

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Third Legislature**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

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

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

Please be seated.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Before we begin, there's a number of guests in the gallery, so I will introduce them first.

First, I'd like to draw attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today the summer tour guides for the Legislative Building: Emilie Derbowka, Emmanuelle Fomgambi [*phonetic*], Shiven Shiravasta [*phonetic*], Marti [*phonetic*] Stokke, accompanied by Claire Normandeau, manager of the visitor tour program, and Emily Gray, visitor tour officer.

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

I would also like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today Maples 4 Women, a high school female empowerment group from Maples Collegiate, who are

guests of the honourable member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux).

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

Further, I would draw—like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today Chichi Asagwara, who is the guest and sister of the honourable member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara).

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

Further, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today Arlene Boychuk, Jana-Leigh Povey, Jasmine Masse, Jason Linklater, Karen Viveiros, Leann Oakley, Margret Thomas, Shayleen Goretzki, Shelagh Parken, Shona Litke, Tanya Burnside, Wayne Chacun, Teresa Bowerman, Veronica Boychuk, Michelle Mansell, Paulette Sherb, Carol Birch, who are guests of the honourable member for Union Station.

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

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**The Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### Allied Health Professionals Week

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** As we mark Allied Health Professionals Week, I am grateful for the opportunity to express my appreciation for the vital work that all allied health-care professionals across Manitoba do. You are the people that Manitobans encounter every day when they are seeking health care.

Allied health-care professionals support Manitobans at literally all stages of life. In hospital, allied health professionals provide direct care, support patients and help to ensure effective patient flow through our hospitals. They provide care and supports in community to allow people to leave the hospital, knowing that the care they need will continue in their home communities and in their homes themselves.

The expertise they provide in community keeps Manitobans safe and healthy at home, preventing trips to the ER or urgent cares, which can result in extended hospital stays, which is why, shortly after forming government, we increased staffing and expanded evening and weekend discharge in terms of allied health-care professional supports, and our government has committed additional funds in this year's budget to further enhance this initiative to support allied health-care professionals being on the front lines of our health-care system.

There are many, many, many jobs that allied health-care professionals hold, from lab techs to diagnostic imaging, medicine technologists, respiratory therapists, midwives, dieticians, perfusionists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers and paramedics and much, much more.

As your Health Minister, I am committed to rebuilding a health-care system that values and supports you and treats you with respect. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the challenges and difficulties that allied health-care professionals have faced over the past seven and a half years. The damage caused by the former government's neglect and disregard for front-line health-care workers, like allied health-care professionals, has had a lasting impact on our ability to deliver quality care to Manitobans. And, despite all of those challenges, allied health-care professionals, day in and day out, showed up for Manitobans and provided the best care they possibly can.

Despite their wages being frozen for over five years, despite being denied the ability to practise to their full scope, despite their jobs being cut, despite their voices being ignored, allied health-care professionals continue to show up for Manitobans. And I am here to tell all allied health-care professionals that we are dedicated to turning the tide and creating a health-care system that works for you and that works for the people of this province. We are committed to valuing your expertise and working in partnership, and I'm proud to be part of a government that understands the importance of not only investing in the resources that support you, but in rebuilding trust and in prioritizing the well-being of your health and your mental health.

As a registered psychiatric nurse I've seen first-hand the challenges and complexities of our health-care system. I understand the importance of valuing your expertise and supporting health-care workers and multidisciplinary teams. Our entire team recognizes the

importance of that, and we are dedicated to creating a system that works for all of us.

So, during allied health-care professionals week, we celebrate you. We recognize you. We recognize your invaluable contributions that you make to our health-care system every single day. And together we will continue to build a health-care system that values every single allied health-care professional in this province and values the care that you deliver that Manitobans count on.

And so we thank you this week. We thank you each and every day for the work that you do, your dedication and your commitment to making a difference for Manitobans across our province. So we wish all of you a very happy allied health-care professionals week.

Thank you.

\* (13:40)

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** On behalf of my colleagues, I'd like to welcome you all to the Manitoba Legislature today.

I'm excited to be celebrating this Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week, where Manitobans have the opportunity to celebrate health-care professionals across our great province.

Each and every day, allied health-care professionals show their dedication to Manitoba patients by delivering exemplary care to the front lines of our health-care system. They support patients throughout the entirety of their health-care journeys.

Allied health professionals play a fundamental role in our health-care system. They rush patients to the hospital in their time of need, they test and process samples for medical analysis, they help patients get back their mobility after treatment and much more.

From paramedics, audiologists, radiologists, dieticians, medical laboratory technologists, physiotherapists, health-care aides and many, many other allied health professions, they are the people working tirelessly to ensure that Manitobans get the care they need when they need it.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all allied health-care professionals who work within our province for their service to Manitoba patients and to our health-care system.

Thank you sincerely for the work that you do to help keep us all healthy and happy.

Thank you.

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

**The Speaker:** Does the member for Tyndall Park have leave? [*Agreed*]

**MLA Lamoureux:** Thousands of allied health-care professionals here in Manitoba are committed to delivering front-line quality care to Manitobans every day. They are, by nature, problem solvers and innovators, and Manitoba is privileged to have among the best and brightest working here in our province.

Allied health professionals support our health-care system by increasing the accessibility of care in the community, helping patients to heal and regain mobility and promote mental wellness and healthy lifestyles.

Honourable Speaker, we have seen how their work and support is invaluable, whether it be in emergency rooms and other front-line areas in our health-care system.

Allied health professionals are dedicated paramedics and respiratory therapists working in intensive-care units and patient transport, tending to critically ill adults, the sickest of children and the tiniest of babies.

Further, they are speech language pathologists, spiritual health providers, physiotherapists, social workers, dietitians, lab technologists, perfusionists who are all part of 40 specialized allied health professions that provide Manitobans with the timely, critical care that they need.

Honourable Speaker, staff shortages continue to test all of them as professionals and individuals, yet they remain dedicated, showing up and contributing to the care of Manitobans.

Thank you for all of the work that you do and your immense contributions to Manitoba's health-care system.

Thank you.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Blue Thunderbird Family Care

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** Today, I honour Blue Thunderbird Family Care, a phenomenal organization helping families to thrive through traditional ways of providing care, safety, belonging and connectedness. By affirming and promoting Indigenous, quality care, Blue Thunderbird makes every effort to protect, support and strengthen our relatives across the province.

Among Blue Thunderbird's many incredible programs is Granny's House, where families can find

short-term respite care for their little ones. Children love visiting Granny's while parents can step away for an appointment, to further their education, to participate in healing activities or just to rest. Granny's Houses are staffed at all times by a kokum, supported by aunties who provide culturally safe care to the kids in the home.

Blue Thunderbird's Ongomiizwin lkwe Home is another powerful program working to support Indigenous girls and two-spirit youth who have faced exploitation. It is a place to rebuild strong, safe relationships, connect with the right supports and be part in culturally safe programming from elders and aunties to fortify one's heart and mind. Blue Thunderbird reclaims Indigenous ways of taking care of one another, allowing each family to choose the supports that work best for them and their needs.

I had the honour of visiting both locations. It was a beautiful and much-needed visit, with chatting and laughing with all of the matriarchs. They treat everyone who enters their homes like family, and even invited us to share a meal filled with good food, laughter and, honestly, the best bannock.

Blue Thunderbird has created sacred spaces where community can come together to care for our little ones, our sisters and our relatives and to be seen and to be loved.

A profound miigwech to Blue Thunderbird, in particular, Dana, all the aunties and kokums. You are at the forefront of deep and transformative change in how we care for children and youth here in our province. You are decolonizing child welfare. I see you, I honour you and I love each and every one of you.

*Kinanâskomitinawaw. [I am thankful and grateful to you all.]*

### Westman Area Walk to Support Mental Health

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** This past Saturday, the Westman Mental Wellness and Suicide Prevention Association held their annual walk to raise awareness and funds to support those who suffer from mental illness and their families.

The event began at the Souris Curling Club and walkers had a two-kilometre or five-kilometre option through our beautiful town, followed by a free barbecue lunch, children's activities, vendors of all types and a rainbow auction.

The Mental Wellness and Suicide Prevention Association hosts multiple events throughout the year, including a golf tournament, and new this year, a ball

hockey tournament at the Souris and Glenwood Memorial Complex, all in support of the help and services they provide to Westman families who have been touched by mental illness.

My sincerest thanks to Cathy, Dave, Brenda, Morgan and all the many other board members and volunteers who make this organization happen.

I'd like to conclude my statement with a specific thank you. If you've spent any time in Souris, the name Kirkup will have stood out to you. Whether it's the Kirkup building, Kirkup Agencies, the Kirkup Lounge at the complex, the famous yellow Kirkup house by our Victoria Park or any of the many causes that they support, Bill and Sheila Kirkup and their family are an important presence in our community who I am privileged to call mentors and friends.

This year Sheila turned 90 on May 10, the day before the walk, and it was announced that instead of a celebration, she would be walking in the Mental Wellness Walk in memory of her nephew, Chris Kirkup, who last summer tragically lost his battle with mental health at the age of 44. Rather than gifts or cards, Sheila encouraged her family and the community to send donations to the mental wellness association and to join her on the walk.

On Saturday, Sheila walked with Bill on his trusty scooter, their family and our community behind her, and I am told that donations came in not just from across the region, but from across the country in answer to her call.

Sheila, you are an inspiration. Thank you for showing us what true community leadership is.

### **Vincent Massey Improv Team**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry):** Fort Garry is full of incredibly ambitious young people whose talents are being fostered at school. Vincent Massey Collegiate improv team is a stellar example of what can happen when talented young people are encouraged and guided towards success.

Vincent Massey has been building their improv program since 1989. Nearly every year, the Vincent Massey improv team showcases their incredible skills at the provincial improv games qualifier, competing against other schools in Manitoba for the No. 1 spot in the province. Using their quick wit and humour, the Vincent Massey improv team beat their opponents at provincials, earning the No. 1 place in the province and a spot in the national tournament.

The team travelled to Ottawa this spring and competed against schools around the country for five days. Vincent Massey was a proud ambassador of the province, wearing our provincial pins throughout the tournament and displaying friendly Manitoban spirit. They contributed to Vincent Massey's remarkable legacy of having the most trips to nationals in the province. They performed exceptionally well and were fantastic representatives of our province.

This is Coach Margo Kehler's last year with the team. Under her great leadership, the students of Vincent Massey have been able to study at the best improv schools in the world, travelling to places like Toronto, Chicago and Los Angeles. Her guidance has assisted graduates of the improv program to accomplish extraordinary things.

\* (13:50)

Please join me in congratulating the Vincent Massey improv team for winning the provincial Canadian Improv Games tournament and representing Manitoba in Ottawa. I am in awe of their incredible talent and teamwork. You make us all very proud.

And I'd ask that their names be added to Hansard.

*Coach Margo Kehler; Heidi Andres; Nevin Davies; Phillipe Genest; William Green; Elijah Kanhai; Rowan MacRae; Becky Omondi; Shea Rourie; Avery Sousa*

### **Brian "Woody" Langford**

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Today I want to pay tribute to the life of the late Brian Attwood Langford, better known as Woody to his family and friends.

Woody was born in 1945 and raised on a farm just north of Russell. He left home in 1966 and graduated with an honours degree in geology from the University of Calgary in 1970. After two years working in the oil industry, he returned to Manitoba, where he studied law at the University of Manitoba, receiving his call to the bar in September, 1980.

For 12 years he worked with M.D. Butcher and Associates in Birtle, before opening his own practice. He assisted the Waywayseecappo First Nation on land claims. In January 2003 he joined Sims & Company, at their Birtle office.

Woody was known far and wide for his kindness, generosity, free spirit and his unique way of being. His clients knew him as an honest and compassionate advocate for their legal needs.

Many judges had the pleasure of seeing Woody enter the courtroom wearing his signature beige shorts, white shirt and red vest, no matter the season. When called out by a judge to put on a tie, Woody went outside, got a tie and came back in with it around his waist. When asked later how it went, he said, it was okay for me, but not so good for my client.

Woody loved sports. The Birtle Blue Jays, the Foxwarren Falcons, the Montreal Canadiens and the Yellowhead Chiefs AAA hockey program. He was instrumental in organizing the Blue Jays senior baseball team and served as president during their existence. He was one of the people who brought the Chiefs program to the region. Woody was a regular fixture in hockey arenas, encouraging players with his favourite saying: forecheck, backcheck, paycheque.

Woody was famous for his convertible, which he often drove to a hockey game with the top down in the dead of winter. One of my memories of Woody is him pulling up in a golf cart, of which he owned many, and handing me a beer while in the lineup for the Birtle July 1st parade.

Woody was the type of person that once you met him, you would never forget him. He was a team player, always remarking: Teamwork makes the dream work.

Please join me today in recognizing a kind man who put others first and lived his life to its fullest doing whatever he wanted when he wanted.

Thank you.

### Maples 4 Women

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I rise this afternoon on behalf of Maples 4 Women, who have joined us today in the gallery. They are a high school, female, empowerment group dedicated to uplifting marginalized women through youth engagement.

I have seen them in action first-hand a few months back when I, along with former MLA Rochelle Squires, sat on a panel at their school, discussing and answering questions about what it is like being a female politician.

Honourable Speaker, the group started in 2023 at Maples Collegiate, by the founder and president, Bisman Randhawa and her head teacher, Ashlee Venables. They are completely dedicated to uplifting marginalized women, championing youth engagement, small businesses and female empowerment. They do this through hosting fundraisers, events, panels and donating items such as hygiene products to local resource centres and students.

The group also engages actively with politics. They are eager to learn about the government's plan to support the ongoing crisis of inadequate access to employment opportunities for immigrants, barriers around job matching, language proficiency, credential recognition, and cultural competency training and ways to support international students.

Now, Honourable Speaker, though Maples 4 Women technically is closer to The Maples and Burrows constituencies, it was agreed upon that I would—it would make sense for me to share this statement, as it is a group about female empowerment, and many of the group members live in Tyndall Park. But I want to thank my colleagues for their collaboration on this statement.

In closing, Maples 4 Women, is exceptionally motivated, and I wish them continued success as their journey continues. I'd like to ask that the names of our guests be added to Hansard and that my colleagues join me here today in recognizing them for all of their efforts.

Thank you.

*Maples 4 Women: Emily Alibin, Arielle Cruz, Shekinah DeTorres, Kamal Dhillion, Dibora Habtom, Bisman Randhawa, Ashlee Venables*

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** At this time, I would like to draw all honourable members' attention to the public gallery, where we have with us from the University College of the North, law enforcement students. And they're here as the guests of the honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin).

Welcome.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Political Party Rebate Government Priorities

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Welcome to each and every one of you who have joined us today in the gallery, and to some of our new tour crew. That's awesome to see you're here.

Honourable Speaker, the list of things the Premier (Mr. Kinew) forgot to prioritize in his budget is growing: education, public safety, wildfire fighting, Green Team funding and today, I'll table a budget showing more than \$160 million that has been cut from the Infrastructure budget.

I share this again to illustrate what the Premier does not prioritize.

What does he prioritize? His own taxpayer-funded political subsidy, Honourable Speaker.

My only question, once again, for the Premier is why?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** I want to begin by acknowledging that this week is National Police Week in Canada. And I want to say a sincere thank-you to everybody who works in law enforcement to keep us safe in our communities each and every single day, on behalf of the Province of Manitoba.

Well, we know that for two terms under the PCs, the building crane was an endangered species in Manitoba. But the good news is, thanks to the intrepid work of our Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (MLA Naylor), we've managed to save the building crane from extinction, and we've brought them back to life.

The good news is our government is building facilities across the province: in Neepawa, in Steinbach, in their backyards, in our backyards. The economy's growing. People are working. Good government is back in town.

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** It looks like we should all be ready for another order-in-council, Honourable Speaker, because it sounds like Steve Ashton's going to be hired as an advisor to the Premier again; that's Steve's line. But it's nothing new with the Fort Rouge MLA.

Honourable Speaker, they've cut daycare spaces; they've cut surgery options; they've cut Justice funding; they've cut parks funding; they've cut emergency funding; and they've cut Infrastructure funding.

Roads are crumbling, and what does the Premier do? He increases his own taxpayer political subsidy. Less money for roads, more money for NDP's own political purposes. He didn't run on this, Honourable Speaker, but he hid it in his first budget.

My question is for the Premier, and it's a simple one: Why'd you do it?

**Mr. Kinew:** We build. They cut. Everybody in Manitoba knows it.

That's why, after two terms of Brian Pallister and Heather Stefanson closing any emergency department that they could find across the province, after years

and years of 18th Street seeing pothole after pothole pop up, after Highway 75 to the United States of America falling into blight and disrepair, Manitobans decided to head in a new direction.

They decided to reject the cuts, closures and chaos of the PCs under Heather Stefanson, and they decided to elect a Manitoba NDP government that builds, that's repairing Highway 75, that's 'fixing'—fixing 18th Street, that reopened the Carberry emergency room and that's going to reopen the Victoria emergency room very, very soon.

\* (14:00)

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** Once again, I think we've got about 12 sets of questions, Honourable Speaker. The Premier fails to even get up and get close to the topic of the question.

They've cut schools and daycares. They've cut bail reform. They've cut surgery. They've cut Justice, parks, emergency wildfire fighting and they're cutting infrastructure, no matter what this Premier says.

He wants to double the subsidy paid by taxpayers to his own party, and he doesn't want anyone to know.

So we're letting them know. He slipped it in the budget bill, which will not be subject to public scrutiny through committee, because he knows he didn't run on it and people don't want it.

The Premier's taking more taxpayer money for the NDP.

The only question, again—and again, it's simple, Honourable Speaker: Why is he doing it, and why won't he come clean?

**Mr. Kinew:** You know what Budget 2024 brought to Manitoba? Honourable Speaker, \$1 billion in new investment for the provincial health-care system.

And you know what, Honourable Speaker? That's what we campaigned on. We went door to door every single day during the campaign. We said we're going to fix health care. We got elected by the good people of Manitoba, and we brought a billion dollars more investment to the provincial health-care system.

Now we know what the members opposite did during the campaign. They put up billboards—billboards that I'm not even going to repeat the details of, given what's happening just a few blocks away from here. They took out silver bench ads targeting young people in our schools.



Maybe if they focused on health care and infrastructure during the campaign, they would have been able to save the seats of some of their colleagues, but they didn't. We'll leave that with them as an internal mess to clean up.

What we're going to do on this side—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

### **Green Team Program Camp Massad Funding**

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** This minister owes Manitobans an explanation. He has told media that there were no changes to Green Team criteria, but organizations that have received funding for years have found themselves denied with no notice and no information.

This minister talked a big game to the media, making insurances without specifics.

Needs to stand in his place today and commit to restoring the funding he cut. Will he, yes or no?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Our government is making significant investments in the province of Manitoba.

We know that The Green Team program, the amount of money invested in there has increased under the excellent work of our honourable Minister for Municipal and Northern Relations.

But if we want to talk about the investments that we're making, we could go to each and every one of the constituencies currently represented temporarily by the PCs. Let's start with the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) in the front row there, who can't stand up for a second set of questions. What's happening in his constituency?

Well, under the PCs, the Pine Falls emergency department was closed. Again, we know that the Pine Falls emergency room, which I'll table the documents to prove, closure happened under his watch.

Well, not only are we staffing up the health-care system in the Interlake, our government is opening a new personal-care home in which constituency? The constituency of Lac du Bonnet.

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

**Mr. King:** Organizers are calling on this minister to reconsider his decision. It comes as they were just starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel after the pandemic closures.

The executive director of Camp Massad for the past 15 years said: We were closed for two years straight, and for them to do this right now to us is sort of a thumb in the face.

I ask the minister: Will he reconsider, yes or no?

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, the amount of money that our minister has sought fit to invest in The Green Team initiative has increased relative to what the PCs were doing year after year leading up to the pandemic.

And so that's what we're doing, is we're increasing supports, not only through that initiative, but also through the Building Sustainable Communities initiative. So why don't we move a row back, and check in on how things are going in the constituency of Agassiz?

Well, under the PC government, Agassiz constituency lost the emergency department in Carberry—Carberry. Considering what happened in that community last year, the case was made very clear about the need for emergency services.

The good news is, that government was defeated in the last election. Ours was elected, and guess what's happening in Carberry? We've brought emergency services back and reopened the emergency department.

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

**Mr. King:** What's worse is this minister knew he was going to deny applicants, but kept his cards close to his chest while he and his staff picked the winners and the losers. Camp Massad was a recipient of this treatment.

I quote: This year we waited and we waited and we waited. We hired the positions, we have the people waiting to go out next week. And then we find out that we were declined, he said. We were given no advance notice of any change in their policy or any change in their funding.

I'm giving the minister a chance to do the right thing today; will he?

**Mr. Kinew:** Again, the amount of dollars that's invested in the Green Team program is an increase over what the PCs did for year after year after year leading up to the pandemic.

But I started in the first row, checked in on the second row; why don't we go to the third row and see how investments are doing in that constituency. Well I'll tell you what, Honourable Speaker, we're investing

in improvements to Highway 6. We rolled that out this week.

I also want to commit to the people of Stonewall that your trails are being invested in by our government. The parks in the town of Stonewall are being invested in. And, of course, the South Interlake Regional Library summer learning program, also seeing investments from our provincial government.

So I hope that they go canvassing in their constituencies this summer, get out of my constituency and the constituency of Union Station, get outside the Perimeter and hear about all the great things that your provincial government is doing for your citizens.

### **Manitoba Hydro Future Energy Needs Request for Plan to Address Capacity**

**Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte):** Yesterday, I tabled an article from former Hydro CEO Ms. Jay Grewal, where she said, Manitoba will need new energy generating sources to be online as early as 2029. She also mentioned that with the current \$25-billion debt load by this NDP government that 40 cents of every dollar to Hydro is used to pay the interest on Hydro's debt, and not even touch the principal.

She mentioned, this province needs to look at partnerships like the two current wind farms in Manitoba used to produce energy. This Premier (Mr. Kinew) and minister disagreed, so they fired her. Then this minister closed the door on deals like his very own former NDP leader Gary Doer signed with two wind farms.

Does this minister stand by his decision to fire the CEO of Manitoba Hydro for speaking the truth, and what is this minister doing to address—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

The honourable minister—*[interjection]*

Order, please. Order, please. I have to recognize you first.

The honourable Minister of Finance.

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro):** Honourable Speaker, our government was proud only a couple months after the election to announce a partnership with the federal government that brought \$500 million of investment in hydro right here in Manitoba.

And those investments—part of those investments will create 52 megawatts of new available energy for us here in Manitoba, which will go a long ways.

You know, for seven and a half years, the members opposite sat in their hands and failed to develop one additional megawatt. They did absolutely nothing.

We do know that we need to develop new energy; we're going to do that in a good way that makes sure we keep rates affordable, keep Hydro public and we're going to do that to make sure we build our provincial economy here for Manitobans.

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

**Mr. Khan:** For those keeping track, that's 54 questions and not one straight answer by this minister. This minister is firing those that speak the truth; that is how this NDP government operates.

\* (14:10)

Will this minister also fire the current interim CEO of Hydro? Because he also confirmed what Ms. Jay Grewal said, that Manitoba is in trouble and we need new energy production capacity.

Lake Winnipeg is at its lowest level in over 40 years. Manitoba Hydro says, and I quote: Water inflows to our system are among the lowest we've seen in 40 years for this time of year, and it could curtail Crown corporations' ability to generate capacity. I table that article for you today.

And the 2023 annual report—\$1.1 billion.

What is this minister doing to address the growing energy needs in this province—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

**MLA Sala:** It's hard to believe that the member opposite can stand there with a straight face and make these claims. They stood for seven and a half years in this province and did absolutely nothing to advance the amount of energy we have in this province. Nothing. Again, not a single megawatt.

Our government understands the importance of ensuring we have the energy we need to meet the needs of Manitobans and grow our economy. We're doing that work right now, Honourable Speaker. That's important work; work that they never did.

We're going to do that and make sure Hydro stays public and make sure our rates remain affordable.

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

**Mr. Khan:** Honourable Speaker, that's 55 questions and not one answer from this minister.

This minister has made a political decision to denounce a proven partnership model that currently powers many homes in Manitoba. This minister, just like the rest of the NDP, is putting ideology ahead of Manitobans. We have five years, according to all the experts, to ensure that we have grid capacity for rate-payers, homeowners and industry.

At the Hydro committee meeting, Manitoba's Hydro CEO and the minister committed to getting answers to us, and they haven't tabled any answers, and that was over two months ago.

The question for the minister is simple: What is he hiding from Manitoba?

**MLA Sala:** Honourable Speaker, again, the party of the member opposite here, for seven and a half years, put ideology ahead of the needs of Manitobans.

How did they do that? Instead of ensuring they advance Manitoba Hydro, develop more energy, what did they focus on? Finding new, novel, creative ways to raise hydro rates on Manitobans. That's what they did for seven and a half years. That's a record of irresponsibility. They should have been working to develop more energy resources.

We do need to do that work. That's the work that we're doing right now. We're going to do that a good way that makes your rates remain affordable, Hydro stays public and we're moving the province ahead and building a better Manitoba.

#### **Kenaston Boulevard and Chief Peguis Trail Request for Upgrades and Expansion Support**

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Thank you, Honourable Speaker—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

I can't hear what the question is. I'm sure people on the other side can't hear what the question is. Both sides, calm down so that we can hear.

**Mr. Narth:** Last year, our PC team put \$700,000 towards design for a much needed widening of Kenaston Boulevard, committing to help the City get the project done.

At the time, Mayor Gillingham was quoted publicly as saying traffic backlogs would be up to 75 per cent longer if nothing was done to increase capacity along Kenaston.

Will this Minister for Infrastructure commit today to helping the City of Winnipeg finish this project?

**Hon. Ian Bushie (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations):** I know the member talks about the former PC team, so he—will he also claim—*[interjection]* Will he also claim—and they applaud. I'm glad to see they're applauding, Honourable Speaker—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bushie:** They're applauding their hateful campaign, so I'm glad to see they're applauding their hateful campaign.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

**Mr. Bushie:** For the record, Honourable Speaker, they're applauding their hateful campaign, the divisive campaign that they brought forward.

Our commitment to the City of Winnipeg is to work in collaboration. My conversation with Mayor Gillingham right after the election was about funding freezes year after year after year under the PC government.

What did they do? They tied the hands of the City of Winnipeg, so the City of Winnipeg was limited to what they could do because of limited infrastructure investments from the former PC government.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Narth:** That's quite concerning that there's going to be no further investment for Kenaston Boulevard, but similar to Kenaston Boulevard, our PC team supported the expansion of Chief Peguis Trail, a key roadway that connects east and west Winnipeg.

Mayor Gillingham, again, said at the time the upgrades were needed to improve safety in the area, open up land for housing developments and build bike and walking infrastructure for the locals. Once again, no commitment from this Infrastructure Minister.

Will the NDP support the Chief Peguis expansion, yes or no?

**Mr. Bushie:** Honourable Speaker, they were nothing but the government of announcements. Day in, day out they got out there, and announcement after announcement after announcement—there's no delivery. No delivery.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Bushie:** Announcements and no action, none whatsoever. Oh, now all of a sudden you hear crickets

over there. There's no applauding because that's all they did; they made announcements, never delivered on anything.

Underspent year after year after year. And I know the former Infrastructure minister is standing there silent because he knows—he knows—they didn't make the investments. He was there at the face of the press releases, but did not deliver on anything, nothing whatsoever. Seven years of cuts, cuts, cuts, freeze, freeze, freeze.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for La Vérendrye, on a final supplementary question.

**Mr. Narth:** It's great to see that we set the framework and the groundwork. Both the widening of Kenaston and the expansion of Chief Peguis Trail are needed to support the growth of Winnipeg as a whole. Residents in the area have been calling for these upgrades for years. They are needed for economic and population growth in some of the most populated areas of Winnipeg. That is why our PC team clearly committed to supporting them.

Will the minister confirm for the constituents of Tuxedo, St. James, Kildonan, Radisson, Transcona, Waverley, Rossmere and all Winnipeggers that these planned upgrades will not be cut by this NDP government?

**Mr. Bushie:** Honourable Speaker, he forgot to mention after all that, they destroyed the building. That's really what it came down to when they supposedly developed framework.

But we have good news. We have good news for the PC constituents, because they know they're disappointed in the opposition they have now. They're disappointed in those voices they have now. This year alone we're doing work on PR 308 in La Vérendrye, PTH 10 in Swan River, P-T No. 2 in Midland, PTH 9A in Selkirk, P-T 12 in Dawson Trail.

Perhaps members should go in—out there, talk to their constituents and know that now they have a good government that's speaking up for all of them.

#### **Mental Health and Addiction Treatment Funding Concerns for Budget 2024**

**Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler):** Honourable Speaker, overdose deaths are continuing to climb. The Chief Medical Examiner is warning about new drugs being mixed into current drugs. Manitobans need access to treatment. They need RAAM clinics.

When will the minister commit to expanding RAAM clinics to help Manitobans that need access to recovery?

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** I want to thank the member for that question.

And it is very concerning when anyone dies in this province, you know, and I want to recognize, you know, the families who are impacted by this and just really, you know, uplift and honour, you know, those lives because those are sacred lives. And I think all of us in this Chamber, you know, want to do the right thing. We want to support those families.

Our government is committed. We have purchased two drug testing machines, and those'll be online shortly, and I look forward to sharing more information in my next question.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a supplementary question.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** Honourable Speaker, between 2016 and 2023, the PC government opened seven RAAM clinics, bringing treatment and hope to Manitobans fighting addictions. The minister needs to continue this good work. This is not a partisan issue; this is about treatment.

Will the minister restore funding to mental health and addiction treatment and recovery that was cut in Budget 2024?

\* (14:20)

**Ms. Smith:** I can assure that member that there's been no cuts made to mental health and addictions, that there's been increases in this area. We are working towards opening our first supervised consumption site here in our province.

The previous government never took a harm reduction approach. We are working with front-line workers; we are working with those who are struggling with substance use disorder, and we are working with experts, who are telling us that this is a direction that should have been taken a long time ago.

And we recognize that these are family members, and we are doing everything we can as a government, and we are committed to working with and supporting these families, something the former government never did.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a final supplementary question.

**Mrs. Hiebert:** The new drug, benzodiazepine, cannot be treated with current overdose medications. We've seen no plan from the N-D-T-P government to address this new drug threat. They have provided no help or funding for addictions or treatment spaces. The NDP government needs to take immediate action before it gets worse.

Will the minister take immediate action to reduce the number of overdose deaths and help our loved ones in addiction?

**Ms. Smith:** Well, what I will say to that member is we will take no lessons from members across the way.

When they were in government, they took a blind eye to anything to do with addictions. Their former premier threw a report on the floor. They would not listen to experts. They allowed people in this province to die. They had family members knocking on their door, begging and pleading them to do something.

Our government is taking a different approach. We're leading with compassion. We are working with families, we are working with front-line organizations, and we will continue to work towards getting our first supervised consumption site open, and we will have two drug testing machines up online, and more to come.

We're working towards helping Manitobans.

#### **Drug Decriminalization Policy Government Position**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Last week I asked this Premier whether he plans to request the Trudeau government to decriminalize hard drugs in public places. Manitobans did not receive a clear answer.

BC has already admitted their drug policy does not work. NDP drug policies do not work.

So I will ask the Premier a very simple yes or no question: Will he request decriminalization of hard drugs here in Manitoba, or will he focus not on consumption but on treatment to keep Manitobans safe, yes or no?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** The answer is no. This is a very serious issue. Lives are at stake.

I would invite the members opposite not to heckle. They recently had two terms in government in which they had the opportunity to take action.

The situation we've inherited are a result of decisions that they made in the past. We're taking action to ensure that there's more evidence-based decision

making. When we talk about harm reduction, we're about ensuring that we can keep people alive long enough in order to be able to find a path towards a positive life forward.

While the members opposite want to heckle, perhaps motivated by some feeling of guilt or inadequacy related to the failures of their previous administration, we are committed to taking action. We're about saving lives; we're about living—listening to the experts, and we're about ensuring that more Manitobans can live to see another day.

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

**Mrs. Stone:** This Premier seems to have forgotten about his radicalized drug agenda, where three years ago he called on the Trudeau government to decriminalize hard drugs from public places.

Why is this Premier hiding his true, radical agenda on NDP drug policies from Manitobans?

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** Well, what I will say to that member across the way is, why will they not get on board with supporting a supervised consumption site? Why will they not get on board in supporting families and helping to keep loved ones safe here in our province?

While they were in government, all they did was turn a blind eye, throw a—reports on the floor and expect people to pull their boots up and get into treatment.

Well, not everybody's at that place. We're taking a different approach. We're meeting people where they're at, and we're going to support and make sure that people get to live their lives to the fullest, unlike members opposite.

**Mrs. Stone:** This Premier is planning to follow in the failed footsteps of the NDP-Liberal coalition. Three years ago, this Premier asked Trudeau to decriminalize higher drugs, and I table that for him today in case he has forgotten.

Streets are not safe, playgrounds are not safe and streets are not safe for Manitobans. BC is the living example that NDP drug policies simply do not work.

Will the NDP Premier commit today to Manitobans that he will keep hard drugs banned? Will he focus on treatment over consumption and keep crime out of this province?

**Ms. Smith:** We have a bill before this House: Bill 30. We've been asking the government on the other side to support that bill, The Unexplained Wealth Act.

They refuse to pass that bill, so what I'd say to that member is, get on side. If they want to ensure that drug dealers are not selling drugs in our city, then get onboard and pass that.

The other thing I would say to that member is supervised—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) will come to order, please. He can quit hollering across the way.

**Ms. Smith:** The other thing I will say to that member is, supervised consumption sites are but—about connecting people to services. Whether that is housing, whether that is to treatment, whether that is to medical care, it's more than just consumption.

And people—members on the 'oppo-side,' you need to educate yourself on what supervised consumption sites actually are all about.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Tyndall Park. *[interjection]*

Order, please.

People need to be able to hear when I recognize them and I've noticed several people haven't been able to. So I would call all members to order so that people can at least hear when they should start speaking. So maybe we could calm it down a little.

#### **International Students—Training and Employment Funding Concerns for Budget 2024**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Today, I am joined by Maples 4 Women group. They bring forward pressing concerns that many post-graduate immigrants face regarding employment opportunities being limited due to issues like language proficiency and credential recognition.

It is concerning because training and employment services, businesses and industry training supports and staffing were all cut from this government's budget, resulting in nearly \$1.5 million in core departmental funding cuts. I table this.

How does this government plan to address the inadequate access to employment opportunities for postgrad immigrants, despite the fact that the Province decided not to prioritize workforce training with cuts to its budget?

**Hon. Malaya Marcelino (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** Thank you to member opposite for that excellent question.

I would like to assure Manitobans, and also for our new Canadians and newcomers here to Manitoba, that our government is taking this issue extremely seriously. We want to make sure that new Canadians who come to our province have the support that they need to find meaningful work in the careers that they've trained for in their previous places where—of origin.

And part of our mandate is to make sure that we are removing unfair barriers to credential recognition, beginning with internationally educated health professions, because of what we're seeing in our health-care system right now. This is a top priority of our government and we're going to make sure that—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

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

#### **International Students Business and Industry Training Supports**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Empowering the industry and business community is integral to ensuring that post-graduate students are provided with plenty of opportunities so they can use their skills to contribute to Manitoba's economy.

However, this government shows that it has not prioritized this in their budget, as funds were cut for business and industry training. This includes grants to non-profits and businesses to incentivize companies to hire and train women and new Manitobans to develop workforce skills training.

\* (14:30)

Will the minister commit to restoring funding to business and industry training supports, to ensure that businesses continues to have incentives to hire and train Manitoban workers?

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources):** Honourable Speaker, I appreciate the question. We prioritize skilling up and training workers in our province. It's very important to us to meet the economic challenges of the future.

But the reality is, is that the federal Liberal government cut a labour market funding to all the provinces across the country, including Manitoba. That is the reality of the Trudeau federal government. And it seems, apparently, the Conservatives across the way,

members opposite and maybe the member for Tyndall Park support that approach, but we don't.

We want to invest in the people of Manitoba. We want to invest in their jobs and their careers and growing our economy, and that's exactly our priorities on our government right here in Manitoba.

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

### **Services for International Students Cultural Competency Training**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Honourable Speaker, the reality is this government failed to sign on to a new agreement with the federal government. Manitoba's workforce is diversifying and international students play a big role in supporting Manitoba's changing economy.

However, these students want assurances from the government that services will be in place to help with a seamless transition into the labour market and further develop their careers.

What is this minister doing to make sure that teachers, staff and industry professionals have cultural competency training to better support immigrant students?

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Economic Development, Investment, Trade and Natural Resources):** Honourable Speaker, it seems like members opposite and their failed government approach is now aligned with the member for Tyndall Park and their support for the federal government's cut for workplace training programs in Manitoba. That's what appears like.

Now our approach here is to invest in the people of Manitoba. We're dealing with the reality of—that the federal government cut \$20 million of workforce training support from Manitoba. And the reality is that we prioritize the workforce in Manitoba, for the—so that they can not only be the ones to power and grow our economy, but that we can do so in a way that lifts up their lives and improve the people of Manitoba.

That's the work we'll continue to do, because it's an—important for all of Manitobans.

### **Northwest Manitoba Wildfires Meeting with Evacuees and First Responders**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak):** Honourable Speaker, 550 Manitobans have been forced to leave their homes because of a wildfire that has already consumed 30,000 hectares. That's roughly 70 per cent the size of Winnipeg. Some families had

to leave so quickly that they only had the clothes that they were wearing.

The Fire Commissioner office, firefighters, police, emergency management personnel have been working really hard to fight the fire and support evacuees.

Could the Premier please share with Manitobans about his time yesterday with the first responders and evacuees in Flin Flon and The Pas?

Ekosi.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Want to thank the member for the substantive question on one of the most serious situations facing our province at the current time. It was an honour to meet with the law enforcement and first responders and the Manitoba Wildfire Service who, along with the Office of the Fire Commissioner, are leading the battle against the blaze.

We know that the situation there is very, very serious. I had the opportunity to personally thank the firefighters from Ontario who had just arrived on site yesterday afternoon. I had the opportunity to travel to Flin Flon and to The Pas to thank the good people from the RM of Kelsey, who've been doing amazing work in helping to lead the response alongside provincial officials from multiple departments and the Manitoba Métis Federation.

Folks in Flin Flon have also been stepping up, and even though cell service was down for a few days, I'm happy to report that much of that service has now been restored, along with Manitoba Hydro service to some of the affected area.

I can also update the House that firefighters from New Brunswick and Quebec will be arriving in the region this weekend.

It is truly an insight into the great nature of humanity in our province to see—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

### **Legislative Business Request to Call Estimates**

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** The NDP's first budget was introduced 43 days ago, and yet we still haven't sat down for one single hour of Estimates debate on the details.

It's the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine) who chooses government business for the day—  
*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Jackson:** –and she has had 22 sitting–*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Jackson:** –days, any of one of which she could have called Estimates. We now only have 10–*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

The member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) will quit hollering across the aisle.

**Mr. Jackson:** It's the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine) who chooses government business for the day. She could have called Estimates any one of the 22 days. We have 10 sitting days left. If the NDP are so proud of this budget, why the delay?

Will she call the Estimates process today?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Day after day, afternoon, afternoon, they're blocking a bill, Bill 30, that would allow law enforcement to crack down on drug trafficking. The member should explain why.

While he's busy trying to work with a potential Tuxedo candidate on the explanation, I want to share some good news with the House and the people of Manitoba: the new maps for the provincial highways system are out, and I'll table a copy for the members opposite.

Again, it has a picture of the excellent new Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (MLA Naylor), and while day after day they're asking about the Chief Peguis Trail and Kenaston, I'd invite themselves to put the lattes down, pick up a double-double and familiarize yourselves with the rest of the province outside the Perimeter.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

The time for oral questions has expired.

And just–*[interjection]* Order.

Just for everyone's information and maybe education, I had–contemplating adding an extra question on for a lot of clapping that was taking place. But the amount of clapping and carrying on on the other side negated that.

You've wasted a lot of your time with having to get me–stand up here calling for order, time that you should be using for asking questions. You're wasting that time. So perhaps think about that in the future.

## PETITIONS

### Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Oh, Honourable Speaker. I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly. And as usual, always appreciate the education component of this.

Honourable Speaker, the petition–the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

\* (14:40)

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:



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

This petition is signed by Amanda Dagg, Charis Kelly, Allyssa Baker and many, many more fine Manitobans.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today Gurtet [*phonetic*] Singh, Satwinder Singh, Maghar Singh, Chamkur Singh, who are the guests of the honourable member for the Burrows.

And we all welcome you here today.

### Child-Welfare System—Call for Inquiry

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli):** I wish—Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

### Medical Assistance in Dying

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This is signed by Amy Vanderveen, (2) Haylee Vanderveen, Robin Beukena and many, many, many more Manitobans.

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

\* (14:50)

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

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

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

Thought I was going to sneeze.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

And this petition is signed by Elizabeth Sherman, Stan Blady, Maureen Craigon and many other Manitobans.

### Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to not—have not agreed with the stance that all

Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

Thank you.

### **FortWhyte Alive**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The community of Fort Whyte has over 22,000 residents and the RM of Macdonald has over 8,000 residents, many of them using McGillivray road and PTH 3 as a means of transportation or commute to and from the city of Winnipeg. PTH 3 is a major traffic corridor that services many, many, many communities, including, but not limited to, Oak Bluff, Sanford, Brunkild, Carman, Morden, Manitou and Killarney, to name a few.

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

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

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

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

(6) The City of Winnipeg has been slated to install a new crosswalk at the intersection of Brady Road and McGillivray Boulevard by the summer of 2024. The previous provincial PC government committed to working with the City and FWA, Fort Whyte Alive, to complete this intersection.

\* (15:00)

Honourable Speaker, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to assist the City of Winnipeg to address serious safety risks for all that frequent the FWA–FortWhyte Alive–area by twinning and installing a traffic light and a crosswalk at the intersection of McGillivray Boulevard and Brady Road, as it is–transitions into–as it transitions into Provincial Trunk Highway No. 3.

Honourable Speaker, this petition is signed by Harlan Perchotte, Reed Sutherland, Gerald Sawatsky and many, many, many more great Manitobans.

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

I would remind all members that when reading petitions, they have to read what's written on the page. They cannot be adding extra words that they think are adding dramatic effect. They have to read what is written on the page; nothing more.

And I would ask the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Ewasko) to keep his comments to himself while the Speaker is standing. *[interjection]* The Leader of the Official Opposition, I've asked you to keep your comments to yourself while the Speaker is standing, so you can do that now.

Thank you.

### **Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by many Manitobans: Mike [phonetic] Hiebert, Patey Kumal [phonetic] and Pasey Zeel [phonetic].

### Medical Assistance in Dying

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

\* (15:10)

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This is signed by Therese Bourgooin, Lucienne Choquett, Mariette Sarragin [phonetic], and many, many Manitobans.

### Provincial Trunk Highway 2

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I could ask members to take their conversations to the loge; it would help me hear what's being said.

**Mr. Jackson:** To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) PTH 2 is a significant commuting route for Westman families—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I will call members of the opposition bench to order. It's bad enough you're heckling the other side, but now you're heckling your own side. It's disrespectful to the people that sign their names to those petitions. So please come to order.

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

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

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

(7) The minister outlined that the current 2028-2029 construction plan does not include the

stretch of PTH 2 that runs through the town of Souris, but instead starts on the west side of town.

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

\* (15:20)

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Gail Williamson, Cassidy Gordon, Ruth Smith and many, many more fine Manitobans.

### Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

Thank you.

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** 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:

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

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

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

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

(5) Grain drying, fertilizer and chemical production, mushroom farming, hog operations, the cost of heating a

livestock barn, machine shops and utility buildings are all examples of how the carbon tax on natural gas and other fuels costs farmers and consumers more each year.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

\* (15:30)

This petition has been signed by William Ammeter, Kathy Cockerill, Doug Bottrell and many, many, many, many more Manitobans.

### **Medical Assistance in Dying**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This petition has been signed by Susan Rolles, Kevin Rolles, Crystal Wall and many Manitobans.

#### **MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility**

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from an added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed

images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on Highway No. 1 in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine local-located in Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher service and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located-bless you-it-located in Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is Southport airport. The 'aerodrome' has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait time for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the legislation-Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This is signed by Charles Kilcup, Edna Neufeld, Stan Neufeld and many, many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

#### **Carbon Tax and Rising Food Prices**

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

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

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

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

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

(4) There are increased costs added at every step of the process of Manitoba's agricultural producers.

\* (15:40)

In order to make 18 cents from one bread loaf worth of wheat, farmers are paying carbon tax at every stage of production to grow the crop and get it to market.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

### House Business

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at 6 p.m., to consider Bill 208, The Two-Spirit and Transgender Day of Visibility Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

**The Deputy Speaker:** I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, at 6 p.m. to consider Bill 208, The Two-Spirit and Transgender Day of Visibility Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks, and Months Act Amended).

\* \* \*

**MLA Fontaine:** Honourable Deputy Speaker, once again, for the last three weeks, can you please call the continuation of second reading debate of Bill 30, the unexplained—[interjection] The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended), and should members see fit to do their job and allow it to pass, call second reading of Bill 31, The Captured Carbon Storage Act. And should members once again decide to do their job, please call, followed by second reading of Bill 29, The Body Armour and Fortified Vehicle Control Amendment Act.

**The Deputy Speaker:** It has been announced we will continue debate on Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended), followed by Bill 31, The Captured Carbon Storage Act, followed by Bill 29, The Body Armour and Fortified Vehicle Control Amendment Act.

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

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

**The Deputy Speaker:** As announced, we will now resume second reading debate on the reasoned amendment to Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended)—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.



—standing in the name of the member for Roblin (Mrs. Cook), who has 16 minutes remaining.

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** Honourable Speaker, I am very pleased to stand today to do my job, which is to represent my constituents in the communities of Charleswood and Headingley, in scrutinizing the legislation put forward by the government.

And today, in particular, we are considering—and the Government House Leader, the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), is attempting to shout me down.

I—we are again here to consider the amendment put forward by my colleague, the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill, Bill 30, is different to the existing legislation that was brought forward and passed by this House less than three short years ago in 2021.

And there are many similarities between these two bills, Honourable Deputy Speaker. For one thing, both bill 58 and Bill 30 focus on enhanced power for law enforcement. That's not a bad thing, but it is one way in which these bills are substantially similar and, in fact, not very different at all.

Secondly, both bills deal with an expanded definition of criminal property. That's essential to the notion of criminal property forfeiture, is defining what is, in fact, criminal property.

Number 3: Both bill 58 from 2021 and Bill 30 that we are dealing with today deal with criminal property forfeiture, and

Number 4: Both are intended to target criminal organizations in particular;

Number 5: Both bills seek to improve transparency;

Number 6: Both bills seek to address money laundering;

Number 7: Both bills are focused on the protection of the public, and

Number 8: Both bill 58 and Bill 30 are concerned with bringing Manitoba into compliance with international standards for combatting criminal activity;

Number 9: Both bills seek to serve as a deterrent to criminal activity, and

Number 10: Both bills are based on similar legislation in other jurisdictions that was based on the findings of the Cullen Commission.

\* (15:50)

Now, the Cullen Commission was established in the wake of significant public concern about money laundering in British Columbia. That commission had been given a broad mandate to enquire into and report on money laundering in British Columbia.

And why that's relevant to Manitoba, Honourable Deputy Speaker, is that bill 58, three years ago, already considered the findings of the Cullen Commission and brought those provisions as they apply to Manitoba into law. They are on the books.

One of the key recommendations that came out of that commission was a much more vigorous approach to criminal property forfeiture. And, indeed, that is what we saw already with bill 58.

Asset forfeiture is widely regarded as one of the most effective ways of stifling and disrupting organized crime groups and others involved in serious criminal activity and, indeed, here in Manitoba we have a robust system for criminal property forfeiture.

And that's why my colleague has put forward this reasoned and reasonable amendment. And I think it is our job as the opposition to examine the legislation that's put forward by this House, and when we find, as we have, that a bill has been put forward that is not substantially different from a bill that is already on the books, that warrants further exploration and further discussion in this House.

And a reasoned amendment can be put forward by us as individual legislatures; it could be put forward by a committee. And they are in fact an integral but perhaps little-known part of the legislative process. And reasoned amendments such as the one we're debating here today serve several purposes in the legislative process.

For one, they serve to clarify. Reasoned amendments can help clarify ambiguous or unclear provisions in a bill, ensuring that the intent of the legislation is understood and implemented correctly, and that's what we are seeking to do here today.

A reasoned amendment such as the one put forward by my colleague, the member for Interlake-Gimli, can serve to improve legislation. Reasoned amendments can strengthen a bill, addressing potential flaws or weaknesses. And in this case, we're saying that Bill 30 is just not substantially different than bill 58 that was already passed by the previous PC government in 2021.

A third purpose of a reasoned amendment is compromise, and I think that's what we're asking for on

this side of the House. The compromise in this case would be for the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) to rise in his place and explain to us how Bill 30 is substantially different from bill 58.

And No. 4, a reasoned amendment can improve transparency, due to their exploratory nature. I think all of us in this House certainly believe in the importance of transparency, in enabling lawmakers and the public to understand the reason behind the proposed legislation. I think if the public were to do the same level of analysis of bill 58 and Bill 30 that we have, they would say these bills are very similar.

And No. 5, a reasoned amendment can help with accountability. By requiring lawmakers to provide clear justifications, reasoned amendments can promote accountability and responsible governance.

Now I know that there are best practices for reasoned amendments, and I believe that we've adhered to that on our side of the House. They should be clear and concise; this one certainly is. We have a clear and concise reasoned amendment before the Legislature that we are debating today.

The biggest problem with Bill 30 is that it does not make any relevant or distinct changes to the legislation already in place. It's not that there's anything wrong with Bill 30 in and of itself. It's just that it's not proposing anything new or different than what's already here.

In 2021, amendments were made in this Legislature. Many of us weren't here at that time, but many of us were. And those amendments that were passed in 2021 allow the Criminal Property Forfeiture director—it gives them the mechanism within that department to explore an individual's finances to see if there is an explanation for their wealth. That power already exists.

So part of what we have to do here as legislators is determine how what has been proposed is different than what's already existing. If it's not different, one might wonder why the NDP have, in fact, proposed it and if this bill is actually enhancing something, if it is substantially different, if it is adding something, then the onus is on the government to demonstrate that.

It also makes me question why the government would currently be bringing forward legislation when something so substantially similar already exists.

You could say, it's because they campaigned on it. It's also—it is flattering, I will say, for those who were here in 2021 and had a hand in the legislation

that was passed. They may rightfully be flattered that Bill 30 is so substantially similar to the legislation that they crafted.

And I heard members opposite saying that the Minister of Justice has already explained the differences between the bills, and I'm not sure that I agree. I don't believe that I've heard those explanations and I don't know that Manitobans have yet, either.

Both bills expand the definition of criminal property forfeiture. Both are intended to target criminal organizations. Both address money laundering, which is kind of a hidden crime in our province; it's not easily visible to the public. Both are concerned with the protection of the public. Both bills have laudable and similar goals. Both seek to bring Manitoba into compliance with international standards.

Neither bill is reinventing the wheel. Both are based on best practices in other jurisdictions and ensuring that Manitoba law enforcement have the tools at their disposal to do their jobs to protect Manitobans.

And when I sought out to prepare my comments for this bill, I did go looking for differences between the bills because I thought, well, if I'm going to stand up and defend an amendment saying that the bills are substantially similar, I wanted to assure myself that there were no differences I was overlooking. And I could not find any, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

I could not find any substantial differences between the bills and that's why I have no qualms about standing in my place today to speak to the reasoned amendment put forward by my colleague, the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson).

Bill 58, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act, passed and got royal assent in 2021 and that bill aimed to strengthen the legal framework for combatting criminal activity, particularly in relation to property and financial transactions.

And that's what's so important, Honourable Deputy Speaker, because by cutting off crime at the knees, that's how we prevent organized criminals from using the proceeds of their activities to—what's the word I'm looking for—increase their criminal enterprise, to grow their criminal enterprise. And it can also serve as a deterrent.

Now, I'm not an expert in law enforcement so I don't know how closely criminals or would-be criminals are paying attention to what we do here in the

Legislature. But certainly, if they were to take a look at the criminal property forfeiture laws that are already in place, I think they would find it is indeed a deterrent to know that your property can be seized on the suspicion of it being a proceed of criminal activity.

And that's an important provision and certainly something that we on this side of the House support.

Both bills are about granting our law enforcement agencies—and you know, we talked about it being National Police Week here in Manitoba and we want to give our police the tools they need to do their jobs, to protect the public, to stop organized crime in our province.

Both bill 58 and Bill 30 do just that. They enable law enforcement to more effectively target criminal organizations and the individuals who use property and financial transactions to facilitate their illegal activities.

\* (16:00)

Both bills deal with what the definition of criminal property is, and it's a broad definition. And rightly so. Both bills deal with how that criminal property can be seized by law enforcement in an attempt to protect the public and to target criminal organizations. Both bills aim to disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations by targeting their financial assets.

Both bills expanded—I touched on this already, so I won't repeat myself—both bills expanded the definition of criminal property; Bill 30's focusing on unexplained wealth. Both bills are seeking to prevent criminals from furthering their illegal activities.

So I can't stress enough how similar these two bills actually are.

I find the focus on transparency to be particularly interesting. Bill 30 amends The Corporations Act, requiring companies to disclose ownership and control, and that increases transparency, of course. But there were similar transparency provisions in bill 58, back in 2021. The provisions of bill 58 around the seizure of criminal property are a means to increase transparency in financial transactions.

And both bills, by shedding light on previously hidden or obscured financial dealings, both bills aim to prevent criminal activity and promote accountability.

Both bills target money laundering specifically. And integral to money laundering is the concept of unexplained wealth. Both of these bills contribute to a

global effort to combat money laundering; money laundering knows no borders, knows no boundaries. And it—and as a result, law enforcement agencies need the ability to work together across jurisdictions, and there are provisions within both of these bills that better enable law enforcement agencies to do just that.

And the goal, of course, of both bills is to protect the public from the harmful effects of criminal activity. And that's what I mean when I say that Bill 30 is not substantially different from bill 58. Both bills seek to protect the public, and as a result, Bill 30's not a bad bill. I don't actually have any issues with Bill 30; I just don't understand why it isn't any different than what's already in place.

Especially when the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) was here in the Legislature when bill 21 was passed. I didn't go back to check his voting record to see if he had supported bill 58 back in 2021; suppose I should've done that. I'm not sure if he was paying attention at the time.

Oh gosh, I only have eight seconds left. Well, I'll cede the floor to others who wish to make comments on this important bill.

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** It gives me pleasure to rise in the House today and speak a little bit about the reasoned amendment to Bill 30.

We find, over and over—and this side of the House, it's the opposition's role to ensure that any legislation comes forward in the House is different from legislation that currently exists. And we've seen time and time again this government using some of their recycling tactics and trying to brand—you know, get a brand on a particular bill that's already been put forth.

There was—interesting last week when they—or, a couple week—a week ago, I guess, and a bit; Premier (Mr. Kinew) was up in Swan River and he announced about the CT scan that kind of took us, like, six years to bypass all the red tape put up by the previous government. And he said, oh, this is one of ours.

So the relevance here is I'm just comparing the fact that this is becoming a very known sequence for the government opposite.

However, whether or not this particular amendment to the legislation actually is an advancement at all, is—it's quite difficult to say, because the minister has not explained it. Big problem with Bill 30.

And I know that hats off to our former minister of Justice when the PC government was in power and bringing forth bill 58 because it had all the tools that was needed, you know, so.

But The Unexplained Wealth Act is that it doesn't make any relevant or distinct changes to the legislation already in place within Manitoba, as in 2021, there were amendments made with the Legislature by the PCs allowed for the unexplained wealth order. These allow the Criminal Property Forfeiture director the mechanism within the area of government to explore an individual's finances to see if there is an explanation for their wealth that they acquired.

This piece of legislation is important and appears to be non-partisan, but we must understand today how this is any different from already existing legislation. If not different, it begs the question that the NDP are taking approach of, we have to look like we're doing something even though we're not taking any steps toward the issue of public safety.

And we've seen well into this seven, eight months now, that there's been no action taken. So thank God we put some things in place that give a little bit of framework so that some action can, you know, can take place. *[interjection]* That's right, yes. If this is enhancing something, well, let's know what it is. If it's not, then maybe just admit it.

And the other question, really, is, you know, why is the legislation coming forward when the legislation currently exists already in the province—but—of Manitoba. But I think, unfortunately, there was a campaign promise that was made, Mr.—or, Honourable Deputy Speaker, there was a campaign promise that was made by the NDP in a desperate attempt to try and tell Manitobans that they're tough on crime when, in fact, these laws already exist.

I just want to talk a little bit about the similarities, the comparison, but to give a definition of a reasoned amendment, which is a proposed modification to a bill or a motion that includes a clear and concise explanation of the reasons behind the suggested change. This essential tool enables—excuse me—this essential tool enables lawmakers to engage in informed and constructive debate, refining legislation to better serve the public interest.

A reasoned amendment is a specific type of amendment that not only proposes a change to a bill or a motion but provides a rational justification for the alteration. This justification is typically presented in a clear and concise manner, outlining the reasons why

the amendment is necessary or possibly desirable. Reasoned amendments can be proposed by individual lawmakers, committee or even the executive branch and are an integral part of the overall legislative process.

Reasoned amendments serve several purposes in the Legislature—legislative process. One of them is clarification. Reasoned amendments can help clarify ambiguous or unclear provisions in a bill, ensuring that the intent of the legislation is understood and implemented correctly.

And I see all the members opposite nodding their heads because they know it's true. You know, they're just saying, yes, we agree with you, we agree with you. Why did we even introduce this bill? We could've saved time. We could've just stayed in and presented another bill.

\* (16:10)

And it's taken a lot to try to help the people of Manitoba, and I know there's hundreds of them watching right now on the livestream. And it's taken some time for, you know, these—for them to be able to see that yes, this is happening. Why are we wasting time by having to go over and over and over.

A second thing is improvement by proposing alternative language or modifications. Reasoned amendments can strengthen a bill, addressing potential flaws or perhaps weaknesses.

Then there's a third, of compromise. Reasoned amendments can facilitate compromise among lawmakers with differing opinions, allowing for the finding of common ground and the creation of more effective legislation.

And then there's transparency, a fourth one. The explanatory nature of reasoned amendments promotes transparency, enabling lawmakers and the public to understand the reasoning behind proposed changes.

And there's accountability. By requiring lawmakers to provide clear justifications for the proposed amendments, reasoned amendments promote accountability and responsible governance. And I know the member from La Salle is an educator in the past. She's seen exactly where I'm going with this and she's nodding, yes, I see where you're taking this, member from Swan River.

And the best practice is to maximize the effectiveness of reasoned amendments, lawmakers should be clear and concise. That's one of the main things. We gotta be clear and concise and ensure the explanation

that come—or, accompanying the amendment is easy to understand and addresses the proposed change. And it—for—got to focus on the issue, got to avoid using reasoned amendments as a vehicle for unrelated policy debates or political grandstanding.

And a third is engage in constructive dialogue. Use reasoned amendments as a starting point for respectful and informative decisions with fellow lawmakers. Considerable—or, the fourth one: considerable multiple perspectives. Be open to feedback and willing to incorporate suggestions from others into the amendment.

By employing reasoned 'abendments', lawmakers can engage in a more informed, transparent and accountable legislative process, ultimately leading to a better crafted law that serve the public interest.

And all these different factors were taken into consideration by our member from Steinbach, when he was the minister of Justice, in putting this into perspective so that it would have all the detail that was required, and that is very, very important.

But reasoned amendments that have been brought forward bring the reason why the bill should be withdrawn, not slipped into BITSA, as the government is doing with other pieces of legislation and that are contentious before the House.

But to be able to have a reason for not proceeding with the bill, in this particular case, that reason is that the bill hasn't been described, hasn't been given information about how it is different from other legislation that currently exists in our great province of Manitoba.

The Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), when asked about the difference between this legislation and the legislation that currently exists, didn't have an answer to these questions, and still hasn't answered these questions.

As our member from Fort Whyte, I think, he was telling—and, oh no, that was the other minister. I'm sorry, I thought it was the minister—it was the Minister of Finance, not Justice. I think it was 57 and counting on non-answers, so it seems to be very current, lots of non-answers.

Now I'm sure the Department of Justice could provide in written form, in some way, an explanation of how that bill that is already in existence, the legislation that exists already in Manitoba is different from this particular legislation or how this might enhance it or come alongside and support it.

But there seems to be something of a stubbornness. I won't say the word arrogance because that might be going a little too far. And I don't want to make this personal in any way. But there is certainly stubbornness on the part of the government, the stubbornness that ultimately comes back and will bite the government in the longer term.

With this reasoned amendment that is before the House, we have—the government has to make a decision. They must decide whether or not they do the simple thing, the path of least resistance, and simply answer the questions that have been put forward by myself and others in the House about how this legislation is different from legislation currently exists. A very, very simple request.

At the time of our PC amendments in 2021, the British Columbia had examined what we did under The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and hoped to do the same with their provincial legislation. And I know that the government across the floor looks highly on a lot of the BC things that are brought forward, and some of them are going to—could be very, very devastating to this province.

They introduced bill 21, the Civil Forfeiture Amendment Act—and I'm talking about British Columbia. The minister of public safety, who was the deputy premier in BC at the time, talked a little bit about how this was modelled off of the changes in legislation in Manitoba that took place, again, in 2021 under—guess who—the PC government, not the NDP government. That was an NDP government in BC that referenced our PC government here in Manitoba setting the example across the country of what we need to do to ensure that unexplained wealth and money laundering is dealt with in their province.

And so who did they look at? They looked at the leader in 2021, and that was Manitoba, under a great Justice minister, the member from Steinbach. In an act like this, and in a particular part of Justice like this, there are competing interests. So the public rightfully demands—and this is one of the reasons why we brought the unexplained wealth orders in in 2021—the public rightfully demands that those who are dealing with drugs or are money launderers as a result of dealing drugs or other sorts of things, that there's a punishment put upon them.

Just getting a little dry, excuse me.

Okay, when an order is given, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act, the vast majority—up to 70 per cent—are never contested by the individual.

During the leader debate, the now-Premier (Mr. Kinew) talked, the member from Fort Rouge—where all the crime is occurring right now, I might add, because I do stay in an apartment there—talked about gangsters driving \$100,000 cars.

Well, you know, there's a lot of people that drive \$100,000 cars in Manitoba. I'm sure there's people in this Legislature that drive \$100,000 cars. Are they criminals? Absolutely not. They care about their province. They're in here giving their time for their constituents and the people of Manitoba.

**An Honourable Member:** What's a Ford Lightning worth?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I don't know.

**An Honourable Member:** Hundred and thirty.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Wow. I hope he wasn't referring to all Manitobans that drive \$100,000 cars as gangsters.

Issues in the bill itself, the issue of political targeting. Opponents raised concerns about the act being used for political targeting. Here they may argue authorities could exploit the act to harass or intimidate individuals who hold different political views or are critical of the city. And again, I just—you know, pointing out on these reasoned amendments the similarities that's already in existence. All right?

\* (16:20)

Personal vendettas. Many Manitobans are from small communities, and you know, they're—sometimes people are jealous in small communities. So-and-so has a great job. So-and-so has a beautiful home. So-and-so has a beautiful car. They got a four-wheel drive, they got a boat, they got that—you know, they got a quad.

You maybe don't see it as much in larger communities, but those smaller communities are quite knit. But people can get jealous.

**An Honourable Member:** How does that compare the two bills? Come on.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** How did that person get his money?

And this is perfectly relevant to the amendments—the reasoned amendments on this bill. And I'm comparing bill 58, which already has all these things, and I'm comparing bill—or Bill 30 that's kind of mimicking and mirroring these things.

Why can the person drive a new vehicle? This can all lead to unnecessary conflict.

But the minister is the reason why this bill has now been delayed. It's critically important that we as legislators know what it is that we are debating and what it is that we are passing, and it's the responsibility and the accountability of a minister to be able to bring forward those answers. And we have yet not heard those answers.

So he has that opportunity to still do that today. And I ask him as he's sitting across the House, the member from Concordia, you can—you know, I'll take a break so you can share that with the people of Manitoba, the hundreds of people watching livestream, et cetera. So he has the opportunity still to do that today.

I, like the member from La Salle—because I know, as an educator, take a lot of pride in the fact that, you know, as educators, we really want it to get down to the facts. We didn't want to repeat things over and over again. But I really appreciate her agreeing with me on all these things. So I thank you for that.

But in the absence of that, he's going to continue to hear opposition members do their job and ask that those answers be provided before this bill moves on to the next stage. And that's unfortunate that these delays are happening.

Just want to point out, you know, so I get back to the relevance, some of the similarities to bill 58 and Bill 30. Bill 58, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act in Manitoba and Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, share several similarities despite their distinct focuses.

And I wish I had another 20 or 25 minutes, Deputy Honourable Speaker, because I got so much I want to share on these similarities and comparisons to move that, and possibly I can get leave, maybe, from the members opposite to continue.

But both bills aim to strengthen the legal framework for combatting criminal activity, particularly in relation to property and financial transactions. This analysis will dip into the similarities between the bills, the two bills, highlighting their common goals, provision and their implications. *[interjection]* Please.

Enhanced power for law enforcement. Both bills grant law enforcement agencies increase—thank you—authorities to investigate and seize property suspected of being linked to criminal activity. Bill 58 expands the definition of criminal property to include assets used in the commission of a criminal offense, while Bill 30 allows for the forfeiture of unexplained wealth.

This increased power enables law enforcement to more effectively target criminal organizations and individuals who use property and financial transactions to facilitate illegal activities.

Criminal property forfeiture. Both bills deal with 'criminy'—criminal property forfeiture, and I know that I'm glad—*[interjection]*—yeah, okay. Although Bill 30 focuses on unexplained wealth as a distinct aspect, bill 58 amends The Criminal Property Forfeiture Act to allow for the forfeiture of property used or intended for use in criminal activity, regardless of whether a conviction is obtained.

And I would ask the honourable minister and the member from Concordia that he can now—I would take a break if he chooses to stand and tell the hundreds of Manitobans of the great similarity between bill 58 and Bill 30 and how similar they are and how we just—I just had to get something done and branded by myself, so that's still an opportunity.

Bill 30 amends the same act to include unexplained wealth as a grounds for forfeiture. This shared focus on criminal property forfeiture demonstrates a commitment to depriving criminals from their ill-gotten gains. I just got to quit—taker—I'm just awfully dry today, and I apologize for that. I—too many wings last night.

Anyway, targeting criminal organizations, both bills, Mr. Honourable Deputy Speaker, both bills aim to disrupt and dismantle criminal organizations by targeting their financial assets. Bill 58's expanded definition of criminal property, and Bill 30's focus on unexplained wealth, both seek to prevent criminals from using property and financial transactions to further their illegal activities. By targeting the financial roots of criminal organizations, both bills aim to reduce their ability to operate and cause harm.

Another one is increased transparency. Bill 30's amendment—and I'm going to speed up here because I've been kind of getting sidetracked a little bit here, but—

**An Honourable Member:** Still lots of time, lots of time.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** —okay. Bill 30's amendment to The Corporations Act requiring companies to disclose beneficial ownership and control is a significant step toward increasing transparency.

Similarly, bill 58's provisions for the forfeiture of criminal property can be seen as a means to increase transparency in financial transactions. By shedding

light on previously hidden or obscure financial dealings, both bills aim to prevent criminal activity and promote accountability.

And when it comes to money laundering, the prevention, both address money laundering by targeting the financial aspects of criminal activity. Bill 58 expanded definition of criminal property and Bill 30's focus on unexplained wealth both seek to prevent criminals from using financial transactions to conceal their illegal activities. By making it more difficult for criminals to launder money, both bills contribute to the global effort to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

I know the member from Dauphin knows how hard all those farmers out in his constituency work, just like in Swan River, and how hard they work those Crown lands, you know, getting them active and making sure that they're productive, and—he's just nodding his head. Yes, yes, member from Swan River, I fully understand.

Then there's the protection of the public. Ultimately, both bills aim to protect the public from the harmful effects of criminal activity. By targeting criminal property and financial transactions, both bills seek to reduce the ability of criminals to cause—*[interjection]*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** —harm and perpetuate illegal activities.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

This is what it sounds like when no one's talking. It was getting difficult to hear the honourable member from Swan River speak, so I just wanted to give everyone a chance to listen to the last four minutes if he takes his full four minutes.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I really appreciate that, because I know the member from Dauphin was really listening when I was talking about farmers in his constituency and how hard-working they are, but he's, just like right now, he's right into it; his eyes are glued right on this presentation and he's nodding his head in every word I say, so.

The shared focus on public protection demonstrates a commitment through ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens. And there's also compliance with international standards. And I'm just wrapping up here. I know I need another 10 minutes, but I only got three minutes and 15 seconds, so.

Both bills demonstrate a commitment to complying with international standards for combatting criminal activity by straightening the legal framework for criminal property forfeiture increased—and increasing transparency and financial transactions, both bills align with global efforts to combat these issues.

Both bills facilitate enhanced co-operation between law enforcement agencies, financial regulatory bodies and other organizations involved in combatting criminal activity. And possibly the member—here we talk about the Louise Bridge, and maybe if we checked out the pillars underneath, might be able to come up with a couple million dollars there to get some of those improvements on the Louise Bridge.

By—but by sharing information and resources—I got to stay on track here because I'm running out of time—these agencies can more effectively target criminal organizations and individuals, leading to increased success and disrupting and dismantling operations.

Both bills aimed to create a deterrent effect, discouraging individuals and organizations from engaging in criminal activity. By increasing the risk of forfeiture and penalties for criminal property and financial transactions, both bills seek to prevent criminal activity and promote a culture compliance with the law.

Finally, both bills demonstrate a commitment to justice and the rule of law. By strengthening the legal framework for combatting criminal activity, both bills aim to ensure that those who engage in illegal activity are held accountable for their actions. The shared commitment to justice is a fundamental aspect of both bills.

In conclusion, while bill 58 and Bill 30 have the same focuses, they share several similarities in their goals, their provisions and their implications. Both bills aim to strengthen the legal framework for combatting criminal activity, particularly in relation to property and financial transactions. And now I see the member from Concordia, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), is saying, yes, you know, you have a point there. These bills are so similar, why are we wasting time?

By enhancing the power of law enforcement, targeting criminal organizations and increasing transparency, both bills contribute to the global effort to combat criminal activity and provide a safer, more just society.

Thank you.

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** Well, thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker, and Speaker, as well, as he takes the Chair.

*The Speaker in the Chair*

I think it's important my colleague from Swan River put so many good words on the record, such a wealth of information downloaded there to this Chamber and the folks at hand. I think it's important to just remind everyone what it is we're discussing here, and it is the reasoned amendment for Bill 30. Bill 30 is The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended).

And the reasoned amendment reads that the motion be amended by deleting all the words after that and substituting the following: This House declines to give second reading to Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act (Criminal Property Forfeiture Act and Corporations Act Amended), because this House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill is different to the existing legislation that was brought forward and passed in this House in 2021.

And so that really is the topic at hand here today, and it's an important one because our time in this place is valuable. The government has a lot of priorities that they need to address: many, many, faceted ones across many 'spectors' of the different government departments that they've created and established, different ministries that they've created.

And so we're faced with a situation where we have a minister who's brought forward a bill that, from what we've read, is substantially no different than what is currently written. And I've got to be honest, Honourable Speaker, I'm fairly familiar with bill 58, which is the current act, because I was a member of the team in the building here at the time under Cliff Cullen, who wrote the bill.

So I'm fairly, fairly well informed as to what it is and what it does. He was a great Justice minister, my predecessor as the MLA for Spruce Woods. Of course, he didn't—unfortunately didn't get the credit for actually being able to introduce the bill because the bill was written, and then in January there was a Cabinet shuffle and so the former member for Morden-Winkler was able to introduce the bill. Cameron Friesen actually introduced bill 58 in this place, but it was largely written under his predecessor as minister of Justice, Cliff Cullen.

And so there was robust consultations done on that piece of legislation with chiefs of police and other Crown prosecutors and others across the province,



experts in this file. It's fairly substantive piece of legislation that does, I think—had been working pretty well. Wasn't hearing a lot of complaints about the fact that, gosh, you know, criminals are getting away with keeping their property that they've gotten unlawfully through criminal activity. Wasn't hearing a whole lot about that from stakeholders.

Perhaps the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) was in Concordia, and kudos to him if he was, for representing his constituents' views. There's no question that that is our role in this place. That is what we're supposed to be doing.

But alas, I think we've—were pretty clear that bill 58 does a good job. So good of a job, in fact, that the British Columbia NDP government copied bill 58, almost word for word. Different title. Different bill number, of course, in the British Columbia Legislature at the time, but copied it. It was so well done by Cliff Cullen and the previous Progressive Conservative government.

So why, then, has the minister decided to introduce Bill 30? It's theoretically identical in almost every sense. I hope, you know, that he's not introducing legislation because they made an ill-informed campaign commitment and therefore is wasting time in this place by debating and introducing redundant legislation. That would be a fairly concerning path forward for a new government elected with a new mandate.

But alas, here we are. And so, Progressive Conservatives felt that there was little option but to move a reasoned amendment to suggest that this bill is not substantially different than the existing legislation. I think if the minister, you know, consulted, he would have heard from officials who implement this bill and who utilize it on a day-to-day basis, that it was working pretty well.

\* (16:40)

I remember in my role, working in this building, meeting with chiefs of police and police services about their requests for funding for certain operational items under the Criminal Property Forfeiture Fund, which is created through the wealth obtained through this act.

And a great example is the former chief of police from Altona, Mr. Perry Batchelor, a stand-up individual who served in our Armed Forces and then served at the RCMP and then came back a third time to serve as the chief of 'elai' Altona Police Service. He thought

bill 58 was great, and it was working incredibly, incredibly well.

And so, you know, I'm sure if the minister or anybody else on that side called Perry up and said, what's going on, do you—do we think we need some help? He would've said, listen folks, I've—I bet you've got bigger issues to deal with. This is working well, so why are we trying to present a solution where there is no problem to be solved? But alas, here we are.

And so, from a substantive perspective, the minister said, well, we're just copying BC. Well, BC copied what we've already got. So no wonder the bill looks the same as to what's already written. And that's the big problem with Bill 30. It doesn't make any relevant or distinct changes to the legislation that's already in place within Manitoba.

And just as a reminder, this was brought forward in 2021, relatively recently, in which the now-Minister of Justice was a member of this Chamber. So it's not like he was newly elected in 2023 and had no idea that this bill had been debated and discussed. He was here for that debate. In fact, Honourable Speaker, I bet if we went back into Hansard, he probably has words on the record about the bill 58 debate when it was up for consideration here.

I wonder what those words are. Alas, I didn't have the space in my speech today to fit those Hansard quotes in. Perhaps when we get back to debating the full bill and not the reasoned amendment, those quotes will come into play. But alas. Here we are.

The PC bill, bill 58, the current act in force, made amendments that allow the Criminal Property Forfeiture director and the mechanism within that area to explore an individual's finances to see if there is an explanation for their wealth. This piece of legislation is important. But we must understand today how it's 'exip'—any different from what I just quoted as the existing legislation.

If it's not different, as I mentioned, it begs the question that the NDP are saying, gosh, we got to look like we're doing something. We made this election commitment.

You know, but—

**The Speaker:** Just want to remind members that they should not be on their cellphones while they're in the Chamber. You can use it to look at, but you can't be holding it up talking on it, so.

**Mr. Jackson:** As I was saying, I hope it's not in an attempt to have—trying to fulfill this election commitment that was made based on their friends in the NDP in BC.

By the way, having the NDP BC government copy bill 58, which is now being copied by Bill 30, was a pretty flattering comment. Not very often that NDP governments are copying Progressive Conservative legislation. That's a pretty rare occurrence. And so we were thrilled that the premier at the time in BC said, you know what a good idea is? A good idea, let's move forward with this ourselves.

So, I guess, flattery is the—I'm sorry, copying is the best form of flattery, but unfortunately, the minister could've just stood up and said thanks for doing a great job, PCs. Bill 58 works. And instead, he's copied us again via the BC NDP, and he is—it's very flattering. But it's unnecessary, it's redundant and so therefore we have moved this reasoned amendment to suggest that the minister does not need to be bringing this bill forward. It does not make any substantive changes, and so, therefore, we should be moving on to other bills and addressing serious concerns that, no doubt, other bills that they've brought forward do seek to address.

And that's our job on this side of the House. It's the opposition's role to ensure that any legislation that comes forward in the House is different from statutes that are already enacted.

However, whether or not, you know, the minister believes that this bill is any different is also in question, because in the Q and A section, he didn't respond to questions. In fact he sort of went after the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen); I'm not sure exactly why. I think he's a fairly well-respected member of this Chamber.

Nonetheless, that's what happened. That's how the Q and A section went. So how are we supposed to get answers to the question, and do our jobs as the opposition of ensuring that new legislation brought forward is different from existing legislation if the minister won't answer questions in the Q and A section of bill debate?

Well, the only option that's left to us is a reasoned amendment. And I understand that colleagues had concerns, that this was not a frequently used tool in the Legislative bucket, shall we say, of procedures. But we are committed to doing our job as opposition, and doing it well.

And so, we've read the rules. We understand that these are options available to us in terms of the rules and procedures of this place. And so we have utilized a reasoned amendment to ensure that this government is held to account, and I would encourage members on that side to get up and answer the question, and then we could move on.

But, unfortunately, we haven't seen any members get up on that side and respond to the question that the reasoned amendment asks, which is that the House has not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill is different to the existing legislation passed and brought forward by this House in 2021.

If the minister or others on that side, who may have the answers, want to get up and answer, give us that assurance that it is different, walk us through the differences, we could move on. We could move on to other bills and other items that are in the public interest. But alas, Honourable Speaker, perhaps when I'm done a member from that side will get up and respond to the questions that the reasoned amendment asks.

If it is enhancing something, again, just let us know what it is. And if it's not, then let's admit it. Let's approve the reasoned amendment, which would result in the withdrawal of this bill, as I understand it from how the procedure works. We can go back to the drawing board.

And I know, perhaps, you know, the member for Steinbach, as a minister of Justice, would be happy to help the current Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) take the legislation back to the drawing board and make some substantial changes if he asked. I'm sure, knowing the generous person that he is, that he would be willing to do that if the minister asks.

And so that could be a path forward. We will see whether they take us up on that option, or whether we continue with the reasoned amendment until it comes to a vote, and then we proceed with debate on the bill.

Again, the reasoned amendment that's been brought forward brings forward the reason why the bill should be withdrawn, unlike other practices that this government has used recently, by slipping it into BITSA, to ram it through. We're thankful that that didn't happen with this bill, which they've done elsewhere, because the government, what they're doing with other pieces of legislation that are contentious, but are not able to have a reason for proceeding with them.

In this particular case, the reason is that the bill hasn't been described, hasn't been given any information about how it's different from other legislation that currently exists in the province of Manitoba.

\* (16:50)

And so, Honourable Speaker, with this reasoned amendment that is before the House, the government has to make a decision. They must decide whether or not they do the simple thing, the path of least resistance, and simply vote in favour of this reasoned amendment and answer the questions that have been put forward by many colleagues on this side, answer those questions about how the bill is different, and then we can proceed with the bill. Approving the reasoned amendment doesn't defeat the bill. It can come back in an amended state or in a questions-answered state, if the government so chooses; that is in their power. We are waiting to see.

Perhaps the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) will get up today and enlighten us on what his path forward is. It's a very simple request. Or we will come—it will come to a vote—perhaps, I guess, they will defeat it; that would be unfortunate—and then we will resume debate on the bill itself and why it is not necessary because the provisions are already in place under bill 58 and they are already working.

I've discussed the fact that copying is the most sincere form of flattery, and we thank British Columbia for copying our Progressive Conservative team's work. Again, that was an NDP government in BC. So why this government couldn't just say, gosh, you know, they used the existing legislation here. Nice for us to walk into government and have a bill that's working well. One last thing off the bucket list of problems to solve. Good.

But instead, they decided they needed to introduce a bill that doesn't do anything new, thereby wasting your time, Honourable Speaker, which is very valuable, and the time of this elected Assembly.

And so we have concerns, as well, about comments made publicly. I think my colleague from Swan River mentioned a few of them, on the First Minister's comments made publicly about why he was bringing this bill forward. And so those comments aren't reflected in the substance of the bill, which is the concern. There should be a substantial difference in what's happening with Bill 30 if the Premier (Mr. Kinew) has concerns about the bill and the act as it currently exists.

So the Premier is sharing concerns publicly, and then we got a bill that doesn't really do anything different. So I don't know whether that's a miscommunication between the Justice Minister and the Premier. How their caucus, Cabinet, communications work on that side will probably always be a mystery to me, but, alas, it is something that they do need to address because I would hate for the Minister of Justice to not be meeting the expectations of the First Minister. That would, indeed, be a deep concern.

And so I'm here with my colleagues to put on the record just a few words about Bill 30, The Unexplained Wealth Act, and how our reasoned amendment declines to give second reading to it because we have not received satisfactory evidence or assurance that this bill is different to the existing legislation that was brought forward by my predecessor, Cliff Cullen, and his immediate successor as minister of Justice, Mr. Cameron Friesen.

And so, again, I did touch a little bit about reasoned amendments not being very common. Here is their purpose: A reasoned amendment is a proposed modification to a bill or motion that includes a clear and concise explanation of the reasons behind the suggested change. I think our reasoned amendment, it's pretty clear. A reasoned amendment is a specific type of amendment that not only proposes a change to a bill or motion but also provides a rational justification for the alteration.

Well, having read our reasoned amendment I think the vast majority of Manitobans would agree that it is indeed rational. Most Manitobans would not waste their time trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist. They are busy people; they have busy lives; they have busy careers. They want to get things done, and solve problem that exist and that need to be solved, not solving problems that already have a functioning and working solution.

So the reasoned amendment needs to provide a few things.

Number 1: clarification. Reasoned amendments can help clarify ambiguous or unclear provisions in a bill, ensuring that the intent of the legislation is understood and implemented correctly. So, again, we've moved this reasoned amendment because Manitobans don't know the answers to those questions and they would like the minister to answer. I am sure he will do so as soon as I conclude these remarks.

Number 2: a reasoned amendment must propose improvement. By proposing alternative language or

modifications, reasoned amendments can strengthen a bill, addressing potential flaws or weaknesses.

That is our role here as opposition members, is to strengthen the work of the government. Members across the way did that many times when we were on the other side and they were proposing amendments, when they were criticizing initiatives in question period. That's the role of opposition. I understand that the legislative process can be time-consuming and can be frustrating. But our role as opposition is to strengthen the agenda of the government, and we are doing that with this reasoned amendment.

And No. 3: compromise. Compromise is a tricky word because we all have principles in this place, but we are here asking the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) to compromise or tell us the differences between Bill 30 and the existing statutes. There is a choice. It's always good to have options, and those are the options that face this Justice Minister.

Whether he chooses to take one course or the other, or neither, I suppose, is up to him and the governing caucus, but we at least are providing an option and we hope that Manitobans think that this is the right path forward. I think that they do.

Number 4, which is critical: transparency. The explanatory nature of reasoned amendments promotes transparency, enabling lawmakers and the public to understand the reasoning behind proposed changes. And as a former staff member, sometimes the justification for legislation can be difficult to understand. It's difficult to compress it into a news release or the explanatory note of a bill.

And so we feel that way about Bill 30, and so the reasoned amendment again is another—this is another reason why this amendment has come forward: it promotes transparency, enabling lawmakers—in this case, the Minister of Justice—to give justification to the public about why these proposed changes are necessary and how they enhance what currently exists.

Number 5: accountability. By requiring lawmakers to provide clear justifications for their proposed amendments, reasoned amendments promote accountability and responsible governance. Now that is a hot topic, because I understand the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine) is getting increasingly frustrated about the robust debate on this amendment and the bill. There's some sighing happening every time that they announce this bill.

I understand democracy can be time-consuming and at times frustrating and exacerbating, but we got elected here—whether the government likes that or not—we got elected here to do a job, and it's holding them accountable, which is exactly what we're doing with this reasoned amendment.

I know that's very disappointing to them. They would have liked to win 57 out of 57 seats. Alas, that didn't happen. I look forward to seeing my colleagues across the way on the doorsteps in Spruce Woods. It will be a good time. It will be a good time.

In any case, it's frustrating for the Government House Leader, but nonetheless, we are not deterred. We will continue to do our job.

And so, if the government wanted to add to our reasoned amendment, I'm sure they could. And so by employing reasoned amendments, we could together engage in a more informed, transparent, accountable legislative process enhancing this place and the level of debate and discord and the decisions that we're making.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

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

The hour being 5 o'clock, the House is now adjourned, stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Wednesday, May 15, 2024**

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are also available on the Internet at the following address:

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