

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

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

Vol. LXXVII No. 35 - 1:30 p.m., Monday, April 3, 2023

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 3, 2023

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with the statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): O Eternal and Almighty God—turn the mic on.

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

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

Welcome, everybody. Please be seated.

An Honourable Member: I rise on a matter of privilege.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Union Station, on a matter of privilege.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): The Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) attempted to deliberately mislead this House. That is a clear violation of privilege, as noted by the House of Commons Procedure and Practice on page 83, and is a prima facie violation of the privileges of members of this House.

The Minister of Health said, during proceedings of this House, that the NDP paid nurses to resign from

the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program. The allegation is outrageous and the minister knows it to be false.

I am disappointed I am compelled to raise this today, but the minister refuses to apologize or take responsibility for her actions.

Specifically, the minister said, and I quote: How much did you pay the nurses to resign? End quote, in regards to the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program.

The Speaker has every ability to govern the actions of members who make statements in this Chamber during proceedings they know to be false and which would mislead this House. I cannot perform my job as an MLA when the Minister of Health is deliberately misleading Manitobans about the state of the government's failures in our health-care system.

The minister needs to be held accountable for her actions. This is the earliest opportunity to raise this matter before the House. I took the time to consult the authorities and confirm the facts I outlined, and this is the earliest opportunity that I've had to raise the issue.

As a result, I move, seconded by the MLA for St. Johns, that this House condemn the Minister of Health for deliberately misleading the Legislature and that this matter be immediately referred to a permanent standing committee of this House for investigation.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I'm having some—just getting to the correct page; just give me a moment here, folks.

Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, normally, in these situations where a member brings forward a concern about words that have been spoken in this House, the member will cite a particular reference to Hansard or, in some other circumstances, if they believe that it's been published outside of the House, they'll sometimes bring forward where it's been published outside

of the House. The member seemed to do neither of those, so I'm not entirely sure where they feel that this has taken place.

What is a clear matter of the public record, both in this House and outside of the House, is that the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) has been working diligently, like all ministers of health in Canada, to deal with a difficult situation when it comes to health human resources. She has been working to ensure that the \$200 million that this government has allocated to hire thousands of new health-care professionals is put to work and to ensure that we are able to get those health professionals within the system.

But, again, the member opposite has brought forward an allegation without any indication of where the allegations are cited or where they're rooted in.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all know that we have, in this Chamber, seen far too much heckling and that sometimes the words that are said go far beyond what should be said. And it is time that this sort of heckling becomes accountable. And that's particularly true when it has been heard not by a single person, but by multiple people, and clearly spoken.

And I believe that to be the case in this instance. I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you took this under advisement and took the time to talk with individuals who had heard this statement, that you would find that there are others who would be able to verify what was said.

It's time that—from whatever side, that there is accountability in what is said during heckling statements, and I believe that it's very important that you take this and look at it very carefully because this is a very serious matter, and the remarks which were said were clearly inappropriate, even though they may have been said in haste.

* (13:40)

But the fact is that it's time we have some accountability for what is said during heckling, even if it's not in Hansard.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A matter of privilege is a serious concern. I'm going to take this matter under advisement to consult the authorities and will return to the House with a ruling.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I wish to table written responses to questions No. 1, 2 and 3 that appeared in our Order Paper, and they are posed by the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) and fall within the Department of Justice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): I also am pleased to table a written response to question No. 7, which appeared in the Order Paper and was posed by the member for River Heights, and I'm tabling this on behalf of the Minister of Health.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro): I'm pleased to table a written response to written question No. 4 from the member for St. Boniface.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I'm pleased to table a written response to written questions No. 5 and 6 for the member from Tyndall Park, and a written response to question No. 8 for—from the member for River Heights.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay. Seeing no further—oh, the honourable Minister for Labour and Immigration.

Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I'm pleased to table the 2021-22 Manitoba Labour annual report.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Ministerial statements—and I would inform the House the required 90 minutes was provided.

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): I rise today as we recognize April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month in Manitoba.

April is a time to raise awareness on the prevalence of sexual assault, share information and foster a greater understanding of consent. It gives us a chance to reinforce our commitment to combatting this pervasive crime and acknowledge that we must do more to establish services that will provide survivors with the necessary support for healing.

Supporting further investments in resources that assist survivors with their emotional and spiritual healing is essential for survivors to positively progress in life. Funding wraparound supports that are person-centred are what survivors within our communities currently need to feel better supported.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm honoured to share our recent news that exemplifies our government's dedication to supporting sexual assault survivors. We were proud to announce the recent funding for a new sexual assault crisis response and healing program. This program will be person-centred, with support from medical staff at Klinik, Ka Ni Kanichihk and governed in collaboration with a council of knowledge keepers and survivors.

The sexual assault crisis response and healing program will offer survivors a safe space to receive medical services and trauma supports. There is no better way to reaffirm our commitment to supporting survivors than starting Sexual Assault Awareness Month with this announcement.

Sexual assault survivors deserve to feel heard, supported and have easy access to the services that will ensure that they are able to positively heal and move forward in their lives. Our government has listened and we have taken action.

I encourage everyone to take time this month to reflect on how we can continually support survivors of sexual assault and to learn about the numerous resources available within Manitoba. Survivors deserve to know that they are not alone.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Sexual assault is the only violent crime in Canada not declining.

During the month of April, governments should be prioritizing systematically the protection of citizens from sexual assault. Really, that should be the goal every day and every month. Tragically, the Stefanson government has failed Manitobans who have been sexually assaulted.

Because of this PC government's inaction, survivors are being turned away from hospitals, unable to have the crucial evidence collected because there simply aren't enough available nurses. We've learned survivors are told to not shower or clean themselves before returning—a request both inhumane and retraumatizing.

Northern Manitoba survivors are forced to fly to Winnipeg to receive care and often do not.

Nurses in the SANE program are doing everything that they can to support survivors but, recently, many were forced to resign after their cries for help were ignored by this Health Minister for months now.

Now, at the eleventh hour, the PCs are in damage control. This PC government has repeatedly broken trust for Manitobans. They've failed to provide basic, critical care and supports. And the disrespect shown by the current Health Minister towards survivors and nothing—and nurses is nothing short of outrageous.

There is no place for this failure in leadership in a governing administration.

On this Sexual Assault Awareness Month, the best thing this Health Minister can do for sexual assault survivors is resign—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired. *[interjection]* I'm told she has six more seconds.

The member can continue. My error, although that's not how I saw it, but please go ahead.

MLA Fontaine: To all survivors of sexual assault, we see you, we stand with you and we will always be there to support you.

Miigwech.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the member have leave to speak to the minister's statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: This month, Sexual Assault Awareness Month, is an opportunity to create greater awareness of the tragedies which occur every day in Manitoba as a result of sexual assaults.

In 2021, the latest year for which there's data available, there were 1,729 police-reported sexual assaults—that's about five every day. The rate of police-reported sexual assaults per 100,000 population in Manitoba was far higher than Canada as a whole. Indeed, for level 1 assaults, it was 40 per cent higher, and for level 2 and level 3 assaults, it was double the rate for all of Canada.

Madam Speaker, it is sad—indeed, it's unbelievable—that we have so much more sexual violence in our province than in the rest of Canada. This speaks to the terrible failures of NDP and PC governments over the last 24 years in reducing sexual assaults in our province.

Madam Speaker, we support the recent efforts of the government to help those who are victims of sexual assaults but wonder why it took seven years to act. We are also very concerned that while this effort will support those who've been sexually assaulted—that's important—but we also need action to reduce the number of sexual assaults in the first place.

The report on the public inquiry into the mass shootings in Nova Scotia singles out domestic violence as a precursor to problems like that. Kristina Fifield, a trauma therapist at Avalon Sexual Assault Centre in Halifax, calls for a bold, transformative approach.

We need such a bold, transformative approach in Manitoba to reduce domestic violence and sexual assaults in our province.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Harley and Brooklyn Siemens

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Today, I'm honoured to recognize Harley and Brooklyn Siemens for their contribution to the ag industry and for their—being named Manitoba's outstanding young farmers of 2023.

Harley and Brooklyn live in Rosenort, Manitoba, and are the owner-operators of Siemens Farms, which is a 95,000 and 15,000-pullet operation. This is one of the largest layer farms in Manitoba. Harley is a fourth-generation egg farmer and has operations in my riding and employs at least one of my daughters.

I have also had the opportunity of getting to know Harley over the years and I am proud to call him friend. The Manitoba outstanding young farmers award recognizes the work of young farmers between the ages of 18 and 39. And part of the process of nominees creates a presentation that showcases such things as their community involvement and their progress in the ag industry.

Harley puts in much of his time researching, touring and advocating for the egg industry. And in the last few years, he has revamped and renovated their barns at the main site to a free-run aviary system. This allows their flock to have more room to roam and gives them the space to engage in their natural behaviours.

* (13:50)

Animal welfare is an important part of the ag industry, and this is something that he is focuses on. Harley has a passion to teach consumers about where

their food comes from and he's always more than willing to answer questions. And is clearly—and it's clear by listening to him that he cares about their hens.

On top of being named Manitoba's outstanding young farmers of the year, Harley was previously honoured as part of Canada's Poultry Top 4 Under 40 program.

With the regional win of outstanding young farmers, they will now move to nationals, representing Manitoba in competitions held in Quebec this November.

Harley and Brooklyn were—are unable to be here today, but please join me in congratulating them on their win.

Adanac Apartments

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): The Adanac is an apartment building on Sargent Avenue that has been the site of multiple fires, violence, homicides, sex and drug trafficking. Outside and adjacent to this building is an illegal dumping site full of mounds of garbage that gets piled up on a near daily basis.

The Adanac used to be home to many working families, but now its residents are struggling, with many coming directly from homeless encampments and not receiving the wraparound services that they need to survive. The Adanac is a no-fly zone for government services; no home care or CFS workers will go in there. Even City emergency crews will not enter unless there are a minimum of seven uniformed and armed police officers accompanying them.

The Adanac has been the subject of two heated town halls in Notre Dame constituency, and the Winnipeg assistant fire chief, the director of fire prevention, the staff sergeant of the Winnipeg police community services and the Daniel McIntyre city councillor have all raised their concerns. This building has become a public health and safety hazard to residents and the community and needs to be investigated by the Province.

I have been inside the Adanac and have met with many tenants. Many units have no locks and there are many missing or broken windows and doors. There are folks living under stairwells seeking shelter from the cold, and the lower floor was the site of a flood of open sewage.

Many units do not have running water, sufficient heat or appliances, and all the tenants I have spoken to, they keep their stove elements on and they open their oven doors to stay warm. But, despite these

unsafe living conditions, tenants say that this is still better than being homeless.

Myself and many others, including the Daniel McIntyre city councillor and the mayor of Winnipeg in a recent city council motion on March 23, have called on this PC government to address the public health and safety concerns that have arisen here at the Adanac, and on similar properties across the city.

Notre—

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

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for the member to finish her statement?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Manitoba Women's Institute

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations): Today, I'd like to pay tribute to a rural women's group that has existed in Manitoba since 1910 and originated in Morris, Manitoba.

For more than 100 years, Manitoba's Women's Institute has committed to providing education and skills and development opportunities for women, particularly those in rural areas. They have advocated on behalf of rural families to safeguard the rural way of life and to make their community better places in which to live. MWI members are recognized in their communities and throughout the province as women who make a difference.

Manitoba Women's Institute is a member of the Associated Country Women of the World with a membership of 9 million women in 72 countries. ACWW has consultive status in the United Nations, with members serving on such UN bodies as the World Health Organization and food and agricultural organizations, UNESCO and UNICEF.

MWI currently has several resolutions before either our federal or provincial governments. A couple of their past—many successful resolutions include establishing safe houses for abused women and children in 1986 and having mandatory flashing lights on school buses.

The Women's Institute presents two \$1,000 scholarships annually to rural applicants taking a Manitoba-recognized academic or vocational course.

More recently, the members of the Women's Institute compiled a collection of stories to ensure the history of Manitoba women coping with COVID-19 and its variants is reflected in written format for generations to come. As future pandemics come and go, it is their belief that many will be wondering how to cope with required lifestyle changes that these illnesses will demand. It is their hope that the written stories will be a source of inspiration, comfort, hope and humour to those who come after us.

Thank you to the Manitoba Women's Institute for your commitment to rural women and the families and for including my story about COVID, as a politician, in your publication.

We wish you much—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Health-Care Services

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Speaker, for seven years, this PC government's cuts have made health care less accessible for Manitobans across our province. This is especially true for folks in northeast Winnipeg, who've have experienced the impact of years of PC cuts and closures first-hand.

Despite northeast Winnipeg being one of the fastest growing areas of our city, the PCs pushed ahead with their damaging plan to close the Concordia ER and cut ICU beds at our hospital. They fired nurses and allowed the wait-list for critical surgeries at the hip and knee institute to skyrocket.

They cancelled vital infrastructure projects like personal-care-home beds, the QuickCare clinics and the Concordia Health & Fitness centre. And they cut diagnostic testing and even shuttered the CancerCare clinic at Concordia, leaving vulnerable Manitobans in need of care without local access to health-care services.

Now, over two PC terms, the effects of these local cuts have cascaded through the system, compounding an already strained health-care system. Wait times in our emergency rooms are worse than ever, and more people have been forced to leave without treatment. A shortage of beds and nurses have caused the return of hallway medicine and people have lost their lives waiting for treatment.

In health care, these PC cuts have tragic consequences.

At every doorstep in this province we hear stories and the frustration from Manitobans. Every Manitoban

knows they can't trust this Stefanson government to fix the damage that they've caused.

That's why the NDP will continue to fight to make health care more accessible to Manitobans. We will listen to our front-line workers and hire more front-more health-care professionals. We'll invest in our hospitals and in our health-care facilities and start to reverse the damage—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —that's been done to our health-care system.

Enough of the PC cuts, Mr. Speaker, enough of their closures and enough of their failed—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wiebe: —promises. It's time for a health-care system that works for everyone.

Royal Manitoba Winter Fair

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): To say that last week was an exciting time in Brandon would be an understatement. I want to take this opportunity to thank all of my colleagues who trek—who made the trek to Brandon to enjoy the sights, the sounds and the food at the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair.

This amazing event has been a tradition—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Isleifson: —over the spring break period for over 115 years, and it just keeps getting better and better. Held annually, this fair is recognized as one of Canada's largest ag events, which includes an immense level of fun for the entire family.

With only two fairs in Canada to have received a royal designation from Queen Elizabeth II, the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair has garnered numerous awards from the tourist industry and has been recognized as one of the top 100 events in North America.

In addition to the reptile display and the petting zoo, visitors from across North America witnessed world-class show jumping, heavy horse competitions and even demonstrations with the WoofJocks and the birds of prey.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, over 300 commercial and agricultural exhibits were located throughout the 90-acre property, utilizing over 540,000 square feet of multi-use space, all under one roof.

While I have always enjoyed spending a few days and evenings at the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, this year was extra special for a number of reasons.

First off, I was pleased to welcome our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) to Brandon Regional Health Centre where we were able to see the ongoing work of \$110-million investment and added ICU beds and more additional medical beds.

Shortly afterwards, we were able to walk next door to the Western Manitoba Cancer Centre where evidence of ongoing construction with a \$26-million investment is also under way. I'm extremely pleased to see that our government is making investments so that my constituents get care closer to home.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to say thank you to our government for the additional investment of almost \$11 million in the Keystone Centre.

I look forward to seeing everyone at the 2024 Royal Manitoba Winter Fair.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Fatal Collision in Gilbert Plains Condolence to Families

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want to send my sincere condolences to families in the Parkland and Westman region who are grieving the loss of their children right now.

* (14:00)

Was a terrible accident which took place last week in Gilbert Plains and, sadly, as a result there are four children who are no longer walking among us. There's a fifth teenager who's currently fighting for her life in hospital today.

So, I want to send all my best wishes and sincerest messages of support to the families, to the parents, to the friends, to everybody who's been coming together to try and mourn this terrible tragedy. I don't know how much comfort words can provide at a moment like this, but I do want to say to the families, friends and everybody in the Parkland, as well as in Carberry, that the whole province is with you right now. We've got your backs, and we will be there to support you.

I do have a question on health care, but I wanted to put those words on the record.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition for bringing this forward. This is a very tragic situation that has happened to these families in Gilbert Plains, in the Parkland region of our province.

I was shocked and so devastated to hear of the tragedy last week, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and our

thoughts and condolences go out—and prayers—go out to the families of the individuals who perished. These are teenagers who lost their lives in this accident, and one, as the Leader of the Opposition referred to, continues to fight for their lives as we sit here in the Chamber.

And certainly, on behalf of all Manitobans, we extend our sincere condolences to all of the families, to the community, to the loved ones of—who lost their individuals. And our prayers go to those—to the individual who continues to fight for their lives.

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

ER Wait Times Impact on Patient Care

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, wait times at the Grace Hospital are worse last month than the month before that. And, of course, they are worse, also, than they were in 2022.

Wait times at the Victoria General: also worse than the month before, and worse than the year prior.

Patients are waiting for more than 10 hours at the Health Sciences Centre, and far too many have been waiting for days on end there.

Wait times have never been this bad in the province of Manitoba, and it's because of the cuts made by Brian Pallister and by this Premier.

Will the Premier tell the House why wait times at the Grace and the Victoria hospitals are getting worse each month and every single year that they're in office?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Once again, I'd like to put some facts on the record when it comes to our health-care investments in the province of Manitoba.

We are making record investments in health care: almost \$8 billion this year, a 9.2 per cent increase over last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But I will remind the Leader of the Opposition that back in 2015, after—15 years after the NDP promised to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million—in 2015, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Grace Hospital had the longest ER wait times in Canada.

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

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

Mr. Kinew: Wait times are worse today under this Premier than they have ever been in the history of Manitoba. I'll table the facts that the Stefanson government itself has produced which document this in vivid detail.

Now, we know the impact on patients; that means that there's people waiting in hallways. It also means that surgeries for sick children are being cancelled, simply because our hospitals can't handle the pressure that they're under these days after years of PC cuts. Thousands of Manitobans are leaving ERs without even being seen. That is the impact on patients in Manitoba today, and everyone in this province has a story about how the PC approach to health care has failed them.

Will the Premier tell the House why emergency room wait times are so much worse in Winnipeg and across Manitoba under her watch?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, while the Leader of the Opposition continues to fear monger and put false information on the record in this Chamber, we will continue to tell Manitobans the facts.

The facts are that we're investing record amounts in our health-care system in the province of Manitoba to almost \$2 billion more than the NDP ever invested in the province.

Again, I will remind the Leader of the Opposition, back in 2015, Mr. Deputy Speaker—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —that they had the longest ER wait times at the Grace Hospital in the country. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: And that wasn't after a worldwide pandemic, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We recognize there's more work to do. We'll continue to make sure we get that work done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a follow-up—on a new question.

Settlement of RCMP Collective Agreement Retroactive Costs for Manitoba Municipalities

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): This phenomenon of paying more and getting less under the PCs also extends to the impacts on municipalities, who have had to meet today's challenges with funding that has been frozen for many years.

Now, these municipalities asked for support from the Province, but first Brian Pallister and now this Premier simply told them to go away. We now know that municipalities are facing another massive increase related to policing costs. The RCMP settlement will mean higher taxes for residents in communities like Selkirk, Steinbach, Thompson and many more.

We need to hear from the Premier, who has been silent on this issue: Why has their government failed to support municipalities who are facing these huge increases in costs?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to take a question from the Leader of the Opposition.

I know that we're going to be before AMM at a debate tomorrow morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We'll be having these discussions in front of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, all of whom know the facts. And the facts are that this year alone, we gave a 28 per cent increase to municipalities. Every single municipality in the province of Manitoba got an increase.

What I will also tell Madam—what I would also tell Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that that is ongoing funding. That's baseline funding for municipalities. That's something that we listened to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, we listened to those municipalities out there.

We took action and we got the job done, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, for the entirety of Brian Pallister's time in office and for the first two years under this Premier, every single one of those municipal leaders know that their funding was frozen. And, of course, they see right through the election year gambit of this Premier.

But the question at hand is related to the increasing police costs, which are coming from the settlement. These municipalities have clearly been asking for help. The provincial government has been conspicuously silent. And now we are hearing about the impacts.

There are proposed tax hikes in communities like Selkirk, in communities—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —like Steinbach, and what we're saying is that the provincial government should be there to help.

Help ensure that communities can be kept safe, but also help to ensure that municipalities get the resources that they need to deliver services to the people of Manitoba.

Will the Premier support municipalities across the province, and will she address this issue today?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do support municipalities each and every day. That's why we just gave a 28 per cent increase to the baseline funding for municipalities right across the province of Manitoba. That's why we just—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson: —increased the capital funding for municipalities by some \$23 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the list goes on.

But when it comes to police in the province of Manitoba, we know that there's—that municipalities are struggling with respect to this issue. We have had discussions with the federal government. We've had discussions with municipalities.

What we won't do, Mr. Deputy Speaker—what we won't do—is stand for a defunding of the police, which is where members opposite stand. We will stand with police officers right across this great province of ours.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order.

* (14:10)

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this settlement has been an issue looming for municipalities for some time. We put the issue in writing to this Premier, and she's ignored it for the entirety of her time in office, just as she ignores it today.

We know that the impact of the municipal funding freeze for many years was one thing, but the inability of the Premier to engage with this policing issue substantively is a cause for great concern for people right across Manitoba; hard-working Manitobans who are paying their fair share and who want to be kept safe in their communities and who want law enforcement to be given the respect that they deserve.

Will the Premier commit to resolving the issue of back pay for law enforcement today?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition pretends to care about police

funding in the province of Manitoba when he wants to defund the police. Members opposite have talked about defunding the police.

We will take no lessons from the members opposite when it comes to funding police officers in our province, something that is very important, and we've already moved in that direction, Mr. Deputy—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Stefanson:—Speaker. That's why we increased the baseline funding for those municipalities by 28 per cent.

We respect Manitoba municipalities. We listen to Manitoba municipalities. We don't call them a bunch of howling coyotes, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Settlement of RCMP Collective Agreement Retroactive Costs for Manitoba Municipalities

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Retroactive costs for RCMP services are owed back to 2017. That represents a 23 per cent increase to policing costs that Manitoba municipalities are on the hook for. Without any additional funding, municipalities will be forced to make cuts, raise taxes or both.

The City of Selkirk *[phonetic]* has warned that back pay could cause \$101 tax hike per household, yet the PC government remains silent on this issue.

Can the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) say why she has failed to make this issue a priority?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): On several occasions, we have raised this concern over many months, with the NDP-Liberal coalition in Ottawa, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We've asked the NDP-Liberal coalition in Ottawa to take the concerns of AMM seriously, and all municipalities across Canada. We've joined with other ministers of Justice across Canada and asked them to make sure that those municipal leaders have a seat at the table, that those decisions about the RCMP which they're contracting aren't made without them. We hope that the NDP-Liberal coalition will listen.

I wonder if this NDP government is speaking to their friends in Ottawa.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, on a follow-up.

Ms. Naylor: For seven straight years, the PC government forced municipalities to make cuts just to make

it through the year. Municipalities are cash-strapped and a 23 per cent increase to their policing costs is simply unaffordable.

The federal budget gave a two-year extension to pay retroactive costs, but we want an answer now. The Province has been silent on this issue.

Can the Premier explain when her government is going to take action to ensure ratepayers aren't bearing these higher costs alone?

Mr. Goertzen: Phone calls, letters, news releases together with other ministers of Justice across Canada for several months, and now all of the sudden this NDP opposition shows up at the party late, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm not sure where they've been for the last several months—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen:—maybe even the last few years.

I do know that the members opposite have been standing beside—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen:—been standing beside the federal Leader of the NDP Jagmeet Singh. They've often said that they have a great relationship with them. Mr. Singh has said that he had a big input into this federal budget, the very same federal budget that doesn't provide the funding for municipalities to fund RCMP.

I wonder if they would now repudiate what Mr. Singh has done by supporting this federal budget, which doesn't support our municipalities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, on a final supplementary.

Ms. Naylor: Mr. Deputy Speaker, 19 municipalities in Manitoba pay their bills for policing through the Province, not the federal government, and they are looking to this government for leadership.

Without additional funding, municipalities could be forced to cover the \$45-million cost. That would force 'municipalities' such as Selkirk to raise taxes by over \$100 a year. Municipalities want to know what this government is doing today to take action.

Can the Premier explain what actions her government is taking to ensure municipalities and their ratepayers aren't left holding the bill?

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Deputy Speaker, our record is clear on asking the NDP-Liberal coalition to actually

have a seat at the table for municipalities and fund the RCMP in Manitoba and ensure that they have a say in their contract negotiations.

We've also been very clear by giving record funding to municipalities that also supports their police budgets, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is different than the Opposition House Leader who is on the record in this House saying that the police have enough money and don't need any more. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

New School Construction Use of Public/Private Model

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): The PC cuts and decision-making are hurting kids in schools and it harms kids' families and communities.

In 2017, Premier Brian Pallister said he wanted to build schools using P3s. However, the PCs backed off those plans because peace—P3 schools are more expensive and have terrible outcomes for our communities.

Instead of learning their lesson, the PCs have yet again been pushing a bad P3 model. I'll table the government's own documents, Deputy Speaker, because evidently, they've gone missing. Normally, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) loves finishing whatever Brian Pallister started.

So, I want to ask the Premier to tell this House right now why she thinks Brian Pallister got this one wrong.

Hon. James Teitsma (Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services): I think what I just heard the member for Transcona say is that he'd rather we weren't building nine new schools.

Now I know, talking to school divisions, that they definitely want us to build nine more schools. They're happy that we have a—as government, already started construction—or completed construction—on 14 schools, but nine more would sure be good.

And I should mention for the member's benefit, one of those schools is in fact in River East Transcona. Perhaps he would be able to say that he at least supports the construction of that one, if not the other eight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Transcona, on a follow-up question.

Mr. Altomare: I—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare: —must inform the member from Radisson that we don't favour a terrible model to build public schools, one that was debunked by your own—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare: —former premier.

If you read the documents—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare: —I just tabled them. And in December—let me remind them that in December of this year, the Alberta PCs cancelled their plans to build P3 schools.

And the Premier knows that P3 schools don't work because in 2018, their own government found that they cost taxpayers more and more money, and that member knows it.

So, can they tell us, finally, what the reason is for building these P3 schools?

Mr. Teitsma: Our priority as a government is ensuring that students have good schools that they can attend and that there is enough schools built in this province.

I reflect back on when we first took government after 17 years of NDP government. I can tell you that in the—certainly the last 10 years, what few schools they did build were built for political advantage for themselves, had nothing to do with the needs of students.

* (14:20)

We are interested in the needs of students, the needs of families. We're going to make sure that schools that need to be get—need to get built do get built. We've built 14 or are under way on 14. We are going to add nine more. That's what this is about.

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

Mr. Altomare: So, while they marinate in their own terrible decision making regarding this P3 schools, the ones left with a terrible taste in their mouth, Deputy Speaker, are kids, families and communities. And now they've announced that they're looking to build more—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare: —through this flawed process. This defies logic and it means more waste and terrible—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare: –outcomes for our cherished kids, families and communities.

So, can Manitobans, Deputy Speaker, finally get a coherent explanation as to why the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) is giving away millions to private corporations instead of investing in our public schools?

Mr. Teitsma: I'll just remind the member—thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker—I'll just remind that these schools will be publicly owned. They will be operated by the school divisions just the same way as all the other schools—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: –that are being built. The model that we're pursuing is the same kind of model that got some roads that I drove over this weekend built: Chief Peguis Trail, Moray Street, Disraeli overpass. What do Manitobans—when Manitobans and Winnipeggers think about those roads, what do they think? They think, man, why can't the rest of the roads in the city be this—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: –kind of quality?

That's what we're after. We're after higher quality schools, we're after more schools and we're after getting them built quickly.

Services for Victims of Sexual Assault Government Management Record

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Deputy Speaker, this Premier and her Health Minister are responsible for the state of health care in this province, and after seven years of cuts and chaos, they're out of excuses.

Our health-care system is on the brink, and perhaps nowhere is that more clear than this minister's—rather, nowhere is it more evident that this minister is incompetent in managing health care and the staffing crisis in our health-care system than at the SANE program at HSC.

If the minister believes that this is a priority, why didn't she bother to show up to their own press conference yesterday?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Acting Minister of Health): I'm very pleased that the member opposite is giving me an opportunity to remind the House of our

wonderful announcement yesterday that was supported by community and, of course, developed by community.

Our government attended an announcement at—or made an announcement at Klinik yesterday: \$1.3 million to ensure that we had a community-led, culturally appropriate sexual assault nurse response program. This one is in development with members of the community and Ka Ni Kanichihk, as well as an adviser circle and survivors' circle, because we believe that survivors need to have a say in the types of supports that will be available for them when they are receiving treatment.

So, we're very pleased with this model that will complement the existing—

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

MLA Asagwara: Deputy Speaker, the existing model is falling apart right now because of this government's failures. That program that delivers critical care to survivors is unfortunately unable to do so because nurses are leaving the program in droves due to this government's mistreatment.

Last April, this PC government issued a news release, not unlike the one they did yesterday, promising to expand services, but a year later, nothing has happened. Nurses are leaving the program and sexual assault survivors are being turned away.

Why would anyone, why should anyone, believe this Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), that Minister of Families or this Premier when they haven't lived up to their own announcements?

Ms. Squires: I was very pleased to have the endorsement and the belief from Elder Leslie Spillet, Executive Director Dodie Jordaan and the executive director at Klinik, Ayn Wilcox, among many, many others.

Yesterday we had a packed room. There were 30 members that were in the room and many more outside of the room. Members from the Winnipeg health clinic were there, members of the greater, larger Klinik community, Klinik staff and board of directors were there. Many people from the greater Ka Ni Kanichihk community were all there supporting this program because they had a—they believe in this government's approach to supporting sexual assault victims and ensuring—

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

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

MLA Asagwara: Deputy Speaker, you'll notice that the minister failed to mention whether or not the Health Minister was at yesterday's announcement, and that is because she wasn't there.

This Health Minister is happy to run away and avoid accountability, but Manitobans deserve better. They know they can't trust this PC government to do what they say and follow through—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —on their own commitments. Maybe that's why the minister didn't—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —show up for victims of sexual violence yesterday.

If the minister can't even be bothered to show up, will she resign today and let somebody else do her job?

Ms. Squires: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very disappointing but not surprising that, once again, members opposite go into the gutter. They play gutter politics when it comes to supporting sexual assault survivors.

So, while they're sitting in the gutter over there, we know, on this side of the House, we've got a program. We're supporting survivors of sexual assault. A program that we announced yesterday also had the support of Darlene Jackson, the president of the Manitoba Nurses Union.

So while, on this side of the House, we know more work needs to be done, we are committed to getting the job done and ensuring that all sexual assault survivors get the support where they need it, when they need it most, while they're staying in the gutter.

Addiction Services Act Safe Consumption Site

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): This morning, I was happy to stand alongside staff and organizations, including family members, on the front line of the addiction crisis and announce that we're delaying Bill 33.

Bill 33 creates red tape that puts life-saving harm-reduction services at risk. It's a bad bill and it's long past for the PCs to finally listen to the front-line workers who have been saying it forever: Open a safe consumption site, help save Manitoban lives and quit

thinking about your own ideology. These are Manitoban lives.

So will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) stand up today, will she admit that Bill 33 is a bad bill and will she open a safe consumption site and help save Manitoban lives?

Hon. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): Bill 33 is about safety for those dealing with mental health and addictions; safety for family members, safety for front-line workers and safety for the community at large.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm extremely disappointed NDP's decision to block legislation that will keep our most vulnerable Manitobans safe.

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

Mrs. Smith: It's unfortunate that that minister, that Premier won't listen to the front-line workers. Over 80 organizations in this province have signed on for a safe consumption site. They're all opposed to Bill 33.

Is this government listening? Do they want to help save Manitoban lives? They want to put more red tape—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —in the way of those organizations that are doing the work.

Families were at that meeting this morning—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: They also were standing up against this government. We have a nurse in the gallery today that works on the front lines. They're all opposed to Bill 33.

Will this government do the right thing? Will they abandon Bill 33—we're delaying it anyway because it's a bad bill—and will they open a safe consumption site—

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

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Our government supports individuals in pursuit of recovery.

We ensure quality of services that will be delivered, will be delivered in safe facilities by trained staff and that individuals are able to seek community pathways to ensure their recovery.

With the individuals that we spoke with—over 3,000 with backgrounds in provincial health, clinical, lived experience, we believe this bill supports what they want.

* (14:30)

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

Mrs. Smith: And, again, I'll invite that minister to go actually meet with those 80 organizations who have been telling this government that they have the ability to prevent life from being taken through addictions.

These are Manitobans, these are people who are struggling; these are people who—you know, this government talks about harm reduction, but yet they're not following through. They won't open a safe-consumption site, they won't listen to front-line workers, you know, nurses. RAAM clinic staff have even spoken out. Four people a day; there's lineups of people trying to get in and access the services to get to recovery, but this government isn't providing the services.

So, will they do the right thing? Will they open a safe consumption today and quit putting their ideology in—

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

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Our government's focus is ensuring Manitobans suffering from addictions have access to high quality treatment and services that provide a safe pathway to recovery. We have invested in RAAM clinics, treatment spaces, telepsychiatry, recovery beds, community sports, education; the list goes on.

We support Manitobans.

Request for Provincial Business Registry Criminal Activity Prevention

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Yesterday, I attended the launch of a conference to combat human trafficking and modern slavery, a growing crime that's happening right here in Manitoba.

On March 10th, as I table, The Globe and Mail published an article about sex—how sex traffickers are using shell companies to launder illicit profits in Canada—hundreds of locations across Canada, including six right here in Winnipeg. This can happen because Manitoba's provincial business registry, like that of most other provinces, is a black box.

Having a searchable registry will help expose, prosecute and deter money laundering, human trafficking and criminal tax evasion, and prevent further harm.

Will the government bring in such a registry, or are Manitoba Liberals the only ones committed to making it happen?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Along with the member for St. Boniface, I was pleased to attend the conference yesterday. I want to thank the organizers as well as the sponsors of the conference, the different presenters, the Joy Smith Foundation, I think, who is presenting today, who we are pleased to partnership—or have a partnership with on the initiatives that they're undertaking.

Also want to thank the survivors who are—spoke yesterday but are also speaking today at the conference. I know there's a lot of new ideas that are being brought forward. In addition to looking at the national declaration for zero tolerance on human trafficking, I listened to the member opposite; I listened to him today, and I'm sure we'll be looking at all the different ideas that come from this conference.

Peter Nygård Assault Allegations Criminal Charges in Manitoba Update

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): The reality of human trafficking is that it happens everywhere. International criminal organizations are able to operate using legitimate means: banks, lawyers, accountants and registered corporations across Canada, including here in Manitoba.

And as we mentioned earlier today, it's Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and as we all know, Manitoba was home to someone who stands charged of being a serial sexual predator and a human trafficker: Peter Nygård.

Last November, we spoke to a number of sister survivors of Peter Nygård, who have been trying to get justice for years. The Minister of Justice agreed to have a team from out of province consider why charges have never been laid here in Manitoba, despite allegations that are identical to similar jurisdictions elsewhere.

Can the minister update us on the progress of the Nygård review?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I cannot update him on the progress of the Nygård review because it's an independent review, and he would know full well that if I were to intervene or intercede in that review, that it would

no longer be independent. It would taint the credibility of the review.

When it comes to the issue of human trafficking, the member and I are aligned on this issue. There are significant concerns regarding the growing human trafficking, whether that's for sex, labour or organ human trafficking, both in Canada and around the world.

It's one of the reasons that I, on behalf of our government and as Minister of Justice, signed the declaration yesterday at the conference, and we're hoping that all Attorneys General, but also the federal government, moves forward with that: a national declaration for zero tolerance when it comes to human trafficking.

Addiction Treatment and Recovery Programs Long-Term Beds for Complex Cases

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the expression of interest from the Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness, the focus is on short-term 30- to 90-day treatment of addictions, with very few spaces available for women, and only five for youth, when probably 300 spaces are needed for each.

Recent evidence from Morberg House and elsewhere shows that with the most common, complex addictions, effective treatment and recovery programs usually have to be one to two years to achieve a 75 per cent success in returning an individual to a stable life where they're working.

Is the minister planning to fund shorter term programs so that she can claim to have helped more people? Is the minister willing to visit the St. Boniface Street Links to learn more about the therapeutic—

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

Hon. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): Our government has taken the advice from 3,000 individuals and put it toward our recovery roadmap, five years. We are in our second year of that and we are investing in long-term and short-term recovery programs, have put out an expression of interest for 1,000 treatment spaces and added supports for education and resources.

We are supporting addiction service providers.

Child-Care Services Ten-Dollar-a-Day Program

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$10-a-day daycare is now a reality for thousands of Manitoba families. Our government is creating more spaces, increasing wages and making life more affordable for Manitobans with children in daycare.

Can the fantastic Minister of Education—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lagassé:—elaborate on how our government is helping reduce parent fees for thousands of Manitoba families?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): I'd like to thank that fantastic member for Dawson Trail for a fantastic question, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to say that our government has delivered and gone above and beyond our commitment with the federal government to provide Manitobans with \$10-a-day-maximum daycare fees. That's infant, that's preschool, that's school-age children, all \$10 a day for a regular day of care.

And all this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, three years ahead of schedule.

South Brandon Village Development Wetland Protection Inquiry

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): Mr. Deputy Speaker, April is Earth Month, which is an opportunity to raise awareness and advocate for change around the issues most impacting our planet. In Manitoba, the biggest barrier to—we face in tackling environmental issues is this PC government.

Now, can the Environment Minister advise the House of the current status of his department's work ensuring that existing wetlands are kept intact and protected from the probe—sorry, the proposed South Brandon Village development?

Hon. Kevin E. Klein (Minister of Environment and Climate): I am proud to make sure that everyone understands, in Manitoba, the facts. And the facts are that the—our government, under this leadership, has put more attention and more effort into protecting our environment and our wetlands than any other government before us.

And I'll remind you that members opposite were the ones that, in 2014, when Lake Winnipeg was listed

as the world's most endangered fresh-water lake, did nothing.

So I ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how can Manitobans trust the—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Klein: —NDP who ignored the truth about our environment—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Klein: —who didn't listen to the facts of scientists for years and years and years? All they like to do is create fake news for Twitter and ignore the—

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

Water Rights Act—Landowner Consent

Mr. Wasyliv: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans deserve clean water, and preserving wetlands goes a long way to making that happen. This shouldn't be a partisan—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —or political issue. Yet the Environment Minister and this government, time and time again, refuses to stand up in this House—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —and commit to Manitobans that they will protect our clean water.

According to documents for the Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure, and I quote, the province has no net loss to wetlands and this development is in direct violation of The Water Rights Act.

* (14:40)

Has the Environment Minister consulted with downstream landowners, including the RM of Cornwallis, as is required under The Water Rights Act, and obtained the sign-off and consent? And I will table the document.

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

MLA Klein: Our government is committed to protecting the environment, our precious water lands. We know that they play a crucial role in fighting—fighting climate change and storing carbon from the atmosphere.

And we have made that clear by putting forward a water strategy, something that the NDP—the members

across—opposite—were not able to do, because they were too busy thinking about fake news to put out on Twitter. I would suggest that my member opposite go back to an article—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Klein: —that was written by the Winnipeg free—Winnipeg Sun, that said the former NDP government had failed dramatically at protecting the environment of Winnipeggers and Manitobans. That is their record.

Our record is clear: we are taking reasonable, reliable and focused attention to this matter.

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

Time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Health-Care Coverage

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

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

(1) Health care is a basic human right and fundamental part of responsible public health. Many people in Manitoba are not covered by provincial health care, such as migrant workers with work permits of less than one year, international students and those undocumented residents who have lost their status for a variety of reasons.

(2) Private health insurance is not a substitute for public health insurance. Private insurance plans available to most migrant workers and international students are paid for by the worker or student. They do not provide coverage for all the potential health needs covered by public health coverage. Individuals are required to pay up front for health expenses without a guarantee that they will be covered and wait weeks for reimbursement.

(3) Racialized people and communities are disproportionately affected by the pandemic, mainly due to the social and economic conditions which leave them vulnerable while performing essential work in a variety of industries in Manitoba.

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

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

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

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

We therefore petition the Legislative of Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

Provincial Road 224

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) Without repair, Provincial Road 224 will continue to pose a hazard to the many Manitobans who use it on a regular basis.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

Ekosi.

Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) Manitoba has many good bilingual programs in public schools for children and teens available in other languages, including French, Ukrainian, Ojibwe, Filipino, Cree, Hebrew and Spanish. Punjabi bilingual programs for children and teens such as Punjabi

language instruction at a college and university level could similarly teach and maintain Punjabi language and culture.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

Foot-Care Services

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

* (14:50)

(7) The implications or inadequate—or, the implications of inadequate or lack of podiatric care can lead to amputations.

(8) The city of Thompson also serves as a regional health service provider, and the need of foot care

extends beyond just those served in the capital city of the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you.

SANE Program

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

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

(1) The Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, SANE, program is run out of the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg and provides critical support to sexual assault survivors. The program also helps collect evidence for potential prosecution.

(2) Demand for the SANE program in the province is rising, with 764 sexual assault survivors receiving treatment from April 2022 to January 2023, a nearly 50 per cent increase since 2017-2018.

(3) The SANE program has only one full-time nurse and just over a dozen others who are on call to conduct sexual assault examinations in their off hours.

(4) The provincial government has failed to increase funding or hire additional staff to support the SANE program, breaking its April 2022 promise to spend \$640,000 annually and hire five additional nurses and a provincial co-ordinator.

(5) The provincial government's refusal to support the SANE program has resulted in severe staffing shortages, leading to at least 14 sexual assault survivors being sent home with the instruction to not shower or wipe themselves until they return and staff are eventually available to treat them. It has been reported that survivors often don't return, and the number of people being turned away could be significantly higher.

(6) The provincial government has compounded its failure to provide supports for victims of sexual and gender-based violence by refusing to proclaim a bill passed in 2021 that would hold the provincial government accountable for providing resources available to

child survivors of sexual assault. The bill, sponsored by the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak, is entitled: The Reporting of Supports for Child Survivors of Sexual Assault Act.

(7) The SANE program's staffing shortage is just one example of how the provincial government's cuts to Manitoba's health-care system and front-line health-care workers, including nurses, is causing Manitobans harm.

(8) Urgent action is needed to immediately fix the SANE program staffing shortage and to ensure that sexual assault survivors are supported with timely access to care.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to stop breaking its promises to Manitobans and to provide basic and respectful health care for sexual assault survivors through the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, SANE, program by ensuring it is properly staffed so that no prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence is compromised by the failure to collect evidence.

This has been signed by Melissa Durham, Danielle Carriere and Janet Kehler and many other Manitobans.

Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) Manitoba has many good bilingual programming programs in Punjabi—in public schools for children

and teens available in other languages, including French, Ukrainian, Ojibwe, Filipino, Cree, Hebrew and Spanish. Punjabi bilingual programs for children and teens as well as Punjabi language instruction at college and university levels could similarly teach and maintain Punjabi language and culture.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Harpreet Kour, Paramjit Loyal, Amandeep Kaur and many more.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Community Living disABILITY Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Currently, adults with specific or non-specific disabilities, or a combination of disabilities, such as ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, auditory or language processing disorders and/or non-verbal learning disabilities, will be denied access to services under the Province of Manitoba's community living and disability services, CLDS, if their IQ is above 80.

People with these or other borderline cognitive functioning issues also have extremely low adaptive skills and are not able to live independently without supports.

Recently, it has become widely recognized that access to CLDS should not be based solely on IQ, which is only a measure of a person's ability to answer questions verbally or in writing in relation to mathematics, science or material which is read.

Very often, persons with specific or non-specific disabilities or a combination of those disabilities have specific needs relative to their executive function for support when they are adults or are transitioning to

adulthood, which are not necessarily connected to their IQ.

Executive function is the learned ability to do the normal activities of life, including being organized, being able to plan and to carry out plans and adapt to changing conditions.

Those who have major defects in executive function have a learning disability requiring assistance under CLDS to be able to make a contribution to society and be self-sustaining.

Provision of CLDS services to individuals with specific or non-specific disabilities or a combination of those disabilities or executive function disability, would free them from being dependent on Employment and Income Assistance and have the potential to make an important change in the person's life.

Newfoundland and Labrador have now recognized that access to services should be based on the nature of the disability and the person's needs, rather than on IQ.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to change the requirements for accessing community living and disability services so that these requirements are based on the needs of individuals with specific or non-specific disabilities, including executive function or a combination of disabilities, rather than solely on the basis of their IQ.

Signed by Francine Margolese, Hannah Margolese, Don Hiebert and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any further petitions?

The honourable opposition—my apologies. Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Opposition House Leader, on House business.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Deputy Speaker, on House business, I would like to table a list of one bill designated by the official opposition for this Fifth Session of the 42nd Legislature.

* (15:00)

The one designated bill for this session is Bill 33, The Addiction Services Act.

* * *

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Can you please call for debate this afternoon and for all of its stages, including royal assent, bill number—all of its remaining stages, bill number—[interjection]—concurrence and third reading—resumption of debate on concurrence and third reading and royal assent of Bill 14, the budget implementation tax statutes amendment act.

DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 14—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As it has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader, we will now resume debate on concurrence and third reading, anticipating royal assent, on Bill 14, the budget implementation and tax statutes amendment act.

The debate is in the name of the honourable member for St. James, who has 29 minutes remaining.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): After years—years and years—of cuts to every department across government, this government recently brought forward a budget that included a lot of big promises to Manitobans. And among those promises, they also brought forward, of course, this bill that we're here to debate today.

Those changes that are being proposed to our tax system in this bill are being billed as affordability relief for Manitobans right now.

And we do know, of course, that Manitobans are in desperate need of support, especially lower and middle-income Manitobans. Their need for support has never been greater, because affordability challenges have not been this great in this province for an incredibly long time. We know that they're facing huge increases in food costs, fuel costs, inflation across the board and, of course, the various cost increases that they've been forced to endure as a result of decisions from this PC government.

Relating to this bill, we know that any time tax changes are brought forward by the PCs, that we do need to look at the details very closely. It is good that we have more time today here in debate to look at this bill again and to raise some concerns. And there are some serious concerns with this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And looking forward again today to having a chance to speak a bit about some of those issues that

should be raised and that we know Manitobans want to ensure are raised here in this House.

So, there are some serious fairness concerns about the way that these proposed changes will distribute the income, and I think there are some very serious concerns about fiscal responsibility—the fiscal responsibility of this government and the decisions they are making that need to be raised in the context of this bill, and I'm looking forward to this debate.

As I had a chance to state during the second reading debate, this debate is incredibly consequential, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And it's consequential because the impacts of the changes being proposed with this BITSA bill will have deep and long lasting impacts on this province's ability to generate revenue.

So this debate—this bill—discussion around this bill is incredibly important, and it is important that we have an opportunity to dig in to some of these fairness questions that I identified.

You know, the—in the context of our current situation, where our health-care system is in a state of crisis because of years and years of cuts from the PCs and, of course, departments across government have faced cuts for many years, there are a lot of questions about the general wisdom about some of the decisions that we're seeing from this government and, in particular, from the disproportionate benefits that this tax cut will provide to the very wealthiest people in this province. And so there are very important questions we need to be asking about the wisdom of this spend right now.

And, of course, asking about the impacts of this particular tax bill needs to be also—the impacts need to be considered in the broader context of the impacts of their changes to education property taxes, which will amount this year, if they follow through on their commitment—which we know with the PCs is always in question—but if they do, it will amount to another \$500-million spend. So, a billion-dollar tax cut spend. We know, on the education and property tax side, disproportionately that benefits people like Brian Pallister, who will get \$7,000 cheques, while average Manitobans will get \$500 cheques.

And then we can see—as we'll dig into here in a minute—that these proposed changes in this BITSA bill will also have disproportionate benefits going to the very wealthiest people in this province. And there are important questions that every member in this House needs to be asking about the wisdom of doing that right now.

I do want to start just by focusing in on the proposed changes to the basic personal allowance, and again, to the brackets. We know that the basic personal allowance increase would take place this year—this June—and the tax bracket changes would happen next year in 2024.

There are some very important questions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that need to be asked about the fairness of the distribution of these benefits, which we have raised in this House.

We raised them during second reading. We've raised them outside the House. And we've seen civil society in Manitoba raise some very important questions about the impacts of these proposed changes and how they will unfairly distribute benefits from these changes to Manitobans at different income levels.

Now, we did introduce this again during second reading and I had a chance to discuss this a bit with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen) during our brief time together in Estimates recently. But that was the analysis that was done by the CCPA on the impacts of this tax bill.

Now, during Estimates, we did raise this analysis again, which was done by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, which are a very reputable organization that do important work looking at budgets, doing analysis. And we did introduce this analysis into the House, into Estimates, which provides very important insight, Mr. Deputy Speaker, into the impacts of this change.

And right off the top, what jumps off the page when we look at this analysis—and again, every member across the way needs to be mindful of this and should have this top of mind when they—we think about what they're proposing here.

This tax bill will result in disproportionate—wildly disproportionate benefits going to the very wealthiest people in this province.

A grand total, according to this analysis, of 26 per cent in—26 per cent of all of the benefits will go to the top 10 per cent, to the very wealthiest people in Manitoba.

And the bottom 20 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The bottom 20 per cent stand to receive 2 per cent. Two per cent of all the tax benefits will go to the bottom 20 per cent of Manitobans. So the top 10 per cent, 26 per cent of all tax benefits; bottom 20 per cent, 2 per cent.

I don't think it takes, you know, an economist to see that there's a—some serious fairness concerns here,

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that bear repeating over and over again. That's a serious concern.

And, of course, we know with the PCs that any time they make any kind of decision, we always know that we have to watch because they will always seek to have the greatest benefit, the highest benefits go towards their friends in the ultra-wealthy class here in the province, people like Brian Pallister.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

They're not looking out for middle-income Manitobans. They're certainly not looking out for lower income Manitobans.

We can look at this distribution through another lens, not just comparing what the ultra-wealthy will get compared to lowest income Manitobans. We can also compare, very importantly, to what middle-income Manitobans will receive.

Middle-income Manitobans, according to these changes, will get approximately \$500 in benefits a year. So, broken down per month: 40 bucks a month extra benefits as a result of these changes.

The wealthiest people in Manitoba stand to get three times what middle-income Manitobans will benefit from these changes. So, again, it's not just lower income Manitobans that are getting the short end of the stick from this. They're seeing \$130 million go to the very wealthiest people and they're getting nothing.

It's also the case that middle-income Manitobans, regular Manitobans, who are going out—day in, day out—working regular jobs, hard-working Manitobans, stand to get a third of the benefits that their friends in the ultra-wealthy class will receive.

That's a concern, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That's a serious concern, and it's a concern for a number of reasons I'm looking forward to dig into here today.

Of course, it's also—bears repeating that there's no cap on the proposed changes. So you can be a multi-multi-millionaire in this province and still benefit in a big way from these changes. That's a serious concern for a lot of people in this province.

This tax cut is a concern because that significant benefit, that 26 per cent of all the benefits that are going to the very wealthiest people in this province, that \$130-million spend is coming at a very difficult time, at a time where we have record expenditures and things on the horizon that we'll need to pay for.

* (15:10)

And that proposal of this—these changes that will disproportionately benefit the wealthiest Manitobans could be viewed as a poison pill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And the reason is, is because in order for families to get that little bit of relief that they'll be provided with these changes, we are risking long-term financial impacts here in Manitoba as a result. Manitobans need to be continue—they need to continue to be willing to accept cuts on an ongoing basis from this government. That's the possible risk of accepting this.

And it has to be recognized that, by removing taxation from the very wealthiest people in this province, that that has to be made up somewhere. That has to be made up somewhere, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And we know with this government that they, of course, intend on having that be made up by everyday Manitobans, by that middle-income Manitoban, by lower income Manitobans.

Because the money to pay for services has to come from somewhere and, under this government, it tends to come—more often than not—off the backs of low-income Manitobans and middle-income Manitobans, instead of those that are in that ultra-wealthy category that are mostly willing to pay their share.

The other change in this bill that we've mentioned again already in second debate, but I think it's worth speaking to, are the proposed changes to the health and post-secondary levy. We know that this does increase from \$2 million to \$2.25 million, that exemption threshold—if you have a, you know, 30 or 40 employees, this change may benefit you and your business.

Unfortunately, this change provides no benefits to small businesses in Manitoba, who have taken on more debt than they've ever had, whose sales have been hammered as a result of COVID and continue to be—especially if you look at the impacts on restaurants and other service businesses. Their sales have been hammered.

They're struggling; they're struggling to get by. And I know that my colleagues—and I'm sure that members across hear this all the time from small businesses in their communities that are struggling: Why aren't we getting any support? Why are you helping big businesses instead of looking at us, the mom-and-pop shops or the small, five-, ten-person operations through their communities that are getting nothing as a result to that?

And I can say I spoke with the Canadian Federation of Independent Business just last week, and they said the same thing. They recognize that this has nothing—there's no supports here for small businesses in Manitoba.

So the question is why aren't—why isn't this government helping them? Why aren't they concerned about small businesses?

And I think the reason is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because we know this government isn't on the side of small businesses. They're not concerned about the well-being of small businesses in this province. That was proven out by the fact that small businesses were completely ignored with this bill. It was also proven out throughout COVID.

And I'm hearing the—one of the ministers across the way there chirping about his disbelief that, somehow, small businesses may not be aligned with the interests of the PCs, but small businesses knew that. They experienced that throughout COVID. They had almost no supports from this government. And, as a result, we had a huge number of small businesses that were forced to close their doors because this government let that happen.

So, they can sit there and pretend as though they're the champions of small businesses. Small businesses in this province know better, because they didn't see any support throughout COVID. It caused a huge amount of economic scarring. We lost a lot of jobs in this province because this government failed to support them.

Another important thing here that we need to touch on, and that really bears repeating, is the concerns around the fiscal responsibility of bringing this bill forward right now, and the fact that it spends a significant amount of money giving huge tax breaks to the ultra-wealthy in Manitoba. You know, we're looking at a grand total of about a \$490-million tax spend here. And there are very real questions that we need to be asking—that members in this House need to be asking about, first of all, the wisdom of making these expenditures in a deficit situation.

So, it's been written about in our local media, of course; members on this side of the House have certainly pointed this out, but we know, again, that this tax cut that they're offering is being offered during a deficit. So we will be deficit financing these tax cuts, which will ultimately add to our overall costs of operating this province. It will add to our debt burden.

So, there are very serious questions to be asked about why they've proposed tax changes that are a—that offer a \$130-million giveaway to the ultra-wealthy in Manitoba when we're in this kind of a scenario, when—and to do that from a deficit position is questionable, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We also—you know, as a result of that, we've seen RBC and other credit-rating agencies express deep concern with the fiscal wisdom of what this government is proposing here. Again, I know this government likes to, you know, they like to suggest that previous NDP governments were fiscally, somehow, irresponsible. However, they don't like to look in the mirror and ask themselves about the impacts of what's being proposed here.

There's also the very obvious question to be asked about the wisdom of doing this when we're in a time-limited period of getting bigger federal transfers than we've ever received before. I think that's a question that is a real sleeper question that we haven't heard, certainly haven't heard any of the members across want to address head-on. It's probably because they may share these concerns with us here on this side of the House—we'll see if they do express these concerns—but it's this question about making this kind of a spend in a period where we are in receipt of potentially temporary bonanza revenues.

So we've got this huge \$550-million, one-year boost in equalization from the feds. Next year, another province could join the equalization scheme in this country. We could see Ontario joining again. Ontario joined and became a recipient of equalization payments some time ago. When that happened, that changes the formula that could significantly reduce the overall revenues that we're in receipt of. What happens if that occurs, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Add to that the consideration that we're currently in receipt of record own-source revenues from inflation. Inflation, of course, has a perverse impact of also drastically increasing government revenues. So we've been collecting off the backs of Manitobans—increased revenues as a function of the pain that they're experiencing. That inflation could, at some point, hopefully subside and start to slow the growth of those own-source revenues.

And then, of course, a bonanza year with Hydro, a one-year \$550-million bonanza. It's likely that we won't see record water years like that, and it's very possible we will see a year where we'll have a low-water year sometime in the near future. That happens. That's what happens when you operate a hydroelectric system.

Those are very real concerns about temporary forms of revenue that could create a risk of a structural deficit in this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a situation where we simply do not have the revenues we need to cover our costs. And it doesn't appear as

though this government, this Finance Minister, this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) or any of these members across the way have really accounted for that. And I think that really brings into question the degree of financial responsibility that this government exhibits. That's a very real question.

We know that folks in this province are in very real need of help, and this proposes one approach to doing that. But, of course, we know that it proposes an approach to doing that seven months out from an election. And we know that when it comes to this government they can't be trusted. We know that they do things not to benefit Manitobans but to benefit their own electoral chances; that's obvious by the fact that, again, they're bringing something forward seven months out from an election instead of taking action years ago.

They have had years and years to take action on affordability, to show Manitobans that they really care about the very real challenges that they face on a day-to-day, month-to-month basis. And they haven't done that.

And I think it's worth pointing out again and putting on the record—and I know across the way they do not like it when we say this because this really gets at the heart of what they're doing to Manitobans—but let's start with renters. They raised taxes on renters by \$175 last year, and this year they've locked it in. How on earth can they consider that to be a good idea, a great plan for making life better for Manitobans? We know that renters are seniors, people on fixed incomes, people with disabilities, some of the people in this province that are facing the greatest challenges, that are feeling those affordability challenges more than anyone else. This government, what do they do? They raise their taxes by \$175, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is shameful.

And I hear that when I speak with folks in the community, and they—you know, a lot of folks don't tune in; they don't have the ability to see exactly what happens at the end of the day. They don't understand. They're not aware of that change. And when they do become aware, they're shocked. Why us? Why are they looking to raise our costs? We're struggling. That's what this government would hear if they actually spoke to people on the ground, they spoke to real Manitobans, they'd know that is a terrible idea. They've made life more expensive for renters by raising taxes on them.

They also, of course, continue to make life more expensive—expensive for renters by failing to take care

of our out-of-control, above-guideline rent increase problem. That's a very real issue. They've ignored that. Rents go up by 20, 25, 30 per cent. We're seeing rents go up higher than that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (15:20)

Those rents continue to skyrocket on regular Manitobans and they're doing nothing about it. The costs of housing are one of the biggest costs that Manitobans face. This government isn't connected to them and they do not show any concern.

Post-secondary costs. Again, they're pretending to care about the real costs that Manitobans face. What have they done? They've jacked up the cost of tuition for Manitoban students. So we're not only raising costs on seniors, people with disabilities who are forced to rely on rental housing to have a roof over their heads, they're also making life harder and more expensive for people at the beginning of their journey in Manitoba. Students who want to go, get ahead, get a post-secondary education, develop themselves, make the best that they possibly can with their lives, what are they facing with this government? Huge increases in their tuition, making life more expensive.

Hydro rate increases. Again, the day to day, the month-to-month costs that families face in this province. One of the biggest costs we face—energy costs. What did this government do? They introduced legislation that, for the first time in this province's history, raised hydro rates on Manitobans through legislation.

Instead of bringing forward a bill that sought to freeze hydro rates, or sought to lower hydro rates, they focused on making legislation that figured out how they could raise rates as fast as possible. That's their focus. It's not on making life more affordable; it's on figuring out legislative strategies for raising their energy costs on Manitobans.

That bill is shameful. It still is shameful, especially not only because it raised rates on Manitobans, also because it sought to kneecap the Public Utilities Board and take away our advocate as Manitobans to ensure energy rates stayed as low as possible.

MPI interference—MPI interference in Manitoba. We've seen now this Project Nova. We were asking about this last week in question period. The cost's now set to balloon to \$300 million.

We know that this government interfered in that project, in that development process, so that they could insert IBAM into that process. We saw them do that and, as a result, now, mysteriously, here we are.

We're at a point now where that project is off the rails after this government interfered. And now we're looking at a \$300 million total project cost.

And where are those additional costs going to be paid from? From our charges, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the insurance we pay. Our costs for insurance are going up and up and up because of this government's interference and because of their incompetence. Costs continue to go up under the PCs.

So, again, more and more examples of how they've made life more expensive. More examples of why they clearly are not concerned about the real affordability challenges that Manitobans are facing in this province.

All to say this government has had an incredibly long time to act to prove that they care about affordability challenges in Manitoba, but they do not care. They've shown that over and over again. I listed a bunch of examples showing why they don't care and how they don't care. They do not have concern. And bringing forward these tax changes seven months from an election is not going to do much in the way of proving to Manitobans that they care about their interests.

In fact, this proposal and the budget that they brought forward is more or less an admission of guilt. It's an admission of guilt that they failed for the last seven years, that they failed to fund departments, health care, education, as they should have, and that they failed to respond to our affordability crisis.

They failed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They failed to take action. Manitobans deserve better. They deserve a government that cares about them. They deserve a government that they can trust, that they can believe in, that they know will take actions that matter to them. They cannot have trust in this government. They know they're not connected to their concerns.

On this side of the House, we're going to keep fighting every single day to improve affordability for Manitobans.

Thank you very much.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): As always, it's always an absolute honour to be standing here as the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak and to provide my rebuttal in this debate regarding Bill 14, the budget implementation and tax statutes amendment act.

Now, with the budget, it was quite concerning to hear lack of vision, lack of respect—no respect, I should say, for northern Manitobans.

I receive many calls from my constituents and currently, the most recent—the most calls that I'm getting right now is Manitoba Housing. Currently, within the budget, there was no real commitment to provide housing for our most vulnerable Manitobans, such as, you know, Manitoba Housing could help assist a family reunite. You know, a lot of our mothers cannot get their children back because of lack of housing.

And right now, I'm dealing with a lot of—what would you say—Manitoba Housing can be identified as a slumlord landlord, if you will, because we are dealing with a lot of housing units with water that you'd even—you wouldn't even touch yourself. We're dealing with units with—some of them—lack of plumbing and deteriorating. And we have people living within these units and sending me pictures of water damaging their washing appliance, water damaging their clothes, even to the point where they've got to start boiling their own water; and this is within The Pas and OCN, right? And I think there's only maybe five First Nations that have water boil 'adveries'—advisories.

And so now it's getting to the point where these housing units need to be paid attention to and, like, I can't imagine if your grandchild was going to be having to worry about water, clothes being cleaned, even just to use the washroom. And so that's the current thing that's going on right now that my office is currently seeing.

And, of course, you can't forget about northern health, or should say lack of health.

An Honourable Member: What's that?

Ms. Lathlin: Yes, no kidding. Like, even myself, many of us have to travel out of our community in order to access health-care services. And right now, what's on the need, I keep on repeating, is eye health.

As you know, there's many, many, many Indigenous people—we're the highest population in northern Manitoba. Last time I did the stats, we were at 76 per cent and so that's why I don't understand why there's lack of investment in health care, especially for Indigenous people who have type 2 diabetes, such as myself. Like, it's absolutely astonishing that the foot-care clinic in Thompson is not even up and running.

And like I've shared many, many times within this House, Opaskwayak Cree Nation has the highest rate for amputations, when it comes to being diabetics. And the more and more I see our patients in wheel-chairs with a foot or a leg amputated, they're young

people, and guess where I see them mostly, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker? I mostly see them at the airport, right? When I'm flying back and forth I see a lot of our folks sitting in wheelchairs going to make their appointments. And thank goodness that Calm Air has a Sunday flight now.

An Honourable Member: Finally.

Ms. Lathlin: Finally, yes.

Do they arrive on time or all the time? We still have to figure that out but you know how crucial that Sunday flight is? That means if somebody from northern Manitoba has an appointment on Monday, they no longer have to fly out Friday, come up with money for hotel, gas, food, you know, for Saturday and Sunday, to see their doctor on Monday morning.

Isn't that a good thing? You know, therefore, you know, if one has an appointment on Monday, I could tell you for sure, you know, including in my own family, people would cancel. They'll get frustrated and go, ah, forget it.

So, these lack of services close to home are pretty much killing our people. And that's very true because I've received a lot of calls, too, from our constituents and—not receiving health care on time.

* (15:30)

The MLA for Flin Flon and I had to help out a constituent who was basically thrown in a plane after the PCs privatized that vital, vital life-saving service. A constituent was thrown in a plane that looked like a flipping janitor's closet. Do you remember that?

And it was cold and this poor woman had to fly in this thing and, in addition, land in Winnipeg and, you know, wait for hours and hours in the hallway at a hospital here, Health Sciences Centre.

And I can tell you, too, before these flights were privatized, I've been medevac'd out twice in a plane that was specifically built for these life-saving services. I even had a nurse with me who was specifically trained to be on those planes for life-saving services. And I got great care on that plane. I was glad I had my nurse there, Lena Thorne. I'm still her friend today.

But these are no longer—in that case, I remember, soon as these services were privatized, a constituent of mine called me to tell me that his brother had died waiting for a Lifeflight. And the doctor that was with the patient couldn't even believe, after many, many years of practising medicine in The Pas, couldn't believe, for the first time in his career, couldn't even

get a plane to pick up this young man who had suffered a heart attack.

And, you know, if that happened to your family, you'd be fuming. You know, you wouldn't be—the members opposite wouldn't be saying, you know, you had 17 years, you had 17 years. This is now. These services have to be fixed. Like, I—you—it's unbelievable how much stress it is when you got to make decisions: my health care or should I just stay because I don't have money, I don't have a vehicle, because leaving Norway House or The Pas to go to Winnipeg for a medical can be stressful.

You know what they do to save up money or to—just to go to a medical appointment? We have little mini-fundraisers, you know, in order to meet the needs for a hotel, gas and food. What does that tell you about us northern Manitobans? You know, we're not even considered important enough to have money invested our way to health-care services.

Now, I want to bring up something, too, that was—been brought to my attention. When I was back home for constituency week, spring break, I had a lunch—a breakfast meeting, I should say, with the UCN president, Mr. Doug Lauvstad. And, of course, I asked him, how was UCN doing? And he was quite upset that UCN only got a 2 per cent increase in their budget.

An Honourable Member: And Helga Bryant.

Ms. Lathlin: Yes. And so, basically, to me, we're getting crumbs of the crumbs. UCN is a very important 'educasin'—education facility in northern Manitoba. It's quite an honour to know that my late father was very instrumental that would happen. And it's quite an honour when I walk into the school—the university, I should say, to see the Oscar Lathlin Research Library.

Now, what's really disappointing is the only 2 per cent increase that's—well, what we say back home is ever cheap. You know what I mean? You have this Look North strategy office sitting in Otineka Mall in Opaskwayak Cree Nation. I swear to goodness, I still have to see a live body or the doors unlocked when I go into Otineka Mall in my own home community. So to me, that's just window dressing.

So, to me, okay, so you have this Look North strategy office, okay, and only 2 per cent increase for funding for UCN. It doesn't match. You know, it says here—let's see—the Look North strategy is a movement by northerners, for northerners to grow the economy in northern Manitoba. It is a long-term vision and plan

to unleash the economic potential of the North for generations to come.

Now, how can you unlock—unleash the economic potential of our people when you're only giving us 2.2 per cent increase in our education and training hub of the North?

And also, too, you know, the top priorities identified in this Look North strategy is, okay, we're here. Top priorities identified in this so-called strategy: northern mineral and other resource potential, Indigenous engagement and partnerships, strategic infrastructure investment, housing challenges and opportunities, enterprise ecosystem of support, education training and workforce development. Okay.

So, it's really important to know here that a lot of these action items from this report have not been actioned on by this government. So, again, I need a clear explanation. Why do we have this office renting space from Otineka Mall, when this so-called strategy is not being implemented at all, because the—it's evident by not increasing training and education opportunities for northern Manitobans at University College of the North in two of our regional—two of our campuses and all of our regional offices, right? So I still can't grasp that.

Another thing I want to bring up is community safety. Currently in The Pas, boy, we've had many, many violent assaults and murders, and they're all gang-related and all drug-related. People are crying for addictions support, but the PCs are hiding behind their ideology instead of doing the right thing: proof, evidence. It's really sad in my community that a lot of our young people are getting killed or killing each other; gang-related, drugs. And they're all young people. How did their life end up that way?

You know, we had a First Nations officer—First Nations police officer in OCN, yell at a mother: It's your parenting, that's why your child is into drugs and gang. As if—do you know how insulted you would be if—officer went into your home and pleaded for help for addictions for their child, who's only 15. Gangs—15. How would you feel if this First Nations policing officer said, it's your fault, it's the parenting? Very insulting.

Where do we go from there? So that's why I'm really interested in—to see this so-called gang-prevention strategy. How is that going to work in my community? How are we going to tell our children, we love you, you have potential, you can be a decent human being to others, you don't have to go this way.

This is making me feel—but this is what I'm seeing in my community. It's dangerous now. And—a lot of our folks, it's quite disturbing, you know. The Pas, Manitoba, and OCN, you know, like, an elder's house was shot up at a couple months ago, gang-related again.

* (15:40)

And all I want is for these young people to know that they're loved, there's help, but we just need to get that message out to them somehow, and know that they don't have to go on that path, which is not going anywhere.

And, the reason why I say this because, again, I'm talking about the airport. I meet with a lot of our constituents, and I'm sure the MLA for Flin Flon can agree with me—meet and sit and talk—*[interjection]*

Okay, so, anyways, with BITSA, what I'm trying to get at here is gang-related, okay? BITSA. You know what I seen at the airport? Four Indigenous youth chained up at the feet—and here—and all I could do was just look at them with this—*Cree spoken. Translation unavailable*—which is a Cree word: I feel sorry for you. Like, I was looking at them like I was their aunt, you know, wishing their life could have went differently.

So, with this budget, I just don't understand, how is this going to be helped? How is this going to be implemented? How am I not going to see nothing but Indigenous youth being in chains from The Pas to Winnipeg, you know, to the Remand Centre? You know, that's really heartbreaking. I think more investments should go into schools, you know. And, really, the birthplace of gangs, I say, is once a child is apprehended by CFS. And once that happens, that sense of belonging is there and needed, and that's how this problem evolves.

And what I wanted to talk about, as well, is, in northern Manitoba, we have to talk about Northern Patient Transportation Program. Again, nothing in the budget to increase that. I remember the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) had mentioned there was a little blip in an increase, but my question still stands: why is it still so bad?

And I just believe that this budget can pay more respect and more attention to northern Manitobans. Because the people that I talk to are in agreement with me that this government does not care. It's like they have blinders on like this and don't see what's going around, but I see it. The MLA for Flin Flon sees it. We live it.

And one thing I wanted to say, too, as well, is that living in northern Manitoba, you get used to being part of a have-not community, and that's in terms of education, health, infrastructure, just—even just giving—our roads paved—I mean, our roads cleared in the winter, as well, because people have got to understand—and I know these folks won't understand across—is that those highways are vital arteries into our health-care system.

So, there are many, many things that have to be fixed, you know, in all—on all aspects in orderly to have our lives improved. You know, I want my daughters to have the same services and privileges, you know, that our folks here in the city have. And I think that's what everyone here wants, as well.

But I just don't understand this PC government, you know, especially with the—with this bill of theirs, for a licence for a safe consumption site. What I see there is that it's just—it's fear.

Have they seen—have they even visited that site? Can something like that be done in northern Manitoba? Because the executive director for The Pas Friendship Centre has told me that fentanyl is, indeed, in The Pas, and there's no services there. Our homeless, believe it or not, the people there, manage to get their hands on it. Violent acts because of that drug, the aftermath, happen right by The Pas Friendship Centre where people go in and out to access services, right? So where are our addictions services there? Where are our mental health services there?

So, with that on record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just—I could go on and on and on about things that we need in northern Manitoba, and, like I said, you know, my late dad had taught me a lot in fighting for northern Manitoba, and that's something I want to carry on. I've been in this job for eight years—

An Honourable Member: Great job.

Ms. Lathlin: Thank you.

And I want to continue this fight because—*[interjection]*—yes, and I will work hard to stay in here. And yes, you need to walk a mile in my moccasins in order to understand what's going on where I am from, in my own backyard.

And, again, I just want to thank my constituents for believing me and trusting me and putting me here. And still, to this day, I still have to pinch myself when I'm walking up the steps of this Legislative Building to come to work. I used to walk up the steps of this Legislative Building to come bum some money from my dad or a free lunch, you know, so I still have to

pinch myself that I'm walking up here as the MLA. Now I have my daughter coming here now, third generation, asking for money; or, Mom, take me out for lunch.

So, yes, again, I just want to say it's an absolute privilege to be sitting here with all you folks, even the folks across, and you, too, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, that's all I want to say. Let's end this on a positive note. Respect each other and love each other.

Ekosi.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Before I address—or, sorry, authorize the next member to speak, I would just like to remind everybody if they could please, respectfully, keep their comments to the bill at hand. We are debating Bill 14, the budget implementation and tax statute amendment act.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I speak to this bill at third reading, and I will cover a number of areas. Each of these deals with areas of expenditure, or lack of expenditure, by the government and thus are directly relevant to this particular bill.

I want to begin by just extending condolences to the families and friends of those who perished in the car accident near Gilbert Plains. This was a very tragic accident and four young people died. One young woman has survived and we hope that you will recover fully in due course.

It is—very sad situation and it is important that we not only extend condolences but that we look at what's happened and see what can be done to prevent such accidents in the future.

I want next to talk to funding for addictions. We had some announcement recently of 1,000 treatment spaces, and the question is not just how many, but what is the quality. And when we're talking about spending money, as we are in this bill, we want to make sure that every dollar is spent wisely and effectively.

* (15:50)

And what's happening at the moment is that we have now, increasingly, a situation where we have people with not just one form of addiction, but people are exposed into taking multiple substances, and so the treatment of addictions has become much more complicated than it used to be.

We've also learned about the traditional approach to even conditions which are not so complex. Alcohol addiction has clearly been one of the areas of long,

long-time concern, but we're now into a situation with much more complex drug—as well as alcohol abuse—situations.

But even with alcohol abuse, we've got a situation where the experience over quite a number of years suggests that if you're going to be successful, it's not just a matter of somebody having a 30-day treatment program and that's it.

The success rate is not very good unless you follow this up with things like supportive housing, unless you follow this up by trying to make sure the individual who has an addiction to alcohol isn't right back in the situation with the same immediate friends and the same immediate people who in this case drink alcohol, so that it's much more difficult to stay sober if you have that sort of a situation.

So, we need not just short-term, but we need longer term supports and efforts to make sure that people are not just free of the addiction but, in fact, are stable in that circumstance and are able to work and to be productive citizens.

Let us consider for a moment that the relative cost—because we're talking about a bill, which deals with the cost and the expenses of government—the relative cost of treating somebody with an addiction and having them come out of that to the point where they are stable and they are no longer abusing the substance or substances, and that they are working.

In that sort of a situation, in that sort of recovery, you have an individual who is working, who is productive, contributing to society in one way or another through their work, but also paying taxes. So there is a big, positive benefit from that in terms of taxes and contributions being made.

Mr. Andrew Mickelfield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And contrast that with somebody who is not effectively treated for an addiction, substance abuse issue, and the result is that that individual has very often multiple hospital emergency room visits, has very often—you know, contributing to problems in society, including crime. The cost of that individual who is, in essence, a cost to the government and a cost to society because they very often end up on social assistance or being homeless.

So, whenever we can treat somebody effectively and consider the dollars we are spending as a government and the dollars we are saving and bringing in through revenue, then we need to make sure that we are providing the kind of quality service which is

going to make that difference in the life of the individual who has the addiction or the substance abuse problem.

And the experience at Morberg House, Two Ten Recovery and many places and jurisdictions currently is that very often you need much longer periods. In fact, at Morberg House and St. Boniface Street Links, they now routinely have people in a two-year program.

And that two-year program is time-consuming, but it provides a major help, it makes a major difference and the rate at which people are able to have a stable life and to be contributing and working and paying taxes is 75 per cent: three quarters of people. That's a pretty good success rate when you consider the kinds of addictions problems that we're dealing with, which are very often very difficult to treat, often become like a chronic disease.

So we should be spending the dollars in order to make sure that people have the opportunity to get through their addiction, to come out the other side and to be able to be productive and working.

The—another area where the government is spending—and, again, this is covered under BITSA—is in the area of helping people who've been victims of sexual assaults. But if you look at how we compare to other jurisdictions in Canada, you take our record of the incidence of and the prevalence of sexual assaults in Manitoba, it's much, much higher than in the rest of Canada.

And so we clearly need to have a major effort to prevent sexual assault, to prevent intimate partner violence and domestic violence. And, as has been pointed out, that this needs an approach which is transformative, because what we've been doing in Manitoba under consecutive NDP and PC governments has not been effective. It has not worked. We need to be doing things in a way that's going to be much more effective in reducing sexual assaults and sexual assault rates in Manitoba.

I also want to talk about the effective use of dollars. We saw an example fairly recently of two individuals who were at Morberg House, one of whom was Indigenous and one of whom was not, and they had very similar stories.

But the individual who was Indigenous was given a several-year sentence, incarcerated, and the individual who was not Indigenous—with a very similar problem and 'severy'—'siveral' similar circumstances—was allowed to serve his sentence in the community. This

differentiation, which is from an Indigenous person who was treated much more severely than the non-Indigenous person, we need to end this kind of discrimination. We need to make sure that we are fair to people who are Indigenous and not treating them more severely.

Because, as was pointed out in the stories about this particular situation, this was an individual who was turning his life around, but still in a very delicate state. But when an individual like this can be helped, we should be able to give them a chance, and we should not differentiate between an Indigenous person and a non-Indigenous person by giving the Indigenous person a more severe sentence and more severe hardship.

Indeed, in many circumstances with Indigenous people, they should be treated according to the Gladue approach, and their background needs to be considered in decisions that are made.

There—we have talked about, or I have talked about, sexual assaults and intimate partner violence and the costs associated with this.

* (16:00)

But I am finding that there is an area of big concern, where people are being stigmatized when they shouldn't be: these are individuals who have learning disabilities or ADHD or autism. And because they're being stigmatized and their lives are made more difficult, they often end up with problems with self-esteem.

We need to be much more cognizant of this problem. We need to be making sure that we're identifying people early on in life and that we're providing them the help they need. This, again, is an issue of cost and spending dollars well.

Or we can make a huge difference in the lives of these individuals. They can do extraordinarily well. There are many major entrepreneurs leading companies around the world who have had learning disabilities and who have had that help.

We can have a society which is more productive and happier if we can avoid this kind of stigmatization of these sorts of problems.

This ability to prevent difficulties, and the ability and the need to invest in measures which are going to make a long-term difference, was sadly lacking in this budget, and so we are going to end up with a lot of continuing and major problems.

I give you, as one example, the lack of funding for help with foot care for individuals with diabetes in Thompson. This is a major problem, as I know as a physician, with people who have diabetes, and feet need to be looked after well because if you don't, you end up with an individual with diabetes who has to be hospitalized, who could have an amputation. I mean, it's a disaster if you don't look after the foot care well.

And so, the lack of, in this budget, spending to address the situation of foot care in Thompson has very, very negative implications and has long run excess costs for this government because they haven't thought ahead.

And I give us one last example: A recent story about a woman with lipedema, who was a nurse and who was approved for surgery for her lipedema. But partway through the series of surgeries she needed, the approval was taken away and she was not allowed to have, or not funded for, the remaining surgeries she needed.

Here's a nurse at a time when we desperately need nurses in our province, at a time when we need to restore credibility of the government in dealing with and helping and working with nurses. What happens? We have a nurse who said, and I quote: I gave the best years of my life to nursing in this province, and when I reached out for help, there was absolutely no help from the province.

This is atrocious to have a government which is not going to help the nurses who have contributed so much and done so much for people in Manitoba.

And when we do this at a very critical time like this, when we need 'nurses'—nurses as we have not for some time because we're so short of nurses, and there are many things which are not able to be done because we have this shortage, we're sending a very bad message to nurses and to others that this doesn't—province doesn't care for you.

And I want to say that we need to change this government. We cannot tolerate this kind of approach. It's a disaster for this province. We need a compassionate, caring government—a Liberal government, I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker—and we should remember that and we should work toward it.

And I hope that others in this House will also do the same.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House—

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: –ready to hear the honourable member for Flin Flon?

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I realize some people are in a hurry to get this passed, and—but there's a few things that just—I need to say before we just let it pass, if we do. And that's—I want to talk a little bit about health care in northern Manitoba that this budget fails to address.

When I talked about the budget previously, I talked about the disaster in Lynn Lake, but let me talk about a bigger disaster in Leaf Rapids. Hospital has no doctor. I was there; there's one public health nurse and a receptionist. The ambulance is in need of—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order, please.

Two comments. Okay, the clock has started again. The clock was frozen.

And I know during shift changes, sometimes it gets loud. If we can just keep the volume at an appropriate level so that I can hear the individual who has the floor, that is the honourable member for Flin Flon.

MLA Lindsey: So the ambulance in Leaf Rapids has to leave the community to get to Lynn Lake to take somebody that needs emergency care, because there's no emergency care available in Leaf Rapids. It's hours on a road that this government won't maintain, that this government won't plow.

And when you get to Lynn Lake, they don't have the facilities there, either. So now you're going to travel another four, six, eight hours back to the next closest hospital, or you're going to wait for a plane to come that may or may not come.

This government has gutted the northern patient transportation system that people just stay home now rather than going to their medical appointments. Imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you had to pay two, three, four days hotel rooms, plus meals, plus taxis, just to see a doctor. Imagine, living in the city of Winnipeg, that it cost you thousands of dollars to go to a doctor's appointment.

That's what this government has done to people in northern Manitoba. It costs them thousands of dollars to get to see a doctor. That's not fair and nothing in this budget, nothing in this document that we're talking about today, addresses those issues for people in northern Manitoba.

Hospitals are shut down all over the North. Snow Lake is booming; mining is happening, and they don't

have a hospital anymore, thanks entirely to this government.

And I see a member over there saying well, we got mining; yes, we done that. They did nothing to help that. They did absolutely nothing. It's happening in spite of them, because there's resources that need to be mined and there's things happening.

But this government is standing in the way of any kind of prosperity in northern Manitoba because people cannot afford to live there anymore. Hydro goes up constantly. What does this government do? Well, nothing. Cost of getting to medical appointment goes up. What does this government do? Nothing—they actually cut the amount of money that you might be entitled to.

We talked about roads any number of times in this Chamber, and we know that this government doesn't have enough people hired. We know that the budget hasn't increased enough to pay for more people to work. We know that the rate of pay for people that drive ambulances, to drive snow plows, to be nurses, to be doctors, to be every occupation that this government has, is so low that nobody will take those jobs in northern Manitoba because they simply cannot afford to.

This government talks a lot about making things more affordable, and they have done the complete opposite for people in northern Manitoba. Doesn't matter what community you're talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the life just got worse. Even people that are—have got good-paying jobs in northern Manitoba—even though they are few and far between thanks to this government—are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet to pay the bills.

This government does nothing to address food insecurity in northern communities. It costs so much more to get things as simple as a loaf of bread, a quart of milk in those communities, and this government has budgeted absolutely nothing more to help those communities, to help people in those communities survive.

They've washed their hands completely of people in northern Manitoba. And that's a shame, because there's really good people there. In fact, for the most part, they're all good people there.

* (16:10)

So, this government should all hang their heads in shame when they introduce a budget that does nothing to address the inequality that we see exists and gets worse every day because of this government—because

of this PC government. They should all be ashamed, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

And I know I don't have very long to speak here today, so I'll wrap my comments up real quick. But I see the Minister of Natural Resources smiling from ear to ear while he is making it so people can't even enjoy camping anymore because he's allowed private enterprise to book up the campsites to give out to their friends, to give out as bonuses so that hard-working Manitobans can't even get a campsite now, thanks to that minister. He should be ashamed as well.

We know that the Minister of Seniors sitting there trying to—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Lindsey: —pretend he's not there at the moment, and we know that we've got seniors that need dental care in Flin Flon and they can't get it, and this minister won't do anything to help them because he doesn't care, either.

Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) washed her hands—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Lindsey: —of dental issues because they're non-insured benefits.

I asked specifically for this minister to help; he's done nothing to help. That person lives in pain every day because of this government. They should all be ashamed, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And with those few words, I'll cede the floor.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): Well, that's going to be a little bit of a tough act to follow, but I guess the fact of the matter is that it was not an act. It was truth, it was passion and it was exactly what's—needs to be said to this government.

We sit here and we discuss the budget, we discuss BITSA, and the government claims they're doing all this great work, they—doing all these so-called investments, and they're just announcements. It's not making it to the bedside, it's not making it to the roadside, it's not making it to Manitobans. It's not funnelling down the way they want to claim that it's going to be.

There's a number of different announcements and headlines that they're trying to achieve to actually make it seem like they're getting somewhere, they're making some traction.

But Manitobans won't be fooled. Manitobans know this is election year. Manitobans know that's just election year announcements. And you have to read the fine print.

You have to read the fine print. It reminds me of a commercial where you're going to hear the highlight of the commercial and you're going to see somebody speed talking through all the small print, hoping that people don't pay attention.

But Manitobans are paying attention. Manitobans will not be fooled. Manitobans know what this means for them. They know what this means to their pay-cheque. They know what this means when they go to the hospital. They know what this means when they travel our roads.

And what that means is the—it's nothing but announcements. Those investments are not making it—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bushie: —not making it to the households, not making to the communities that it's supposed to be intended for. Mr. Acting—Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's just no trust.

You know, when we talked about voting for the budget, it was supposed to be a vote of confidence. And the budget that was brought forward by this government was supposed to be a—confidence. Have faith, have confidence in what we're doing. And there is just none. There is no faith, there is no confidence, there is no trust in what this government does. Because they just simply—not believable. People don't forget the last five, six years of cuts, of freezes.

Then, all of a sudden, there's these big grandioso announcements, saying, oh, we're going to do this. And I've said this comment before, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a net loss. It's a net loss from when this government came into leadership, came into power, to where we are today. They're going to sit there and say, we're doing more, we're investing more than ever, and that's just not true.

We're investing more. I remember the PCs mentioned 1,200; it's—we're a minus 200 in that category. And that's just the reality. And when it's convenient, they'll cite the pandemic and they'll say, oh, did you not know there was a worldwide pandemic? Well, yes, we knew.

Did you know? Did you realize that? Did you know that was going on? No.

You just compounded on the pain and suffering of Manitobans and used that as an excuse. Used that as a reason and a justification as to why the behaviour and the incompetency of government was existing. But we knew; Manitobans knew. Manitobans did their part. Manitobans persevered.

So what are they looking for now? They're looking for a government they can believe in, a government they can trust. And that's just not here. That just does not exist under this government. Everything they do is just for their own interests, just trying to sugar-coat and camouflage and hide the reality of what the true intent of what they're doing is.

And that's carrying forward Brian Pallister's agenda, a name they won't say, but you hear it every single day. You see it every single day in the announcements, in the legislation that's brought forward.

And they do their best to try and say, we're doing the right thing. You know, the—we'll see between now and when we rise in June. They'll bring forth some bills and some legislation and say, oh, you know, we would do this; this is a priority.

Well, if that was a priority, why wasn't that raised before when it was, for lack of a better term, guaranteed passage?

And we sit here discussing BITSA, and we discuss the implications of what this means and what does this mean for Manitobans. What does it really mean for Manitobans? It means that this government went to the federal government, asked for more money, got it and then wasted it.

They misspent it. They misspent it and they didn't truly bring it to the doorsteps, to the communities, to the bedsides, to the roadsides. They didn't do that. They went hat in hand, asked the federal government when it was convenient for them, say, can we have more money? And you know what? They were given it.

And sometimes, with just a simple ask of the federal government, well, you show us that you're spending—you want more health money? You show us you're spending it at the bedside; you show us you're spending it in hospitals. And what happens there? They get very defensive because they're not doing that, and they're failing in that regard every day, every single day.

So, when Manitobans come and they hear these announcements come up, they're just not believable. Manitobans persevered. They did their part for these last few years of the pandemic. And we're not through

COVID; we're not over COVID. It's something that's in our lives now and in our communities, and is something we're adapting to and learning to live with. But there's a number of different factors that Manitobans have done, and Manitobans have done their part, and this government is not stepping up to do their part.

When they bring forth legislation like BITSA and the budget and they're saying, we're going to do this, we're going to announce this. But that's not the reality. Manitobans know this is an election year. Manitobans know not to believe this. Manitobans were—heard that same rhetoric in 2016, heard the same thing in 2019.

And what happens right after that? Oh, we'll go back to this old way. We'll go back to this tunnel vision of this so-called responsibility that this government has.

And they're not looking at all of Manitobans because they're not governing all of Manitobans and they have no intention of doing that. Heard my colleague from Flin Flon speak about the North, my colleague from The Pas-Kameesak talk about the North because it's been ignored. It's been ignored by this government and the budget ignores it. BITSA ignores it.

The realities and the difficulties that exist in northern and remote communities is not reflective in this government's agenda, not reflected in their priorities. And it comes down to the fact that there's just no trust and no belief.

And they'll say, oh, that's just a small minority of Manitobans that are saying that, that are having this kind of conversations and are not believing it, and they feel they're not being affected, they're not being positively influenced.

But the reality is that's the majority of Manitobans. That's the majority of Manitobans that are being neglected and ignored by this government, and their budget and BITSA is an absolute reflection of that—that ignorance towards Manitobans. And that's why Manitobans do not believe this government. That's why Manitobans do not trust this government.

And that's why, when Manitoba comes time to get to that ballot box and sit there, you're going to hear that voice and you're going to see that loud and clear, that there's no belief; there's no trust. And with every good reason, they have no reason to believe and have no reason to trust this government.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): It's always an honour to stand in this House. I know I say that on numerous occasions, but it is true. We are here to represent the people that elected us, the people that put their faith in us.

We have a budget implementation and tax statutes act that we are debating this afternoon, Deputy Speaker, probably one of the most important pieces of legislation that a government brings forward. I can tell because we're starting to see more and more members return to the House here at this point because we're getting ready for, really, an important vote.

* (16:20)

I just want to say—I want to thank my colleagues, the member for St. James (Mr. Sala), the member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin), the member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey), the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie), that brought some very important words to the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, regarding BITSA.

I will say I'm hoping that the other side of the aisle was listening, paying attention to what was being said and brought forward. I've said this on many occasions, Deputy Speaker, this BITSA bill was really an opportunity for government to show what we're really made of.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you tell you through their BITSA bill what's important to them, we need to believe them. So what's important? Certainly something that isn't resonating for Manitoba. How do we know that? How many people did they put up to speak to BITSA in this third reading? How many people?

Friends, how many people were put up by the government benches? How many? Zero. They can't even get up in this House, at third reading, and support a piece of legislation that is the most consequential in the province. They sit there. Why? I'll tell you why, Deputy Speaker. The reason is, is that they have nothing to bring that's new to the province, at an inflection point that is really a missed opportunity.

We have seen time after time after time many, many instances when this government hasn't lived up to the moment. Right now, this is the moment when we needed to see a true shift and change. What do we see? We see them dig up an old P3 model for public school construction. How absolutely ridiculous is that? One that was debunked by their former premier, who actually took the time, Deputy Speaker, when they were debating a previous BITSA bill, to say that that's not the path for Manitoba.

Deputy Speaker, it is remarkable. And this is why they're all sitting down at this point and not saying anything.

I will tell you, this side of the House will never tire of advocating for constituents and bringing the voice of all Manitobans to this Chamber so that perhaps, at some point, we'll get some adequate response from government.

With those few words, I will end my comments.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): A recorded vote, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A recorded vote being called, ring the bells. Call in the members. Ring the bells. Do both.

* (16:30)

Order, please.

The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023.

Division

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

Yeas

Clarke, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Goertzen, Guenter, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Khan, Klein, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk.

Nays

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

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 30, Nays 20.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously declared, we will now prepare for royal assent.

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Cam Steel): Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Her Honour Anita R. Neville, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Mr. Deputy Speaker addressed Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Your Honour:

At this sitting, the Legislative Assembly has passed a certain bill that I ask Your Honour to give assent to:

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Vanessa Gregg):

Bill 14 – The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2023; Loi d'exécution du budget de 2023 et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): In His Majesty's name, Her Honour assents to this bill.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

* * *

* (16:40)

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, could you please canvass the House to see if it's the will of members to call it 5 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of members to call it 5 p.m.? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until tomorrow morning at 10 o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 3, 2023

CONTENTS

Matter of Privilege		New School Construction	
Asagwara	1113	Altomare	1122
Goertzen	1113	Teitsma	1122
Gerrard	1114		
		Services for Victims of Sexual Assault	
		Asagwara	1123
		Squires	1123
ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Tabling of Reports		Addiction Services Act	
Goertzen	1114	B. Smith	1124
Cullen	1114	Morley-Lecomte	1124
Squires	1114		
Reyes	1114	Request for Provincial Business Registry	
		Lamont	1125
Ministerial Statements		Goertzen	1125
Sexual Assault Awareness Month			
Squires	1114	Peter Nygård Assault Allegations	
Fontaine	1115	Lamont	1125
Gerrard	1115	Goertzen	1125
		Addiction Treatment and Recovery Programs	
Members' Statements		Gerrard	1126
Harley and Brooklyn Siemens		Morley-Lecomte	1126
Lagassé	1116		
Adanac Apartments		Child-Care Services	
Marcelino	1116	Lagassé	1126
		Ewasko	1126
Manitoba Women's Institute			
Clarke	1117	South Brandon Village Development	
		Wasyliw	1126
Health-Care Services		Klein	1126
Wiebe	1117		
		Petitions	
Royal Manitoba Winter Fair		Health-Care Coverage	
Isleifson	1118	Altomare	1127
Oral Questions		Provincial Road 224	
Fatal Collision in Gilbert Plains		Lathlin	1128
Kinew	1118		
Stefanson	1118	Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools	
		B. Smith	1128
ER Wait Times			
Kinew	1119	Foot-Care Services	
Stefanson	1119	Redhead	1129
Settlement of RCMP Collective Agreement		SANE Program	
Kinew	1119	Marcelino	1129
Stefanson	1120		
		Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools	
Settlement of RCMP Collective Agreement		Sandhu	1130
Naylor	1121		
Goertzen	1121	Community Living disABILITY Services	
		Gerrard	1130

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Debate on Concurrence and Third Readings

Bill 14—The Budget Implementation and Tax
Statutes Amendment Act, 2023

Sala	1131
Lathlin	1136
Gerrard	1139
Lindsey	1142
Bushie	1143
Altomare	1145

Royal Assent

Bill 14 – The Budget Implementation and Tax
Statutes Amendment Act, 2023 1146

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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