not have to worry about the amount of funding which goes towards the care of residents, food or the number of staff available. These are basic standards that all facilities should not have a difficult choice of maintaining.

Does the Minister of Health believe that the current operating funding is sufficient, and if not, can they share with the House when facilities can expect a new model so that no long-term-care facilities will have to cut services for their residents?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I appreciate that question from the member across the way. Our Budget 2024 invests 1 billion new dollars in health care across our province to strengthen services for Manitoba; set aside \$310 million to retain, train and recruit health-care staff to the front lines of our health-care system, and it invests in repairing relationships with health-care workers across the province.

We are currently undertaking a review of long-term care services across Manitoba. We've sat down and met with many long-term-care providers. We have 124 personal-care homes across the province; we look forward to working with each and every one of them to strengthen this area of health care for all Manitobans who need it.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a final supplementary question.

Health-Care System Privatization Request for Legislation to Prevent

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): The provision of health-care services should never have to come at the expense of patient care. Unfortunately, we are seeing this in long-term care and many other health-care facilities across our province.

If this government supports the public provisions of services, will the Minister of Health consider introducing legislation to prevent the further privatization of health care?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, on this side of the House, we understand the importance of

protecting public health care here in Manitoba. It is a fundamental Canadian value that folks should be able to access public health care and that government should invest in strengthening public health care.

We recognize that our health-care system does include private entities, and it's also important for our government to hold them accountable and to ensure that standards of care are being met and delivered that best suit the needs of residents and patients across Manitoba.

That work is ongoing. It's work that was not done for seven and a half years under the previous government, and we saw the devastating impacts of those failures, of the failures of those members opposite and the previous leadership of Heather Stefanson.

We're taking a different approach. We're investing in strengthening health care and that, no matter where you are and what you need, our government is there for you.

Carberry Emergency Department Reopening Announcement

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): Last Friday, the town of Carberry showed up to hear an announcement from our Premier (Mr. Kinew) and our Health Minister. After the PCs closed the Carberry emergency department on the eve of the last election, our government announced it will be reopening.

Can the Health Minister elaborate on what this means to the town of Carberry and rural Manitoba?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Great question from my colleague. Honourable Speaker, on Frider [*phonetic*] the Carberry emergency department reopened to cheers, and I will table the article.

The reopening of the Carberry emergency department is an example of what happens when government listens to communities and when communities work with government to make good things happen. I want to thank all the folks who made that a reality: the health action committee, physicians, local nurses, health-care workers, the mayor and, of course, the people of Carberry.

The previous government blindsided that community when they let the ER close. Manitobans deserve better. The reopening in Carberry shows that our government is committed to having strong relationships with municipalities, with front-line health-care providers to make sure that communities across the province have the care—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Green Team Program Summer Camp Funding

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): In 2023, over 20 summer camps and related associations received funding through the Green Team program. In fact, camps have benefited greatly over the last five years of Green Team. These camps provide memories and experiences to our province's children that last a lifetime.

Can the minister tell me: How many summer camps receive Green Team funding this year as opposed to previous years?

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): Our government is proud to continue to work with valued youth here in Manitoba, and the Green Team program is no exception.

Green Team was established in the 1990s, supports youth in municipalities, northern affairs communities and northern province. Urban Hometown Green Team grant benefit to communities and they benefit youth all over Manitoba to gain valuable experience in Manitoba.

I know members opposite ignore municipalities, ignore northern Manitoba, but we're investing in Manitoba and we're investing in the youth of Manitoba.

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

Camp Massad Funding Inquiry

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, attending camp is an experience that I'm sure all the members in this House can relate to. That experience has been put in jeopardy for many campers this year by Green Team funding decisions.

Camp Massad is one of those camps that has seen its funding cut after receiving over \$80,000 the last several years. Minister, Camp Massad has clearly been eligible for funding in the past.

Can the minister share with us what has changed in regards to Camp Massad?

Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations): We are proud to fund organizations throughout the province, including Steinbach, Brandon, Dauphin.

Following the efforts to recover from the pandemic, we've restored Green Team funding rates and we're supporting communities to continue to support

the organizations as best as possible. Participants work on a variety of community development projects and improve neighbourhoods, promote community involvement and help develop young leaders.

This program contributes to our proudest vision for building a stronger Manitoba, something they ignored for seven and a half years, Honourable Speaker. Seven and a half years, they ignored municipalities, they ignored northern Manitoba, they ignored the youth in Manitoba and now they stand here and they want to be able to say that they're speaking up and representing northern Manitoba, representing our young people in Manitoba.

At the end of the day, Honourable Speaker, time and time again, they ignored the youth in Manitoba each and every day—shameful.

The Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government

calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

* (14:30)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them much-needed relief.

This petition is signed by Cathy Halbesman [*phonetic*], Toni Pochushko [*phonetic*], Robert Baranoski and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

In 2022, according to Statistics Canada, there was an 11.4 per cent increase in food prices.

Staple food products such as baked goods, margarine and other oils, dairy products and eggs have seen some of the largest price increases.

Agriculture and agri-food sectors continue close to 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP. They continue—sorry, I need to re-read that. I am getting the look from the Clerk here. I missed a word, so,

(3) Agriculture and the agri-food sectors contribute close to 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP.

There are increased costs added at every step of the process for Manitoba's agriculture producers. In order to make 18 cents from one loaf worth of wheat, farmers are paying carbon tax at every stage of production to grow the crop and get it to market.

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical productions, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating a livestock barn, machine shops and utility buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on

natural gas and other fuels cost farmers and consumers more each year.

(6) In food production there are currently no viable alternatives to natural gas and propane. Carbon tax takes money away from farmers, making them less profitable and hindering rural agricultural producers' ability to invest in upgrades and improve efficiency while reducing emissions.

The provincial government neglected farmers in the six-month fuel tax holiday until the opposition critic and local stakeholders' groups called for their inclusion.

Other provincial jurisdictions and leaders have taken action on calling on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax and/or stop collecting the carbon tax altogether.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows—excuse me.

To urge the provincial government to call on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels and farm inputs for Manitoba agricultural producers and the agri-food sector to decrease the costs of putting food on the table for Manitoba consumers.

This petition was signed by Murray Jaenen, Terry Jaenen and Paige Jaenen, along with many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) Beginning March 17, 2024, persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from

depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition, and

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

This petition has been signed by Shane Poitras, Rene Bouchard and Sandrine Jasserre and many, many Manitobans.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the ages of 10 and 19.

There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would

undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to those supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition.

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

And this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

Child-Welfare System—Call for Inquiry

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition is as follows:

On Sunday, February 11, 2024, Manitobans witnessed an unimaginable tragedy when five individuals were murdered.

(2) The victims ranged in ages from two months to 30 years.

(3) Manitoba has the second highest rate of intimate partner violence among Canadian provinces, at a rate of 633 per 100,000 people, according to police-reported data from Statistics Canada.

* (14:40)

(4) Public reporting indicates that on December 9, 2023, Myah-Lee left a voicemail for her Child and

Family Services worker in which she pleaded to be moved out of her home in Carman.

(5) Manitoba's Advocate for Children and Youth noted: This case highlights the failures of the government to respond to our recommendations.

(6) On March 6, 2024, the Minister of Families, the MLA for St. Johns, indicated on the public record that she was too busy to discuss issues surrounding children in care, including calling a public inquiry into this unprecedented tragedy.

(7) The last inquiry held in Manitoba was for the death of five-year-old Phoenix Sinclair in 2008.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Families to develop better policies to protect youth in care from potential physical and psychological abuse.

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately establish a public inquiry to identify the failing of the child-welfare system and ensure that no call for a child ever goes unanswered or ignored again.

This petition is signed by Ashley Rechik, Lee Engdebaek [*phonetic*], Guy Lagimodière and many, many, many Manitobans.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I wish to present the following petition.

And these are the reasons for the petition.

(1) Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

And, Honourable Speaker, this petition is signed by Aurise Declaire [*phonetic*], Johanna Janeker [*phonetic*] and Suzanna [*phonetic*] Quenelle.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) In 2022, according to Statistics Canada, there was an 11.4 per cent increase in food prices.

(2) Staple food products such as baked goods, margarine and other oils, dairy products and eggs have seen some of the largest price increases.

(3) Agriculture and the agri-food sectors contribute close to 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP.

(4) There are increased costs added at every step of the process for Manitoba's agriculture producers. In order to make 18 cents from one bread loaf worth of wheat, farmers are paying carbon tax at every stage of production to grow the crop and get it to market.

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical production, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating a livestock barn, machine shops and utility

buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels cost farmers and consumers more each year.

(6) In food production, there are currently no viable alternatives to natural gas and propane. The carbon tax takes money away from farmers, making them less profitable and hindering rural agriculture producers' ability to invest in upgrades and improve efficiency while reducing emissions.

(7) The provincial government neglected farmers in the six-month fuel tax holiday until the opposition critic and local stakeholder groups called for their inclusion.

(8) Other provincial jurisdictions and leaders have taken action on calling on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax and/or stop collecting the carbon tax altogether.

We petition the legislative of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to call on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels and farm inputs for Manitoba agriculture producers and the agri-food sector to decrease the costs of putting food on the table for Manitoba consumers.

This has been signed by many Manitobans: Ken Odonnell, Sherry Francis, Robert Lowry and many, many, many more Manitobans.

Louise Bridge

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

* (14:50)

Over 25,000 vehicles per day cross the Louise Bridge, which has served a vital link for vehicular traffic between northeast Winnipeg and the downtown for the last 113 years. The current—

(2) The current structure will undoubtedly be declared unsafe in a few years as it has deteriorative—deteriorated extensively, is now functional obsolete, and therefore 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 has studied where the new replacement bridge should be situated.

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

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

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

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

(8) 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.

(9) The City expropriation process has begun. The \$6.35-million street upgrade of Nairn Avenue from Watt Street to the 113-year-old bridge is complete.

(10) 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.

(11) 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 recommend that the City of Winnipeg keep the old bridge fully open to traffic while the new bridge is under construction.

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

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by Ali Esmail, Don Bowes, Sajjad Hashmi and many, many, many other Manitobans.

FortWhyte Alive

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) The community of Fort Whyte has over 22,000 residents, and the RM of Macdonald has over 8,000 residents, many of them using McGillivray road and Provincial Trunk Highway No. 3 as a means of transportation or commute to and from the city of Winnipeg. Provincial Trunk Highway 3 is a major traffic corridor that services many communities, including Oak Bluff, Sanford, Brunkild, Carman, Morden, Manitou and Killarney, just to name a few.

(2) Thousands of vehicles travel down McGillivray and Provincial Trunk Highway 3 each day, and with the fall—with the growing industrial park in this area and connections to the Perimeter Highway, many transport vehicles, large trucks and farm equipment need to travel down these roads each day.

(3) In the last three years, under the previous PC provincial government, two new sets of traffic lights were installed along this roadway. Local officials praised these initiatives, stating that it was greatly needed to help reduce traffic incidents.

* (15:00)

(4) Fort alive—FortWhyte Alive, also known as FWA, is located in this area, which is a reclaimed wildlife preserve, recreation area and environmental education centre in southwest Winnipeg that attracts 100,000 visitors each year. This 660-acre park is located along the migratory path of Canadian geese and is named after the surrounding community of Fort Whyte. A failure to install traffic lights poses a significant safety risk to all those who frequent that area.

(5) FortWhyte Alive has been undergoing renovations along 2505 McGillivray Blvd., across from Brady Road, and is to be transformed into a new building called Buffalo Crossing, which will attract many more visitors to the area by vehicle, transit, bicycle and those walking by foot.

(6) The City of Winnipeg has been slated to install a new crosswalk at the intersection of Brady Road and McGillivray Boulevard by the summer of 2024. The

previous PC provincial government committed to working with the City and FortWhyte Alive to complete this intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the political government to assist the City of Winnipeg to address serious safety risks for all that frequent the FortWhyte Alive area by twinning and installing a traffic light and crosswalk at the intersection of McGillivray Boulevard and Brady Road as it is transitioned—as it transitions into Provincial Trunk Highway 3.

This petition has been signed by Michael Hiebert, Patel Kuncz [*phonetic*], Patey Zeheel [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

In 2022, according to Statistics Canada, there was an eleven–11.4 per cent increase in food prices.

(2) Staple food products such as baked goods, margarine and other oils, dairy products and eggs have seen some of the large–largest price increases.

Agriculture and the agri-food sectors contribute close to 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP.

(4) There are increased costs added at every step of the process for Manitoba's agriculture products. In order to make 18 cents from one bread loaf worth of wheat, farmers are paying carbon tax at every stage of production to grow the crop and get it to market.

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical production, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating a livestock barn, machine shops and utility buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels costs farmers and consumers more each year.

(6) In food production, there are currently no viable alternatives to natural gas and propane. The carbon tax takes money away from farmers, making them less profitable and hindering rural agricultural producers the ability to invest in upgrades and improve efficiency while reducing emissions.

(7) The provincial government neglected farmers in the six-month fuel tax holiday until the opposition

critic and local stakeholder groups called for their inclusion.

(8) Other provincial jurisdictions and leaders have taken action on calling on the federal government to remove the prohibiting carbon tax—or punishing carbon tax and/or stop collecting the carbon tax altogether.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to call on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels and farm inputs for Manitoba agriculture producers and the agri-food sector to decrease the costs of putting food on the table for Manitoba consumers.

This has been signed by many Manitobans: Horton [*phonetic*] Perchotte, Reed Sutherland, Gerard Sawatsky and many, many other Manitobans.

Child-Welfare System—Call for Inquiry

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) On Sunday, February 11, 2024, Manitobans witnessed an unimaginable tragedy when five individuals were murdered.

(2) The victims ranged in ages from two months to 30 years old.

* (15:10)

(3) Manitoba has the second highest rate of intimate partner violence among Canadian provinces, at a rate of 633 per 100,000 people, according to police-reported data from Statistics Canada.

(4) Public reporting indicates that on December 9, 2023, Myah-Lee left a voicemail for her Child and Family Services worker in which she pledged to be moved out of her home in Carman.

(5) Manitoba's Advocate for Children and Youth noted, quote: This case highlights the failures of the government to respond to our recommendations, end quote.

(6) On March 6, 2024, the Minister of Families, the MLA for St. Johns, indicated on the public record that she was too busy to discuss issues surrounding children in care, including calling a public inquiry into this unprecedented tragedy.

(7) The last inquiry held in Manitoba was for the death of five-year-old Phoenix Sinclair in 2008.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Families to develop better policies to protect youth in care from potential physical or psychological abuse.

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately establish a public inquiry to identify the failing of our child-welfare system and ensure that no call from a child ever goes unanswered or ignored again.

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by many, many, many Manitobans.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

(3) There have been reports of the unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering

medical assistance in dying for those with mental illness.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition.

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

This is signed by Tiarra Krahn, Jordan Krahn, Kathryn Wiebe and many other Manitobans.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

* (15:20)

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes.

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them with much-needed relief.

This petition has been signed by Linda Newton, Joanne Findlay, Tim Cornborough and many, many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Child-Welfare System—Call for Inquiry

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Thank you for the opportunity to rise today, Honourable Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

On Sunday, February 11, 2024, Manitoba's 'witenen'-Manitobans witnessed an unimaginable tragedy when five individuals were murdered.

(2) The victims ranged in age from two months to 30 years.

(3) Manitoba has the second highest rate of intimate partner violence among Canadian provinces, at a rate of 633 per 100,000 people, according to police-reported data from Statistics Canada.

(4) Public reporting indicates that on December 9, 2023, Myah-Lee left a voicemail for her Child and Family Services worker in which she pleaded to be moved out of her home in Carman.

(5) Manitoba's Advocate for Children and Youth noted: This case highlights the failures of the government to respond to our recommendations.

(6) On March 6, 2024, the Minister of Families, the MLA for St. Johns, indicated to the public—indicated on the public record that she was too busy to discuss issues surrounding children in care, including calling a public inquiry into this unprecedented tragedy.

(7) The last inquiry held in Manitoba was the death of five-year-old Phoenix Sinclair in 2008.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Families to develop better policies to protect youth in care from potential physical or psychological abuse.

(2) To urge the provincial government to immediately establish a public inquiry to identify the failing of the child-welfare system and to ensure that no call from a child ever goes unanswered or ignored again.

Signed—this petition has been signed by Murray Jaenen, Terry Jaenen, Taylor Banman and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

In 2022, according to Statistics Canada, there was an 11.4 per cent increase in food prices.

Staple food products such as baked goods, margarine and other oils, dairy products and eggs have seen some of the largest price increases.

Agriculture and agri-food sectors contribute close to 10 per cent of Manitoba's GDP.

There are increased costs added at every step of the process for Manitoba's agriculture producers. In order to make 18 cents from one bread loaf worth of wheat, farmers are paying carbon tax at every stage of production to grow the crop and get it to market.

Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical product, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating a livestock barn, machine shops and utility buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels cost farmers and consumers more each year.

In food production there is currently no viable alternatives to natural gas and propane. The carbon tax takes money away from farmers, making them less profitable and hindering rural agricultural producers' ability to invest in upgrades and improve efficiency while reducing emissions.

* (15:30)

Provincial government neglected farmers in the six-month fuel tax holiday until the opposition critic and local stakeholder groups called for their inclusion.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Other provincial jurisdictions and leaders have taken action on calling on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax and/or stop collecting the carbon tax altogether.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to call on the federal government to remove the punishing carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels and farm inputs for Manitoba agriculture producers and agri-food sector to decrease the costs of putting food on the table for Manitoba consumers.

This petition has been signed by Patricia Pellard [*phonetic*], Joel Touron [*phonetic*], Greg Bugera and many, many, many other Manitobans.

Louise Bridge

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Honourable Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) 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 113 years.

(2) The current structure will undoubtedly be declared unsafe in a few years as it has deteriorated extensively and is now functionally obsolete and therefore more subject—pardon me—and therefore 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 has studied where the new replacement bridge should be situated.

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

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

(6) In 2014, the new City administration did not make use of available 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 the old bridge kept open for local traffic.

(8) 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.

(9) The City 'exporation' process has begun. The \$6.35-million street upgrade of Nairn Avenue from Watt Street to the 113-year-old bridge is complete.

(10) 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.

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

(2) To urge the provincial government to recommend that the City of Winnipeg keep the old bridge fully open to traffic while the new bridge is under construction.

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

This petition has been signed by Harlan Perchotte, Reed Sutherland, Gerald Sawatsky and many, many, many more Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 2

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): Thank you to my colleagues. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

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

* (15:40)

(1) Provincial Trunk Highway 2, PTH 2, is a 315-kilometre, 196-mile highway that runs from the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border to Winnipeg's Perimeter Highway.

(2) A significant portion of PTH 2 runs through the constituency of Spruce Woods, from the border of the rural municipality of Pipestone and the rural municipality of Sifton to the border of the rural municipality of Victoria and the rural municipality of Norfolk-Treherne.

(3) This route is historically significant, as it follows the original path taken in 1874 by the North West Mounted Police in their march west from Fort Dufferin to Fort Whoop-Up.

(4) PTH 2 is a significant commuting route for Westman families and is also utilized by those in the trade, commerce, tourism, agriculture and agri-food industries.

(5) The condition of PTH 2, from the east side of the town of Souris straight through to the hamlet of Deleau, is in an unacceptable state of disrepair.

(6) The newly appointed Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure has confirmed the department has no plan to refurbish this stretch of road until the 2028-2029 construction season.

(7) The minister outlined that the current 2028-2029 construction plan does not include the stretch that runs—the stretch, pardon me, of PTH 2 that runs through the town of Souris, but instead starts on the west side of town.

(8) The communities in the area have been clear that any reconstruction of PTH 2 must include the stretch that runs through the town of Souris.

(9) The minister and the Premier have a duty to respond to infrastructure needs identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier and Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to immediately prioritize the reconstruction of Provincial Trunk Highway 2 in the upcoming construction season.

(2) To urge the provincial government to include the stretch of Provincial Trunk Highway 2 that runs through the town of Souris in its reconstruction plans.

This petition has been signed by Gail Williamson, Lucero Moru-Aliuni [*phonetic*], Jessica Canning and many, many, many more fine Manitobans.

Medical Assistance in Dying

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Persons struggling with mental health as their sole condition may access medical assistance in dying unless Parliament intervenes.

(2) Suicidality is often a symptom of mental illness, and suicide is the second leading cause of death for Canadians between the age of 10 and 19.

There have been reports of unsolicited introduction of medical assistance in dying to non-seeking persons, including Canadian veterans, as a solution for their medical and mental health issues.

(4) Legal and medical experts are deeply concerned that permitting Canadians suffering from depression and other mental illnesses to access euthanasia would undermine suicide prevention efforts and risk normalizing suicide as a solution for those suffering from mental illness.

(5) The federal government is bound by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to advance and protect the life, liberty and security of its citizens.

* (15:50)

(6) Manitobans consider it a priority to ensure that adequate supports are in place for the mental health of all Canadians.

(7) Vulnerable Manitobans must be given suicide prevention counselling instead of suicide assistance.

(8) The federal government should focus on increasing mental health supports to provinces and improve access to these supports, instead of offering medical assistance in dying for those with mental illnesses.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to stop the expansion of

medical assistance in dying to those for whom mental illness is the sole condition.

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to protect Canadians struggling with mental illness by facilitating treatment, recovery and medical assistance in living, not death.

This petition has been signed by Karla Kuizenza [*phonetic*], Tyneesha Rook, Joyce Beichter and many, many more Manitobans.

The Deputy Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Can you please call for the continuation of second reading debate of Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended); followed by second reading of Bill 31, The Captured Carbon Storage Act; and then followed by second reading of Bill 29, The Body Armour and Fortified Vehicle Control Amendment Act.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 30—The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended)

The Deputy Speaker: We will begin by—on second reading debate of Bill 30 and the debate on the reasoned amendment put forward by the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson).

Speaking rests with one minute with the honourable member for Riding Mountain.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I had a chance to put 29 minutes on the record on Thursday afternoon as to why, you know, Bill 30 was similar to bill 58 that was passed by a PC government in 2021.

And, you know, three days have passed, I guess four days, since I spoke, and I still have the feelings that the bills are very, very similar.

I think I made a firm case on Thursday afternoon of how similar those bills were, and I think I would challenge the honourable Justice Minister here to tell this House how these bills are different, so perhaps we can move this Bill 30 forward.

We certainly know that both bills aim to strengthen the legal framework for combatting criminal activity, particularly in relation to property and financial transactions.

So thank you, again, Honourable Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to the House, and I look forward to hearing from the Justice Minister.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on record in regard to the reasoned amendment, Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act.

And much like my colleague from Riding Mountain, I want to talk about the reasoned amendment. And, you know what, it's been three or four days since he educated a lot of us on what a reasoned amendment is that I thought, well, it's okay, that's what I had prepared before he spoke, so again, we can refresh everybody's memory.

Again, our concerns with this Bill 30 is the fact that there're so many similarities between it and The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, which is bill 58, which, of course, a Progressive Conservative government introduced in 2021, I believe it was. So those are our concerns, is how much they're alike.

But my colleague and friend from Interlake-Gimli brought forward a reasoned amendment and, you know, just in case not everybody knows what a reasoned amendment is, I thought I would bring forward what I found as a definition as a reasoned amendment to Bill 30.

So what I've come up with here is, a reasoned amendment is a parliamentary procedure used to modify or oppose a motion or bill being considered by a legislative body, which is of course where we are, so it allows members of the legislative body to propose amendments to the motion or bill, along with a detailed explanation or rationale, a reasoned argument for why they are proposing those changes. So that's something we're lacking here, I think, in this Bill 30, is what are the proposed changes?

When a reasoned amendment is proposed, it typically includes specific changes or alterations to the original motion or bill, along with an explanation of the rationale behind those changes. This explanation often outlines the concerns or objections that members have with the original proposal and provides arguments for why the proposed amendments would address those concerns or improve the proposal. Again, these are the things we're asking for on Bill 30.

So reasoned amendments are often used in parliamentary debates as a way for members to express their views, influence the outcome of a vote or propose alternatives to the original proposal. They can be parti-

cularly useful in situations where there are disagreements or divisions within the legislative body about the content of a motion or a bill. So I think that's where we're at right here, right now.

After a reasoned amendment is proposed, it is typically debated and voted on by members of the legislative body along with any other amendments that have been proposed. The outcome of that vote on the reasoned amendment will determine whether the proposed changes are accepted and incorporated into the final version of the motion or bill.

If the reasoned amendment is adopted, it modifies the original proposal accordingly. If it is rejected, the legislative body continues to debate and vote on the original proposal and any remaining amendments.

So that, Honourable Deputy Speaker, is what I found as a definition for a reasoned amendment, and I hope that kind of explains what we're doing here. We're debating a reasoned amendment to Bill 30 and for those of you that had no idea what a reasoned amendment might be, that's—I've just defined it for you, as did my colleague in his words from Riding Mountain this past Thursday. And I'm sure he would have—he'd had more time today, more than a minute, he probably would have refreshed everybody's mind, as well, as to what in his words a reasoned amendment were.

So again, what we're debating here is the similarities between Bill 30, what we proposed a reasoned amendment on, and bill 58. So we're not seeing much of a difference, and I mean, my take on it is the Justice Minister brought it forward because this is what the NDP campaigned on, was The Unexplained Wealth Act throughout their campaign, so they felt they had to bring something forward even though we already had a bill in place thanks to the Progressive Conservative government in 2021.

So I thought I'd do a little digging here and get a—some more definitions, just so I fully understand stuff and so maybe I could help my colleagues, as well, understand certain terms. So I did a little—got a little definition here on what The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act is and I want to compare it to The Unexplained Wealth Act.

So if I, Honourable Deputy Speaker, if I could take this opportunity with the reasoned amendment that we're debating here to give you some of those definitions.

* (16:00)

So on The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, which we call bill 58 here in Manitoba—so there's many different types, of course, criminal property forfeiture acts throughout the world. Manitoba, of course, I've printed off here; I can go through that later, but this is kind of my—what I found as a definition to what a criminal property forfeiture act is, and that applies universally across all jurisdictions.

However, many countries have laws and regulations related to the forfeiture of property acquired through criminal activities. These laws often aim to combat organized crime, money laundering and other illegal activities by depriving criminals of the proceeds of their unlawful actions. So the specific name and provisions of forfeiture laws can vary from one jurisdiction to another, of course, but they generally share the common objectives and mechanisms.

And so I'm just going to point out to you some of the key features typically found in criminal property forfeiture laws. And I've heard throughout the debate, and I've heard from my colleagues, as well, and some of the PC caucus that were here through the introduction of bill 58, that the province of British Columbia actually wanted to copy our bill. And I'll get into that a little bit later. I can define their unexplained wealth act or criminal property forfeiture act too.

But—so here are some key features, as we talk about the reasoned amendment.

Asset confiscation—did I say that right? Confiscation—yes, I did. So these laws allow law enforcement agencies and prosecutors to seek the confiscation of or forfeiture of assets that are determined to be the proceeds of criminal activity. This can include cash, real estate, vehicles and other valuables. So that's the definition of asset confiscation.

Legal process: So here again with the criminal—with bill 58, Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, which is very similar to The Unexplained Wealth Act, which is the reason we brought forward the reasoned amendment. I want to make sure I'm clear here, and I'm staying on track.

So forfeiture typically involves a legal process where authorities must demonstrate, often in court, that the property in question was obtained through criminal means. This process may involve presenting evidence of the property's connection to specific criminal offenses.

So I'm probably boring our colleague from Fort Garry here; he probably knows all this. I'm quite certain our honourable member is quite familiar with the legal

process. He probably should be in the Justice chair, I would think, because he's got the experience, more so than the Justice critic we have now.

But anyways, I'll carry on. The burden of proof: many jurisdictions, the burden of proof in forfeiture cases may differ from that in criminal cases. Instead of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, prosecutors may only need to establish on a balance of probabilities that the property is linked to criminal activity. So that's the burden of proof in a criminal property forfeiture act, bill 58, and we're going to see some of these similarities when I move on to define The Unexplained Wealth Act.

Number four: innocent owner protections. Some forfeiture laws include provisions to protect innocent owners of property that may have been used in criminal activities without their knowledge or consent. These provisions may allow innocent owners to contest the forfeiture and prove their lack of involvement in the criminal activity. So that's the protection that the bill has against the innocent. It's the definition.

Use of forfeited funds, No. 5: In some cases, funds obtained through forfeiture may be used to support law enforcement efforts, compensate victims of crime or fund community programs aimed at preventing crime and supporting rehabilitation. Again, very similar to what's proposed in The Unexplained Wealth Act.

This, again, what I'm stating here is the definition of a criminal property forfeiture act, which can vary throughout jurisdictions. So it's important to note that forfeiture laws can be complex and may vary significantly, depending on the legal system and jurisdiction.

Additionally, the implementation and enforcement of these laws can raise various legal and ethical considerations, particularly regarding due process, property rights and the potential for abuse or misuse of forfeiture powers.

So again, Honourable Speaker, that there is a definition of—somewhat of a definition of criminal property forfeiture acts throughout the country and throughout the world, and very similar to what bill 58 is, which is very similar to what Bill 30 is, The Unexplained Wealth Act, which is the reason why we have a reasoned amendment to Bill 30.

So I'm going to move on now to my definition that I have found on unexplained wealth acts in various jurisdictions, but—so this will be Bill 30 that I'm about to define here.

So the unexplained wealth act, otherwise known as the UWA, another 'acronym' we can put in our vocabulary, is a legal framework aimed at combatting money laundering and illicit wealth accumulation. Several countries have 'implemated'—or implemented, sorry, or are considering implementing versions of the unexplained wealth act to address financial crimes that increase transparency in wealth ownership. Again, very similar to what's in bill 58.

So the UWA, or the unexplained wealth act, typically empowers law enforcement agencies to investigate individuals or entities suspected of owning assets or wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income. It allows authorities to compel individuals to provide explanations for their wealth and requires them to demonstrate that their assets were acquired through legitimate means.

So I'm going to give you some of the key features here of The Unexplained Wealth Act, just as I did with the criminal property forfeiture act—Bill 30, bill 58.

So for Bill 30, or for The Unexplained Wealth Act, some key features are asset disclosure: individuals or entities defined as having unexplained wealth may be required to disclose information about their assets, including their origins and sources of funding. Again, very similar to the criminal property forfeiture.

Number 2, investigation powers, something our member from Brandon West would be very familiar with, I would think, if he was—when he was in law enforcement. So law enforcement agencies are granted investigative powers to gather evidence and determine the legitimacy of the wealth in question. So this may involve obtaining financial records, conducting interviews and collaborating with international counterparts. Again, stuff that's very similar to bill 58.

Number 3, asset seizure and confiscation—I keep thinking I'm saying that word wrong, but I'm not. Confiscation, yes—big word. Anyway, so if unexplained wealth is found to be linked to criminal activity or cannot be satisfactorily accounted for, authorities may seize and confiscate the assets through legal proceedings. Again, another similarity.

Number 4, legal safeguards of Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act. The unexplained wealth act typically includes legal safeguards to protect individuals' rights, such as due process, the right to legal representation and mechanisms for appealing decisions.

So there you have some of the key features of the unexplained wealth act. In fact, I think I read more key features from the criminal property forfeiture act,

bill 58, than I'm reading out of The Unexplained Wealth Act.

So the implementation and effectiveness of the unexplained wealth act can vary, depending on the jurisdiction and its legal system. Once again, just like the criminal property forfeiture act.

Some countries have successfully utilized similar legislation to recover proceeds of crime, deter money laundering and enhance financial transparency, while others may face challenges in enforcement and compliance.

It's worth noting that the specifics of the unexplained wealth act made—may defer between countries, and it's essential to refer to the relevant legislation and legal interpretations in a specific jurisdiction for accurate information.

* (16:10)

So there is my definition that I came up with for Bill 30, which was proposed by our new government, The Unexplained Wealth Act, hashtag criminal property forfeiture act.

So again, what I read on the one, Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, and what I read on No. 2, The Unexplained Wealth Act, I'm sure you all, if you're listening to me, heard many, many similarities in these definitions. So again, Honourable Deputy Speaker, this is what I'm trying to explain is why we're here today debating the reasoned amendment for Bill 30. We're not seeing any differences; many similarities.

So those are the definitions. Now, what I want to do is, I want to talk about some of the similarities that I may have found in Bill 30 and bill 58. We'll see what the similarities are because I know, it seems like I've been reading all the similarities, but I kept it separate. I wanted the definition then I wanted the similarities, so here we go.

I got a little—lots to talk about here. So I'm going to talk about the similarities and then I'm going to talk about the differences that I couldn't find, again, to the reasoned amendment on Bill 30. So here's the similarities between Bill 30 and bill 58.

So while the 'periminal' property forfeiture act, the CPFA, another new one, The Unexplained Wealth Act, the UWA, have distinct focuses and objectives, there are some similarities between the two. Here are a few. A few, I've got six of them, which is more than what I found in my definitions of the two.

So anyways, here's the similarities between the two bills: Targeting illicit wealth. Both acts are aimed at addressing financial crimes and illicit wealth accumulation. Yes, that's what I'm reading from it. The CPFA, Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, targets assets directly linked to criminal activity, while the UWA, The Unexplained Wealth Act, focuses on wealth or assets that are disproportionate to legitimate income. So that's what we're reading here in both acts—in both bills, sorry. The similarities: the reason, Honourable Deputy Speaker, we are here debating a reasonable amendment.

Number 2: legal mechanisms. Both acts provide legal mechanisms for authorities to investigate and confiscate assets suspected of being obtained through illegal means. They establish procedures for forfeiture proceedings, which may involve court processes and judicial oversight. Yes, the similarities between bill 58 and Bill 30.

Number 3: law enforcement tools. Both acts provide law enforcement agencies with tools to combat financial crime and money laundering. They enable authorities to disrupt criminal enterprises by depriving criminals of the proceeds of their illegal activities. That's No. 3, another similarity of both bills. I think I got everybody's attention.

Number 4: preventing asset laundering. Both acts contribute to efforts to prevent the laundering of illicit assets. By targeting assets obtained through criminal activity or unexplained wealth, they help deter individuals and organizations from using the financial system to legitimize proceeds of crime. Again, both acts cover that—both bills.

Number 5: promoting transparency. Both acts promote transparency in financial transactions and asset ownership by requiring individuals to account for their wealth or assets. They contribute to efforts to combat corruption, tax evasion and other forms of financial misconduct.

And, finally, another similarity—important, key similarity. I've got six of them here. I'm sure there's many more if I had took the time to dig through these two bills, but these are the important ones that I picked out.

Legal safeguards, No. 6. Both acts typically include legal safeguards to protect individuals' rights and ensure due process. This may include provisions for notice, the right to legal representation and mechanisms for challenging forfeiture decisions.

I'm sure, again, my colleague from Fort Garry understands this stuff a whole lot more than I do, being having a legal background which, you know, the farm boy that I am, I've learned quite a bit doing this research on my own. And I've come up with quite a bit of knowledge now of both bill 58 and Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act. Finding that they're both similar is what we've been debating. The similarity between is why we are at a reasoned amendment on Bill 30 right now.

So while the CPFA, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act—and I'm—we're going to use these acronyms so we all get familiar with them, because we're—seems like we're talking about this quite a bit, which is unfortunate—and the UWA, which is The Unexplained Wealth Act, have similarities in their objectives and mechanisms, it's important to note that they may have distinct focuses and may operate differently in different jurisdictions.

The CPFA primarily targets assets and special criminal offences, while the UWA focuses on unexplained wealth regardless of whether criminal charges have been laid. Additionally, the burden of proof from legal procedures may differ between the two acts. So that's the only difference I could find in this—these two bills.

So there you have it. The similarities that I have dug up between our Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, bill 58, which was proposed by the Progressive Conservative government in 2021, to the Bill 30, which was proposed by our new NDP government, The Unexplained Wealth Act. Again, I'm finding way too many similarities in this, and they can't seem to point out what's different about it.

Again, I know it was just a campaign promise that they need to fulfill, so they'll ride on the coattails of the progressive government with some good legislation, and we'll carry on. People be—think they're heroes, which the PCs already were for that type of work in the Justice Department.

So again, I tried to find some differences, myself. And so I dug in a little bit in my mind and with the bills. I read them over and over and over again and came up with three things. I just talked about six things that were similar. I came up with three little different things that—I think it might be just wording is what it might be.

So the difference between the UWA and—the UWA—and the CPFA—and I'm trying to use these acronyms so I can shorten up my speech a little bit. I

don't—I'm afraid I'm going to run out of time with what I got to say anyway.

But The Unexplained Wealth Act and the property forfeiture act are both legal frameworks aimed at combatting financial crimes and illicit wealth accumulation. They just operate in different ways and target different aspects on the issue.

So here are my key differences between the two. And maybe if the Justice Minister was here to hear this, he might maybe think, oh, this is a difference. Maybe I could propose it.

So the focus, Unexplained Wealth Act to the property forfeiture act. Again, talking about the reasoned amendment, the reason why we're here debating this. The UWA primarily targets individuals or entities who possess wealth or assets that are disproportionate to their own sources of income. It focuses on investigating and explaining the origins of unexplained wealth, with the goal of identifying and preventing money laundering and illicit financial activities.

And the property forfeiture act: the property forfeiture act, on the other hand, generally focuses on the confiscation or forfeiture of property that has been used in connection with criminal activities or as the proceeds of crime. Targets tangible assets such as cash, real estate, vehicles and other valuables rather than focusing on the individuals who possess them.

So again, I'm reading the same thing in each one. Very much so. Even though this is supposed to be the difference. So it's wording.

* (16:20)

The second thing, the legal basis of these two acts: The Unexplained Wealth Act typically provides a legal framework for authorities to investigate individuals or entities suspected of owning unexplained wealth. Often includes provisions for compelling individuals to disclose information about their assets and sources of income, and may allow authorities to seize assets if they cannot be adequately explained.

Property forfeiture act: Property forfeiture act establishes procedures for the seizure and forfeiture of property that has been used in conjunction with criminal activities or obtained through illegal means. Typically requires authorities to demonstrate, often in court, that the property is linked to criminal activity before it can be forfeited. Again, a very similar definition there.

And the third thing that I found some difference in wording was the burden of proof. I know you're all following me on this, and I'm happy to be able to give

everyone this education too. I'm not a teacher; I'm a farmer. But I did my research here.

Unexplained Wealth Act: The burden of proof under The Unexplained Wealth Act often lies within the individual or entity suspected of owning unexplained wealth. They may be required to demonstrate, on a balance of probabilities, that their assets were acquired through legitimate means.

Now, the property forfeiture act, on the other hand: the burden of proof in forfeiture cases under the property forfeiture act may vary depending on the jurisdiction; of course, we know that.

But it generally requires authorities to establish, often by a 'preponderance'-preponderance-it's a big word, there-of evidence. Where's my friend from Fort Garry? He can help me with these words. That the property is subject to forfeiture because of its connection to criminal activity.

Again, I'm reading very, very similar things in both acts. So in summary to this-in fact, it could be my summary to everything, by the looks of the time. I'm running out; I don't know where the time went. While both The Unexplained Wealth Act and the property forfeiture act aim to address financial crimes, and illicit wealth accumulation, they only differ in their focus, their legal basis and the burden of proof. So that's what I just pointed out to you.

The UWA, Unexplained Wealth Act, primarily targets unexplained wealth, while the property forfeiture act focuses on the forfeiture of property linked to criminal activities. Well, again, I don't see much different. They're not finding-I'm not finding much difference in the-in either of these bills.

So-and, again, the bills where-I'm talking about, the difference in would be bill 58, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, and Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, just proposed by our NDP government because they wanted good legislation, so they thought they would copy Bill 30 from bill 58, which was brought in by the Progressive Conservatives in 2021. And to fulfill a campaign promise.

So until we can come up with some differences in these acts, we're pretty proud that the NDP government wants to copy some of our legislation. We're quite happy that-we're quite happy to help them, if they want good legislation, to help them bring in good legislation on certain issues. I get it, they're new in government, and it's going to take some time for them to figure it all out and find a way to bring in good legislation.

But we're here to help. We're here to help; we're here to work together.

An Honourable Member: Help us help you.

Mr. King: Yes, help us help you. If there's some way that we can work together to make Bill 30 better and different than bill 58, well, we're here to help. We are here to help. And apparently we have already helped with very much great legislation that we brought forward before that you guys would like to branch out on, here.

So, Honourable Speaker-Deputy Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I had so much more to say, but my time appears to be up.

Thank you.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I am pleased to rise in the House today to put a few words on the record as it relates to the reasoned amendment to Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended).

Now, my incredible colleague from Interlake-Gimli proposed this amendment. I think it was a couple of weeks ago now but I will just reread the amendment for the House and for the record to reflect.

You know, Bill 30, Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended) is because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill is any different to existing legislation that was already brought forward and passed in the House in 2021, and I want to commend the former Justice minister at the time for bringing forward that important piece of legislation.

And, you know, I believe my colleague, the member from Riding Mountain spoke extensively about this last week that it is the opposition's role to ensure that any legislation that does come forward is different from legislation that currently exists.

You know, we believe on this side of the House that there isn't a lot of differences with Bill 30 that's come forward, compared to the bill that was brought forward in 2021. You know, but first I would just like to speak about reasoned amendments in general and what a reasoned amendment actually is and, you know, I'm a new member of this House. I was elected in October so this is my first time speaking to a reasoned amendment so I have learned a lot about this process. But, you know, I will talk about the similarities that are between bill 58 and Bill 30 in particular.

You know, so a reasoned amendment is a proposed modification to a bill or motion that includes a clear and concise explanation of the reasons behind a suggested change. And what we're saying on this side of the House is there is really no substantial—substantially any difference between the two bills.

A reasoned amendment—or, this is an essential tool that does enable lawmakers to engage in informed and constructive debate, refining legislation to better serve the public interest, which is what we are trying to do on this side of the House. And, you know, what we have been doing with this reasoned amendment for, you know, the past week or so, you know, but back to my initial comment, a reasoned amendment is a specific type of amendment that not only does propose a change to a bill or a motion but also provides a rational justification for the alteration which I do believe that this reasoned amendment that my colleague from Interlake-Gimli put forward and, you know, this justification is typically presented in a clear and concise manner which I know that my incredible colleague, the member from Interlake-Gimli did and outlined the reasons why this amendment is necessary or desirable.

Excuse me, I apologize, Deputy Speaker, I am still recovering from a cold here.

So reasoned amendments can be proposed by individual lawmakers, committees or even parties and are integral and imperative to the legislative process. And, you know, they are used to serve several purposes in the legislative process and my colleague from Riding Mountain spoke at length about these but I think it is important for the record to reflect and I will reiterate some of these key purposes for the reasoned amendment.

Number 1, which is really critical, is clarification. Now, reasoned amendments can help clarify ambiguous or unclear provisions in a bill and ensures that the intent of legislation is understood and implemented correctly.

Number 2 is for improvements, you know, by proposing different language, new language or various modifications. Reasoned amendments can strengthen a bill, can improve it. It can address any flaws or gaps that may have been missed, and weaknesses as well.

Now, you know, in the case of our reasoned amendment and as it relates to Bill 30 that the government has brought forward, we are saying that Bill 30 is not substantially different from bill 58 which, as I've already mentioned, was passed by our incredible

Justice Minister at the time, the Progressive Conservative government, back in 2021.

* (16:30)

Number 3 is compromise, you know, and I—and you know, we'd like the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) to perhaps compromise, or at least tell us the differences between Bill 30 and bill 58. And I, you know, during questions on Bill 30, my colleague, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), asked this very, very clear question of the Minister of Justice, of what is the difference. What is the difference between this bill that the Minister of Justice has brought forward and bill 58 that was passed in 2021?

On our side of the House, we believe that there is nothing substantially different within Bill 30 that was not already addressed through 'substantia' consultation with various stakeholders back in 2021. You know, and I do know, that criminal property forfeiture has been amended several times over the past 20 years and my colleague, the member for Steinbach talked about this significantly. You know, I believe he was around during the time of the early 2000s and remembers these bills and amendments that have been brought forward over the past 20 years or so.

You know, but really, we're asking the Minister of Justice to compromise or at the very least inform us as to what is different about Bill 30 compared to bill 58, which is really what this reasoned amendment is all about.

Number 4, key part of reasoned amendment is transparency, so the explanatory nature of a reasoned amendment promotes transparency. It enables lawmakers and the public to understand the reasoning behind these proposed changes. And I think if the public looks at both bill 58 and Bill 30, then they could reasonably say that there is nothing substantially different about this bill that has been brought forward.

And so far, as I mentioned, Honourable Deputy Speaker, the Justice Minister has not been able to clarify for this House about what is different. We ask questions from the Minister of Justice, with this very question in mind about what is substantially different about Bill 30 compared to bill 58.

And, you know, a reasonable person would say that if the minister cannot answer that question about what is different, then perhaps there is nothing different. Otherwise, he would have been able to provide an answer and clarify for us when we ask these questions about what those differences are. However,

no answer—well, a reasonable person would say, then there's nothing really different about it.

In fact, I think if the public were to look at the two bills then they would also say, you know, they look pretty similar. It was very comprehensive legislation that was passed in 2021 that included a significant amount of consultation by the former Justice minister and it was a comprehensive amendment, bill 58. You know, and at the time, the minister of Justice, I believe, was able to answer what was it being expanded within bill 58 that previous amendments did not address, or the gaps that did exist from previous legislation.

And unfortunately, the current Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) has been unable to answer that question, and so, you know, going back to my earlier comment about transparency, it's important for the government to be transparent with the public about what they are intending to do with this new piece of legislation. You know, how is it any different from the legislation that was amended and passed back in 2021 and, you know, as I've now said and a number of my colleagues who have already spoken to this reasoned amendment have said, is we really cannot find any concrete substantial differences between the two pieces of legislation, and all we want to be informed and told of by this Minister of Justice and I believe that the public deserves to be informed about, is how are they different. And we still have not been able to get a clear and concise answer about what those differences are, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

So, you know, the fifth thing that is important as we talk about this reasonable amendment is accountability. By requiring lawmakers to provide clear justifications for their proposed amendments, reasoned amendments do promote accountability and responsible governance. We are trying to be a responsible opposition, as my colleague from Riding Mountain, the member from Riding Mountain has said when he spoke last week, in holding a responsible government to account.

Now, we would say, on this side of the House, that this particular reasoned amendment does show accountability, because we are asking the government and the Minister of Justice to be accountable to the public as to what is the difference between Bill 30 and bill 58. This was very comprehensive legislation amendments that were put forward in 2021 that encompass a significant and great deal of consultation with lawmakers, various industries, groups, police. And I believe my colleague, the member from Brandon West

at the time, was, you know, very much in favour of this legislation in 2021.

So, you know, we have to ask, like, what are the differences? Like, what did the previous government miss that this NDP government is trying to fill the gap on? However, they have not been able to answer that question. So we need to ensure that this government is being accountable and transparent, as I already mentioned, to the public about what those differences are. We want to ensure that legislation is as comprehensive as possible, and amendments are an important way to help fill in the gaps that may have been missed.

However, in order to fill in the gaps of what may have been missed in past legislation, we need to understand what those gaps are. And the minister for Justice has not been able to clearly identify what those gaps were. Why is this new legislation being brought forward? What is the justification for new legislation? Because, you know, when we did our analysis of the two bills, it didn't really seem like it was substantially different from bill 58.

Now, you know, in the past few weeks, we've certainly seen the NDP government take credit for bills that we had on the Order Paper. You know, I had a certain bill, The Intimate Image Protection Amendment Act.

My colleague from Brandon West also had a bill on the Order Paper, and, you know, suddenly, the NDP took our lead and introduced legislation that we had been working on.

Well, this seems exactly the same process of what they did with our previous bills on the Order Paper. They're taking legislation that the PCs worked hard on in 2021 and introduced bill 58, and now they're trying to take credit for it a couple years later with a bill that is not substantially different, which goes back to the reasoned amendment that my colleague, the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) has brought forward to this House.

You know, now there is best practices for reasoned amendments and, you know, we are certainly, on this side of the House, abiding by that. But to maximize the effectiveness of reasoned amendments, lawmakers should be clear and concise. And I do believe that all of my colleagues that have spoken before me on this reasoned amendment have done just that. They have been clear and concise in all their time, but they've had to address this Legislature on why this reasoned amendment has been brought forward.

You know, so again, clearly, as I've mentioned, there really are no differences between bill 58 and Bill 30, as stated in our reasoned amendment, you know. So we are—majority of us, you know, we're talking about this reasoned amendment so we can understand if the government can tell us what those differences between those two pieces of legislation are.

You know, and as I've already mentioned, Honourable Deputy Speaker, to extent, that question still remains unanswered. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) has been unable to give us an answer as to what are the differences between these two pieces of legislation.

Okay, so now that, Deputy Honourable Speaker, I've, you know, put some words on the record, you know, with why it's important to bring this reasoned amendment forward, you know, I'd like to lead into now about talking about what really are the differences between bill 58, which was The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act that did get royal assent in 2021, and Bill 30 that has now been brought forward, The Unexplained Wealth Act, criminal property forfeiture act and corporations amendment act.

* (16:40)

So, you know, that's really what our goal is here today is to talk about the similarities between bill 50 and 30, not necessarily to talk about the differences because as we have already mentioned, we really don't see any substantial differences between the two pieces of legislation.

You know, so both the bills, bill 58 that, as mentioned, was passed in 2021 by the former Justice minister and the PC government is—and Bill 30, which is now the proposed government bill, do share a number of similarities, despite their distinct focuses. You know, so I believe my member from Riding Mountain had mentioned this, that both bills aim to strengthen the legal framework for combatting criminal activity, particularly in relation to property and financial transactions.

You know, so when you look into the similarities between the two bills and, you know, you look at the various provisions and implications, you know, there are quite a few number of similarities. And, you know, with this reasoned amendment, I want to ensure that the record reflects is, you know, we are certainly in favour of ensuring that legislation gets strengthened and that criminal legislation gets strengthened. And

the member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen) spoke extensively about this.

And, you know, as we've seen, like, I, you know, I live in a small town just outside of the city of Winnipeg, but we've certainly seen a number of situations of property theft. You know, this past winter, from our farm a snowmobile was stolen. You know, we could see the truck with the snowmobile and trailer driving away and, you know, we called the RCMP, but, you know, what happens? You know, how do we better give the tools for our law enforcement officials to be able to ensure that that money is not going to drug traffickers, that it's not being used in a way that would damage our province and individuals' property. And, you know, I know certainly we're starting to see a number of these scenarios across the entire province as it relates to property theft; and, you know, snowmobiles is just one example, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

We also had tools stolen from our shed, you know, within the past few months. We're seeing a number of break-ins into our cars, windows smashed. You know, this is occurring significantly, you know, within the city of Winnipeg, where my family lives, and, you know, I certainly think twice every time I park on the street at my parents' house as to whether my vehicle's going to be smashed in and property is going to be taken and used within, you know, the drug trade or used within the black market.

So, you know, so back to the reasoned amendment, Deputy Honourable Speaker, both bills deal with criminal property forfeiture. So bill 58, again, the bill from 2021, which the Progressive Conservative government introduced, you know, was very comprehensive in dealing with the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund, which is why it received royal assent and why there is, you know, many lawmakers and law enforcement officials that spoke in favour of the bill at that time.

Now, so bill 58, and, you know, this is one of the similarities between 58 and 30, is that the bill 58's provisions for forfeiture of criminal property can be seen as a means to increase transparency in financial transactions. You know, so if we look at, you know, previously hidden or obscure financial dealings, both bills do aim to prevent criminal activity and promote accountability, you know, which goes back to my comment, like, you know, we are seeing a significant amount of property theft and we need to ensure that law enforcement do have the tools available to them to deal with this, and that's exactly what bill 58 tried

to provide: those tools, those necessary tools to our law enforcement officials.

So, you know, Deputy Honourable Speaker, you know, I'm not trying to point out the differences between the two bills, but in fact, I'm trying to point out what those similarities are. And this is why, when we asked questions of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), he was unable to answer how these two bills were any different, because they are the same, which is exactly why we have brought this reasoned amendment forward.

It is important, Deputy Honourable Speaker, that we do make it more difficult for criminals to launder money. You know, and both of these bills do contribute to this global effort of combatting money laundering. You know, and we often see money laundering is, you know, heavily involved with drug trafficking, and these are the types of things we do want to stop. We do not want to see more drugs and increased drugs on our streets. We want to ensure that we are giving law enforcement officials the necessary tools to be able to stop this.

But this is exactly what bill 58 did. You know, bill 58 at the time, in 2021, expanded the definition of criminal property. And Bill 30's focus on unexplained wealth, both bills seek to prevent criminals from using financial transactions to conceal their illegal activities. So that's the point of bill 58, Deputy Honourable Speaker, is we don't understand—and the Minister of Justice has not been able to clarify for us—what the difference is between bill 58 and Bill 30.

My former—my colleagues last week spoke about protection to the public, and you know, Deputy Honourable Speaker, this is probably the most important similarity between the two bills, and that is safety. You know, at the end of the day, we want to ensure the public is safe.

We also want to protect private and personal property from theft, and we want to ensure that money laundering and drug trafficking is stopped.

You know, both sides of the House, we have this same goal at the end of the day. We want to protect the public. We want to ensure that the public feels safe, like I said, you know, I want to ensure that my property, my vehicle is going to be safe parked, you know, parked outside on a street. We want to ensure that the public feels safe walking downtown. We want to give law enforcement officials the tools needed in order to keep the public safe.

This is the end goal. We do—we, you know, we disagree a lot on different sides of this House, but I think we can all agree that public safety should be our top concern. It should be our top priority, and we should all work together to try to ensure that the public in our province—children, moms, parents, individuals going into their job, nurses walking to HSC, walking to St. Boniface from their cars—do feel safe within our province.

This is our No. 1 priority, and I do believe that we do have the same end goal in mind, Deputy Honourable Speaker. You know, we've recently seen a business within the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) own constituency close down. You know, I spoke about this in question period last week, you know; unfortunately, I just couldn't get my Starbucks on the way to work today. And why did that business close down? Well, they cited it's a result of increased public drug use and crime, which leads to what I've already spoken about, public safety.

So I believe that, you know, targeting criminal activity is the right thing to do. There is no question about that. And on this side of the House, we are not arguing that that shouldn't be done. In fact, we are doing the opposite. We are saying that we want to ensure that law enforcement have as many tools at their disposal to keep the public safe.

The only question that we are asking today is: What is the difference between the two bills? What is Bill 30 accomplishing that bill 58 does not? And I know the Minister of Justice does have good intentions. Like I said, you know, we want to ensure the public is safe. We want to put criminals—we want to ensure violent criminals stay behind bars. You know, we don't want to grant repeat bail to violent offenders. We want to keep the public safe.

* (16:50)

But you know, when they brought forward Bill 30—you know, I do believe it was an election promise; I think they did bring this forward during their campaign—you know, perhaps that they didn't conduct proper consultation. Because if they had conducted proper consultation, then they would have clearly noticed that everything that they were bringing forward in Bill 30 was already being dealt with in legislation, and that was bill 58, which as I mentioned, was passed with royal assent in 2021 by the former PC government. And, you know, I know the former Justice minister did significant consultation as it related to that bill.

You know, so again, Honourable Deputy Speaker, bill 58 and Bill 30, they do both demonstrate a commitment to complying with international standards for combatting criminal activity, particularly in relation to money laundering and terrorist financing.

So, you know, again, 58 and 30 are very similar there. And by strengthening the legal framework for criminal property forfeiture and increasing transparency in financial transactions, both bills align with global efforts to combat these issues.

You know, so again, Deputy Honourable Speaker, my comparison does show that both bills do facilitate enhanced co-operation between law enforcement agencies, financial regulatory bodies and other organizations involved in combatting criminal activity. You know, this is the ultimate goal of bill 58 from 2021 and from what I understand, Bill 30 to this point.

So if the end goals are being accomplished in bill 58, then again I have to ask: Why bring Bill 30 forward? And if there are gaps that bill 58 did not address, then the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) should be able to stand up and answer that question.

But unfortunately, when my colleague, the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), asked this exact question very clearly and precisely, about what the differences are, what did bill 58 fail to do that Bill 30 accomplishes, he was not able to provide an answer.

This is a key part of lawmaking and when bringing forward legislation, is to be transparent and accountable with the public as to why; why this legislation is important. What does the public need from this legislation? How does this legislation improve public safety for Manitobans? How does this legislation provide our law enforcement officials with the tools needed for them to do their jobs?

But, Deputy Honourable Speaker, unfortunately, the Minister of Justice was unable to answer those questions. When bringing forward legislation, this is their job. Their job is to have these answers for the public.

So it begs the question: If the Minister of Justice was unable to explain to us as opposition how these two bills are different, how is he able to explain that to the public? That is what we are here to do. We are here to hold the NDP government to account and it's the NDP's job to be transparent and accountable to the public on the legislation that they are bringing forward. But they are not being transparent and accountable if they cannot answer a very simple question as

to how two pieces of legislation are substantially different.

And this is exactly why my colleague—incredible colleague, I might add—the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson), brought forward this reasoned amendment, is to try to ask the NDP government why. What? What is different? Why this bill? What are the gaps that 58 did not address in the first place? Because we need to understand this, Deputy Honourable Speaker.

Thank you for this time to speak today.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): And, again, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the Chamber today again and a great honour to rise in the Chamber. Any time we have an opportunity to do that, it's obviously not taken lightly, and certainly, today's discussion, again, is an example of why we're here and why, in opposition, we need to make sure that the new government is held to account, particularly with respect to Bill 30.

And before we really start I would like to thank, again, my colleague from Interlake-Gimli for introducing the reasoned amendment to this bill. We know we've had a lot of discussion in this House with respect to Bill 30, but really we understand that Bill 30 is more of a copycat almost. The similarities to Bill 30 and the Progressive Conservative bill that was passed in 2021, bill 58, needs to be flushed out, for lack of a better term. We need to understand.

So I would again take the opportunity today to speak directly to Manitobans when it comes to Bill 30 and some of the areas that I know Manitobans are particularly interested in. So I'm happy to have the opportunity to put some facts on the record for Manitobans—all Manitobans—with respect to this very important bill.

And again, I would suspect that if the member from Concordia, the Minister of Justice and gatekeeper of the seal had the opportunity—or took the opportunity—to actually consult with industry; with, of course, our police services; Manitobans, like we're going to do today, and speak directly to Manitobans to ensure that we—they understand why this bill came forward without any consultation, too. Because there are similarities between bill 58 and Bill 30, Manitobans are asking the same question.

And, of course, our duty, as the official opposition, is to ensure that those questions are answered and we'll continue to do that right here in this Legislature.

And again, Honourable Deputy Speaker, you know, looking through the bill and looking through bill 58, on those similarities, really Bill 30 essentially comes down to more along the lines of a, more of a regulation appeal, or we'll call it even housecleaning, no pun intended, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

But, really, there's so many similarities between Bill 30 and bill 58 that certainly, if the minister and Cabinet and perhaps their bill committee would look through the bill, the existing bill, bill 58, and the current bill that's presented today, they would recognize that, you know what? Maybe just some simple regulations, maybe to help modernize and, based on the current environment today with crime the way it is, and continues to again blossom under the NDP's hold as well. So we know that this is very important and safety is No. 1.

I know I remember the Premier (Mr. Kinew) mentioning in the House just a while ago about safety. Well, we agree. Safety is No. 1. But duplication in legislation is certainly something that Manitobans don't expect. There's so many other areas that need to be addressed, and certainly we recognize that, and that's why we're here day after day.

But, you know, it's interesting, been in this House for just under eight years now and I've had several opportunity to get up and speak, but this one is fairly new for us, too, as well. Again, new to opposition, so I wanted the opportunity as well to talk about, you know, again, what a reasoned amendment is.

And I know our colleagues have spoke about it, but I'm going to speak directly to the constituents of Red River North and all Manitobans that have tuned in today to understand why they weren't consulted, No. 1, and No. 2, why we're having to talk about a bill that's been introduced by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), the gatekeeper of the seal, the member from Concordia, that is so similar to bill 58, the PC Progressive Conservative bill that was introduced by our great Justice minister at the time. And certainly that bill continues today and we're wondering why—

The Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 25 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 13, 2024

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<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>