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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 1, 2022

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable First Minister please proceed with her statement.

Domestic Violence Awareness Month

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): November is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It is a time where we rededicate ourselves to ending domestic violence and work to ensure that everyone has the ability to feel safe in their own home.

We also take time to recognize all those whose lives have been touched by domestic violence, either as survivors, family members or friends, and acknowledge the lasting impact that these experiences have.

In Canada, intimate partner violence represents 30 per cent of all violent crime reported to police. It is the most common form of violence experienced by women, who make up 79 per cent of victims.

Violence has long-reaching effects that flow through generations, leaving both physical and invisible scars. Individuals who have experienced violence are all more likely to live with substance use and have higher rates of depression, anxiety, PTSD and suicidal thoughts.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, Manitoba has the second highest rate of police-reported family violence in Canada. Women experience violence at higher rates than men, and Indigenous women, women with disabilities, non-binary 2SLGBTQ individuals are almost 20 per cent more likely to have experienced some form of intimate partner violence, compared to other women.

Women under the age of 25 were almost three times more likely to experience some form of violence. Even more shocking is that so far this year, 10 women have been lost to violence, the majority of those Indigenous women and girls. Manitoba has the tragic distinction of having some of the highest rates of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. This is a distinction our government is committed to taking action in combatting.

Today and every day we lift up survivors and honour the dedicated and hard-working individuals who are fighting to end domestic violence. That is why we have recently invested in a number of initiatives and programs to support survivors and their families.

In December 2020, we released Manitoba's framework to end gender-based violence, which is focused on preventing violence by addressing its root causes, supporting survivors by providing direct services, and intervening with those who use violence.

We also recently introduced The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act, known as Clare's Law, a bill which would enable women in Manitoba to access information about their partner's history of violence. I look forward to that bill becoming law here in Manitoba.

We are implementing new technology for the domestic violence crisis line that includes text and web-based chat functions. Even more, each shelter will have equitable staffing resources available to ensure they are able to respond when Manitobans reach out for support.

We have made further commitments to accessible crisis lines with our agreement for \$1 million in federal funding to Klinik Community Health, over the next five years, to support their various crisis lines that respond to gender-based violence.

We have also made an historic \$5.1-million investment in the family violence shelter sector, which, along with an improved funding model, will ensure equitable access to supportive services across the province.

This is the first significant investment in the sector in over 20 years.

We have also invested \$400,000 in North End Women's Centre substance use and mental health recovery transitional housing program, which will provide supportive transitional housing for women who have or are exiting the sex trade or are survivors of sexual exploitation, along with \$855,000 to West Central Women's Resource Centre to fund their transitional housing unit for those rebuilding their lives after violence.

Our government is committed to supporting those both seeking and providing domestic violence supports and to working towards ending domestic violence throughout the province.

Throughout—we have also invested \$400,000 in North End Women's Centre substance use and mental health recovery transitional housing program, which will provide supportive transitional housing for women who have and are exiting sex trade or are survivors of sexual exploitation.

Our government is committed to supporting those both seeking and providing domestic violence supports and to working towards ending domestic violence throughout the province.

Madam Speaker, today we are thinking of all those who have experienced domestic violence. We are standing before them today, and today we lift you up.

Thank you.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): November is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. It's a time to raise awareness about the epidemic levels of violence and abuse occurring across Manitoba and certainly across Canada. It's a time to commit to ending domestic violence and, in particular, for governments of all stripes to step up with the resources required to do so.

Let's be clear, Madam Speaker, domestic violence is a gendered issue. Women and girls make up the majority of victims and men make up the majority of perpetrators.

While physical and sexual intimate partner violence is the most well-known form of domestic violence, abuse can also be emotional, psychological, financial, mental and spiritual. It can be perpetrated by spouses and partners, alongside parents, children, siblings and other family members.

Leaving domestic violence is a terrifying and lonely experience and is often when a woman is most at risk for harm or, in some cases, murder.

Domestic violence occurs in every community. It's crucial that women and girls are able to access supports within their own culture and in their own language. This is not yet available for all Manitobans. Fortunately, there are some amazing organizations working hard to provide these much-needed resources: Ikwe-Widdjiitiwin, Willow Place, Aurora House, to name but a few, Madam Speaker.

I'm happy to highlight one of Manitoba's newest women's shelters. Sakeenah Homes is the first Muslim woman's shelter serving the critical needs of Muslim women and their families here in Manitoba. Sakeenah Homes is a nationwide charity providing culturally sensitive supports for Muslim women and girls.

Often supports for Muslim women and girls are not available, but additionally, women—Muslim women have stated the existing resources did not meet their specific cultural and traditional needs and they experienced Islamophobia accessing other resources.

Sakeenah Homes is doing incredible work in the fight against domestic violence, and they need our help. I announced this morning that, for the second year in a row, I am conducting a hygiene donation drive for the whole month of November, and this year's recipient is Sakeenah Homes.

Sakeenah Homes is looking for donations to help them get on their feet. They need a kitchen table and chairs, office chairs, play mats, toys, a coffee table, living room chairs, a filing cabinet, a bookshelf, bedding, kitchen supplies and cleaning supplies, as well as hygiene products such as menstrual products, shampoo and conditioner, toothbrushes, toothpaste and deodorant.

Items can be dropped off at my St. Johns constituency office located at 1763 Main St. or here at the Legislative Building, with security. I will be delivering all of the donations at the end of the month to Sakeenah Homes.

* (13:40)

Finally, Madam Speaker, on this day and every day, we stand with those that are in the midst of domestic violence and we assure them that there are supports out there, should they be able and willing and able to leave.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I ask for leave to respond to the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) statement.

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

Ms. Lamoureux: November marks Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and this awareness is very important here in Manitoba as we continue to maintain the second highest police-reported intimate partner violence of all the provinces.

Madam Speaker, even now, in 2022, we are continuing to see increased rates of violence on families, communities and especially on women and children, and we need to do a lot more here in Manitoba to break this cycle and develop effective methods for combatting abusive behaviours.

I want to commend the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires) for introducing Clare's Law here in Manitoba, as it will provide a process for individuals who feel they may be at risk of experiencing intimate partner violence or are currently experiencing violence and need resources for a safety plan, risk assessment, referrals and confidentiality.

Clare's Law, here in Manitoba, includes the right to tell so we can put Clare's Law on people's radar. It furthers the definition of intimate partner violence to include family violence and harm to animals and on property damage.

Madam Speaker, I believe many Manitobans will benefit from this legislation.

And in addition to Clare's Law, we could also make psychotherapy more available by regulating it. Let's make it so those who need access to mental health supports can, in fact, access it, and those who are providing mental health supports are qualified and trained to do so.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: I'm going to take a moment right now to introduce some guests to you in the gallery, as they have to leave in a short time and I did want to have a chance to introduce them.

We have, seated in the public gallery, from Collège Jeanne-Sauvé, 42 grade 9 students under the direction of Dominic Courcelles, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Riel (Ms. Squires).

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Domestic Violence

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): November is Domestic Violence Awareness Month in Canada. Domestic violence can happen to anyone, and there is need to work together to increase awareness and build partnerships in order to address this issue effectively and urgently.

Thursday, October 20th, also marked Purple Thursday, the national day for domestic violence awareness. And on this day, I was pleased to join a group of judiciaries, crisis shelter staff, health-care professionals and counsellors, law enforcement, legislators and municipal leaders to show support and learn more about domestic violence in our country and in our constituency of Dauphin.

Over half of domestic homicide victims in Canada from 2010 to 2019 were identified as belonging to one or more of four vulnerable populations: Indigenous, immigrant, refugee, rural, remote and northern populations, as well as children. Multiple factors increase the vulnerability for these groups in particular, and we know that our area of the Parkland reflects all of these risk factors.

Dr. Peter Jaffe, psychologist and professor at Western University and director emeritus of the Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children, brought the keynote address. And I want to thank everyone who attended to bring awareness to this important issue.

Today, I was also pleased to see that our government is taking positive steps in regards to crime and safety in Winnipeg's downtown neighbourhood, which many Dauphin constituents frequently visit.

Our government has committed \$3.6 million to the Downtown Community Safety Partnership, also known as DCSP, an organization who works to create a safer and more inviting downtown Winnipeg for all. They are a non-emergency response team with a focus on outreach and intervention to those experiencing issues in the downtown area.

I commend our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) for getting results like this for all Manitoba.

Pat LeBlanc

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Today, I recognize an individual who has made an extraordinary contribution to youth and families in St. Vital and beyond in

his enduring commitment to serve the needs of youth in our community.

Pat LeBlanc, the executive director of Teen Stop Jeunesse, who is here with us in the gallery, after 24 dedicated years is set for a well-deserved retirement.

Pat began at Teen Stop Jeunesse in 1998 when the centre could barely scrape by and was one of the few agencies outside the inner city servicing at-risk youth. Pat knew failure was not an option, so he worked to bring in a board with a mixture of members both from the business and social work communities.

The program saw rapid growth and to better serve the growing community, Pat moved Teen Stop's facilities to their current location at 533 St. Anne's Rd.

In the fall of 2001, Pat began expanding their breadth of programming and started their adult learning centre. He then partnered with Morrow Avenue child-care program and the Victor Mager job re-entry program, now called EDGE Skills Centre.

Teen Stop Jeunesse has impressively grown from serving an average of 35 youth per day to about 300 youth per day. As Pat has custom—as been custom from day one for Pat, he serves youth's needs and wants. This has led to the addition of a music program and a recording studio. This past 'summer,' at their AGM, I had the pleasure of listening to the—some of those talented youth, those talented musical artists.

With Pat's commitment over all these years, it is no surprise that the youth continue to keep in touch with him and express their appreciation for his impact on their lives.

So I invite all members to join me in celebrating Pat LeBlanc for his tremendous work in growing Teen Stop Jeunesse and his dedication to youth and the families of St. Vital.

Remembrance Day

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): On—excuse me—on November 11, Canadians will commemorate Remembrance Day and reflect on the sacrifices of Canada's young men and women made on battlefields far from home in the service of freedom. They have left us with a precious heritage to cherish and legacies of entire generations that rose to defend the right, even when victory was far from certain.

In World War I, from a population of just 8 million, over 600—over 600,000 Canadians enlisted, of which nearly 60,000 died during the conflict. They

fought valiantly, and, after the war, as an expression of the gratitude of the French people for Canada's sacrifices in securing their freedom, France gifted a parcel of land to Canada on which the magnificent Canadian national Vimy memorial now stands.

In World War II, nearly 1.2 million Canadians served, out of a population of 11 million. By the end of the war, Canada had the third largest navy and fourth largest air force in the world. Forty-five thousand lost their lives fighting for our freedom.

In a remarkable expression of goodwill between nations and peoples, the Dutch royal family and the people of the Netherlands sent 100,000 tulip bulbs to Canada in thanks for liberating their country from the Nazis and providing a refuge for their beloved royal family. Today, the Canadian Tulip Festival, held annually in Ottawa, is the largest of its kind in the world and continues this wonderful tradition of friendship between the Dutch and Canadians.

Canadian soldiers have also served with distinction in other conflicts, such as the Korean War and, more recently, the war in Afghanistan.

We can all take a moment to pause and reflect this Remembrance Day, and to purpose to take up the torch that they have left us, to make much of it each day, to honour it and to ensure its safe delivery into the hands of the next generation.

In the constituency of Borderland, the communities of Gretna, Emerson and Dominion City will be holding Remembrance Day services, and I encourage all who are able to attend one.

To those living and dead who have served, and to those serving in our nation's Armed Forces today, thank you.

Cost of Living

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry, the member needs to unmute.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Madam Speaker, Manitobans continue to struggle with rising costs in the wake of the pandemic and skyrocketing inflation. The approach of this government is not enough to help struggling families and individuals to make ends meet.

The PC government has the wrong priorities. Changes to the education property tax rebate are going to some of the richest out-of-province corporations in Canada, including pipeline companies and mall owners.

* (13:50)

Right now, working families with moderate incomes, seniors and those coming to age of retirement, renters and northern families all have been pushed aside. Those who are struggling face policies that further increase the cost of living. And one of these changes will result in hydro bills increasing by up to 5 per cent a year, where many folks simply cannot afford another rate increase.

The PC approach is just not the right approach. We should not be favouring out-of-province, multi-billion-dollar corporations with tax breaks while regular Manitobans are struggling just trying to survive with rising costs.

What Manitobans need are broader supports in the face of a crisis. Policies aimed at helping affordability must include those working overtime to pay rent, as well as those struggling to pay their mortgage. Manitobans are losing ground, with seniors lacking financial support for their prescriptions, students facing tuition increases and wages not being tied to inflation.

Manitobans need a different approach as the storm of inflation and poor policy has done nothing but cause Manitobans to drown in debt.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Étienne Gaboury

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Je prends la parole aujourd'hui pour rendre hommage à un géant de la communauté franco-manitobaine : Étienne Gaboury. Comme *La Liberté* l'a écrit, le célèbre architecte franco-manitobain Étienne Gaboury est décédé ce vendredi 14 octobre à l'âge de 92 ans.

Né le 24 avril 1930 dans le village de Bruxelles au Manitoba, le récipiendaire de l'Ordre du Manitoba en 2012, a marqué son époque par ses œuvres et son travail. Les Manitobains sont habitués à passer chaque jour devant les édifices qu'il a conçus comme l'Esplanade Riel, l'église Précieux-Sang ou l'église de Saint-Claude, pour ne citer que ceux-là.

Celui qui a fait ses études à l'Université du Manitoba et après avoir passé du temps à Paris pour étudier les Beaux-Arts, est revenu au Manitoba pour entreprendre plus de 300 projets. Parmi les plus connus : l'ambassade du Canada à Mexico en 1981, le bâtiment de la Monnaie royale canadienne situé à Winnipeg en 1975 ou encore la nouvelle cathédrale Saint-Boniface en 1972.

Évidemment, quand on regarde son héritage architectural, c'est très impressionnant, a déclaré

Daniel Boucher, directeur général de la société culturelle franco-manitobaine. Je pense que nous savons tous ce qu'est un édifice de Gaboury. Il était vraiment un grand architecte, mais il était aussi une personne formidable dans la communauté franco-manitobaine.

Ibrahima Diallo, l'époux de Lise Gaboury-Diallo, fille d'Étienne Gaboury, a réagi : Le baobab s'est éteint pour décrire la force de sa vision architecturale, ses talents de bâtisseur, son humanisme, son humilité et sa sagesse, son ouverture d'esprit. À certains moments, dans son bureau, il pouvait y avoir jusqu'à plus de 10 nationalités différentes dans son équipe.

Guy Préfontaine a dit : Étienne était un artiste accompli qui n'était pas un homme d'affaires. En fait, il a presque déploré l'idée des affaires, parce que pour lui, l'architecture était de l'art.

À sa famille et à toute la communauté : nos condoléances. Reposez en paix.

Translation

I stand today to pay tribute to a giant of the Franco-Manitoban community: Étienne Gaboury. As stated in La Liberté, the famous architect Étienne Gaboury died on Friday, October 14th, at the age of 92.

Gaboury was born on April 24, 1930, in Bruxelles, Manitoba. He received the Order of Manitoba in 2012, and left his mark on his time thanks to great creations and to his work. Manitobans are used to passing daily by the many buildings he conceived, such as the Esplanade Riel, the Précieux-Sang church and the church in St. Claude, amongst many.

After studying at the University of Manitoba and spending some time in Paris to study fine arts, Gaboury came back to Manitoba and initiated more than 300 projects. Amongst the most well known are the Embassy of Canada to Mexico in 1981, the Royal Canadian Mint building in Winnipeg in 1975 and the new St. Boniface cathedral in 1972.

His architectural legacy is very impressive, indicated the société culturelle franco-manitobaine's executive director, Daniel Boucher. I think we all know what a Gaboury building looks like. He was a great architect, but he was also an amazing member of the Francophone community.

Ibrahima Diallo, whose spouse Lise Gaboury-Diallo was the daughter of Étienne Gaboury, commented: The baobab has fallen – as I would describe the strength of his architectural vision, his builder talents, his humanism, his humility and his wisdom, as well

as his open-mindedness. At times, up to 10 different nationalities might be represented within his team.

Guy Préfontaine added: He was an accomplished artist, who was not a businessman. In fact, he almost deplored the notion of business, because to him, architecture was an art.

To Étienne Gaboury's family and to the entire community, we present our condolences. Rest in peace.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Health-Care System Government Record

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Brian Pallister did a lot of damage to health care. We know that he did that damage to health care when he closed emergency rooms, when he fired nurses and when he forced Manitobans to pay for basic health-care services.

But the PCs on the other side of this House don't want to admit that those were bad moves. In 'fatch'—in fact, just watch them, Madam Speaker. They'll try to deny that there even have been any cuts to health care, even though everyone in Manitoba knows that they've cut health-care services. That's wrong.

Will the Premier admit that PC cuts to health care have hurt our health-care system?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, what's wrong is that the Leader of the Opposition continues to put false information on the record here in the Chamber.

The facts of the matter are that we are investing more than \$1 billion more than the NDP ever did in health care in the province of Manitoba. But I know there are a number of investments that we are making.

We have been taking action, Madam Speaker, on behalf of Manitobans: \$141-million investment tripling the size of the St. Boniface ER. Again, \$50-million increase to Health Sciences Centre surgical capacity by 25 per cent. The list goes on.

I know members opposite don't want to hear this because they actually voted against it. Shame on them. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: I'm just going to remind members in the gallery that there is to be no applause or involvement in the things that are going on down here on the floor of the Legislature. So, we invite our guests to

watch and to come here and to be part of it by watching, but there is to be no applause from the gallery. Thank you.

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

Mr. Kinew: Again, as predicted, they continue to deny that their cuts to health care have had an impact in Manitoba. The Premier can't even say that Brian Pallister's cuts to health care were wrong. Instead, she says, and I quote here, it's neither good nor bad, not here nor there. It's just the way it is.

So, again, closing emergency rooms, neither good nor bad. Forcing Manitobans to pay for—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —basic health-care services, that's neither here nor there. Firing nurses, Madam Speaker, just the way it is, apparently.

The former head of Doctors Manitoba said just last week that situation is quite dire right now; worse than a year ago when the Premier first took office.

Why is the Premier continuing Brian Pallister's failed approach of health-care cuts?

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, again, the litany of false accusations that the Leader of the Opposition continues to put on the record in this Chamber, and we will continue to refute his arguments because they are wrong. They are not facts.

The facts are that we are investing more than \$1 billion more today than the NDP ever did when they were in office. And I will remind members opposite and all Manitobans that when the NDP was in power in this province, they closed 20 rural emergency rooms, Madam Speaker.

Manitobans don't want to go back to the dark days of the previous NDP government.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, again, day after day, the Premier comes in here and tries to deny that there have been cuts to health care.

Well, what happened to the emergency room at the Victoria hospital and at the Concordia Hospital and at the Seven Oaks hospital? What happened to the urgent care at the Misericordia hospital? Why are there 2,400 fewer nurses working at the bedside today? Why do people now have to pay for outpatient

physiotherapy services after they get a hip or a knee surgery?

The answer to all those questions is the same: because the PCs cut health care. It's the same approach that we saw with Brian Pallister. We say it's time for a new approach, one that will actually invest in the front lines.

But before we get a chance to implement our vision of fixing the PC mistakes, can the Premier simply admit that the health-care cuts the PCs are making are wrong?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, again, what's wrong, Madam Speaker, is the Leader of the Opposition continuing to put false information on the record in this Chamber. The facts of the matter are—and all Manitobans, it's there for them to see it—\$1 billion more in investments in health care in our province than the NDP ever did.

But I'm glad the member opposite mentioned Concordia Hospital—\$4.9-million investment, a fifth operating room at the Concordia Hospital to increase orthopedic surgery capacity by 1,000 procedures this year—a year—starting this year, Madam Speaker.

And what did members opposite do about that? They voted against it. Shame on them. We will take no lessons from members opposite.

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

Manitoba Hydro Rates Amendment to Bill 36

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Life is getting more expensive for Manitobans, Madam Speaker. Everybody watching along knows that the price of gas and price of groceries have kept increasing over the course of this year.

Now, this government has come here this fall to pass a bill called Bill 36 that is going to make your life even more expensive. That's because when this government finishes pushing through Bill 36, hydro bills are going to increase by 5 per cent.

We think, given the situation that everybody's living through right now, that that's the wrong approach. And yes, for the record, it is Brian Pallister's approach that they're continuing on. Same thing we saw with bill 35; it's back again this year with Bill 36.

Will the Premier and the PC caucus finally admit that this is wrong and not increase hydro rates on Manitobans this year?

* (14:00)

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, again, what's wrong is that the Leader of the Opposition continues to put false information on the record in this Chamber, Madam Speaker.

The facts of matter are that Bill 36 not only protects ratepayers, but it also protects Manitoba Hydro from the NDP.

We know what happened: \$4 billion in cost overruns under the previous NDP government. Leaving—the ratepayers have to pay for that, Madam Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: To me and to our government, that is wrong, and the NDP is—should be ashamed to come forward with this.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, it's very simple, Madam Speaker. On this side of the House, we think increasing Manitoba hydro rates again, given the rising cost of gas, given the rising cost of groceries, is wrong. That's why we opposed Bill 36.

On the other side of the House, they're going to vote for Bill 36. That's going to increase your hydro bills by 5 per cent.

We're going to give the PCs an opportunity to clarify the situation. This afternoon, we are going to move an amendment that will give them the opportunity to freeze rates—very clearly, freeze rates—for everyone who's paying a Manitoba Hydro bill.

The question is, are the PCs going to vote for our rate freeze, or are they going to vote for their 5 per cent rate increase?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: The Leader of the Opposition speaks out of both sides of his mouth.

On one day, he says that we shouldn't be interfering with the Public Utilities Board, and now he's going to introduce an amendment before the Manitoba Legislature today saying to interfere with the Public Utilities Board, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, Bill 36 is all about protecting ratepayers for Manitoba and all about protecting

Manitoba Hydro, so we stand by that. While the Leader of the Opposition continues to flip-flop on this matter, we will do what's right for Manitobans.

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

Mr. Kinew: Unfortunately, it sounds like Manitobans should get ready for another 5 per cent hydro rate increase because, again, it's a very clear distinction. This side of the House freezes people's hydro rates. That side of the House—5 per cent hydro rate increases.

The question is going to be put to a vote today. If they vote against our amendment, they're voting in favour of higher hydro bills. If they vote for our amendment, everyone at home has their hydro bills frozen. That's going to help you with the cost of gas; that's going to help you with the cost of groceries.

So the question is, for the Premier, why wouldn't she support giving Manitobans a break by freezing their hydro rates?

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, I appreciate any question from the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite when it comes to affordability in Manitoba because it gives us a chance to remind Manitobans that, under the NDP, their track record was increasing the PST, even after campaigning against doing so.

Is that what they're doing again now, Madam Speaker? Are they making promises to Manitobans that they're not going to deliver on? I will tell you, we will continue to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

Manitoba Hydro Rates Cost of Living Concerns

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Madam Speaker, we know the PC government plans to raise hydro rates by 5 per cent will only make life harder for Manitoban families. It's a bad plan made worse by all the interference from this government. They sold off and broke up parts of Hydro and made life more expensive, and that's wrong.

Will the minister stop his plans to push through Bill 36 and stop raising hydro rates on Manitoban families?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Madam Speaker, I'm always

pleased to answer questions for the member, but—especially today, perhaps, because the NDP finds themselves in new, embarrassing territory, which is really something for them.

About two hours ago, they issued a press release that indicated they were going to interfere with the PUB mandate, but then someone in their shop phoned back and said, we didn't mean to do that, and they actually un-released their press release. Madam Speaker, I do have a copy here, so if they rethink it, I could table their press release for them.

Madam Speaker, the members over there should know that they can't call for interference one day and not interfering the next day. They want to interfere with the PUB.

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

Economic Review of Bipole III and Keeyask Request to Table Progress Report

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): It sounds like the minister and this government are sticking by their plan to raise rates by 5 per cent on Manitobans.

We know the government ordered Hydro to implement all the recommendations from the Wall report, and that will lead to more privatization and higher rates for regular families. That's wrong.

We also know the minister promised he would publicly provide a report or update on how far the government has gone in implementing aspects of the Wall report.

Will the minister table that for the House today?

Madam Speaker: The—[interjection] Order.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): Well, no wonder the Free Press judged that member, saying it's the worst kind of political theatre, the kind that plays on the anxieties of Manitobans who are genuinely worried about the impact of rising costs and their ability to make ends meet.

Let's see if the minister can appreciate his dilemma: he has falsely alleged—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

An Honourable Member: The member.

Mr. Friesen: Oh—he wishes.

Let's see if the member can appreciate his dilemma: he has falsely alleged that this bill will interfere

with the PUB, which it does not, but then he changed his mind and says that, in a new effort, the NDP will now interfere with the PUB.

Which is it: interfere or not interfere? Or should we wait for their press release?

Madam Speaker: Order.

Sounds like everybody ate too much Halloween candy last night.

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

Mr. Sala: We know the minister is afraid of telling Manitobans what his government is doing on Manitoba Hydro. We know he is afraid because Manitobans don't support higher hydro rates and Manitobans don't support more privatization, Madam Speaker.

We agree with Manitobans on this side of the House, and that's why we're calling on the minister to stop hiding his plans.

Will he table the report promised today?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, speaking of afraid, the NDP is afraid of its own press release.

Madam Speaker, they did it again. Last week, the Opposition Leader actually stood in the hallway and tried to say that gas prices for hydro customers were going up and that somehow that was the government's fault, when he knew full well that the gas price is set centrally and simply passed through to Manitobans. However, he implied that he would interfere with the PUB and their issuance of a report on gas prices.

Now they've done it again and said that, coming today, the NDP—this just in—will interfere with the role of the PUB.

No wonder the Free Press said that either they haven't read the legislation, they don't know the difference between up and down or they're just pulling—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Just a reminder, we do have a lot of guests in the gallery that are here to hear questions and answers.

Drug Overdose Prevention Investments Needed

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Yesterday, my colleague, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), raised critical concerns about overdose deaths in Manitoba. She called for quicker disclosure of drug overdoses, readily available drug-

testing machines and a commitment for supervised consumption for those facing addiction. The minister's response was that we were simply favouring the requests of one organization over another.

* (14:10)

I'd ask the minister to withdraw that comment. And, more importantly, I ask that she commit to these important initiatives that will save so many lives.

Will she do so today?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): I appreciate the member asking a question about our investments for those who are living with addiction issues.

This morning, I was happy to join the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires) and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) as we announced investments for St. Boniface Street Links, which is an organization that actually does the outreach, goes into the homeless encampments and sets up these individuals who are struggling with social services, housing and treatment.

Madam Speaker, we will continue to invest in the support that Manitobans need.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, the minister looks to divide those fighting this crisis, but they're speaking as one voice.

Yesterday, all members of the Legislature received an open letter signed by over 80 front-line community organizations, and I'll table a copy of that letter. They are united. They're calling on the government to provide more timely overdose information, provide drug-testing machines and establish supervised consumption sites.

These are the organizations that work closely—on the front lines—with addictions, Madam Speaker. Will the minister listen to them and take action to reduce overdose deaths in Manitoba?

Mrs. Guillemard: I'm not sure if the member opposite was actually listening to the answer I provided, but we have now invested \$215,000 into the St. Boniface Street Links OASIS team. They absolutely are front-line workers who are on the ground providing the services that are going to get individuals into recovery and stabilized and back to restoring lives.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to listen and meet with all organizations. We all have—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —one goal. That is to save lives, restore lives and bring back to health those who are not well.

Thank you.

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

MLA Asagwara: I am listening to the minister's responses, as are the over 80 organizations who signed that letter, and they see that the PCs are simply ideological.

The member for Rossmere's (Mr. Micklefield) recent article on this matter 'proposed' crackdowns, and I quote, getting people to work, end quote, as if this is sufficient to address the public health emergency.

What the members of the entire PC caucus won't come to terms with is that their approach has failed. It is failing miserably. Solutions proposed by dozens and dozens of community organizations include providing quicker updates about overdoses, providing drug testing and supervised consumption sites. It will save countless lives.

When will the minister finally listen to these organizations?

Mrs. Guillemard: Again, I want to really highlight Marion Willis, who's the executive director of St. Boniface Street Links.

I was able to visit Morberg House and actually hear from the residents, who are 'lividing' in residence, of their experiences. I have yet to meet with somebody who has gone through recovery who said that they wanted to stay dependent on illicit drugs.

All of them didn't believe that there was an—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —avenue off and—an avenue—a path to health. There is, Madam Speaker. We have front-line workers who believe in them, our government believes in them and we will invest to help them achieve health.

Thank you.

Licence Plates for MMIWG2S Awareness Request to Call Bill 241 to Committee

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I brought forward Bill 241, which would allow Manitobans to purchase licence plates that would raise awareness around MMIW2S.

The Government House Leader has refused to bring this bill to committee so that it can pass into law, despite the support from families, Indigenous community leaders and organizations.

I've spoken with Manitoba Métis Federation, the Inuit community and Grand Chief Cathy Merrick, who represents all 62 First Nations, who is in the House today. I want to shout her out—made history, first female grand chief in Manitoba. Congratulations.

So, I'll ask: Why won't they support this bill, help create awareness? Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) do the right thing and call it to committee today?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): I would echo the congratulations by the member for Point Douglas for Grand Chief Merrick. Truly making history, and I think that all Manitobans are proud of that history being made.

I want to commend the member for Point Douglas for this initiative. She raised it and said that she was concerned that it might not happen in adequate times. We've reached out to Manitoba Public Insurance; we've asked them to prioritize this. They've committed to ensuring that consultations and a design happen for review and, hopefully, for redistribution by June of next year.

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

Mrs. Smith: The PCs are playing games yet again.

They refuse to bring Bill 241 to committee despite the support from MMIWG, which many are in the gallery today that have had to come back yet again because this minister—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —continues to play games.

First, he said it was timing. Then he didn't—said we didn't have a sponsor. Then they said MPI had too many plates, but yet they've brought forward a plate, and they've passed plates in this very building.

So, will this Premier and this House leader do the right thing; support these families and show leadership and that they care about MMIWG and they'll stand and support them and call it to committee today?

Mr. Goertzen: We certainly welcome our guests to the gallery. I certainly hope that the member opposite gave them the actual facts about how this works.

You do not need a bill to have a licence plate—a specialty licence plate. There are more than 15 speciality licence plates in Manitoba, and most of them don't have bills. However, they could be delayed by the mechanism by which the member opposite was trying to bring it forward, so we reached out to member—to Manitoba Public Insurance—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —asked them to prioritize this because we believe and we agree with the member for Point Douglas.

I'd like her to be involved with the consultation. I'd love it if she was there to help reveal the plate in the summer of next year.

This isn't about politics; I hope she's not making it about politics. We support it, and we're getting it done, Madam Speaker.

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

Mrs. Smith: This House leader and this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) can show families today that they support them and pass it through this House into law. This House—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —leader has the capacity to do that. He's playing games with this such as they did with the overdose—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —act that I brought forward.

So, why don't you show leadership? Why don't you show all of these families and community members here today that you stand with them, that you will pass this through law and not use this as a, oh, it's got to go through regulations?

Do the right thing, Kelvin. Do the right thing, Premier. Show them that you support them and pass this—

Madam Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

Just a reminder to the member that members aren't to be recognized by their first names, and also I would ask that when questions are being asked, that they come through me to the government. And that will then keep the temperature in the room down so that we can properly hear the questions and the answers, please.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the member opposite won't take yes for an answer.

Madam Speaker, there are 30 applications for speciality licence plates with MPI. If it wasn't prioritized by the Minister responsible for MPI, which is the role that I have, it could take years for that licence plate to be developed. I asked member—Manitoba Public Insurance to prioritize this plate ahead of the other 30 applications. [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: I know they want to play politics, Madam Speaker. I won't go to that level.

I asked them to prioritize this plate ahead of the other 30 applications because we believe it's important and hope to participate in the consultations. I hope she'll be there for the reveal.

I want those members who have come down here—probably under a false pretence—to know we support the plate and we'll get it done. [*interjection*]

* (14:20)

Madam Speaker: Order. [*interjection*] Order, please.

Northern Snow Clearing and Road Maintenance Department Staffing and Equipment Sales

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, the situation for road maintenance and snow-clearing operations is serious in northern Manitoba.

Roads are being neglected, taking far too long for the snow to be cleared. Yesterday, my colleague revealed the big explanation for that is that there's so few people left working in the northern departments. Nearly half of the staff are missing.

I ask the minister: Why has he allowed the northern health—or, the northern region to rot?

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I just wanted the—tell the member that, you know, he actually sat with me in Flin Flon when I went on my tour. And we actually had breakfast together. And we—actually knows how much the—worth—North means to us.

We're actually doing a tour right now, making sure that we actually look at—making sure that we are recruiting workers to come and work on our snow plows. We've actually recruited 32 new retirees that are coming back this winter to help us with our maintenance, Madam Speaker.

And we're—we'll continue to recruit members for the snow plow operations in the North.

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

MLA Lindsey: Earlier this year, hundreds and hundreds of northerners called for better maintenance on Highway 6 and other northern roads. The minister is ignoring their concerns.

Hundreds of pieces of equipment that repair our roads and clear snow have been sold off. Sixty-four positions have been outright cut in the last four years and an astonishing 127 positions are sitting empty. That's just in the highway maintenance part in the northern region. Fifty per cent vacancy rate, nearly.

Why is the minister cutting road maintenance and snow clearing in northern Manitoba?

Mr. Piwniuk: Madam Speaker, I just wanted to tell the member that when we went up to north—to Thompson, we met with the staff of the—MTI, and we made sure that—we're dedicated to making sure that we do recruitment. We're actually wanting to staff up. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Piwniuk: We're doing recruitment. When we went for—went to First Nation communities, we tell First Nation communities that we're actually hiring.

And so, the thing is to let individuals—First Nation communities to know that there's a career in—when it comes to MTI, and we're there to make sure that we include the First Nation communities when it comes to road maintenance.

And we're there for—we actually invested over \$21 million this year. In the next three years, Madam Speaker, we're going to invest \$51 million on—just on Highway 6 alone, putting shoulders on the highways.

And we'll get that work done, not like the NDP; they had—or, they underspent by \$1 billion, Madam Speaker.

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

MLA Lindsey: Well, he talks about shoulders—they're all in the south. There's nothing happening in the North. The PCs cut over \$8 million from the highways repair budget last year alone.

The situation in the North is desperate. Snow clearing is taking far too long. Dozens of positions have been cut, 127 are empty—vacant—nobody there. There are half the people missing from the northern highway maintenance crew. This is beyond unacceptable as we get ready to go into another winter.

Will the minister stop the cuts, restore staff for snow clearing and northern repairs, and what exactly is he doing to rectify this situation? Talk.

Mr. Piwniuk: Madam Speaker, I just wanted to let the member know that we've actually added 17 new pieces of snow-clearing equipment this season to replace the—supplement existing—to add into 350 new other pieces of equipment that we have.

Madam Speaker, they allow the—I—the deferred maintenance of our equipment—go downhill. We're actually investing in our equipment. We actually led—high—I—actually invested in 17 new pieces of equipment that does more work, does more efficient, they're bigger equipment and they're more dependable.

And we're going to get the job done, what they failed.

Surgical Backlog and Staffing Shortage Impact on Manitobans Waiting for Care

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I recently met someone who was told in February they needed heart surgery within two weeks. It's now November, nine months later, and they're still waiting. He said if he doesn't get his operation soon, his chances for survival by December are about 50-50.

Now, I know this government doesn't want to talk about individual cases. That's fine 'becauidivs' we know this individual is not alone. There have been backlogs in surgeries for cardiac, pulmonary and cancer.

Can the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) tell us how many Manitobans have died waiting for a life-saving operation for cancer, heart or lungs on Manitoba's wait-lists, or does the Province not track that?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I thank the member from St. Boniface for the question.

The Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force was launched last year, and I'm pleased to share some of the good-news stats from the task force.

The pandemic cataract backlog was reported to be 1,200 cases, Madam Speaker, in February, and has been reduced to 116 cases in August. So far in 2022, we have completed more cases than in the last two years for cardiac surgery, cataract surgery, CT scans, myocardial perfusion scans, ultrasounds, orthopedic hip replacements and orthopedic knee replacements.

We will continue to come to the aid of Manitobans who are needing these critical surgeries.

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

Mr. Lamont: The backlogs and staff shortages are so bad that, effective yesterday, the government loosened restrictions to allow people who are still sick with COVID back to work in the health-care system. The Shared Health document read that these changes are primarily motivated by widespread staffing challenges being experienced across the health-care system.

Many of these staffing shortages are undoubtedly related to this government's political decision to override public health and let COVID rip through the population, resulting in far more days of lost work and people ending up in hospital, ICU, or an early grave or with long COVID.

Instead of lowering 'standards' for hospitals, has anyone in the PC government considered that if they raised them for everybody else, we'd actually see fewer cases of COVID and fewer sick workers?

Ms. Gordon: Since yesterday, the member for St. Boniface has obtained an MD degree.

But, Madam Speaker, I want him to know that we are listening to doctors in the system, public health experts. They are the individuals that are making the decisions. Guidelines and regulations regarding COVID restrictions or masking or any other requirements in facilities across the province that are health related are made by Shared Health, they are not made here in the Manitoba Legislature.

We will continue to respect our public health experts in making those decisions.

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

Fishery on Lake Winnipegosis Restoration of the Walleye Stock

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, according to the government's own report, which I table, millions of dollars in potential revenue are being lost annually due to the poor state of the walleye stock

in Manitoba's second largest lake, Lake Winnipegosis. A lack of appropriate and sustainable harvest control rules is cited in the report as the reason. The annual mortality rate of walleye in 2019-2020 was 45 per cent—much too high.

What action is the minister taking to restore the Lake Winnipegosis walleye fishery, which has been depressed for about 60 years under consecutive NDP and PC governments?

Hon. Greg Nesbitt (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development): It's certainly a pleasure to rise in this Legislature for the first time to answer a question. I want to thank our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), first of all, for her confidence in me, and I'm pleased to get this question from the member from River Heights.

Certainly, our government takes fisheries very seriously here in Manitoba. We're working on eco-certification with all the various stakeholders here in Manitoba. We're committed to ensuring stocks of fish are plentiful for our commercial fishermen and our recreational anglers in the province.

* (14:30)

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Whyte. *[interjection]* Order. Order.

Downtown Community Safety Partnership Government Funding Announcement

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Madam Speaker, violent crime and public safety continues to be a concern to residents in Winnipeg and many other communities in Manitoba.

Our government is committed to working with important organizations that are essential in addressing community issues and vulnerabilities.

Can the Minister of Justice please share some of our government efforts to make our communities safer?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I want to thank the member for Fort Whyte, who's been an tremendous advocate when it comes to trying to ensure that we keep our communities safe. He's been a great spokesperson on this particular issue.

I also want to thank our Premier, our Deputy Premier (Mr. Cullen), the Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness (Mrs. Guillemard) and the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), who were at an

announcement this morning for \$3.6 million to support the Downtown Community Safety Partnership.

There is not one solution or one answer when it comes to any homelessness or making our communities safe, but it is about partnerships. And I want to thank all those who are involved with the DCSP, including Greg Burnett, including Mark Chipman, who were at the announcement, as well, and who've been great advocates. And including the mayor-elect, Scott Gillingham, who was also there to offer his support as we partner with him and others in our community.

Thank you very much.

Home-Care Services Care Hours Available

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Madam Speaker, last week, I raised the concerns of home-care workers who are telling me that a new scheduling tool is being used to cut the time they can provide to their clients.

The minister responded that he was doing a home-care review. Well, that's not good enough. These workers and their clients deserve accountability.

Will the minister explain why the WRHA has cut the time of home-care workers to perform home care by as much as 50 per cent or more, and will he reverse these cuts?

Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care): I appreciate the member's question.

We as a government, as well as other governments throughout the country, are certainly—are challenged by being able to accommodate home-care needs in regards to staffing. I mean, that's a challenge that exists throughout the whole country.

And, as I'd indicated on many occasions, we are addressing that issue. We are doing the studies that need to be done to ensure that we can accommodate all of our seniors long term. That's exactly what we're doing.

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

MLA Marcelino: Madam Speaker, the minister does not need to take a review to try to—and try to find answers for why nobody wants to work in home care. It's because these home-care workers are treated so poorly.

They don't even have any sick—paid sick days. They don't even have any benefits. They don't even

have full-time status. And they don't even—get treated properly for so many reasons, about the gas mileage and everything. There are so many reasons why home-care workers don't want to work in home care, and you don't need a review to find those questions—to find those answers.

Madam Speaker, home-care workers are being stretched thin. We recently revealed regions where the number of clients are up, the costs are up, but the total numbers of hours of care are down. This points to a system that is starved for support and has become too reliant on private agency—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Johnston: I'm not sure if there was a question in that last thing that the member was doing—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Johnston: —I'm not sure.

I, you know, as I had indicated earlier, I mean, the NDP brought forward a flawed home-care strategy and structuring. This government recognizes it. We know that we need to make changes. We know that we've got to address it.

Not doing a study, the member suggests? I can't believe that. Of course you've got to study the issue. You've got to come to terms with solutions. And that's exactly what we're doing: studying it.

Madam Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Madam Speaker: Petitions? Are there any petitions? If not—oh, the member for River Heights.

Hearing Aids

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I wish to read the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

A hearing aid is a battery-powered electronic device designed to improve an individual's ability to perceive sound. Worn in or behind a person's ear, they make some sounds louder, helping people hear better when it's quiet and when it's noisy.

People who suffer hearing loss, whether due to aging, illness, employment or accident, not only lose the ability to communicate effectively with friends,

family or colleagues, they also can experience unemployment, social isolation and struggles with mental health.

Hearing loss can also impact the safety of an individual with hearing loss, as it affects the ability to hear cars coming, safety alarms, call 911, et cetera.

A global commission on the state of the research for dementia care and prevention released an updated consensus report in July 2020, identifying 12 key risk factors for dementia and cognitive decline. The strongest risk factor that was indicated was hearing loss. It was calculated that up to 8 per cent of the total number of dementia cases could potentially be avoided with management of hearing loss.

Hearing aids are therefore essential to the mental health and well-being of Manitobans, especially to those at significant risk of dementia, Alzheimer's, a disorder of the brain affecting cognition in the ever-growing senior population.

Audiologists are health-care professionals who help patients decide which kind of hearing aid will work best for them, based on the type of hearing loss, patient's age and ability to manage small devices, lifestyle and ability to afford.

The cost of hearing aids can be prohibitive to many Manitobans, depending on their income and circumstances. Hearing aids cost an average of \$995 to \$4,000 per ear, and many professionals say the hearing aids only work at their best for five years.

Manitoba residents under the age of 18 who require a hearing aid, as prescribed by an otolaryngologist or audiologist, will receive either an 80 per cent reimbursement from Manitoba Health of a fixed amount for an analog device, up to a maximum of \$500 per ear, or 80 per cent of a fixed amount for a digital or analog programmable device, up to a maximum of \$1,800. However, this reimbursement is not available to Manitobans who need the device who are over the age of 18, which will result in financial hardship for many young people entering the workforce, students and families. In addition, seniors representing 14.3 per cent of Manitoba's population are not eligible for reimbursement, despite being the group most likely in need of a hearing aid.

Most insurance companies only provide a minimum partial cost of a hearing aid, and many Manitobans, especially retired persons, old-age pensioners and other low-income earners, do not have access to hearing health insurance plans.

The Province of Quebec's hearing devices program covers all costs related to hearing aids and assistive listening devices, including the purchase, repair and replacement.

Alberta offers subsidies to all seniors 65 and over and low-income adults 18 to 64 once every five years.

New Brunswick provides coverage for the purchase and maintenance not covered by other agencies or private health insurance plans, as well as assistance for those for whom the purchase would cause financial hardship.

Manitobans over age 18 are only eligible for support for hearing aids if they are receiving Employment and Income Assistance, and the reimbursement only provides a maximum of \$500 an ear.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to consider hearing loss as a medical treatment under Manitoba Health.

(2) To urge the provincial government to provide income-based coverage for hearing aids to all who need them, as hearing has been proven to be essential to Manitobans' cognitive, mental and social well-being and well-being.

Signed by Paul Bedard, Doug Kendall, Carmen Peder and many, many other Manitobans.

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

Are there any further petitions? If not, grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Madam Speaker: I have a leave request for the House.

Due to a miscommunication between Legislative Counsel and our Journals Branch, one of the member for River Heights's (Mr. Gerrard) report stage amendments for Bill 22 was not distributed in the House last week and is not listed on today's Order Paper.

For your information, the member has six listed on the Order Paper, but it should be seven. This seventh report stage amendment has now been distributed in the House.

* (14:40)

Is there leave to allow the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) to move this seventh report stage amendment for Bill 22 along with his others? Leave? *[Agreed]*

Leave has been granted, and I thank you for that.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Could you please call for second reading debate this afternoon Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, and then following that, if that concludes before 4 p.m., could you then call the report stage amendments?

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider debate on second reading of Bill 46, and that will be followed by report stage amendments.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 46—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: So, I will therefore call resuming debate on second reading of Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, who has unlimited time.

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): The goal is to have the regulation changes completed promptly once the act is passed so that we can have this offence in place in early 2023, Madam Speaker, recognizing that we may still be experiencing winter weather at this point.

I believe that this bill makes common sense amendments to The Highway Traffic Act. In fact, I was surprised to learn that—I think many others were—would be, as well—that there has been already—not already been offence for driving on the closed roads in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

The proposed amendments will also bring Manitoba in line with other provinces, including British Columbia, Ontario and Saskatchewan that already have been offences to driving on closed roads.

This is important legislation that will make Manitoba's roads safer, and I'm pleased to have the opportunity to move this legislative forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

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

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

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Just like to start by thanking the minister for bringing this forward.

As a follow-up to the questions that were asked in the bill briefing that was offered to myself and staff, has the minister—does the minister have additional information about the impacts that this bill may have on gig workers or on contracted employees, particularly of delivery services?

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): Yes, the answer to the question, Madam Speaker, from the member from Concordia that we will actually be—when it comes to contractors and—contractors that actually are on for the delivery for third parties, they will be also responsible for road closures if they get on the roads, or they might be even—because of the responsibility of both the person who actually hires them for services or the person who is actually conducting the contract work, if it finds out that—it's—the up to the RCMP to actually fine them if they're both responsible for going on a closed road when they were not supposed to.

Mr. Wiebe: So again, not to put too fine a point on it, but I would like the minister to be very specific.

When we're talking about ride-sharing companies, when we're talking about delivery companies—particularly those that employ, you know, technology like an app to have a loose association with those performing the service—are those considered employees under contract, and would they fall under this bill?

Mr. Piwniuk: Well, Madam Speaker, I was want to answer the member's question that everybody be responsible. So, if they're going on the highway that's closed and it's dangerous, they're going to be responsible.

It's going to be up to the police—RCMP, police officers or the city—city police of Winnipeg or any other municipality that if a person goes on a highway, even who's responsible for it, if it's the ride-share person who was actually riding—driving that vehicle that he decides to go on that closed road, or if that person requires him to go on that closed road, it'll be determined on the RCMP who will they—he will fine.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): We're certainly in support of this bill, I want to put that on top right away.

In order to have laws which people follow, you have to have some common sense, also. And recently, for example, there was a closed sign up on Waverley in River Heights, and much of the time there was no—it was a clear passageway through and people could see that it was clear and they went through, even though there was a closed sign.

So, what I'm trying to say is that, under those sorts of circumstances, if it's not really needed to be closed, the sign should come down and so that when it's up there, people know that it really needs—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Piwniuk: Yes, the member has, you know, he has a point. When it comes to—maybe sometimes that's why we have to have better communication with the RCMP or with other police services, that when it comes to a closed road, that sometimes the road is closed.

Mr. Andrew Mickelfield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

But because of communication, sometimes, when it comes to the actual shift of workers from shift-work change, they might forget that the road was closed, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker, and then it delays the actual opening of that route.

So it is important that the communication—that when we work with police and that 511—our website, we want to make sure that there's better communication, especially when it comes to this situation you're—when the member from River Heights said about that situation with Waverley. We will make sure that there's better communication when it comes to our department, 511 and police services.

Mr. Wiebe: So, just to be clear for the House, you know, it's already illegal to drive past a clearly marked provincial roadway marker that has indicated that a roadway is closed. The minister knows this. What we're trying to do here is make sure that the penalties are such that folks don't do it.

Again, what I'm asking about is the vicarious responsibility of the employer versus the responsibility of the employee. And maybe the minister can just help us understand what is the difference in the bill between contracted employees, owner/operators, versus employees of a company and the responsibility of that company.

Mr. Piwniuk: With the member from Concordia, like, I have to say, when it comes to this bill, it does actually make it that if the employer at that—tells his employee that he has to be on that highway because he wants to make sure that the goods get delivered on time, then that's—like, when the police catch that individual as an employee on the highway, then they can go and fine the employer because that gives that responsibility to the employer that he was actually the one that forced the employee, maybe by threat of employment termination, but this is where the RCMP will determine who is responsible for getting that person on the road.

If that person—if the employer did not tell that employee to go on the highway and he was caught, then he's responsible, can get the fine. But when it comes to a contract employee, they both have opportunities—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mr. Wiebe: I think the minister is mid-flight, so I'll let him finish his thought.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister.

Mr. Piwniuk: When it comes to, again, when it comes to a contractor and he hires out the services, again, it depends on the communication between the two—the contractor, who actually hires it out. If he's responsible that he wants to make sure that is delivered on time and that the contracting person who is driving that vehicle that he hires, depending on the RCMP, if that person was forced to go—not get the contract—then it's up to the employer that would—like, the contractor who got the—who hired that contractor to do the truck driving, he would be responsible.

But if the person—the truck—let's say, the owner—like, say the—that manager of the, like, the equipment that was supposed to be delivered—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's time has expired.

Mr. Wiebe: I think the minister understands where we're going with this, and I do think we are on the same page with regards to this.

I guess my final comment/question would be just with regards to gig workers. We understand, you know, the minister is saying that it depends on the communication between the employer and the contracted employee or the employee, and the minister knows that that sometimes is not as straightforward as

a specific directive that may be issued, but still pressures that are put on the employee.

So I think maybe if the minister can contact on ways that maybe we can improve this bill or just an acknowledgement that that is an issue.

Mr. Piwniuk: Yes, when it comes to this bill, when it comes to the police officers that actually give the fine out, they'll be doing their research. They're going to be ones that are actually finding out what the circumstances was. They'll be asking questions, both on the employer's side, on the employee side or the contractor or the subcontractor. This will be all determined by the RCMP. They will look at each circumstances separately. This is up to the RCMP.

* (14:50)

This is what this bill was brought forward by the RCMP because it—just wants to make sure that there's safety, not only for their own staff but for any EMS people out there that have to respond to any accidents or incidences because of road closures.

Mr. Wiebe: This bill gives certain exemptions for emergency personnel and first responders. Has the minister been contacted by anyone outside of the—those specific folks identified in this bill about other exemptions that may be appropriate?

Mr. Piwniuk: Well, there was no other—Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you.

When it comes to any other exemptions, it's basically for the EMS personnel, like it's police officers, to firefighters, to ambulance paramedics. This is what this bill is for; making sure that they can get on the highway if they have to respond to a serious accident because maybe the road was already—was open and it was just closed recently and there was an accident. So when the road gets closed like that, it'll allow—like the—what happened to be the people that were left on the highway and there was an accident. That allows the emergency vehicles to go into—actually respond to an accident. But when it comes to anybody else, there's really no other exemptions.

I know we spoke with the Manitoba truckers' association and the thing is, what we want to make sure of for them is that we're not trying to fine people out there—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's time has expired.

Are there any other questions?

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Seeing none, the floor is open for debate.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on with regards to Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act. And it goes without saying that we support this bill, and I do appreciate the minister giving us some detail and specifics with regards to the impacts that this bill may have out in the field.

We are very much in favour of enhancing the tools that are available to law enforcement and to our first responders, to make things as safe as possible, to ensure that our highways in this province are as safe as possible.

And, you know, I don't know if, you know, the minister specifically said this or not, but certainly this last year that we've had, in terms of weather in this province, has certainly demonstrated how important it is for our highway system and those law enforcement who are enforcing those rules on our highway system, that they are given all the tools necessary for that.

And, by which I mean that this last winter was, you know, I mean, it was the highest precipitation year on record, the number of times we had highway closures because of snow and blowing snow and ice on our highways was higher than ever.

And then following that, of course, we entered a spring where flooding was the issue. And the issue there is, of course, we, you know, we had flooding on the Red River. We had flooding coming from the east, but it was also the water that was on the land and we saw that across the province that there were many places where roads were washed out, where emergency crews were called in to, you know, to immediately address those connection issues. But then, more importantly, I guess, you know, ensure that they can get the job done without having, you know, folks accessing those highways and those roadways outside of the times that they should be.

It is important for us to give the tools that we need to give to the first responders and to those law enforcement who are enforcing this. But it is also important, of course, that we ensure that safety is the No. 1 priority.

As I said in my questions, you know, it is illegal right now to go on a highway that has been closed by law enforcement or by Highways. That being said, if we're giving the tools to first responders to be able to—

and law enforcement—to enforce these, I think those are certainly laudable goals.

Now, if we want to talk about highway infrastructure and safety more broadly, I think there's certainly a lot that we could say and we could spend a whole afternoon here, I think, talking about, well, I mean just specifics. The minister likes to talk about spending time out in the—on the highways. I'm sure he does. I've, you know, logged my fair share of miles this year and look forward to doing more in the future.

I think it's important to get out and experience those highways and the issues that folks are bringing to us directly. I certainly brought a number of specific issues forward to the minister, and I think there are, you know, more I could, you know, the list is very long, a lot of work that needs to be done, and we know that if budgets are underspent year over year, there are impacts. So when we're talking about the safety of roadways and we're talking about, you know, closing them because of emergency, we also understand that highways need to be safe at all times, and there are a number of ways that this minister could be moving more quickly to get that done.

The other issue, and I know my colleague from Flin Flon will certainly put some words on the record with regards to his experiences in the North, but we know that, you know, snow clearing is a significant issue and, you know, not to bring the questions of question period here to debate on Bill 46, but, you know, it is to say that there are—the vacancy rate in the department is such that there's just no possible way, and we're getting calls from folks who are out in the field who are working for the department, for MI-Highways, and they're saying, look, we just can't do the job. Like, we just don't have the resources, we don't have the equipment, we don't have the personnel and there's no end in sight. It's getting worse, not getting better. The minister says they're hiring folks, but they're not seeing that out in the yards.

And so, you know, that's where real world problems happen. And so if we want to keep our highways safe, you know, it was a, sort of an eye-opener to talk to my friend from Flin Flon. And I said, well, you know, how do you know, if you're heading up Highway 6, how do you know when the highway's closed? You know, and I raised the same point with the minister.

I said, you know, how are you going to communicate this road closure to the people who are using these highways? And so, specifically, I asked about Highway 6, you know, for, you know, for obvious

reasons, but also because our member from Thompson, our member from Flin Flon, the member from The Pas use Highway 6 on a regular basis. So if they're heading out there, like their constituents are and like, they, you know, they would on a regular, you know, day, how do they know when the highway's closed?

Well, the minister says, well, you know—or I should say, the member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey) first said, well, we don't—they don't get closed, right, you know, it's an expectation that people would understand that it's closed. It's not like the gates at Portage. It's not like the gates here in—leaving the Perimeter or leaving Highway 1 in Headingley. There is no way for—and—on the Perimeter, for that matter—there's no way for Manitoba Highways to close a lot of these roadways.

And so I think that's something that we continue to look at as ways that we can enhance this. We have—if we have the tools now to, you know, to give people warnings, to say these highways are closed and these are the, you know, these are the enforceable—this is the enforceable action that we can take, how do we inform them and how do we actually close these highways when they become unsafe?

And I think there's a lot that can be done there. But, again, if we're just talking about, you know, your average day in the winter in Manitoba, there's a number of places where if the plows aren't out, that highway should be closed and we're expecting that it's going to be open because we have an expectation that plows can make it out and get it open. But, you know, even our major highways, Highway 75, they're running on just a few trucks, a few plows going down for most of that section.

That's a major concern not only for the people, you know, for the trucking industry and the trade. Of course, we want to talk about keeping our economy moving, but it's also an issue for the people who have to just use it to get home at the end of the day or the end of the week.

So, again, you know, we're sort of picking around the edges here. I understand why this bill's come forward, and, again, we support it because I think it's important. It's important to give law enforcement that backup to give them that structure and that idea about how they can enforce rules out on our highways.

That being said, without sort of the bigger picture and the infrastructure that's required to, you know, ensure our highways are safe, you know, this is going to continue to be a problem where, you know, winter

comes and many of our highways are simply just unsafe.

So, again, I know the member for Flin Flon, he's going to educate all of us and I always appreciate his sage advice with regards to his experiences in his constituency, but I do hope that the minister's taking these concerns to heart.

Very briefly, as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to mention that while we understand and applaud the ability of these fines to be directly levied against companies if they have been directing their employees to break rules or break laws.

* (15:00)

As I said in my questions, we understand that it's not as straightforward as—maybe as is presented in the bill. We are concerned—you know, as I mentioned, gig workers or folks who are under a loose, if you can—if we can put it that way, a loose contract with a delivery company or a ride-sharing company, but, you know, even more specifically with regards to owner-operators who, you know, are—again, they'll have pressures that maybe aren't, you know, obvious or maybe aren't put out on front, but they understand the pressures and they understand that if they need to fulfill this contract that their employer or the contractee is telling them they need to, you know, make good on this delivery schedule. That's where we're concerned, and we want to make sure that these companies, if they are liable or if they have made these decisions, that they are held liable for those actions.

So, we're going to stand with the trucking industry. You know, listen to them, continue to listen to them, understand if the wording in the bill is, you know, is appropriate, is strong enough and our—if the fines are strong enough, as well.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Because they know their members. You know, they're—they want to do the right thing. They want to be safe. They want to make sure that their drivers are safe out on the roads. That's their No. 1 goal, as well. And so, we want to work with them and make sure that this bill, you know, is strong enough to ensure that that is happening and happening across the board for, you know, a level playing field for all companies.

So, with those few words, Madam Speaker, I—do hope that this bill moves forward. And, you know, winter is coming, to coin a phrase, and we know that this is something that, you know, Manitobans are asking for. They want to see some action. And, you know,

coupled with enhanced or, you know, improved spending on highway safety in general, snow clearing, dealing with those issues, I think that this could be part of the solution with making our highways much safer.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Madam Speaker, the history of accidents, as has been pointed out, is a strong reason to reinforce the prohibition of people travelling on highways when they are closed and marked closed.

It is, as I pointed out in my question, it is important that, when there is a sign up that there is a need for that highway or road to be closed, and—that it is important that those signs are taken down when the road is fine to travel on.

So, this is important because people need to be able to trust that when there is a road closed, that it really is closed and they shouldn't be travelling on it, which is the case. But if people see roads with a sign, closed, which they can see there's no reason for it to be closed, it's a reason for people to start using roads, as occurred recently on Waverley in River Heights, when they are marked closed.

So I thank the minister for his comments and his attention to this. I think it is important that we are moving to protect the lives of people and to make sure that people don't put themselves in danger. There are frequently road closed signs when there is major danger up ahead. There could be a bridge watched out—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —for example. There could be a—as we saw in one of these examples—a snowstorm where visibility is virtually zero.

Certainly we're in support of this legislation and hope that it passes and becomes law quickly.

Thank you.

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I want to put a few words out there and, hopefully, the minister will pay attention to what I'm going to say.

Nobody on this side is going to advocate that people should drive on a road that's closed. But at the same time, nobody on this side is going to advocate that people should drive on a road that hasn't been properly maintained. Nobody's going to advocate, on this side, that people shouldn't drive on a road that hasn't seen a snowplow.

The problem is, Madam Speaker, if this government's answer to the cuts they've made to equipment operators, snowplow operators, equipment that they've gotten rid of, that they no longer maintain roads in the North, if their answer is to just put a roadblock up and say you can't go anywhere all winter, then we have a problem.

The correct answer, of course, should be, Madam Speaker, to hire enough people, to have enough equipment to actually maintain the roads and keep them open. And certainly, anybody that comes from the North—and my northern colleagues will vouch for this—we've all driven on roads that we wished we hadn't because they haven't seen a snowplow, because they don't have shoulders, pavement's all broke up.

And I've talked about any number of times, Highway 60 in particular, where it has no shoulders and the edges of the pavement are all broken up. So semis, big trucks drive down the middle of the road because when they're not properly plowed, even though the road is open, they're afraid that one of their trailer wheels is going to catch the end of that pavement that they can't see now because it's all just white, and it'll drag them into the ditch or flip them.

So the correct answer has to be, it simply has to be that the government provides the resources, the people, the equipment to properly maintain those roads in the North. And I get you're having a flood; that of course, there's roads that need to be closed and people should stay off them.

But if you're going to close the road every time you have a snowstorm simply because you have nobody left to maintain the road, then that's the wrong answer. And I know, Madam Speaker, that I've been on No. 6 Highway, when there was two tracks, sometimes down the middle of the road, sometimes one side, sometimes the other.

And we got stuck by Eriksdale. There was a police truck stuck on the road in front of me and I asked the officer why the road was open, why it wasn't closed. Well, she didn't know because she wasn't from there. She was trying to get back up North, the same as the rest of us were trying to get back up North, on a road that should've been closed or properly maintained. That'd be the correct answer: properly maintained.

The next thing we know, there was an ambulance came flying by us, landed up sitting in the ditch about 20 feet past us. Finally had to call some local farmers

out with their tractors to plow a path on a provincial highway that this government won't properly maintain.

We've certainly heard from the concerned citizens that presented a petition to the government about maintaining the road, about building passing lanes. And they haven't done any of that. They've just ignored that, and it's a shame that the minister chooses to ignore what's going on in the North—well, in fact, makes what's going on the North worse by refusing to hire enough snowplow operators to—by refusing to maintain those roads.

Go north of Thompson sometime, head towards Lynn Lake; gravel road, sometimes little more than a cow trail at the best of times. And yet, less people are there to maintain the roads.

How do they maintain the snowplow equipment, for example, in the North, when there's absolutely nobody left working at the VEMA garage in Thompson? It's all full of some private contractor because this government got rid of all the workers that maintained Highways' equipment. So now that equipment has to go to Winnipeg or to, sometimes, The Pas if they happen to have space. Which, again, takes more equipment away from maintaining those roads.

* (15:10)

So, I don't want to beleaguer the point too much, but the answer has to be properly maintain the roads, not just put up roadblocks.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

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

House Business

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Yes, on House business, Madam Speaker, I'd like to announce that, in addition to the bills previously referred, the following bill will also be considered at the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development meeting on Wednesday, November 2nd, 2022, at 7 p.m.: Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that in addition to the bills previously referred, the following bill will also be considered at the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development meeting on Wednesday, November 2nd, 2022, at 7 p.m.: Bill 46, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Madam Speaker: And as agreed to earlier, we will now move into report stage amendments.

And I am informing the House that I have received a written request from the honourable member for River Heights asking that the report stage amendments for Bills 22 and 24 be grouped for debate today.

So, in accordance with subrule 139(10), I have reviewed the amendments and they do fit the criteria of the provisions referenced in subrule 139(10)(a), which says amendments which could form the subject of a single debate are grouped according to content if, once adopted, they would have the same effect in different parts of the bill or if they relate to the same provision or similar provisions of the bill.

Accordingly, as per subrule 139(10), the member's amendments to this bill will be moved consecutively, be the subject of a single debate and have the questions put and decided collectively.

I—[interjection]—the honourable member for River Heights.

Point of Order

Mr. Gerrard: Point of order. Yes, this was to apply to Bill 24, but not to the report stage amendments on Bill 22, which should be considered separately.

Madam Speaker: Okay, I appreciate the clarification from the member.

* * *

Madam Speaker: So, therefore, on Bill 22, we will be starting with that one.

Bill 22—The Environment Amendment Act (Pesticide Restrictions)

Madam Speaker: So, report stage amendment on Bill 22, The Environment Amendment Act (Pesticide Restrictions).

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3, in the proposed subsection 40.5(2), by striking out "or" at the end of clause (a), adding "or" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause (b):

(c) a golf course.

This—

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3, in the proposed subsection 40.5(2), by—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, the intent of this amendment is to include golf courses in the areas where these pesticides are not to be used.

And the reason for this is that the golf courses are areas where there are many people using the course, where the people using the course are people of all ages, including children to seniors. And we suggest that it would be wise to not use these cosmetic pesticides on golf courses, Madam Speaker, and that's the reason for this amendment.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for—[interjection]—Wolseley?

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I didn't know what the process was; sorry, Madam Speaker.

Yes, I will just take a minute to speak to this amendment to say that it—I believe that this amendment actually could strengthen the existing Environment Act, but where—when the law was changed in 2014, golf courses were not a part of the existing legislation.

So, I do appreciate the member for River Heights bringing forward this amendment because restricting this class of herbicides, these pesticides, from golf courses would only serve to strengthen the existing act and to protect more people and more habitats from pesticides.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to—[interjection]—oh, is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the first report stage amendment for Bill 22?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I will now call report stage amendment No. 2, The Environment Amendment Act (Pesticide Restrictions).

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3 in the proposed subsection 40.5—by striking out "or" at the end of clause (a), adding "or" at the end of clause (b), and adding the following after clause (b):

—an outdoor sports field.

The intent of this amendment is to ensure that outdoor sports fields are covered with—by the ban on cosmetic pesticides. Outdoor sports fields are areas where there are very often children playing sports, as well as adults, and so I think it's an area where—

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights, just to put forward his amendment.

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3, in the proposed subsection 40.5(2), by striking out "or" at the end of clause (a), adding "or" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause (b):

—the legislative precinct, as defined in *The Legislative Security Act*.

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3 in the proposed—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The honourable member for River Heights, to speak to his amendment.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, this amendment deals with grounds which are very dear to all of us, the Legislative Precinct.

And, as we know, there are very often children out on these grounds. They're there for all of us to enjoy and there are very frequently families who come there, particularly on weekends. Sometimes there's wedding parties and various other groups of people. Certainly, I think it would be smart if we extended the ban on cosmetic pesticides to include the Legislative Precinct.

I would ask the minister responsible, if they don't want to ban the cosmetic pesticides, maybe there should be a big sign on the Legislative grounds: cosmetic pesticides used here, to make sure that people are aware of the potential dangers to coming on the Legislative Precinct ground.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Any further debate on this amendment?

* (15:20)

Ms. Naylor: Through Bill 22, the government is determined to roll back protections, health protections that have been in place for almost eight years in this province. They're determined to implement Brian Pallister's plan that he started to initiate while he was still the premier of this province and that they have now just brought forward this year in order to basically take away some human rights from Manitobans to the right to be safe and healthy in their own communities. They're going to make life harder for people with asthma. They're going to make boulevards and parks and other areas in our community less safe for children and for pets.

So, you know, obviously, I don't want to see Bill 22 pass at all. However, if the government is intent on passing it, then I do support this amendment to the legislation.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is the report stage amendment No. 2.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I will now call report stage amendment No. 3.

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3, in the proposed subsection 40.5(2), by striking out "or" at the end of clause (a), adding "or" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause (b):

(c) an outdoor sports field.

Madam Speaker, outdoor sports field areas—

Madam Speaker: Order.

And I should have indicated that this was report stage amendment No. 4—[interjection]—no, three? Okay, No. 3.

So, it has been moved by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux),

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3, in the proposed subsection 40—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The honourable member—the amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, outdoor sports fields are where children of all ages are playing—sometimes, adults, too. But certainly, we need to be concerned about the use of cosmetic pesticides in areas where children are playing, and I would suggest and ask all the MLAs to consider supporting this amendment so that we don't put children who are playing at risk.

Ms. Naylor: Again, it's—I will just say for the record how unfortunate it is that this government is pushing forward Bill 22 after hearing from, you know, at least a dozen community members as well as speakers representing many, many groups in the province and across the country who are entrusted in the health protections of Manitobans. Yet the government's insisting on pushing forward a bad bill that's going to make things worse for help—for people in Manitoba.

And—but part of the confusion of this bill and some of what I tried to sort out with the minister from the first day that I had a technical briefing on the bill was some of the strange, you know, where they were suggesting there's going to be some protections but other places where there's not protections.

Sports fields is a really good example of that because, you know, on one hand, you know, if it's the school sports field, it's protected from pesticides under Bill 22, but if you move across, you know—depending on where your school's located and where the other sports fields are, someone could go and play on a municipal sports field and have it be sprayed with pesticides, you know, that very day or any time that—where it could have an effect on children playing there. So, it makes no sense to say a population is worthy of protection on this side of the street, but once they cross to play on that side of the street, they aren't protected.

So I do believe this amendment would expand and improve on what is, unfortunately, a very bad bill but could make it a little bit more palatable, so I also support this amendment.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the report stage amendment No. 3?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I will now call report stage amendment No. 4.

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3, in the proposed subsection 40.5—by striking out "or" at the end of clause (a), adding "or" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause (b):

(c) park land within a municipality, including Assiniboine Forest Park, Assiniboine Park, and Kildonan Park.

Madam Speaker: Can the member please repeat his amendment, as specifically related to what is written.

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3, in the proposed subsection 40.5(2), by striking out "or" at the end of clause (a), adding "or" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause (b):

(c) park land within a municipality, including Assiniboine Forest Park, Assiniboine Park, and Kildonan Park.

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3, in the proposed subsection 40.5(2)—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: This—intent of this amendment is to make sure that municipal parks are covered, unequivocally so, and that they will not have cosmetic pesticides used on them.

We know that the Assiniboine Park and Kildonan Park are two of the major parks in Winnipeg, and they're just here as examples. The Assiniboine Forest Park, which is an area maintained—and thanks to the Charleswood Rotary Club—and the idea here is to not use these cosmetic pesticides in areas where there are many children, as well as families picnicking, having a wonderful time.

These cosmetic pesticides, as we know, have dangers for young children and they are being banned in many other parts of Canada. And this government is trying to be very regressive, and we'd like to at least make sure that some areas are safe for children to play, including the parks within municipalities.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Naylor: I will reiterate again that Bill 22 is, in fact, a terrible bill. It is introducing more pesticides into our air and onto the ground around us.

One of my significant concerns with the bill is that it specifically talks about protecting the area around, like, what's called a picnic area, is the language in the bill. Now, I met with the minister, and on more than one occasion, I have asked the minister to define picnic area. The minister wouldn't define a picnic area.

* (15:30)

So, a specific example was, so, if someone comes, say, to a—to the park in my neighbourhood, they come to Vimy Ridge park and they want to have a picnic. Is just the picnic table a picnic area? Is that considered a picnic area because there's so much more going on at that park? Is the area 30 feet away, on the grass or where the—where folks have put in their own gardens in the area? What part of that is a picnic area?

And what I've been told is this will be up to municipalities to define. So, in fact, and I've said this in the Legislature before, this is really a downloading of responsibility, of health-care responsibility and of safety, down to individual municipalities to make a decision.

And so to have language in a bill that isn't defined and can be interpreted completely differently by any municipality is very problematic. It would be much safer to amend that language to simply eliminate having pesticides sprayed in any municipal parks

across the province so that folks could have a picnic, play in the park, play on the play structures, do whatever they want safely as a family without fear of harm for themselves or their pets from the pesticides.

So for that reason, I would be supporting this amendment.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Madam Speaker: The—is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the report stage amendment No. 4? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I will now call report stage amendment No. 5.

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3 in the proposed subsection 40.5(2), by striking out "or" at the end of clause (a), adding "or" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause (b):

(c) land within 100 meters of the premises of a public school, independent school, university, college or private vocational institution.

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

THAT Bill—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, this amendment we are bringing in because the area adjacent to schools

are clearly areas of special concern. They are areas which are highly travelled by children on a daily basis, walking back and forth to school or playing in the area.

And so we urge the government to adopt this motion and protect children in the area of schools. This is surely one of the least things that the government can do to provide additional protection for children.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Naylor: The Canadian Cancer Society has made it very clear that when these products are being used that nobody should be on that ground, on that grass, for 48 hours after the use. And yet, Bill 22, while it does seek to create a buffer zone on school property, there is no buffer zone provided for boulevards or any areas close to schools.

This amendment does seek to correct that issue; although, I certainly think we need to go further and have, you know, daycares, home daycares—actually, any programming whatsoever for children—to have this kind of buffer zone attached to it.

I do not support Bill 22 in any way, and, you know, I can hear that there's no support for consideration of the amendments that have come forward. But of all the ones we've heard today, I really hope that the government would consider how critical it is to create this buffer zone around schools as they move forward with this bill that they're so insistent on passing, despite how bad it is for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the report stage amendment No. 5? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

I declare the motion lost.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I will now call report stage amendment No. 6.

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 3, in the proposed subsection 40.5(2), by striking out "or" at the end of clause (a), adding "or" at the end of clause (b) and adding the following after clause (b):

(c) within the boundaries of

–the City of Winnipeg,

(ii) a city, town, village or local urban district established or continued under *The Municipal Act*,

(iii) a community that has–is continued or designated under *The Northern Affairs Act*.

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended in–

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, the intent here is to ask the government to consider separating rural and urban areas when looking at the application of this bill.

Clearly, the strongest representation against the bill has been from individuals in rural areas and, in contrast, the areas which are urban areas, including cities, villages, towns and so on, are areas where the population is denser, areas where there are a lot more children playing, areas where the risk of use of the cosmetic pesticides is higher, and the risk, therefore, to children and adults.

We are asking that the government consider a broad amendment which would exclude the application of these cosmetic pesticides in urban areas in Manitoba and we suggest that this would be a much safer situation than continuing with the bill in its current form, which allows for the widespread use of these cosmetic pesticides in urban areas and as we have–are finding out, including in areas where children are playing and where they may be putting children at risk.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Naylor: I think there's been some misunderstanding and confusion among Manitobans, perhaps among members of this Legislature, from the beginning about the implications of this change to The Environment Act.

The Environment Act does not stop people from using these pesticides in agriculture. It does not prevent people from using these pesticides for their own gardens. It–what it does is create–there's restrictions around the use on lawns in municipal parks, around schools, in–around all of the places that the member for River Heights is speaking about today.

I actually don't think that this is a useful amendment because it–all it does is, really, it replicates what we already have in The Environment Act, which is no use of these products around municipal parks, around schools in urban areas across the province. There's absolutely no restrictions for farmers or producers to use these products on their crops or around, you know, in any way that they need to, or for folks, you know, at a cottage or somewhere to control issues with poison ivy or other kind of toxic species like that.

* (15:40)

So, it–that is the whole–I think, part of the problem with this whole thing is the idea that it's somehow interfering with how agriculture happens in our province and the impact in that area, so I just want to get clear on that issue.

I don't support this particular amendment because I think that the health protections that we've talked about should apply across the province, regardless of where you live, whether you live–you know, whether it's–you can be in a very rural area, but if you're using this on your lawn and you live next door to someone with asthma or someone with–running a home daycare, it's still a problem.

So, for that reason, I'm still going to make a clear statement that Bill 22 is a bad bill that harms Manitobans, harms the environment, and this particular amendment I'm not in favour of.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt report stage amendment No. 6?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

I declare the amendment lost.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

* * *

Madam Speaker: I will now call report stage amendment No. 7.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, Madam Speaker, this was a corollary amendment if any of the others passed, so I withdraw—

Madam Speaker: Order.

The member needs to read out the amendment and then send it up to the Speaker.

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

THAT Bill 22—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: *THAT Bill 22 be amended by replacing Clause 4 with the following:*

—Section 40.6 is amended,

(a) in the part before clause (a), by striking out "Sections 40.4 and 40.5" and substituting "The prohibitions in section 40.5"; and

(b) by repealing clause (c).

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

THAT Bill 22 be amended—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, I will withdraw this amendment because it was only needed if the other—one or more of the other member—one or more of the other amendments passed.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to allow the member to withdraw that amendment? *[Agreed]*

The amendment has been withdrawn.

Bill 24—The Real Property Valuation Board and Related Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: We will now move to report stage amendments of Bill 24, The Real Property Valuation Board and Related Amendments Act.

And this is the one that has been requested by the member for River Heights to combine the amendments in accordance with rule 139(10), and as a result, the member for River Heights will move each of these seven amendments separately, and then there will be one vote to be held on all seven report stage amendments.

The honourable member for River Heights, on the first amendment. *[interjection]* Oh. Okay, the honourable member for River Heights.

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

THAT Bill 24 be amended in Clause 1 by striking out clause (d) of the proposed definition "designated Act".

Madam Speaker: I would indicate that when we're grouping this, the member would need to read all of the amendments consecutively.

I do not respond yet.

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

THAT Bill 24 be amended by striking out Clause 3(a)(iv).

I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 24 be amended by striking out Clause 29(4).

I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 24 be amended in Clause 30

—by striking out the proposed clause (1)(a);

(b) in the part before the proposed subclause (2)(a)(i), by striking out "or The Surface Rights Board"; and

(c) in the proposed subsection (3),

(i) in clause (b), by striking out "The Land Value Appraisal Commission, The Municipal Board or The Surface Rights Board" and substituting "The Land Value Appraisal Commission or The Municipal Board"; and

(ii) in clause (c) of the English version, by striking out "The Land Value Appraisal Commission, The Municipal Board or The Surface Rights Board" and substituting "The Land Value Appraisal Commission or The Municipal Board".

I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park, THAT Bill 24 be amended by replacing Clause 30(5) with the following:

Hearings recommended before Real Property Valuation Board

30(5) *In the case of an oral current hearing before The Land Value Appraisal Commission in which the presentation of oral evidence or argument has begun (including, for certainty, a hearing in which the presentation of evidence and argument has finished but The Land Value Appraisal Commission has not yet made a decision),*

(a) on the coming into force of this section, the hearing is terminated;

(b) the application in respect of the terminated hearing is deemed to have been re-filed before the board;

(c) within 60 days after the coming into force of this section, the board must notify each party in writing about the application of this section to the hearing;

(d) the board must hear the application by way of a new hearing, without regard to oral evidence or argument previously brought in the current hearing;

(e) the board must obtain copies of all written evidence and argument filed with, and any interlocutory decisions made by The Land Value Appraisal Commission before the commencement of oral evidence or argument before that body; and

(f) an interlocutory decision or order made by The Land Value Appraisal Commission in the hearing is deemed to be a decision in order of the board.

I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 24 be amended in Clause 31 by striking out "The Land Value Appraisal Commission, The Municipal Board and The Surface Rights Board" and substituting "The Land Value Appraisal Commission and The Municipal Board".

And lastly, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

THAT Bill 24 be amended by striking out Clause 36 and the centred heading before it.

Madam Speaker: The report stage amendments are in order.

As a reminder to all members, there will be one debate covering the combined amendments.

Debate can proceed—[interjection]—or, oh. Apparently, I have to start reading them now 'til somebody indicates dispense. But I do need to start.

So, The Real Property Valuation Board and Related Amendments Act, moved by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux)—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Gerrard: The—Madam Speaker, the point of these varied amendments is to remove the reference to The Surface Rights Act and the Surface Rights Board and the changes that are being proposed by this government.

* (15:50)

The real property valuation board is not the right board, in our view, to evaluate matters which are currently before or which could go to the Surface Rights Board. Many of these decisions which would go to the Surface Rights Board can relate to things like wells and groundwater and need very specific expertise. They deal with oil wells, but they can also deal with sand wells or other aspects of surface rights.

And one of the things that we know is that groundwater is one of the province's most precious resources, and this is particularly true in areas where it is potable, where the water is of very high quality, as it is in the aquifers in the southeast of Manitoba. There is a very high risk of pollution if things are not handled very well, and the problem with pollution of groundwater is that it can be long term and extremely hard to clear up, maybe almost impossible in some circumstances.

So, we suggest that including the Surface Rights Board and decisions under the current Surface Rights Board or a future Surface Rights Board under the real property valuation board is a mistake, and we believe that it should be removed from the—being tied into the real property valuation board. And we ask and bring in this amendment.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I appreciate the opportunity to speak very briefly to Bill 24 and this amendment that's been brought forward—or, I guess, series of amendments.

Before I address the particular amendment, I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank all those municipal candidates who put their names on a ballot

across our great province. Whether they were successful or not, their participation, I think, speaks to the strength of democracy here in this province.

And you know, not always the most—it's sometimes a thankless job to put your name forward, you know, to put yourself out there, and especially in these times when, you know, certain levels of respect and decorum are sometimes not always adhered to. It takes a lot for folks to put their names forward, so I want to thank them.

I also wanted to take a moment to just, you know, congratulate those who were successful, and we look forward to working with you as we go forward.

This bill—and I think the amendments speak to this—really takes a lot of the power out of the hands of those municipal leaders. And so, it's curious that we're talking about this bill just days after this municipal election across our province when we see a deterioration of the ability of those municipal leaders to have an impact when it comes to planning, when it comes to the surface rights, when it comes to assessments and valuation in their own communities.

They have been tasked and given a mandate by their ratepayers to come forward and to advocate for them and to make the best decisions for their particular jurisdictions, those municipalities. And at the same time, the government is taking power away from them, is saying that this should be in the hands on an unelected board which is appointed by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council. At the same time, they're saying we want to get things done for our local communities, this government continues to put more red tape and more bureaucracy between the people of Manitoba and those decisions and how they're made.

You know, we've heard directly from the Municipal Board that they are already overwhelmed. We know that these other boards will be quickly overwhelmed by the additional work that's being foisted upon them as well. I do believe that, you know, this government has lost its way in terms of giving that local authority the power to actually have an influence.

We want to work as partners with local municipalities. We know that bill 37 was the wrong step to take, and it doesn't matter how many bills or amendments this government brings forward to try to deal with those problems that were created from bill 37; we know that it was a bad piece of legislation.

So, we look forward to working with our municipal partners to—showing them the respect that we have

for that local democratic voice, and we'll continue to do that every step of the way as this government deals with bill 37.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Just quickly, I want to not only thank the one exuberant member for the applause, but more than that, I want to thank the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for the series of report stage amendments he's brought forward on this bill and the previous bill.

While they weren't accepted by the government, I want him to know that they were well-considered by the government. And sometimes amendments, while they don't get accepted into legislation, sometimes they show up in different ways, in policy and those sorts of things. But, regardless, if they have an effect down the road or not, it's an important part of our process.

So, I do want him to know that the minister and the department officials considered the amendments that he brought forward, and we do appreciate him bringing forward suggestions for the rest.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the report stage amendments for Bill 24?

Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

I declare the amendments lost.

Mr. Gerrard: On division, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On division.

Bill 36—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: I will now call report stage amendments on Bill 36, the Court of Appeal amendment and Provincial Court amendment act.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, with his first amendment.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I don't think that was the right title of the bill.

Madam Speaker: A correction is to be made from the documents before me.

The actual title of Bill 36 is The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act.

Mr. Kinew: I move, seconded by the member for St. James (Mr. Sala),

THAT Bill 36 be amended in Clause 13 by adding the following after the proposed section 39.5:

Rates frozen during transitional period

39.5.1(1) Despite this Act or any other Act, rates for power supplied during the transitional period must not be increased.

Rates to be published

39.5.1(2) Throughout the transitional period, the corporation must publish the applicable rates on its website.

Transitional period

39.5.1(3) In this section, "transitional period" means the period beginning on the day section 39 comes into force and ending on the last day before the first rate period under the definition "rate period".

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, seconded by the honourable member for St. James—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, the idea behind these amendments is a simple idea.

Manitobans deserve a break. Manitobans deserve a break from the rising cost of living, the rising cost

of groceries and gas, and we should start right here with your Manitoba Hydro bills.

So, if the government supports this amendment, it will freeze hydro bills for everybody across Manitoba and give you a break during this rising cost of living period, during these times of inflation.

Of course, Bill 36 itself seeks to increase rates by 5 per cent. We think that's the wrong approach, given the rising cost of living, so we're proud to bring this amendment forward to give Manitobans a break and freeze your Manitoba Hydro rates.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question.

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question is—or is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the report stage amendment—the first report stage amendment on Bill 36?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

I declare the amendment lost.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

* (16:00)

Order, please.

The question before the House is the first report stage amendment to Bill 36.

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Kinew, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliw, Wiebe.

Nays

Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gerrard, Goertzen, Gordon, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Khan, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamont, Lamoureux, Martin, Michaleski, Mickelfield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Schuler, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 18, Nays 35.

Madam Speaker: The motion is accordingly defeated.

* * *

* (16:10)

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Related to the second amendment on Bill 36, as this second amendment is consequential to the first amendment and the first amendment was defeated, it cannot proceed.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Could you canvass members to see if it's the will of the House to call it 5 p.m.?

Madam Speaker: Is it will of the House to call it 5 p.m.? [*Agreed*]

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

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