

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 15, 2021

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

Bill 225—The Budget Impact Reporting Act

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Thank you, Madam—

Madam Speaker: We just lost the member.

Could the member please unmute.

Mr. Wasyliv: Okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Sala), that Bill 225, The Budget Impact Reporting Act; Loi sur la publication de rapports concernant les répercussions des mesures budgétaires, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wasyliv: I am pleased to introduce Bill 225, The Budget Impact Reporting Act. This act would require the Minister of Finance to report on the effects of the government's budget decisions on economic and social inclusion and greenhouse gas emissions in Manitoba.

The government's budget decisions have a direct impact on the ability of Manitobans to fully participate in economic and social activities, as well as on the amount of greenhouse gas emissions in our province. Bill 225 will increase government's accountability for its budget decisions and will lead to enhanced affordability for Manitobans and promote the creation and retention of environmentally sustainable jobs for all Manitobans.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk).

An Honourable Member: Did you mean Riding Mountain, Madam Speaker?

Madam Speaker: No, Turtle Mountain.

I will—hopefully, somebody can connect with him.

Madam Speaker: And I will call the honourable member for La Vérendrye on a committee report.

**Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs
Sixth Report**

Mr. Dennis Smook (Chairperson): I wish to present the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on April 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- ***Bill (No. 21) – The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) and Related Amendments Act/Loi sur les conflits d'intérêts des députés et des ministres et modifications connexes***
- ***Bill (No. 29) – The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2020/Loi de 2020 visant la réduction du fardeau administratif et l'amélioration des services***
- ***Bill (No. 32) – The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act (Government Advertising)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi électorale (publicité du gouvernement)***
- ***Bill (No. 49) – The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée***
- ***Bill (No. 52) – The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2021/Loi corrective de 2021***

- **Bill (No. 54)** – *The Personal Health Information Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements médicaux personnels*

Committee Membership

- *MLA ASAGWARA*
- *Hon. Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Ms. MARCELINO*
- *Mr. MICHALESKI*
- *Mr. SMOOK*
- *Hon. Mrs. STEFANSON*

Your Committee elected Mr. SMOOK as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. MICHALESKI as the Vice-Chairperson.

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- *Mr. LAMONT*

As per the Sessional Order passed by the House on October 7, 2020 and further amended on December 3, 2020, Rule 83(2) was waived for the April 14, 2021 meeting, reducing the membership to six Members (4 Government and 2 Official Opposition).

Public Presentations

*Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 29)** – *The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2020/Loi de 2020 visant la réduction du fardeau administratif et l'amélioration des services:**

Molly McCracken, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives

Philip Halprin, Private citizen

Brenda Halprin, Private citizen

*Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 32)** – *The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act (Government Advertising)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi électorale (publicité du gouvernement):**

Kevin Rebeck, Manitoba Federation of Labour

*Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 49)** – *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée:**

Bridget Whipple, Manitoba Nurses Union

Kevin Walby, Director, Centre for Access to Information and Justice, University of Winnipeg
Shawna Finnegan, Private citizen

*Your Committee heard the following presentation on **Bill (No. 54)** – *The Personal Health Information Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements médicaux personnels:**

Shawna Finnegan, Private citizen

Written Submissions

*Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 29)** – *The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2020/Loi de 2020 visant la réduction du fardeau administratif et l'amélioration des services:**

Leanne Fenez, Private citizen

*Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 32)** – *The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act (Government Advertising)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi électorale (publicité du gouvernement):**

Darryl Harrison, Winnipeg Construction Association

*Your Committee received the following written submission on **Bill (No. 49)** – *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée :**

Denys Volkov, Association of Manitoba Municipalities

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 21)** – *The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) and Related Amendments Act/Loi sur les conflits d'intérêts des députés et des ministres et modifications connexes*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 29)** – *The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2020/Loi de 2020 visant la réduction du fardeau administratif et l'amélioration des services*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 32)** – *The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act (Government Advertising)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi électorale (publicité du gouvernement)*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 49) – The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'accès à l'information et la protection de la vie privée**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, with the following two amendments:

THAT Clause 9 of the Bill be amended by striking out clause (a).

THAT Clause 43 of the Bill be amended by replacing the proposed subsection 98(1) with the following:

Review of Act within five years

98(1) The responsible minister must undertake a comprehensive review of the operation of this Act, which involves public representations, within five years after the day on which this section comes into force.

- **Bill (No. 52) – The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2021 / Loi corrective de 2021**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 54) – The Personal Health Information Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements médicaux personnels**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill, with the following amendment:

THAT Clause 33 of the Bill be amended by replacing the proposed subsection 67(1) with the following:

Review of Act within five years

67(1) The minister must undertake a comprehensive review of the operation of this Act, which involves public representations, within five years after the day on which this section comes into force.

Mr. Smook: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Madam Speaker: Is the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) there?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I think there's a technical issue that's being dealt with. I wonder if we could move on to members' statements and revert back to committee reports following that?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to revert back to committee reports following members' statements? Agreed? [Agreed]

Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Goodland Apples

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Central Services): Madam Speaker, when we had the very good fortune to move to Brandon over 30 years ago, we were able to build a new house. Part of that planning included planting trees, and we explored the idea of fruit trees.

We found that the Goodland apple tree was developed at the agriculture research centre in Morden, Manitoba, under the direction of Dr. Leslie, the head of station. It was known as Morden 354 when it was developed in 1925 and introduced to the market as the Goodland apple in 1955.

I suspect a good portion of the apples for the Morden Corn and Apple Festival are Goodland apples.

We planted a Goodland apple tree in the corner of the yard and watched as it grew and flourished. Our children were very excited when it first began producing apples. They could hardly wait until they were ready to eat, and we had many years where they were shared with friends and family.

Madam Speaker, the Goodland apple is a very, very productive tree. As our family grew and became busier with school and activities, we found it became more of a chore picking up the fallen apples than a joy to enjoy them.

Our dogs did enjoy munching on a few of the fallen apples, but even they couldn't keep up to the bountiful production. We gave many apples away and often received pies, apple cobblers, apple dumplings and more in return, but we were also concerned about the waste.

A few years ago, we discovered that a group had formed in Brandon called Fruit Share. It is an organization that co-ordinates volunteer pickers to harvest fruit. One third of the fruit goes to the volunteers, one third to charitable organizations in Brandon and one third to the fruit owners if they want it.

Katy [phonetic] Bruederlin and her pickers do a wonderful job with our Goodland apple tree, and we can be assured that the fruit is used and not wasted.

Born in Power Exhibit

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, I'm honoured to rise today to recognize the Born in Power exhibit at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.

Originally installed at the Winnipeg Art Gallery in November 2020, the Born in Power exhibit officially launched in February 2021 in conjunction with Black History Month.

The WAG curator of Indigenous and contemporary art, Jaimie Isaac, noticed an opportunity to share this exhibition in light of COVID-19, since many other exhibitions were being cancelled. Some featured artists include Anique Jordan, Meryl McMaster, Ella Cooper, Kali Spitzer, Hagere Selam Shimby Zegeye-Gebrehiwot and more.

Born in Power represents—sorry—rather, presents Black and Indigenous representation through photography, film, mixed media and text. Black and Indigenous artists unpack the history of photography as a colonial tool, an imperial weapon of racial violence and objectification.

The exhibit honours the very significant resistance and reclamation that various artists express through their works.

The exhibition presents women and non-binary and enby identities that highlight both the self and community through reclaiming sovereign—image sovereignty. Black and Indigenous peoples are represented through an intergenerational lens and represent both self-determination as well as familial power.

The artists featured use their work to express collective histories of resistance, intersectional oppression, discrimination, objectification and use photography to defy stereotypes and Eurocentric standards.

It's so important for Black and Indigenous community members to define their own identities and that of their communities, and this is exactly what Born in Power represents.

Thank you, and congratulations to Jaimie Isaac and to all the amazing local artists.

I encourage all members to attend Born in Power, as well as their online programming featuring voices from the community, and to continue educating themselves on the lived experiences of Black and Indigenous members of our communities.

Thank you.

Community Newspaper Day

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Today I rise to recognize all community newspaper publishers in the province as we mark Community Newspaper Day in Manitoba on April 17th.

This special day came about as the result of the unanimous all-party passage of a private member's resolution moved by Mavis—MLA Mavis Taillieu in 2005.

* (13:40)

Now, as many in this House know, Mavis was the publisher of the Headingley Headliner prior to being elected as a member of this Legislature. She knew full well the contribution that community newspapers make in the everyday life of Manitobans.

As a community newspaper publisher myself for 40 years, I recognized early on in my career that, even though I owned the newspapers, they really belonged to the communities they served.

Community newspapers carry news that matters. Unlike their big city cousins, they are not filled with news from across Canada or around the world, but instead offer news and features with a local perspective, as well as advertising from area businesses, municipalities and government.

Community newspapers tend to publish informative and uplifting stories and don't intentionally go looking for negativity. Perhaps that's why, they are such a valued source for news and advertising—have—and have consistently high readership.

Throughout history, newspapers have been relied upon to provide trusted and important information in times of crisis. During this pandemic the need for vital information to be communicated uniformly and without prejudice is greater now than it ever has been. Community newspapers are on the front lines, keeping citizens of their communities updated on the latest developments directly affecting their lives.

But there are storm clouds, Madam Speaker. The steady erosion of advertising dollars that pay the bills is a major concern to publishers. Online giants like Google and Facebook—who, incidentally, do not support anything local—use content generated by hard-working journalists without any compensation to the news outlets. Then, to top it off, they use this contact to attract online advertisers.

Manitoba's—community newspapers have been asking the federal government to stand up to these

web giants and pass legislation to ensure they reimburse newspapers for the content they use.

In closing, I want to tip my hat to the employees of the 37 community newspapers—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Is there leave to allow the member to conclude his statement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Nesbitt: In closing, I want to tip my hat to the employees of the 37 community newspapers across Manitoba as they continue to play a vital role in documenting the history of our communities.

Madam Speaker, I would like to request leave to add the names of all 37 community newspapers and their publishers to Hansard.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow those names into Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Manitoba Community Newspaper Publishers: Jenifer Bilsky, The Graphic Leader; Gord Brewerton, Empire-Advance, and The Reminder; Mark T. Buss, The Clipper; Bob Cox and John Kendle, The Headliner, The Herald, The Lance, The Metro, The Sou'wester, and The Times; Laurie Finley, The Carillon; Bob Gilroy, Dauphin Herald, Opasquia Times, The Roblin Review, The Russell Banner, and Swan Valley Star and Times; Darryl Holyk, Minnedosa Tribune; Lorraine Houston, Boissevain Recorder; Grant and Kim Howatt, The Western Canadian; Mike Johnson, Baldur Glenboro Gazette; Daxley Lodwick, The Times; Lana Meier, The Express Weekly News, Selkirk Record, and Stonewall Teulon Tribune; Jim Mihaly, Westman This Week; Ryan Nesbitt, Erickson South Mountain Press, and Crossroads This Week; Susan Peterson, The Sentinel Courier; Brenda Piatt, Emerson Southeast Journal; Rick Reimer, The Winkler Morden Voice; Jay Struth, The Guide; Lynn Taylor, Thompson Citizen, and Nickel Belt News; Bruce Valpy, Kivalliq News; Ken Waddell, Neepawa Banner & Press; Micah Waddell, Rivers Banner; Vicki Wallace, Southern Manitoba Review.

St. Theresa Point Church Fire

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): I rise today to share a few words about the Catholic church that served the people of the St. Theresa Point First Nation.

Madam Speaker, tragedy struck the community this past Easter Sunday when a fire completely destroyed the 65-year-old community church.

The church, over its 65 years, was home to many occasions for the people of St. Theresa Point. Madam Speaker, community church services, weddings, celebrations of life were but a few events that the church hosted.

Madam Speaker, the church meant so much more to the community than just the services held there. The community church was also a sanctuary for all the people of St. Theresa Point; it was a place, regardless of how you felt or no matter what was going on in your life, it was a place where you could truly be yourself and be counted on for guidance and assistance

In a remote community, let alone a remote First Nation community, culture, religion and a sense of community belonging are a key component to helping someone feel whole. While, to some, a church building itself may seem like just that, a building, to the members of St. Theresa Point it meant so much more: it was a sense of pride, a feeling of comfort, a sense of belonging, and ultimately it was the heart of the community itself

While the people of St. Theresa Point feel sadness at the loss of their church, they take comfort in the joy that the church brought them and its generations of community residents over its 65 years

While you can expect issues with a building of its age, it's with loving hands and hard work the people of St. Theresa Point were able to keep its doors open for their devout parishioners, and to quote the community of St. Theresa Point: We will work together and recover this huge loss and always have faith that things happen for a reason. Please remember the wonderful memory the building holds forever in our hearts.

While the members of St. Theresa Point church are reeling from the tragedy, they are already looking forward to the construction of a new church, for which they have already begun fundraising to be rebuilt.

Madam Speaker, while it may take months or even years to rebuild, I look forward to someday soon attending the opening of a new church in St. Theresa Point First Nation, because I know, with the will, determination and strong belief that the people of St. Theresa have in their community, their church, their culture and religion, I have no doubt they will come together, persevere, rebuild and be stronger than ever.

Miigwech.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights. The honourable member for River Heights, on a member's statement?

David Schindler

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes. Madam—

Madam Speaker: Could the member please turn his video on?

Mr. Gerrard: Yes. Madam Speaker, I want to pay tribute to an extraordinary individual who has been one of the foremost ecosystem scientists the globe has seen. He spent quite a bit of time in Manitoba. His name is David Schindler.

When he was about 28, he was asked to head up what became the Experimental Lakes Area and is now the International Institute for Sustainable Development and Experimental Lakes Area together.

He was extraordinarily important in the understanding of the originals of algal blooms and in showing that phosphorus was the critical element which was important for algal blooms.

And, of course, we benefit from that knowledge as we proceed in our efforts to clean up Lake Winnipeg and reduce algal blooms there.

He also played an extraordinary role in understanding acid rain and in bringing an end to the major problem of acid rain in Canada and in the United States.

He was extraordinarily important in many other facets of understanding ecosystem health and worked in part after he retired from the Experimental Lakes Area in the mountains in Alberta and in northern Alberta in the Peace River Area.

He passed away recently and he is remembered by many of his colleagues in a recent ceremony that spoke out not only for his scientific knowledge but for his humanity, his encouragement of others—particularly women—and for really laying the foundation for a wonderful ecosystem science in Canada.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

(Continued)

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development Fifth Report

Madam Speaker: As agreed, the House will now revert back to committee reports.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on April 14, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 45) – The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba Teachers' Society Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques et la Loi sur l'Association des enseignants du Manitoba**

Committee Membership

- Mr. ALTOMARE
- Hon. Mr. CULLEN
- Hon. Mrs. GUILLEMARD
- Mr. JOHNSTON
- Ms. NAYLOR
- Mr. PIWNIUK

Your Committee elected Mr. PIWNIUK as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. JOHNSTON as the Vice-Chairperson.

As per the Sessional Order passed by the House on October 7, 2020 and further amended on December 3, 2020, Rule 83(2) was waived for the April 14, 2021 meeting, reducing the membership to six Members (4 Government and 2 Official Opposition).

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- Ms. LAMOUREUX

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following 13 presentations on Bill (No. 45) – The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba Teachers' Society Amendment Act/Loi

modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques et la Loi sur l'Association des enseignants du Manitoba:

*Alan Campbell, Manitoba School Boards Association
Donald Nikkel, Lakeshore School Division*

James Bedford, Manitoba Teachers' Society

John Wiens, Private Citizen

Anne Lindsay, Thompson Teachers' Association

Chance Henderson, Mountainview Teachers' Association

Anna-Maria Coniglio, Private Citizen

Kevin Rebeck, Manitoba Federation of Labour

Mark Behrendt, Private Citizen

Kelly Friesen, Private Citizen

Jan McIntyre, Prairie Spirit School Division

Lise Legal, Pembina Trails Teachers' Association

Nancy Karpinsky, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

*Your Committee received the following 15 written submissions on **Bill (No. 45) – The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba Teachers' Society Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques et la Loi sur l'Association des enseignants du Manitoba:***

Jay Ewert, Evergreen Teachers' Association

Marcela Cabezas, Louis Riel Teachers' Association

Lindsay Vieira, Private Citizen

Rowena Lavarias, Private Citizen

Julie Ching, Private Citizen

Nicole Peake, Private Citizen

Cameron Watson, Pine Creek Teachers' Association

William L Taylor, Private Citizen

Vanessa Lylyk, Private Citizen

Maureen Ferley, Private Citizen

Katinka Stecina, Private Citizen

Jerry Sodomlak, River East Transcona School Division

Lynsey Lodge, Private Citizen

Justin Rempel, Private Citizen

Charlene Sacher, Private Citizen

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 45) – The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba Teachers' Society Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques et la Loi sur l'Association des enseignants du Manitoba**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Piwniuk: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mr. Johnston), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTIONS

COVID-19 Vaccinations Priority for Essential Workers

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Essential front-line workers in our communities like teachers, child-care workers, transit drivers, grocery store workers, those in manufacturing, law enforcement and others deserve to feel safe when they are on the job. But as we enter a third wave with case counts rising and variants of concern emerging, our essential workers are feeling less and less safe.

One way to ensure that they are safe would be to get them and all other Manitobans vaccinated faster. Unfortunately, Manitoba is second worst in all of Canada for the percentage of first doses in people's arms. Now, that's not sitting well with essential workers in manufacturing and other sectors, nor with teachers, nor with first responders. They still have to go to work even if restrictions do get increased.

So these essential workers want to know: When will the Premier (Mr. Pallister) prioritize them to get vaccinated?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Deputy Premier): We thank all the essential workers in Manitoba, who've been doing an extraordinary job over the last year for all Manitobans.

So, the vaccine task force, which is in charge of making these decisions, has already helped to administer more than 300,000 doses, Madam Speaker. That includes—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, that includes 100,000 doses to our First Nations partners.

We know that there are adjustments that are always happening. The vaccine task force is always looking at those adjustments. But we certainly thank all those essential front-line workers, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, there's a health-care basis for extending the vaccine priority list to include

these essential workers. Part of it is that it would help slow down on community spread. As the virus changes, we need to ensure that our responses to the pandemic continue to adapt and keep pace.

Now, essential workers need greater protection today so that they can continue to provide Manitobans with the services that we need in order to stay fed, safe, healthy and to continue learning.

* (13:50)

Now, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) refuses to entertain requests to give teachers and other educational staff additional protective equipment. He also refuses to prioritize them for vaccines. That leaves them very concerned.

When will the Premier begin vaccinating Manitoba's essential workers?

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, the reality is, when there is still a scarcity of vaccines, that there are going to be more people who want the vaccine than it can be administered to.

So, the vaccine task force is making those priorities based on the best medical advice that they can provide, Madam Speaker, to provide those who most need it the vaccine while we have the scarcity. Now, we are certainly hoping, of course, that vaccines continue to come in and come in at a greater number from the federal government. While that is still happening, we rely on the experts to determine how those vaccines should be distributed.

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

Personal-Care Homes COVID-19 Prevention

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): It was very concerning today to hear the news that another outbreak has been declared at Parkview Place personal-care home. Parkview Place was among the hardest hit of the long-term-care facilities during the second wave. Tragically, there were 30 deaths at that facility.

Now, after failing to call in the military during the second wave, or really to do anything to protect Parkview Place, the Premier failed to include any additional investments in our long-term-care system in their recent budget.

After all these failures, it's time that the government take a new and much improved approach to protecting seniors.

What is the Premier's plan to help Parkview Place and other personal-care homes today?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Deputy Premier): Madam Speaker, the priority always was to ensure that those in our personal-care homes got not just one dose, but got two doses. That is why we're leading the country in that.

Listening to those on the vaccine task force yesterday, Madam Speaker, they described how those who've had two doses—none of those who've had two doses have had to go to hospital if they've contracted COVID-19. That is why we made it a priority to ensure that the most vulnerable got those vaccines.

In terms of resources, Madam Speaker, not only do we provide those resources but we've provided additional resources going forward, \$1.2 billion, which the member opposite and all of his caucus colleagues had the opportunity to support yesterday. Instead, they voted against.

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

Public Services Sustainability Act Ruling on Public Sector Wages

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, today's ruling at the Court of Appeal is a win for thousands of families right across our province.

The Premier's clear disdain of the rights of these Manitobans is shameful. He's continued to force illegal wage freezes on heroes like nurses and teachers and our Hydro workers. He's used Manitoba tax dollars to go to court to fight for those unconstitutional wage freezes. And every single time that he's tried to fight these issues, Madam Speaker, he has lost—every single time.

It's time that this stops. The courts have ordered arbitration.

Will the Premier simply promise to the people of Manitoba that this will never happen again?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): We respect the decisions of the courts. It was our government's view, obviously, that parties should actually try to reasonably negotiate, instead of just one-and-a-half days, many months like others. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fielding: We do respect the court's opinion. An arbitration panel has been struck and dates are already established in September.

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

Mr. Kinew: The Premier's (Mr. Pallister) continued interference has been proven unconstitutional and just plain wrong many, many times.

It was ruled in this fashion at the Labour Board. Arbitrators ruled against him. The Court of Queen's Bench has ruled against him. And now the Court of Appeal has found against him again. Bill 28 was deemed unconstitutional. And now his refusal to allow arbitration has been declared unreasonable.

The Premier has continued to waste time and taxpayers' money on these legal fights, all while he could have been ensuring that these folks get a decent wage so that they can go out and spend money in the community and thereby promoting an economic recovery.

Will the Premier simply admit defeat and stop his attack on working people?

Mr. Fielding: I'm not sure why the member doesn't like the word or take the word yes as an answer. We respect the decision of the courts. It's the government's view that these things could be resolved, obviously, directly through collective bargaining before going to arbitration. One and a half days, in the government's opinion, wasn't long enough to be at the arbitration table.

With that being said, we do respect the court system. We do respect the fact that there is an arbitration panel that is already established. And we also do respect the fact that there's dates in September of— to hear this case.

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

Hydro Labour Dispute Request for Arbitration

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, Madam Speaker, today's ruling doesn't just vindicate those thousands of people who work in the public sector, it also vindicates those 2,300 IBEW Manitoba Hydro employees who are on strike right now.

And let's recall: those workers have been asking for arbitration. So I wonder if the Finance Minister's new-found approval of arbitration extends to those

Manitoba Hydro workers. And, yes, a yes would suffice in answer to this question.

But what it tells us is that the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Pallister) has been wrong in his attack on working people the whole time, that the zeroes that this team has implemented has been wrong the whole time.

Will the Premier finally admit that his actions have been unreasonable, get out of the way and let the 2,300 Manitoba Hydro workers go to arbitration?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Again, I'm going to reiterate what I said before: we respect the court's decision in respect to this, and it was our government's opinion that these things could be resolved through collective bargaining as opposed to going to the arbitration process. One and a half days isn't, in our opinion, the right 'around', but we do appreciate and we do respect the court's decision.

There's an arbitration panel that's there. We're not going to make the mistakes in other arbitration—or, other labour disputes, where you have the Leader of the Opposition that is picketing on one side and choosing winners and losers with these decisions.

This isn't something we're going to do, Madam Speaker. We want to balance between labour and business practices. We think it's totally appropriate.

Vaccinations for Vulnerable Manitobans Request for Transportation Opinions

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, getting vulnerable Manitobans vaccinated should be this government's No. 1 priority right now. However, today's announcement did absolutely nothing to address the cost and accessibility barriers that they are currently—that are currently preventing many Manitobans from getting vaccinated.

Many of these folks are already aware of their transportation options, they just can't afford them. Today's announcement missed the mark.

Will the minister provide additional, no-cost transportation options for getting to and from vaccination appointments for Manitobans who face mobility and income barriers?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Health and Seniors Care): We absolutely did put vulnerable Manitobans first, Madam Speaker. That's why all 125 personal-care-home citizens in those personal-care homes got not just one dose of the vaccine, but got two doses of the vaccine.

The member opposite—when it comes to vulnerable Manitobans needing some help to get to the vaccine site to get their doses of the vaccine, I'll inform the member that we launched a new partner with United Way 211 Manitoba to help connect seniors and people with mobility issues to transportation services that can get them to their COVID-19 vaccination appointments.

I will remind the member opposite that that's part of the budget that they voted against yesterday.

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

MLA Asagwara: Today's government press release says, and I quote, individuals are responsible for the cost of their transportation service. End quote.

I have stood in this House and given the minister examples of instances when Manitobans could not afford transportation to their vaccine appointments. Stretcher services and wheelchair—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —options cost hundreds of dollars in some cases. Many seniors, Manitobans with disabilities and others with mobility issues do not have that kind of disposable income.

Will the minister address the real barriers to getting vaccinated and work to provide an additional, no-cost transportation option or options today, yes—

* (14:00)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

MLA Asagwara: Hold on.

Yes or no?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mrs. Stefanson: And it's not even Friday, Madam Speaker.

But what I will say, Madam Speaker, is that we recognize the need to get those vulnerable Manitobans and those with mobility issues to the vaccine site to be able to get their doses of the vaccine. That's why we have partnered with 211, with the United Way and 211 Manitoba to help those individuals get to their doses of vaccine at the vaccine sites.

It's very important, and we are very committed, along with our Vaccine Implementation Task Force, to ensure that we get as many Manitobans as possible the vaccine that they need, want and deserve. And that is our main focus.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, we're entering a third wave. Our provincial government isn't treating this like the public health emergency that it is.

And instead of finding ways to provide free transportation to seniors, to Manitobans with physical disabilities and mobility issues, this government is patting itself on the back for finding these folks a phone line, a line that has a list of options that many were already aware of and that they're aware they cannot afford.

Will the minister provide actual leadership during this health emergency and provide additional no-cost transportation options for Manitobans who need it to get to and from their vaccine appointments?

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, every step of the way throughout this entire pandemic, the Vaccine Implementation Task Force has been focused on ensuring that the most vulnerable citizens in our community get access to the vaccine in a priority basis.

And the member opposite talked about the third wave, and I know that Dr. Roussin has been talking about that and the concerns around that, and that's why we have been preparing. Our Vaccine Implementation Task Force has been preparing, doctors have been paring—preparing, everyone's been preparing in Manitoba for the third wave. That's why the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding) announced \$1.2 billion in our recent budget for COVID funding in the budget of '20-21, Madam Speaker.

Members opposite still have a chance to vote in favour of that budget. Do the right thing. Support all of the supports that are going towards those—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Energy Efficiency Programs Hydro Rate Increases

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Earlier this year, the Pallister government said it would take over \$30 million from the federal government for energy efficiency. Unfortunately, it's been revealed today that the federal funding is, in fact, not increasing initiatives like energy rebates, it's being used to backfill.

The Province's own contribution to these initiatives will now be less than it was five years ago. That's of real concern.

Why is the government reducing its own funding for energy efficiency while raising rates on Manitobans?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Conservation and Climate): Madam Speaker, Efficiency Manitoba programs are going to be implemented in reducing the province's GHG emissions. That is the goals that we have set; that is the goals that they will meet.

I don't know what the member has against reducing rates for Manitoba ratepayers.

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

Manitoba Hydro's Finances Call for a General Rate Application

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): The minister seems to forget that she and her entire government legislated a rate increase on all Manitobans last December.

The Pallister government is hiding the true financial picture of Manitoba Hydro. The Wall review hid the value of contracts worth over \$5 billion. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: Hydro is not, in fact, bankrupt, as the members opposite like to assert. It's projecting profits of \$111 million this year and \$190 million in the next. Hydro is profitable, and yet government is legislating rate increases and they forced 2,300 Hydro workers to go on strike to fight against an unconstitutional wage freeze.

Manitobans deserve to know the reality of Hydro's finances.

Will the Pallister government support the call for a general rate application today?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Crown Services): Certainly, what Manitobans deserve to know is the outcome of the Wall report. They know that the NDP mismanaged Manitoba Hydro to the tune of \$10 billion—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wharton: —they know—*[interjection]*—see, they're so excited, Madam Speaker, to hear this news.

They know that they drove up rates by over 40 per cent to Manitobans. Madam Speaker, shame on them.

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

Hydro Labour Dispute Request for Arbitration

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Manitoba Hydro is profitable, and yet the Pallister government is cutting its contribution to energy efficiency, raising rates by legislation and forcing Hydro workers to accept a wage freeze. These workers are not being negotiated with in good faith: 2,300 workers are out on strike, and they deserve a fair deal.

We learned today that the government's civil service is finally headed for arbitration after this government was found, once again, to be, quote, unreasonable in the way it treats workers. Bill 28 has been struck down by the courts.

Will the Pallister government admit its mistake and agree to arbitration at Hydro to finally broker a fair resolution for striking IBEW workers?

Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Crown Services): Certainly, we know that we respect the process, Madam Speaker, when it comes to bargaining with IBEW or any other union—and we know—we expect the bargaining that's done by the employer, in this case Manitoba Hydro.

What we will ask of the members opposite, Madam Speaker, is just simply get out of the way when it comes to bargaining. Let the parties get together; let them resolve for the betterment of all Manitoba ratepayers.

Advanced Education Administration Act Request to Withdraw Bill 33

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): We heard from dozens of presenters last Tuesday night, and it was overwhelmingly clear that people do not like Bill 33. Everyone said, again and again, that consultation was insufficient and that they have real concerns about this minister's interference with students and how they govern themselves.

The minister has proposed amendments to his own legislation because it is so flawed. That amendment won't even fix the whole host of other serious issues with that bill. Bill 33 needs to be withdrawn in its entirety.

Will the minister withdraw Bill 33 today and sit down, do some real consultation with students, staff and faculty?

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration): I appreciate the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) applauding

me on here, Madam Speaker. I'd like to thank the member for the question, as well.

The largest population that I'd like to thank is all those people who attended Tuesday night and will continue to attend tonight's presentations on Bill 33, exercising their democratic right, right here in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

As the member's pointed out, we have consulted with many, many, many Manitobans on Bill 33. The students themselves have said how many times that they've met with either myself or my predecessor. We're bringing forward an amendment tonight to clarify the bill. I just wish the member would get on board and support Bill 33.

* (14:10)

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

Mr. Moses: Madam Speaker, several of the public presenters were really concerned that the bill would allow different tuition increases across different programs.

With this bill, tuition could 'incline'—increase 'rappingly' in one program, like the arts and humanities, than in other places. We heard that in other jurisdictions where this approach has been taken that there was perverse outcomes, like seats that in so-called job-ready fields were actually decreased by universities.

This is just one of the unintended consequences of this government's poorly considered Bill 33. Over and over again, this minister had no answer for those questions about the differential tuition increases. Bill 33 needs to be withdrawn.

Will the minister do so today?

Mr. Ewasko: I wish that the member would recheck his speaking notes that the—that his party has—that has provided for him, Madam Speaker.

Bill 33 is, in fact, bringing forward a balanced approach for student affordability and institutional sustainability. We, on this side of the House, Madam Speaker, are listening to various groups. Our door is open.

It's just unfortunate that—I was sort of hoping that the member would have turned his team's small boat without a motor in a more positive direction, Madam Speaker, instead of following his leader's self-serving attitude to self-seeking behaviour.

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

Mr. Moses: Madam Speaker, presenters were concerned with affordability. They note that university costs have already increased \$1,000 under this government, negating any bursaries.

Now, Bill 33 puts no limit on how high these costs may go and Bill 33 proposes, again, differential tuition. In other jurisdictions, this led to so-called job-ready programs seeing their fields and their seats cut, and arts and humanities programs going to the 'privileged' and the 'lites'.

Is this the minister's plan? He hasn't clearly explained it. The minister has no answers today and no answers for the presenters he raises—who raises these concerns.

He clearly has not considered the consequences of Bill 33. It needs to be withdrawn.

Will the—

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

The clock is ticking.

Mr. Ewasko: I'm happy to get a question from the member about post-secondary education and how we fund it, Madam Speaker. How we fund it is through taxation, largely personal and income taxes.

Madam Speaker, the leader of the NDP, the member from Fort Garry and additional members from the NDP side live in over-million-dollar homes. And they pay education taxes.

We, on this side of the House, have instituted a significant education tax reduction measure those NDP MLAs will see on savings.

To them, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —we, on this side of the House, say, you're welcome.

Northern Economic Development Government Plan for CEDF Program

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): The Communities Economic Development Fund, or CEDF, support the northern economy through Business Loans Program. But the Pallister government put a stop to these loans in 2017. The program is now in its fifth year under review.

Now, this review should have been complete long ago, Madam Speaker. So the question is simple.

I'll ask the minister: When will the review be released and well—will he reinstate the CEDF Business Loans Program to provide our northern businesses with the support they need?

Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Economic Development and Jobs): I'd like to take this time to thank Oswald for—the CEO, be it—from the CEDF, all the good work he did, and welcome Muhamud Sassan [*phonetic*] for his job and Jamie Wilson for their work. Certainly, we know the good work that they do providing funding for our fishermen.

I just also want to point out a few other things. Northern sector council, 2015-16, funding from the NDP: one seventy-seven, five twenty-nine. Our government: one point seven million, four thousand, one hundred and eighty-eight dollars. That's what we do to government.

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

Mr. Bushie: So I take that to mean the minister does not know anything about the review being released at all.

But the longer this program stays frozen, Madam Speaker, northern business owners and communities are forced to stay without much-needed funding. The Pallister government has ordered not one but two reviews of CEDF, all while northern businesses suffer. The minister's own briefing note, which I'll table for the House, says, and I quote: Why has the government not reinstated communities economic development business fund—business loans program? And Manitoba businesses are wondering the same.

So will the minister tell us why his government has not reinstated CEDF business loans program?

Mr. Eichler: I want to thank all the staff and the hard workers that work for CEDF on the work they do.

I have more good news to share with members opposite: Manitoba Metis Federation Wabowden local: our funding, \$28,583; under \$27,000 by the previous NDP government.

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

Mr. Bushie: Well, that was supposedly good news, but how about some bad news? Five years, Madam Speaker, five years; that's how long these loans programs have been frozen. They have been going

without support because of this minister's prolonged review—a review which we all know will result in nothing but a straight cut.

When will the minister release the review and tell northern Manitobans what his plans are for the CEDF program?

Mr. Eichler: I'll share some more good news with the members opposite.

Madam Speaker, on the previous government, the town of Churchill: nada, zero. Our government: \$96,298.

An Honourable Member: Wow.

Mr. Eichler: I know, it's impressive.

I've got a few more, Madam Speaker. FireSpirit Inc., out of The Pas, Manitoba. Under the previous government: \$50,000. Our government: \$200,000.

Madam Speaker, move back to the—out of the way. We're going forward with more funding for northern Manitoba.

Education Modernization Act Request for Referendum

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I've written the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the Leader of the Opposition to ask whether they would consider having a referendum on Bill 64.

Now, we believe that while referendums must not be used as a way for politicians to avoid responsibility for hard decisions, we believe that changes in Bill 64 are so far-reaching that a full debate and a referendum would be worthwhile because eliminating local democracy and blowing up the K-to-12 system was not in the PC's platform or in the K-to-12 review, for that matter.

Now, more than 2,700 Manitobans agree.

If the Premier (Mr. Pallister) believes in referenda for dams, PST hikes or selling off Hydro, will he have one on Bill 64?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Education): Well, Madam Speaker, nothing can be further from the truth.

I mean, our government—even prior to forming government—signalled that we wanted to do a review of K-to-12 education. We've engaged Manitobans over the last two years. We've indicated we're going to continue to engage Manitobans over the next several years to come.

* (14:20)

We clearly believe, through Bill 64, a change in governance will provide—taking \$40 million out of boardrooms and putting it at the front line to help Manitoba students. Madam Speaker, this is a move forward for Manitoba students.

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

Mr. Lamont: Public education is one of the core jobs of the provincial government. If passed, Bill 64 will have a massive impact on every community in Manitoba, in our opinion, for the worse.

Now, I asked the Leader of the Opposition about a referendum. He said the Premier could not be trusted to come up with a fair question and disagreed with having one.

We're willing to work together to fast-track an amendment to referendum legislation to let an independent, trusted third party come up with a good question. We believe every Manitoban should have a say in the future of our public education system: grandparents, parents, teachers, principals and communities.

Will this government have a referendum on Bill 64 or will they side with the NDP against one?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, I thought it was just the NDP that was the party of status quo when it came to education. Clearly, the Liberal Party are the party of status quo. They want students to remain dead last when it comes to outcomes. We believe Manitoba students deserve better.

We've committed to over \$3 billion in this budget alone. That's over a \$40-million increase for front-line students. And, by the way, guess who voted against those increases: both opposition parties.

Northern and Rural Teachers Consultations on Bill 45

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Yesterday, we heard from presenters at committee on Bill 45, The Public Schools Amendment and Manitoba Teachers' Society Amendment Act. Many of the presenters, who are teachers, talked about how this legislation, if it comes into force by proclamation as it is written, leaves teachers in Manitoba, especially those in rural Manitoba, with a reality that they could be without a contract for years, not to mention it breaks the contracts currently in place.

Madam Speaker, teachers deserve security. They deserve to have their voices heard and to be fairly represented.

Will the minister reconsider Bill 45 and consult with teachers to ensure they can negotiate in an environment that is free from political interference?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Education): Well, Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's question.

Madam Speaker, clearly, Bill 45 is designed around what Manitoba Teachers' Society has been asking for years. The NDP never implemented. We brought forward legislation respecting province-wide bargaining. We're standing up for Manitoba teachers.

In addition, Madam Speaker, in this budget, we've allocated \$260 million this year alone for capital for Manitoba schools. Who voted against it? Both parties across the aisle.

Addiction Treatment Services Funding for Recovery Housing

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): It is definitely—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Isleifson: —through wellness, healing and hope that Manitobans dealing with addiction issues find their way to recovery.

Can the Minister for Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery please share with their House how our government is improving access to recovery housing for Manitobans dealing with addiction issues?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery): I thank the member for the question.

Our government has provided \$2.29 million to Siloam Mission, Riverwood Church Community, Tamarack Recovery, community health and housing association in the Westman region and Men Are Part of the Solution to develop 70 supportive housing units in Winnipeg, nine in Brandon and 12 units in Thompson, including on-site support services for Manitobans completing their addictions treatment; and also at AFM, offering 30 sobriety-based transitional housing units at River Point.

Madam Speaker, our government believes this environment is a very important step for people after addictions treatment and we will continue to support Manitobans on their way to recovery.

**Early Learning and Child Care
Request to Withdraw Bill 47**

Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson): The wait-list for child care has increased by four—more than 4,000, more than 1,800 children since this government has taken office.

Families of all ages, including school-aged children, need access to affordable child care, yet Bill 47 makes no mention of child—school-age children when it comes to providing quality early-learning care. This has parents, providers worried because they know they can't trust this minister at her word.

Will the minister address their concerns and repeal Bill 47 today?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): Our government recognizes the need for an affordable, accessible child-care system. That is why budget '21 creates 541 new spaces in the child-care sector. That is on top of the nearly 4,000 spaces that we've already created since we formed government.

We understand that is an important, key element to ensuring that all families in Manitoba get child care when they want it and where they want it.

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

Ms. Adams: The minister points to vacancies on this list that include for-profit child care that charges \$10,000 per year. Who can afford that?

And child-care vacancies in Tuxedo doesn't help families with children needing care in Thompson or The Pas. Madam Speaker, there's approximately half the amount of child-care spots in rural and northern Manitoba than there are in Winnipeg.

Will the minister address the 18,000 Manitoba children that need child care in this province, and will she do so today?

Ms. Squires: Our government recognizes the significant flaws with the NDP-created child-care registry that has never been efficient and never really been accurate. And that is why we are moving forward with a better system for helping families get the child care that they want, when they need it and where they need it.

Very, very pleased that this budget puts \$25 million more in child care than the NDP ever spent on child care. Our government recognizes that all families in this province deserve to have access to affordable child care where they need it, and that is

why our government is moving forward with creating new spaces.

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

Ms. Adams: Budget 2021 doesn't—again, has funding frozen for child-care centres for the fifth year in a row. Salaries within the child-care sector are unacceptably low and child-care wait-lists continue to grow. And child care is becoming more and more inaccessible for low-income families.

Now Bill 47—the minister's opening the door for lowering standards for school-age children and expanding for-profit child care. This will hurt child care in Manitoba.

Will the minister do the right thing for Manitoba parents, children and those working in the child-care sector, and withdraw Bill 47 today?

Ms. Squires: It would be appreciated if that member stopped fear-mongering amongst families who are looking for child care.

Madam Speaker, our government recognizes the need to have affordable access to child care. That is why we have capped parent fees for three years. We will not be bringing in an increase in parent fees.

We've also given 11 and a half million dollars to a Child Care Sustainability Trust—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Squires: —that would give child-care centres greater access to funds to—for discretionary items.

We've also just recently given \$4.4 million in additional operating dollars to child-care centres that were running a deficit during the pandemic, so that they could be maintained whole, so that they can put—open their doors in a post-pandemic environment and provide more child care to families throughout the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

* (14:30)

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

At the beginning of routine proceedings on April 6th, 2021, the honourable Minister for Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery raised a matter of contempt regarding remarks made by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) during debate on the

evening of March 25th, 2021. She indicated that the remarks and behaviour of the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) occurred during debate on Bill 56, The Smoking and Vapour Products Control Amendment Act. The minister stated that while she was speaking in debate on that bill, and I quote, "the member for St. Johns shouted at me that, and I quote, you all colonizers should be ashamed of yourself." End quote. The minister further noted that this shouting occurred while the Acting Speaker was standing and after he had repeatedly asked for order. The minister concluded her remarks by moving, and I quote, "that the member for St. Johns be asked to apologize to the House for her actions in disregarding of the authority of the Chair and showing contempt of this House."

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) and the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) both spoke to this matter before it was taken under advisement.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for a matter to be raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of contempt: (1) was the issue raised at the earliest available opportunity; and (2) was sufficient evidence provided to support the member's claim that a matter of contempt had occurred.

On the issue of timeliness, the honourable minister indicated in her submission that the remarks in question were made in the House on the evening of Thursday, March 25th. She further noted that this was her first opportunity to raise this issue, as the debate that evening took place under the terms of the Sessional Order which require that any such matters arising be considered at 1:30 p.m. on the next sitting day.

On this point the minister is correct. The Sessional Order passed by the House on March 15th, 2021, indicates that during the limited debates outlined in the order, which includes the evening of March 25th, 2021, matters of privilege and points of order will be deferred until 1:30 p.m. on the next sitting day. Accordingly, 1:30 p.m. on April 6th was indeed the first opportunity for the minister to raise this matter, and I would rule that she met the test of timeliness.

The question of whether sufficient evidence was provided to support the minister's claim that the honourable member for St. Johns disregarded the authority of the Chair and showed contempt for this House is a more complicated matter, one which I have studied carefully.

As the raising of a matter of contempt is an uncommon occurrence in this House, I will begin with some explanation. Bosc and Gagnon provide a useful summary of contempt in the parliamentary sense on pages 80 and 81, the third edition of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, and I quote: "It is important to distinguish between a 'breach of privilege' and 'contempt of Parliament'. Any disregard or attack on the rights, powers and immunities of the House and its Members, either by an outside person or body, or by a Member of the House, is referred to as a 'breach of privilege' and is punishable by the House. There are, however, other affronts against the dignity and authority of Parliament which may not fall within one of the specifically defined privileges."

"Thus, the House also claims the right to punish, as a contempt, any action which, though not a breach of a specific privilege, tends to obstruct or impede the House in the performance of its functions; obstructs or impedes any Member or Officer of the House in the discharge of their duties; or is an offence against the authority or dignity of the House, such as disobedience of its legitimate commands or libels upon itself, its Members, or its Officers. As the authors of Odgers' Senate Practice (Australia) state", and I quote, "The rationale of the power to punish contempts, whether contempt of court or contempt of the Houses, is that the courts and the two Houses should be able to protect themselves from acts which directly or indirectly impede them in the performance of their functions'." end quote, "In that sense, all breaches of privilege are contempts of the House, but not all contempts are necessarily breaches of privilege."

Further, Bosc and Gagnon state on page 82 that, in its 1999 report, the United Kingdom Joint Committee on Parliamentary Privilege identified on its list of the types of contempt, and I quote, "interrupting or disturbing the proceedings of, or engaging in other misconduct in the presence of, the House or a committee." End quote.

Based on this standard, I can say without question that the incident in this Chamber on the evening of March 25th, 2021, interrupted and disturbed the proceedings of this House. Despite being called to order several times, the member for St. Johns continued yelling across the Chamber, disregarding the authority of the Chair.

As members know, the Hansard transcript of our sittings is the primary record of what has been said on the record in this House. Members should also know

that Speakers do not often rule on comments made off the record, and by that I mean comments made by members who do not have the floor and which are therefore not included in the Hansard transcript.

In this instance, I did review the Hansard transcript, but I also viewed the video and audio coverage of this incident, as the full scale of what occurred is not reflected in the Hansard transcript, nor should it have been, for reasons I have just noted.

I will also note that, as with all sittings, House proceedings that evening were broadcast live on our website and remain online in our broadcast archive.

Upon review, the incident in question featured what I can only describe as yelling from several members from both sides of the House. I will note here that this was not an isolated incident, as decorum has been problematic in the House for many months now. I do believe though that this incident offers us all an opportunity to reset our behaviour. If this institution is to maintain its necessary authority in this province, I believe we should all raise our standards of decorum and our expectations of ourselves and each other.

I am not saying that members should agree on policy matters, nor should any of you feel anything less than free to state your opinions with enthusiasm and eloquence. What we should not do is let our emotions take over. Members should feel free to disagree and explain why they disagree, but members should not be yelling at each other. You can disagree in this place without eroding the decorum of this House.

We should also be refraining from engaging in personal attacks on other members, as that is often the first step towards shouting and reciprocal attacks. Disagreements over policy decisions, disagreement over historic injustices or past wrongs, all of these are perfectly acceptable in this place. What is not acceptable is a shouting match.

We all have an opportunity today to reflect on this ruling and the state of affairs which led to it and determine how to be better in this place.

Returning to the matter raised by the Minister for Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery, based on the descriptions of contempt in the procedural authorities and the events of March 25th, 2001, I am ruling that a prima facie case of contempt was established by the minister for mental health—

Let me start that paragraph again.

Returning to the matter raised by the Minister for Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery, based on the descriptions of contempt in the procedural authorities and the events of March 25th, 2021, I am ruling that a prima facie case of contempt was established by the Minister for Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery.

As a result, the motion moved by the minister may take precedence in debate and should go forward today in the House as the first item of business under orders of the day. It is a debatable motion, and the House must vote on and adopt the motion in order for the remedy suggested in the motion to proceed. If the motion is defeated, the matter would be concluded.

I would also note, however, that an apology from the member for St. Johns right now could also resolve this matter.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I apologize to the Chair.

Madam Speaker: And the Chair thanks the member very kindly for the apology.

And that resolves the matter.

PETITIONS

Public Child-Care Grants

Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislature.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The pandemic has further emphasized the need for quality, affordable, accessible child care and has demonstrated that the government has failed to ensure child care is accessible for all Manitoba families.

* (14:40)

(2) Over 90 per cent of Manitoba children receive child care through non-profit, licensed centres, and yet the funding has been frozen since 2016. These cuts have resulted in many early-childhood educators leaving the sector.

(3) While child-care centres have faced increased costs associated with loss of parent fees due to COVID-19 closures and spent thousands on PPE, when open, to keep kids safe, the provincial government has provided no additional financial support.

(4) KPMG—The government spent less than 1 per cent of the \$18-million temporary child-care grant. Instead they gave KPMG double their contract, nearly \$600,000—

Madam Speaker: Order. The member could proceed. I'm just having difficulty hearing because there's a lot of conversations going on.

Ms. Adams: —nearly \$600,000, to conduct a review that will raise parent fees and lay the groundwork for privatization.

(5) The provincial government—cut—nursery school grants is doubling parent fees for hundreds of families, making child care less affordable and accessible.

(6) The provincial government passed bill 34, the budget implementation tax status amendment act, which involved removing the cap on child-care fees for private sector businesses.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reduce—reverse its changes to the nursery school grant and to end the freeze on child-care's operating grants while committing to keeping public child care affordable and accessible to all Manitoba families.

This petition is signed by many Manitobans.

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

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) The pandemic has emphasized the need for quality, affordable and accessible child care and has demonstrated that the government has failed to ensure child care is accessible to all Manitoba families.

(2) Over 90 per cent of Manitoba children receive child care through non-profit, licensed centres, and yet funding has been frozen since 2016. These cuts have resulted in many early-childhood educators leaving the sector.

(3) While child-care centres have faced increased costs associated with lost parent fees due to COVID-19 closures and spent thousands on PPE, when open, to keep kids safe, the provincial government has provided no additional financial support.

(4) The government spent less than 1 per cent of the \$18-million temporary child-care grant, and instead gave KPMG double their contract, nearly

\$600,000, to conduct a review that will raise parent fees and lay the groundwork for privatization.

(5) The provincial government's cuts to nursery school grants is doubling parent fees for hundreds of families, making child care less affordable and accessible.

(6) The provincial government passed bill 34, the budget implementation and tax statutes amendment act, which removed the cap on child-care fees for private sector businesses.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse changes to the nursery school grants and to end the freeze on child-care's operating grants while committing to keeping public child care affordable and accessible for all Manitoba families.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Personal-Care Homes—Quality of Care

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba elders and seniors built this country and province and should receive the highest level of support, having earned the right to be treated with due respect, dignity, understanding and compassion as a fundamental human right.

Residents of personal-care homes deserve to have the best possible quality of life in their last few days, weeks, months or years. Yet family members are regularly left angry, frustrated, disappointment and shocked at the care their loved ones receive in Manitoba's personal-care homes.

Seniors who reside in personal-care homes have the right to visitation by family members, especially those who provide day-to-day assistance in augmenting the care of their loved ones as designated family caregivers. These individuals are essential partners in care, actively and regularly participating in providing care, and may support feeding, mobility, personal hygiene, cognitive stimulation, communication, meaningful connection, relational continuity and assistance in decision-making.

Legal representation, such as lawyers, powers of attorney and health-care proxies, should always be allowed unlimited and unobstructed access to the

residents for whom they are responsible, as they depend on their designated legal representative to ensure proper and adequate care and act as legal designate for care decisions on their behalf.

Most personal-care homes do not have enough health-care aides to adequately provide the aforementioned basic care for seniors with high and complex levels of physical and mental issues, such as those with dementia coupled with multiple chronic conditions.

Residents often require assistance in communicating their needs to overworked health-care aides, and most often this is accomplished with the assistance of designated family caregivers.

Because of the insufficient number of health-care aides, especially full-time staff, available to personal-care homes, residents often lack the most basic care, such as feeding, toileting, hydration, dental care, personal grooming, exercise and socialization.

The lack of such basic care often leads to health issues such as periodontal disease, dehydration, urinary tract infections, sepsis, pressure ulcers, bedsores and more, which often lead to hospitalization which—left unreported.

Family members who advocate for improvements of such basic care can be dismissed or are met with resistance because there is not enough staff or funding to provide proper essential care.

Family members who repeatedly put significant pressure on personal-care-home staff and management for the required basic care, according to the personal-care home's own published standards, are often labelled as troublemakers and barred from entry into homes and/or contact with their loved ones.

Care-home management will utilize The Petty Trespasses Act to justify their actions rather than improve the level of care.

Under such circumstances, the additional stress and worry serves to increase the difficulty in the relationship between the resident, the family member and the personal-care home, resulting in increased tensions and fear of reprisals.

Concerns related to the above situation escalate when the barred family member receives information that their loved one's basic needs are not being met, further exacerbating the issue.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to establish an independent, non-partisan seniors advocate, to ensure that care standards are being met in all Manitoba personal-care homes and to resolve disputes before harm comes to residents of personal-care homes.

To urge the provincial government to ensure residents of personal-care homes receive adequate hands-on care to provide for their basic needs and ongoing physical care on their individual requirements.

To urge the provincial government to ensure that the mental health needs of communication and socialization of personal-care-home residents are met through a combination of facilitated programs, sufficient staff on hand to provide those services, and adequate access to family members, designated family caregivers and other visitors under all reasonable circumstances.

To urge the provincial government to enforce mechanisms that mandate operators to proactively and collaboratively work with designated family caregivers who augment care by ensuring they are allowed access to the loved ones under all reasonable circumstances, to provide active care and support to the resident's emotional well-being, health and quality of life.

Signed by Krista Austin, Ron Weir, Betty Weir and many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Diagnostic Testing Accessibility

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Until recently, diagnostic medical tests, including for blood and fluid samples, were available and accessible in most medical clinics.

(2) Dynacare blood test labs have consolidated their blood and fluid testing services by closing 25 of its labs.

(3) The provincial government has cut diagnostic testing at many clinic sites, and residents now have to travel to different locations to get their testing done, even for a simple blood test or urine sample.

(4) Further, travel challenges for vulnerable and elderly residents of northeast Winnipeg may result in fewer tests being done or delays in testing, with the attendant effects of increased health-care costs and poorer individual patient outcomes.

* (14:50)

(5) COVID-19 emergency rules have resulted in long outdoor lineups, putting vulnerable residents at further risk in extreme weather, being it hot or cold. Moreover, these long lineups have resulted in longer wait times for services and poorer service in general.

(6) Manitoba residents value the convenience and efficiency of the health-care system when they're able to give their samples at the time of the doctor visit.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately demand Dynacare maintain all of the phlebotomy, blood sample sites existing prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency, and allow all Manitobans to get their blood and urine tests done when visiting their doctor, thereby facilitating local access to blood testing services.

This petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

Public Child-Care Grants

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Madam 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) The pandemic has further emphasized the need for quality, affordable and accessible child care and has demonstrated that the government has failed to ensure child care is accessible to all Manitoba families.

(2) Over 90 per cent of Manitoba children receive child care through non-profit, licensed centres, and yet funding has been frozen since 2016. These cuts have resulted in many early-childhood educators leaving the sector.

(3) While child-care centres have faced increased costs associated with lost parent fees due to COVID-19 closures and spent thousands on PPE, when open, to keep kids safe, the provincial government has provided no additional financial support.

(4) The government has spent less than 1 per cent of the 18 million temporary child-care grant and, instead, gave KPMG double their contract—nearly \$600,000—to conduct a review that will raise parent fees and lay the groundwork for privatization.

(5) The provincial government cuts to nursery school grant is doubling parent fees for hundreds of families, making child care less affordable and accessible.

(6) The provincial government passed bill 34, the budget implementation and tax status amendment act, which removed the cap on child-care fees for private sector businesses.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse changes to the nursery school grant and to end the freeze on child-care operating grants while committing to keeping public child care affordable and accessible for all Manitoban families.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Dauphin Correctional Centre

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates over capacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May of 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 20–250 inmates over capacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

And this has been signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, the DCC, in May 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates over capacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): A few committee announcements.

I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet, if necessary, on Friday, April 16th, 2021, at 1 p.m. to consider Bill 47, The Early Learning and Child Care Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet, if necessary, on Friday, April 16th, 2021, at 1 p.m. to consider Bill 47, The Early Learning and Child Care Act.

Mr. Goertzen: I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Monday, April 19th, 2021, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 25, The Municipal Statutes Amendment Act; Bill 37, The Planning Amendment and City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act; Bill 38, The Building and Electrical Permitting Improvement Act (Various Acts Amended and Permit Dispute Resolution Act Enacted); and Bill 53, The Municipal Statutes Amendment Act (2).

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Monday, April 19th, 2021, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 25, The Municipal Statutes Amendment Act; Bill 37, The Planning Amendment and City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act; Bill 38, The Building and Electrical Permitting Improvement Act (Various Acts Amended and Permit Dispute Resolution Act Enacted); and Bill 53, The Municipal Statutes Amendment Act (2).

Mr. Goertzen: I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food will meet on Tuesday, April 20th, 2021, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 36, The Public Health Amendment Act (Food Safety and Other Amendments); and Bill 62, The Animal Diseases Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food will meet on Tuesday, April 20th, 2021, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 36, The Public Health Amendment Act (Food Safety and Other Amendments); Bill 62, The Animal Diseases Amendment Act.

* * *

Mr. Goertzen: Could you please call for debate this afternoon, third readings of bills 14, 19, 68 and 55?

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider third readings of the following bills this afternoon: Bill 14, Bill 19, Bill 68 and Bill 55.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 14—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020

Madam Speaker: I will start, therefore, by calling Bill 14, third reading, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Legislative and Public Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), that Bill 14, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020, be—reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

* (15:00)

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, both of us sort of stumbled over that 2020, thinking about what year we're in, but this is one of the bills that has been before the Legislature for quite a long time as a result of a number of things related to the opposition's actions and then also the pandemic.

But members will know that these are relatively routine matters that have come before the Assembly every year—that is why it has a particular date ascribed to it—where acts in our Legislature sometimes need minor corrections, whether in the translation of the act or whether there's a typographical error within the act. There are very dedicated individuals in the various departments within government that come across these mistakes over the context of a year, they compile them, and then they come into an omnibus act, if you will, like this, Madam Speaker, where there are corrections across a variety of different acts.

There's one provision within this act that I highlighted at second reading that I would highlight again, and that is the change of names for what are—or previously known as private schools will now be known as independent schools.

I know, as a former minister of Education, that throughout the department and certainly within the broader education system, independent schools are known as independent schools, not as private schools.

It's a term from a different time, Madam Speaker, and so I'm glad to see that that change is being made so there is a correct reflection of how those schools are actually—not only actually operated, because they are largely independent, but how they are referred to within the broader school system.

So I certainly commend this bill to the House and I don't believe that it'll receive much objection based on what I've heard from opposition members so far. And I hope that that prediction proves to be correct.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I just have a few short words; I'll keep my remarks short, here.

As the minister mentioned, this bill has been before the Legislature for quite some time and, in summary, it corrects typographical and numbering and other drafting errors while making some minor amendments to various acts.

And we will be supporting this legislation moving forward.

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Bill 14, the minor amendments and corrections act, makes various acts—makes amendments to various acts to change drafting errors and update references. This bill updates the titles of ministers, the wording in the French-language version of several bills and some reporting requirements.

Madam Speaker, I did my best to go over the different provisions set aside in this bill, and I was not able to see any objections that our party would have with this. So we're okay with letting this go forward.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 14, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 19—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2)

Madam Speaker: I will now call third—concurrence and third reading of Bill 19, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2).

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal

Relations (Mr. Johnson), that Bill 19, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2020 (2), be reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: I'm pleased to rise and give third reading to Bill 19, The Minor Amendments and Correction Act, 2020 (2). This act is one of long-standing traditions in this House addressing typographical numbering and minor drafting and translation errors, as well as minor amendments to several acts. In addition, it repeals a number of statutes that no longer serve a useful purpose or, as my colleague from River Heights had noted, were simply brought in by the former NDP government as a public relations exercise and—but never actioned, and are now out of date.

As well, this particular minor amendments and correction act makes amendments to add gender neutral terminology to a number of official documents. And I am extremely proud to be sponsoring these provisions.

Once again, I am very pleased to have brought this legislation before the House, and I look forward to it receiving the support of the House so that it can make a difference in the lives of Manitobans.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Bill 19 makes amendments to several acts, and corrects drafting errors. Bill 19 also repeals La Communauté des Soeurs de Notre-Dame de la Croix Incorporation Act, and three unproclaimed acts: The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act, The Crime Prevention Foundation Act, The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act.

The Churchill Arctic Port Canada Act established Churchill Arctic Port Canada Inc., a non-government agency with a mandate to facilitate the long-term development and viability of the Churchill gateway system and to promote it.

The Thompson Nickel Belt Sustainability Act required Vale Canada Ltd. to make a payment of \$6.25 million to the local government, District of Mystery Lake. It required those payments to be apportioned amongst the City of Thompson, the School District of Mystery Lake and the local government district.

This bill also established the Thompson Nickel Belt Economic Development Fund. The fund was to

promote and stimulate the economic development and stability of the Thompson Nickel Belt area.

We want to ensure that with these acts being repealed that economic opportunity and development continues to grow in the North, maintain stable good-paying jobs for Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). Can the member for River Heights—[interjection] Okay.

Is there any other speakers on this bill?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 19, the minor amendments and corrections act, 2020.

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

Bill 68—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So now we'll go on to Bill 68, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, on—the honourable member for Legislative and Public Affairs.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Legislative and Public Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler), that Bill 68, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

* (15:10)

Mr. Goertzen: This is a relatively minor, but I think important, bill, just in terms of the operation of the Assembly in ensuring that the right things are reported by the right people who are responsible in this institution, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, currently, the annual reports of the amounts paid to members of the Assembly through Members' Allowances, for example, are reported by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fielding), where they should more naturally be reported by the Speaker, as it is the Speaker who is more closely responsible.

So, as an example, members are able to claim certain things as allowances. If, for example, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) had purchased a camera for \$3,300 and claimed that, it would show up in this report. If, for example, the member for St. Boniface had claimed four MacBooks over two years at a cost of \$10,000, it would show up in this report. So that is where it would be reported, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the Speaker, as opposed to the Minister of Finance.

In addition to that, the severances that are paid to MLAs when they are no longer MLAs in this Assembly are now being reported by Members' Allowances even though Members' Allowances no longer has, you know, a relationship with a member once they are severed, once they are no longer an MLA.

So they will be now reported as they already are, by the Speaker. So they won't be reported twice; those payments will simply be reported by the Speaker.

These changes were recommended by the Legislative Assembly Management Commission, and I am pleased to refer them to the House.

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Bill 68, or The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act—with this bill it requires the Speaker to report on members' indemnities and allowances instead of the Minister of Finance. Also, severances paid to former members is no longer included in the report prepared by the Members' Allowances Office. These amounts will now be included in the Speaker's report.

I did my best, and our caucus did our best, to carefully take a look at these provisions, and we found that they were minor and helpful amendments to The Legislative Assembly Act, and so we are fine with this going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I will speak very briefly. We are in support of these amendments. We think this is reasonable and a reasonable change.

Thank you. Merci.

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

The question before the House is the concurrence and third reading of Bill 68, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 55—The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Now we'll go on to Bill 55, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Legislative and Public Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Crown Services (Mr. Wharton)—*[interjection]*—sorry, Central Services (Mr. Helwer), that Bill 55, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been carried—moved by the honourable member—minister for legislative and public relations, seconded by the honourable Minister for Central Services—*[interjection]*—oh. It was actually moved by the Deputy Premier of—seconded by the honourable Minister for Central Services, that Bill 55, The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, 2021, be reported from the Standing Committee of Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for the third time and passed.

Mr. Goertzen: So, this bill is one of the annual bills that is brought into the Legislature when it comes to reducing red tape and improving services, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, there are a variety of different suggestions that come from the departments within government annually that they bring forward to be part of this bill.

And certainly our government has a long history and a very proud history of reducing red tape on local governments, businesses, non-profit organizations and citizens. In fact, it has been recognized nationally for the reduction in red tape that we have undertaken in a number of different ways. And that is important to ensuring that citizens and other levels of government are able to properly engage with government in a number of different ways without other impediments coming into place for them, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I know organizations that, of course, involve business, like CFIB, for example, have recognized our government, but there are other organizations, as well, who have seen the importance of reducing red tape on government and on the citizens that they serve, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, I want to be clear, of course, that there are many good reasons why there are regulations and

other sorts of things that might be referred to as red tape, that they are important in many cases—in most cases I would say, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But, over time it is not unusual for regulations and other provisions to pile up and not to be reviewed because it's hard work; it is difficult work to be going through a variety of different red-tape provisions and reducing them. We're very fortunate to be led by many, including Deputy Minister Elliott Sims, working on these provisions within government.

And I would say that it is important for citizens because, while they certainly want to have protections in place, they also want to be able to—whether they're in business or just applying for a licence or some other function that brings them into interaction with government—to do it in a reasonable way.

This particular iteration of The Reducing Red Tape and Improving of Services bill has a number of different provisions. One is the phasing out of the enhanced ID cards. I think when the enhanced ID cards were brought in by I believe it was the former NDP government, there was a good reason for it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms those who were crossing international borders, of course, most clearly, the one an hour south from here, the international border at Pembina or at the other crossings that we have along the border, to have that as an option that could be accepted.

Now, since that time, there have been many changes when it comes to security and requirements and passing international borders, and it's become much more common now for residents to have passports because you're required to have a passport to fly internationally. And so we simply don't see the need for this as much as we did with passports or Nexus cards in some situations, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But there will be a phase-out period to provide the ability for those who are relying on these enhanced ID cards to find and to be provided another form of ID that is suitable for them.

There are also changes, as recommended by the Chief Electoral Officer, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that allows for electronic signatures to be used in filing documentation with Elections Manitoba. All of us who have run for elected office, and that is, of course, is everyone who was elected here, will know that there are a number of requirements that are asked for annually, but particularly at election time, from Elections Manitoba, and they have to be filed generally by hand, and that can be cumbersome. And for those who live quite far away from Winnipeg, it

can be difficult to ensure that that is being done. The allowance of electronic signatures—except for nomination forms, I believe, because that is a particularly sensitive part of the election process—will make this easier for those who are fulfilling the requirements of Elections Manitoba.

So there are a number of provisions such as that within this bill that help to make life a little easier for those who are interacting with government to fulfill the recommendations from others who've brought forward these recommendations, either within government or externally from government, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I hope that the House will give it speedy passage at third reading.

* (15:20)

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It would appear that the love-in with passing bills quickly has come to an end.

This bill touches so many different bills. Some of the things that it does, not the end of the world; maybe they needed to be changed. Certainly, things should be looked at from time to time to see what needs to be changed or updated.

But some of the things that this bill does really just needed to be used properly by this government. But what this government continually does is fail to stand up for Manitobans, fails to stand up for working Manitobans. In fact, they go much worse than failing to stand up for them; they blatantly outright attack them at every opportunity that they get. One of the most egregious things—and there's a few in this bill—that this bill does is it stops young Manitobans dead in their tracks from having a brighter future.

You know, they talk about all these wonderful things they've done, but here's young Manitobans that want to get apprenticeships to get out of poverty. What's one of the best ways of getting out of poverty? Well, we all know it's to get a good-paying job. The best-paying jobs for a lot of young people are trades jobs. But this bill interferes with what's been a long-standing practice and a long-standing piece of legislation that requires, on public projects—so, projects where the governments are putting public money into—the previous act that this act wants to completely do away with—not change, not make better, not tweak, not reduce red tape—it just wants to plain, flat out do away with—the requirement that those public works projects have apprentices as part of it so that contractors that are taking on these projects know upfront

that they have to employ apprentices to start helping young people get ahead.

But that's not what this government is about. They're not about Manitobans getting ahead. They're only about their rich corporate friends getting ahead. We've seen that any number of times with various taxation things that they do. It's not about leaving money on the average Manitoban's table; it's about leaving money on the table way down on Wellington Crescent.

So, really and truly, perhaps what should've been done with the apprentice part of this bill is to say, you know what, we need to make sure that more of these public works projects employ more apprentices so that more young people in Manitoba can get raised out of poverty. That would've been a worthwhile venture for this government. Wouldn't have cost them a dime either.

So this isn't even about just saving money for this government, which is their main mandate. They don't care about people; they care about money. They care about the dollars, not the sense, because there is no sense in withdrawing the requirement to have apprentices employed in public works projects. Doesn't make any sense whatsoever. Employing more apprentices, getting more people trained would've made some sense.

But we've seen in other pieces of legislation as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that really, that's not what this bunch is about again. They've done away with project labour agreements that really made sure that, again, young people got training, that they knew upfront what was going to be required of these projects. But instead, this government is all about racing to the bottom to make sure that the only ones that come out ahead are their rich corporate friends that don't support Manitoba and don't pay taxes in Manitoba. This bill will allow contractors to come from all over and not employ Manitobans.

The changes to the apprenticeship ratio will make it worse for young Manitobans to get apprenticeships, to get full certification, to get red seal trades, but it will make it cheaper for this bunch's corporate friends to make money; to take money out of your pocket, to take money out of your son's and daughter's pockets. That's what this bunch is about, not about putting money on your kitchen table. They're taking money away from your kid's future.

Every time they do something, it's always about making your kid's future worse, not better, whether it's

destroying the health-care system, whether it's now destroying the education system. It's destroying the apprenticeship system. It's always about making the future bleaker for your kids.

There's other parts in this bill that I'm sure other speakers will want to talk more about. It's doing away with a bill around adult literacy, which again is all about making it harder for people to get ahead. You know, we talked about one of the best ways out of poverty is to have a good job. One of the best ways to get a good job is to have the right communication skills, the right literacy skills, so that you can actually apply for those jobs and meet the requirements.

I mean, once upon a time, when I was young, you could go to work at a mining company, for example—or any number of other industrial workplaces, with minimal education. I mean, there was all sorts of folks that worked there that worked there that—worked there for 40 years that couldn't read and write. It wasn't a requirement in those days.

Now, with the advent of more computers and—the literacy requirements are so much greater. To get that same job, you have to have a minimum of grade 12. Lots of young people struggle to get that minimum requirement for various reasons, various socio-economic reasons that this government makes worse instead of better.

So sometimes it takes people a while to realize that they need to upgrade their skills but this government isn't about helping those people that are adults now, upgrade their literary—well, I think I need some upgrading—upgrading their skills so that they can apply for better jobs, so that they can be more prepared for a better future.

What else does this particular piece of legislation do? I'm sure we'll come back to some of these other things in a little more detail. Well, what else is does is it fails small farmers because that's, again, not who this government is about. They don't want small farmers. They hate small farmers. They want corporate farmers, corporate farms, multinational corporations that take your tax dollars, take their profits and invest them somewhere else.

Because this bill, in particular, it removes the requirement that the Manitoba Farm Industry Board has to investigate and mediate financial disputes between farmers and creditors, small farmers now will have to go to court, where the creditors with unlimited financial resources will be able to take on small farmers, who are already in trouble, and then be able

to beat them in court. Then they'll probably turn around and sell whatever they've taken away from those small farmers, to this government's corporate buddies; make the industrial farms bigger. And we all know that industrial farming—industrial agriculture is worse for the environment, provides lower quality food than what everybody envisions the small family farm is.

* (15:30)

Make no mistake that there will be less family farms as a result of legislation such as this. It allows creditors to seize assets from farmers due to a failure to pay. Once upon a time, you would've had to have the approval of the Farm Industry Board to do that, but that's all gone now because this government supports bankers before farmers.

We've seen that in any number of instances. We've heard our Agriculture critic talk about the farmers that he's talked to that see lease bills going dramatically through the roof. While this government talks about leaving more money on your kitchen table, they're sure as heck not leaving more money on small farmers' kitchen tables. They're squeezing them and forcing them out of business. They're auctioning off Crown lands to the highest bidder to make sure that their corporate friends can squeeze out the small farmers that have used—and sometimes those Crown lands, they've leased them for generations. But they won't be able to afford to do that anymore, thanks to this government.

And, you know, it's always easy and—to blame the Premier (Mr. Pallister) for all of these things, and while he has his hand and fingers firmly in every piece of legislation that gets developed, his Deputy Premier could've said, wait a minute, boss, let's stop this. The member from Steinbach had the ability to say, no, no, this is not right.

But, clearly, he doesn't care either. He doesn't care about small farmers. He clearly doesn't care about young people trying to get apprenticeships. He clearly doesn't care about working Manitobans getting ahead. And he sure as heck doesn't care about new Manitobans.

They like to open the doors to more immigrants, but the very programs that help lots of folks that come from somewhere else, hard-working people, they need to upgrade their skills, 'literate'—literate—I can't say it today—they need to upgrade their skills so that they can get better jobs. But this government does away

with the adult literacy requirements in the legislation because, once again, they don't care.

All they want to have is a two-tiered system that makes sure their rich friends get richer and all the rest of us get poorer, all the rest of us become serfs to their little kingdoms. So many of these pieces of legislation take us back to the 1930s, 1920s, 1900s because that's where their mindset is. It's not about making life better for Manitobans.

You know, one of the things that they've done in this act—and, like I said earlier, this one piece of legislation touches 14 different acts and regulations; 14 different pieces of legislation get played with by this one piece of legislation. Maybe to be helpful, I'll just give a quick list of all those 14 pieces of legislation that this bill changes, just so people are aware of what this type of omnibus legislation does.

So it's got its fingers in The Adult Literacy Act, it's got its fingers in The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act, The Crown Corporations Governance and Accountability Act, The Drivers and Vehicles Act, The Election Financing Act, The Elections Act, The Family Farm Protection Act, The Farm Machinery and Equipment Act, The Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund Act, The Garage Keepers Act, The Highway Traffic Act, The Planning Act, The Statutes and Regulations Act and The Wildlife Act. One piece of legislation changes things in so many other pieces of legislation that this government says, well, it's just reducing red tape. It's reducing red tape will reduce Manitobans.

One of the things this does is it allows private landowners and municipalities to remove things like beaver dams without government authorization. So why should there have been government authorization? Well, simply because the act of removing a beaver dam without talking to your neighbours, without informing anybody that understands the entire big picture, the flows and whatnot; big farmer A may flood out small farmer B by the very act of removing a beaver dam without someone being able to say no, no, wait a minute, let's look at what the big picture is, what really needs to be done here.

The other thing that this bill does now is it will allow people to kill wild animals. The original piece of legislation that allowed farmers, in particular, to protect their crops and their livestock, made some exemptions, some exemptions for things like moose, caribou, deer, antelope, elk. Some of those animals are already in a threatened state. So now it's open season. Without any justification whatsoever, people can go

shoot a moose, shoot an elk, shoot any number of them actually because they believe it's threatening their crop.

What this bill does now, it threatens Manitoba's biodiversity, it threatens wildlife species that may already be at risk. At the very least, there should be some justification that has to be put forward before anybody's allowed to just go and start blasting away. Imagine how conservation officers are going to feel when anytime, any day, there's people out shooting big game. It makes no sense.

The piece around drainage is very important. It's very important for landowners to really make sure that the right type of drainage is in place to address some of their issues. But this government really has failed in addressing those issues now. It—in order to have an effective drainage system, you need to make sure that the decisions of one person don't have unintended consequences down the road. But this bill doesn't take that into account now. It really does the complete opposite of that.

And really, if the government was serious about having proper drainage and consultation and all these things that it would like us to believe that it has, they wouldn't have underspent their flood protection money. Do you know that this past fiscal year, this government budgeted \$65 million for flood protection measures? How much do you think they actually spent? Well, I'll tell you, \$17 million.

And that's the problem. I mean, earlier today you heard the member from Steinbach talk about how we didn't support their budget. And that's because their budget is full of meaningless numbers. Because they don't spend what they say they're going to spend. They throw out big numbers. Whether it's COVID-relief numbers, relief for businesses, flood protection numbers, they throw the big numbers out there. But then they underspend constantly.

* (15:40)

So there's other things that affect things like The Planning Act. So, previously municipalities could withhold development permits for 125 days. Now they've reduced that down to 90 days, and this change comes on top of changes that they made to the appeals process.

So, why is this a bad thing? Well, because it gives people that might be opposed—or, for that matter, in favour of—some of these changes, it gives less time for people to first become aware that there's a change taking place, and then to adequately prepare their

response for or against. So, all of a sudden, somebody's going to wake up one day with a gravel pit next door to them and they haven't had time to say, well, wait a minute. It's going to affect the water quality; it's going to affect my ability to farm; it's changing the landscape; it's doing all these things; it's creating dust, and the less time now is going to be allotted to folks to be able to actually address those issues.

You know, we touched on a few of the acts, a few of the things that this particular bill calls red tape. And so many of these things are, in fact, red tape for a reason, because they're there to protect Manitobans; they're there to help Manitobans have a better future. But this bill just takes the axe to them and chop, chop, chop, cut, cut, cut, because that's all this government understands. It's not about building a better future; it's not about building a better future for everyone in Manitoba.

Imagine if you're a young person trying to get an apprenticeship. You know there's a big public works project taking place. What an ideal place to start getting that education you need—not any more. Where will young Manitobans get those apprenticeship opportunities? And I guess the double whammy to that is this government has no great plans to invest in any kind of large infrastructure projects that would allow a lot of Manitobans to have those good jobs.

We haven't heard, really—well, again in their budget, in their make-believe number budget, they throw out numbers about what they're going to spend on highways, but we know that every year they've underspent that budget. We know that they talk about infrastructure numbers and what they're going to spend, but are there big projects, projects that would help us get out of what we all know is going to be a recession, as this pandemic starts to wind down?

And we need to know that there will be jobs for people to go back to. We need to know that some of those projects that need to go forward, that need to have public investment so that they can go forward, we need to know that those jobs will be available for Manitobans so that they can pay their taxes—unlike the corporate entities that don't, that pay their taxes somewhere else—unlike the workers that the government will allow contractors to bring in, thanks to their involvement in the new west trade agreement and the Canada-wide free trade agreement.

They've traded away our young people's future, traded it away to the lowest bidder. Young people trying to get into the trades to get good jobs that can build quality products for us, that will pay taxes here

in Manitoba and support a strong Manitoba economy, aren't going to have that opportunity, thank you to the Pallister government and thank you to every one of those PC caucus members that continually sits on their hands and allows their constituents' future to be traded away, to be bleaker than it needs to be.

You know, we've seen the member of Dauphin when they talk about shutting down a major employer in his community say, ah, nothing I can do about it. Nothing needs to be done about it. It's too bad, but that's the way it is. And I hope that his constituents will soon become his former constituents when election comes around and they say, you know what? He didn't stand up for us. Why would we vote for him?

But there's many more sitting in the backbenches—and some of the front benches—on this Conservative government that are just as guilty of saying nothing and doing nothing to protect Manitoba's future. You know, maybe some of them only represent bankers and big corporations. Because that really seems to be the only ones that are coming out ahead.

Certainly, as we come out of this pandemic, we know that the recovery curve now will leave many people behind—I believe they call it a K-curve—so that the Pallister government's rich corporate friends, away they go up, profits, yahoo; money to be made. Manitobans—uh oh. Money not being made. Life getting worse. And every one of those caucus members on that side of the House needs to wear that cloak of shame going forward from not standing up for Manitobans, for not making a better future.

So, we've kind of touched on a lot of different things here that really are going to be worse. And certainly, there's more things than that—and I hope other speakers—I know from our side—will stand up and speak and really enunciate much better than I can some of the bad parts of this bill.

But you know what? I would encourage at least one of the members on the other side to just say, wait a minute. Let's pause this. Let's relook at it. There's some things in here that aren't going to help my constituents. Just one of them stand up and say this is not good legislation for Manitobans. It's not good for my constituents.

I'd be willing to take money that we're not going to see one of them stand up and do that, either publicly or privately. Because that's the bunch that are in charge now.

So, we know that this bill will be bad for young Manitobans' ability to have a brighter future. We

know that this bill will be bad for small family farms. We know that this bill will be bad for anyone who's trying to upgrade their literacy—literacy skills to have a better, brighter future. We know that—yes, there's a couple of things in here that should have been changed, perhaps. Maybe things with the election in fact needed to be changed. Sure, okay. So introduce those changes in a separate piece of legislation. But quit making Manitobans' future worse with pieces of legislation like this that claim to be nothing more than red tape.

We've seen other pieces of legislation that were minor corrections. Well, a lot of those are anything but. They touch so many different things and that's what this bill does. It has its fingers in 14 different acts and makes your future worse, makes your kids' future worse. It does nothing to build a better Manitoba.

It takes money away from your kids' future and puts it on the kitchen table of corporate entities, not on your kitchen table, Manitoba. Not on working people's table, Manitoba. This, along with so many—

* (15:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I'm pleased to be speaking on Bill 55 today and I am actually quite shocked that we still haven't seen any amendments to Bill 55, given the salacious aspects of this bill. Quite frankly, the audacity that this government has to bring forward a bill that would cut and, frankly, throw out some key and important literacy programs in our province, it is quite outrageous—quite outrageous.

And this isn't just something that affects people in my neighbourhood in St. Vital, which it does. I have a fantastic adult literacy program in St. Vital, EDGE Skills Centre, that does fantastic work with residents in St. Vital, but there's so many agencies across our province that teach individuals adult learning, adult literacy. These are key aspects.

And for—in Bill 55, for the government to come in, try to pull the wool over Manitobans' eyes by calling it Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act, but really sneak in there the fact that they are going to be repealing The Adult Literacy Act is, quite frankly, outrageous and unacceptable. The Adult Literacy Act has improved the lives of thousands of Manitobans over the years—thousands.

Now, as many of you know, I'm sure, there are three stages of literacy when you're teaching as

part of the adult learning program. There's stage 1, which is to read—the ability to read short texts, simple instructions. That's often—and, you know—and, of course, as people enter into these programs, they are assessed for their literacy skills. You know, that's stage 1, being able to read short texts and understand simple instructions.

Stage 2, during—of the literacy program is to read more complex texts—perhaps longer, more complex—and understand it and a piece of information from that, or to be able to read multiple short texts and be able to understand multiple pieces of information for more shorter or less complex texts.

And then the stage 3, where they are working to get towards as part of their literacy program, is to be able to really integrate those information—integrate pieces of information from various sources and to their understanding of what this means, as a part of the literacy program.

And this is the program that the government is cutting. This is the act that the government is 'cunding'—cutting, that it is repealing in Bill 55.

And again, if they wanted to be open and transparent about this process, they could have had the opportunity. They could have repealed The Adult Literacy Act in its own piece of legislation, letting Manitobans have a clear say and a clear sense of what that would mean and what that would—impact that it would have on Manitobans.

But no. Instead, this is part of Bill 55.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Again, Bill 55 is called Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act. Does that have anything to do with adult literacy? Not by its title, you wouldn't know that. But does it really? Absolutely.

The act is what enshrines the fact that the government has a responsibility to record and retain services for adult literacy. Literacy: this is the ability for people in our province—adults—to learn, to engage, to be fully part of our communities and our workforce. And by taking this away, by taking this act and repealing it, it means that the government is no longer going to be accountable, no longer going to be accountable for the literacy, the adult literacy, of Manitobans.

Now what does that say? What does that say about this government? What does it say about their priorities? That they don't care about the literacy of Manitobans. That they don't care about people who

don't have the ability to read in our province. That they're not willing to have that as a priority. It says a lot. It says that they'd rather focus on the dollars and cents than about fixing the quality of life. They'd be—rather worry about making themselves look good or having, you know, people in their own constituencies supported, rather than help the Manitobans who need it most, who need literacy supports and are relying on this government to help them through it.

We all know our communities succeed when people are well-educated and well-resourced. This government takes a different approach. They turn a blind eye to these individuals who need literacy supports. They turn their back on these individuals who are looking to get a leg up and head up, when it comes to their own economic futures.

We know our economy is very—it's very demanding these days. Whether it's through globalization, whether it's through domestic competition, whether it's through challenges with changing workforces, whether skills that need to be refined and complemented as new technologies are invested. The challenges never end in our workforce. And that's why the challenges should never end when we're trying to educate our skilled labour, when it comes with educating our population. It should never end; as a government, as a community. And it should never end as a government to support our individuals who need that learning, who need to educate themselves so that they can have their best futures and their own lives; to make the most of their communities, to be the best people they can for our economy. And that economic success has so much positive outward effects.

You know, I did meet the individuals who work at EDGE Skills Centre. Now, they provide some of these programs in my community, as I mentioned. They do fantastic work. Not only do they provide literacy programs for individuals—particularly young individuals, you know, and they're post-high school age, 19 and up, often in their 20s or 30s, who are trying to complete this literacy work—but they also provide services for ESL—English as a second language.

Now this service, and these services provided by the EDGE Skills Centre, are so critical to newcomers, to people who are trying to settle into our community and don't have English as their main skill. And for the government to say that they're willing to repeal The Adult Literacy Act and ignore the fact that so many Manitoban residents need to improve their literacy

skill does not in–priority or important for them, is really a slap to their face.

Now, EDGE Skills Centre also offers career skills to help individuals who have now built up some of those literacy skills, have the tools and the ability and the knowledge about how to gain employment in Manitoba. Now this employment obviously can start from the ground up and start from building a network of information of how to go about applying for a job, what the resume process looks like, where to look for jobs and to apply; also, how you go about doing the interview process and what you wear to the interview. These are a–critical job finding and career building skills that EDGE Skills Centre provides.

We're very thankful, in St. Vital, to have an organization like that, but it goes beyond that so much more. These adults who learn these skills, learn the literacy skills that is being repealed in this act, once they learn these skills, they are able to pass them on to their children and their family and their network.

Now, you consider individuals who maybe have had a–poor literacy skills and they have children who maybe also might have poor literacy skills themselves. Well, once one person in that family is able to break that cycle of poor literacy by attending one of these adult literacy programs, which this government seems so freely willing to cut, that person, having achieved their goal of literacy, can now break that cycle and pass those skills on to their family members and their children. And now this program has not only lifted up that one individual, but it has lifted up their community, has lifted up their family, and has lifted up a whole network of people. But the choices by this government to repeal The Adult Literacy Act truly unconscionable for so many Manitobans who need, rely and think it is critical that we have this in our province.

* (16:00)

Now, I know that when it comes to adult literacy there are many, many Manitobans who benefit from these services. And as I mentioned, there are many newcomers who benefit from these services. The Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration (Mr. Ewasko) presented a report to this government on adult literacy which stated that there were 9 per cent of the individuals who participated in adult literacy programs were immigrants, 57 per cent were women and 74 per cent were under the age of 35. It's clear that there are so many young Manitobans–female Manitobans who benefit from this program.

And by the government making their decision, their choice to repeal The Adult Literacy Act, is sending a clear signal that their issues–that the concerns of these people are not top of mind, that they are not just third, fourth and fifth on the list, not even sixth, seven, eighth, ninth and tenth; they're so low on the list they're willing to repeal the act, cut the act and say this is not something we want to have here in Manitoba. I think that's shameful.

Now, again, looking at the adult literacy side of this–and again, I'm still, Madam Speaker, shocked that they would put an adult literacy repeal in a bill called reducing red tape. That just shocks me. But I digress. In speaking about this, we look at the challenges that we're facing right now, and no challenge is bigger for our community or any other community than the COVID-19 pandemic. What that has shown us is that, as a result of the economic downturn, as a result of the pandemic, we need to rethink about how we build up skills and we frame our economy.

Our economic outlook and our economic prosperity is reliant on having a well-skilled, well-informed, well-educated workforce, a well-educated labour force. We can't accomplish that goal unless we ensure that our skilled workers are literate. And what better way to do that than teaching adult literacy, which this government seems so willing to cut and repeal. Bell–Bill 55 is simply, simply atrocious.

The minister for adult–for adult–Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration, as I mentioned earlier, should be very concerned with the bill–extremely concerned with the bill–because the act does include section 2(1)(d), which requires the mandate of the minister which the–which requires the minister to be mandated to monitor and evaluate and conduct research and analysis about post-secondary education and adult learning. That is going to be gone with this bill, in Bill 55.

Again, I will repeat that so the Speaker can understand: that Bill 55 will repeal the minister's mandate to monitor and evaluate and conduct research and analysis about post-secondary education and adult learning.

Now, why would this government and this minister want that act to be repealed? Is it because the minister has no interest in monitoring or evaluating advanced education and adult learning? He has no interest about really knowing what's going on at universities and colleges and adult learning programs because he doesn't want to monitor and evaluate

them? Is that what he's saying by introducing this clause in Bill 55? It's—that what it seems like, or else why would this be in the legislation?

Bill 55 also says that the minister does not—is not mandated to conduct research and analysis about post-secondary education and adult learning, right in Bill 55. I'm not sure why Bill 55 isn't brought forward by the Minister for Advanced Education Skills and Immigration, because it certainly means that he has a—quite an easier job now that this section is being repealed. He has a lot less work. He doesn't have to monitor, doesn't have to evaluate, doesn't have to conduct research or analysis about post-secondary education and adult learning.

Now, why would he want to include this in the bill? Is he just not willing to do his job? Is he just not willing to investigate to find out what's truly going on at our post-secondary institutions and what's going on in our adult learning programs? Maybe he has no interest in funding them, which I think is quite likely the scenario.

I think that this section's included in the bill, and I also think that the adult learning—The Adult Literacy Act is being repealed in this bill because this government and this minister has no interest in funding these programs. Let's look at the reality. If this program—if adult literacy programs were going to be funded properly, wouldn't the government want to brag and report about all the learners that they were able to educate, all the Manitobans that they were able to help solve the literacy issues? Wouldn't they want this act to be in place so that they could show off and brag about how many Manitobans they were able to help conquer their challenges and achieve their goals?

But no, they choose to repeal the act. The minister chooses to take away the mandate to monitor and evaluate, and conduct research and analysis about post-secondary education and adult learning. Why does he do that? Because he knows those programs are going to get underfunded, he knows those programs are going to get cut, and he knows that he doesn't want to report on it so that Manitobans don't know how much money they're truly spending on these issues, how much money is being cut from these programs, how much money they are choosing not to spend on those who need it the most, but rather give the wealthy Manitobans tax breaks.

I think this is a very concerning issue that I want to bring to light for all Manitobans. It's a clear choice in Manitoba that Bill 55 spells out in plain, concise, clear writing, that this government does not value

adult literacy at all. They don't have that as a priority. They choose not to monitor and evaluate our post-secondary education and adult learning.

They choose not to conduct research and analysis about our post-secondary education and adult learning because they want to underfund it and make the lives more difficult who—for those Manitobans who are trying to educate themselves, make their own lives better, make their family lives better, and make their communities better. This government does not support those individuals. It's quite clear in Bill 55.

So I will talk a little bit about—a little bit more—further about Bill 55 in terms of its impact on adult literacy. Now, we know that there are significant costs to individuals who are low literacy in Manitoba. It's extremely common for many Manitobans to be functionally low literacy. In fact, we know that about 285,000 adults in Manitoba between the ages of 16 and 65 have literacy levels at stage 1 and 2, that I spoke of earlier.

And again, to repeat, stage 1 and 2 literacy: stage 1 is being able to read a short text and understand a simple instruction, stage 2 is to be able to understand a more complex text, a longer text and understand that information, or being able to understand two short texts—multiple texts that are short. That—again, I repeat that number, that's 285,000 adults between 16 and 65 found themselves at stage 1 or stage 2.

* (16:10)

Now, we know that at least being at stage 3 is what's required by employers these days. So why would the provincial government see it fit to not try to encourage more Manitobans into adult literacy programs? Essentially, this government is saying that they want a whole host of Manitobans to not engage in our economy.

Those with functional illiteracy are so much more likely to be living in poverty and so much more likely to endure poverty-related consequences. This is very, very evident. It's very, very evident that the average income of Canadians with strong literacy skills in 2003 was \$42,239, but those with poor literacy skills was \$20,692. That is less than half.

So understand that correctly: those with poor literacy skills have less than half the amount of income than those with strong literacy skills. So wouldn't that make sense to want to increase the literacy skills of Manitobans? So why isn't this government prioritizing literacy programs? It doesn't

make any sense. Is it maybe because they're not working for all Manitobans? Is it because they are not working to help everyone rise out of poverty, to solve their challenges? It sure seems like that's not their interests.

Their interests clearly must be placed somewhere else, and I think that's squarely in the interests of those who are well funded, who are wealthy individuals, and apparently those must be the supporters of the members on that side of the House.

We on this side of the House will continue to fight every day for working-class Manitobans, those who need to be raised up out of poverty, those who are trying to make a better life for themselves and their families through education and through literacy programs.

It's quite simple, Madam Speaker. It's quite simple. By contrast, it's very important to understand that these literacy programs not only pay back the individual for their hard work, but it pays back their community many times over. There is so much strong evidence that public investment in adult literacy programming produce such a large economic benefit that the payback for that investment is less than one year. Less than one year: you can't get that at any financial institution. You go to a bank, you go to a credit union and you say I want to put in—make an investment; I want to get a return on my investment within a year. If you invest in adult literacy and adult learning, you will—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Moses: —get the investment back in our economy in less than one year. Obviously, we have a supporter for investments—

Madam Speaker: Order. Point out this is what happens when we start yelling across and somebody starts yelling back. So, please, let's get this debate back on track, please.

Mr. Moses: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's quite obvious that at least there's one member on that side who's in favour of supporting investment in adult literacy.

I hope that he's sincere about this, and I hope he strongly talks to the minister who brought forward this bill, but, furthermore, the Premier (Mr. Pallister), and encourage them to remove this section from the bill who—to actually make an investment, as the member across so strongly suggests, and help people who are struggling with literacy programs—literacy issues to

'missure' that there are the correct programs for them to attend.

And as I said, the investment in adult literacy pays back our Province in terms of economic benefit in less than one year.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

I don't know why any government wouldn't want to make that investment.

It's quite clear that we see that, based in 2018's data, found that these 87—over 87,000 children in Manitoba were living in poor families. That's 28 per cent, or one in four, children living in this province. Very high rate of poverty—childhood poverty.

We know, as I demonstrated, that one of the best ways to raise people out of poverty is by clearly indicating and signalling to them that the value of their education is important. By signalling to them that our province really cares about their well-beings and their success.

And how do you do that? You do it with your actions, you do it with real, tangible programs that will assist them through their needs. When people are yearning for the ability to help themselves up through education, we as a society ought to provide them their help that they're looking for.

Instead, this government chooses to ignore these issues, not only put it way down on the priority list, but in Bill 55 simply chooses to repeal The Adult Literacy Act.

And so, I urge any minister who—or member on the opposite side—who is serious about benefitting the lives of those individuals—who are calling for and yearning for a better quality of life to rise up out of poverty and maybe enhance and benefit their economic goals—to make strong investments in adult literacy.

I will also add that when we're considering these programs and the choices that individuals make when it comes to learning and benefitting our economy, that it should be done so with the interest that we're all in this together, that we're all seeking the same goal for a better, more prosperous Manitoba.

And this, obviously, was on full display throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, but it's been on display—for those who have paid attention and watched—very much so over the last decade or two decades. And

that's the income inequality that is faced by so many Manitobans and so many people across our world.

We don't solve that issue unless we get serious about how to raise people out of poverty—and how to tackle that as one of the great challenges we have in our province. Literacy is a key tool in doing so. Investing in our education system, K to 12, is a key way to raise people out of poverty. And it is—you know, it is very sad to know that this act is being repealed.

Now, I've heard comments, you know, from members and from ministers when introducing this bill that, oh, you know, this is just an act that requires us to report on these issues, it's just red tape, it's not actually the funding for these programs. But again, Mr. Deputy Chair: if the minister and this government was going to fund these programs, why wouldn't they want to keep this act in here? Why wouldn't they want to brag about—and show—the positive impacts that this bill that they're funding—if they were interested in making literacy funding—actually have on people's lives?

But instead, by choosing to repeal this act, it sends a clear signal that they don't have an interest in funding these programs, and the fact that they will be cut in some form, one way or the other. What better way to hide a funding cut if you don't have to report on it? And that's exactly what Bill 55 does: it makes it harder for us, as Manitobans—not only as members, but for the public of Manitoba—to see how much they're cutting from these literacy programs.

* (16:20)

And in a time and in a generation and in a place that the requirements of finding success have been—are higher than they've ever been before. We need a government that supports individuals through learning, through education, and through literacy.

And so I'm proudly not going to support Bill 55 because of all the negative impacts that it will have on individuals and on people in our community, and I'm hopeful that members who have listened to this across can now see that The Adult Literacy Act need not be repealed and that they can choose a better path, and they can start choosing that better path with Bill 55.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): It's another one of these bills which claims to increase efficiencies by cutting red tape. We do have lots of serious concerns about this bill because I think, in

the bigger picture, when I think about what this government is trying to do, I think it is taking somewhat of a, I would say, a US libertarian approach to Canadian, Manitoba problems.

There have been lots of these problems that have been in place in Manitoba, and I think we have a very different perspective on these things because we, as Liberals, have a different perspective on the record and the choices of both the NDP and the PCs over the last few years and few decades.

It's not as if the NDP suddenly sprang out of nowhere in 2016 or in 2019 and were a brand new party and never governed Manitoba before. When we consider the impacts of adult literacy and the challenges of poverty and adult literacy in Manitoba, Jim Silver, of the Canadian Centre of Policy—for Policy Alternatives gave an excellent presentation at committee the other day. I was looking over his submission and, look, these problems have been here for a long time. So when he talks about studies and challenges in Point Douglas, he's talking about 2012.

So it is really quite shocking, but it is important to—it's important for everybody to realize the number of Manitobans—adult Manitobans—who can't read at the top level. As Mr. Silver said, I'll be very brief. Functional illiteracy is shockingly common in Manitoba, far too little is being done about it, and in 2010-11, the Manitoba adult literacy program provided funding to support literacy for 2,773 adults. Yet, approximately 285,000 adults in Manitoba between the ages of 16 and 65 had literacy levels at stages 1 or 2, when a stage 3 level literacy is what is deemed necessary for full participation in Canadian society.

And I think things have gotten worse, not better. There are a number of reasons for this, that one of the things that's happened, if you look at the EIA rates and the number of people who are on EIA, the number of people on what used to be called welfare or social assistance, was trending down slightly 'til about 2008, and then after that shock of the global financial crisis, things started to get worse.

So, at this point, we now have—before the pandemic, we had 75,000 people—75,000 people—a record high number of people on EIA in Manitoba. It had been growing by thousands of people every single year, and when you look at who those people are, lots of them could be working.

We've had lots of immigration, but some of them immigration has been people who are refugees.

So I remember door knocking in St. Boniface and knocking on the doors of people and there'd be a family there, and the one person who could speak to me was a girl who was—a daughter who was serving as the translator for the entire family.

And so there are people who could be working. They have skills, but the obstacle they have is that they can't read, or that they can't read well enough. And there was an incredible feature in the Free Press a few years ago, talking about what a difference adult literacy made for people who were already working.

So you had people working at a Boeing plant in St. James-Assiniboia, right, aerospace. Once those people were able to improve their reading skills and read blueprints, they could get promotions. They could get—they can get a better wage. They can make more money for their family. They can be more productive for the economy. And the same is also true for people working in health care.

There were people—and I don't want to make generalizations—there are all sorts of people who grew up under all sorts of circumstances, and maybe their family didn't know how to read or they didn't make it through—past grade 8. And there's no shame in that. This is just the way things used to be. Sometimes it was a lot easier to get a job without finishing junior high or even high school.

But it means that people—there is a—there are huge, huge obstacles for people that don't need to be there if we're actually able to make sure that people can read. So it's a really—and it's really difficult, because, for my family—the only reason my family is where we are is because of learning.

My father used to say that education is the great leveler. It is the great leveler in society, because anybody from any background should be able to learn, and if they can do that, that they can make it. And that's something that—and recognizing all sorts of systemic problems—but that's it—but it makes a huge difference.

My grandfather moved to Manitoba over a century ago from Prince Edward Island working on the railroad. His father was a cobbler; he left school—left home at 15, moved to Manitoba working on the railway, but then ended up getting—finishing high school, finishing university, getting a scholarship, only to be wiped out in the depression where he was living in a shack, a converted green shed in Headingly, with his wife and five children.

And—but then, you know, everybody pulled together and after the depression, my father actually also had a scholarship. And I ended up going to high school on a scholarship as well. So I have a—my family has a deep, deep appreciation of the power of reading and literacy and the ability it gives to people to pull themselves up, to navigate the world and to see—and to create a new future for themselves.

So, it is something that's absolutely critical. But again, it's not something that's new. This is something that has been a problem for years and years and years that has been ignored. And that's part of what's very frustrating about this and about—frustrating about these bills, generally.

Now, I will just say that I think—in an—in a brief attempt at—in the interest of trying to bridge the divide between parties or at least talk about our differences, that one of the greatest cultural differences anywhere in the world is between rural and urban. And it's—we have a cultural and political divide in Manitoba. We have a cultural and political divide between urban and rural in Canada. And it's like that all around the world.

And so—and part of it is simply that different solutions work different ways because of the environment. There are solutions that work in urban centres that will not—that don't make sense in rural areas. It's possible for people in smaller communities to be able to band together and the—and help a family in need.

It's much harder to do that in cities just because you have—the enormous costs of cities both make people rich but they also make people poor as well. This is one of the things that happens in our society.

But what happens is we have different—essentially, what are different policies and different attitudes about the way government should work, and sometimes we'll take solutions that seem to make sense in—and I'll say it, this works both ways—that it might make—it seem—might seem to make sense in a community of 700 or 5,000, but it doesn't work—it doesn't scale up to a community of 700 or 800 thousand or 5 million.

There's a reason why we have the divisions we do, but also the reason why we govern differently. The fact is that for anybody who grows up in the city, the moment that I wake up and I turn on my light, that light is powered by public utility. When I get out of bed and brush my teeth, I'm drinking water from a public water utility.

When I go out, I'll walk onto the paved sidewalk and the—and drive to work over the paved roads. If I have a problem, I can go to a hospital. I can call an ambulance or the police. All these services are super concentrated in the city and they are—tend to be less available in rural areas.

But it's also critically important that we maintain those standards, that we not reduce them and that we don't cut away at them, because what I see in this—and what I see when people talk about red tape and improving services over and over again—it's about shifting everything off the government's books. But those costs don't just disappear; it isn't just saying, well, we're not going to do this anymore. It means somebody else has to pay for it. And it's shifting costs and risks off the government's books and onto somebody else's.

* (16:30)

So, when you have something like The Family Farm Protection Act, it means that you're stripping away protections from farmers who could be in difficulty with their credit, which would certainly be no surprise right now after the last year of crisis, but also after 20 years of ever-increasing debt.

That—this is the sort of thing, is that making it easier for creditors to seize property at a time of crisis is not a good idea. We should be doing everything we can to preserve the value for our citizens and for our farmers, and making sure they're not being taken advantage of by creditors or being stripped of their property because they've had a bad run of things because there's—for whatever reason. It can be everything from political to weather to market disruptions, especially right now.

When it comes to the—the same thing also applies to who we'd think of as wildlife management. On the one hand, it seems to make sense. You could say, well, private landowners in municipalities may remove beaver dams and lodges on their land without government authorization. Are—the quarter section we own up near Rosburn, we had—we were accused of interfering by—falsely accused, I will add—by a neighbour who was concerned that we were flooding their land because we'd put a—some kind of water device.

We'd done no such thing, but the fact is that beaver dams can actually—and getting rid of them—can cause really quite significant floods and enormous amounts of damage. There's a reason why we—you know, there's a saying, also, that good walls make for

good neighbours—or, good fences make for good neighbours, and some of this is just about making sure that people are—that there are rules in place.

The rules don't have to be draconian; the rules don't have to be tough, but the idea that we all have to operate by the same rules—and we have a common sense of what those rules and what those laws are—are fundamental. Because where there—there's a saying, I think it was Ron MacLean, the NHL—former NHL ref and—from Hockey Night in Canada who said: where there are no rules, there is no game.

So, when you start stripping away protections—which is what lots of this—what lots of these regulations are—or making sure that you're double-checking, you're opening up new pathways to risk that you may not have considered before.

So there are always unintended consequences, both—from anything, which is why you have to be careful about the way these things are being done. And that's—that is—the major concern is that there is this sort of idea of—that if you make things easier, and easier, and easier, it is necessarily more efficient. But, if you have a process, which is controlled, that has checks and balances, and you can avoid a disaster—which is what you should—which should be all of our goal—it's a completely different scenario.

It's a bit—I sometimes wondered, and I said this about the Conservative government of—the Harper Conservative federal government when they were in the midst of stripping away regulations: it's a bit like having a boat and you think you're going to go faster if you can tear out all the—if you don't have to—or, you can use more energy if you're not using it on radar and if you're not—don't have the extra weight of all those life jackets and life preservers, and you start cutting off all the lifeboats and throwing them overboard. You can go faster but, if you have an accident, you're going to be in big, big trouble.

And that, over and over, is what I see with this government, that when government abandons these things—or, when government stops paying for these things or shifts the burden to somebody else—it doesn't disappear. It goes somewhere else, and government right now is—has a much greater capacity to bear burdens and risk and shelter people from risk than individuals do, because of—more than 50 per cent of Manitobans are on the verge of—are within \$200 a month of insolvency, and I think something like 20 per cent of Manitobans are technically insolvent because of the level of debt that they're facing.

So, when this government forces extra costs onto people, if you force \$200 extra a month just for one month of costs onto a family, it can mean they go insolvent and they can't pay their bills. That's the seriousness of what we're dealing with, and that is—and the idea that we can all solve all our problems by forcing people to take on more debt is also a problem.

And I think a year ago, I gave—I talked about the challenges, because right now in Manitoba, we're facing two or three things happening, and it's true across Canada, that prior to the pandemic, we had growing numbers of insolvencies, we had growing numbers of people on EI—falling onto EI, and there were growing numbers of people in too much debt. We are seeing that again now.

And the risk here, there are two risks: one, we have the pandemic, and that as we come out of the pandemic we have to make sure people are being taken care of. And what I see from this government is very much—it's the same ideology that both created the depression of the 1930s and extended the depression of the 1930s, because there was a—Woodrow Wilson had a secretary of the treasury who said we'll just liquidate everything; we'll liquidate the farmers, we'll liquidate the workers, we'll liquidate the businesses; we'll purge all the rotteness out of the system and then something else will come new. But that's not actually what worked. Ultimately, what happens is that we have to find a way to give—to put—to make sure people are working, and working at productive work.

And my concern is that, yes, we're seeing people with record numbers of savings, but it's a tiny number of people. And that, not just in this budget, but this government overwhelmingly, by acting on the perception that the NDP were wildly left wing when they often, as the Premier (Mr. Pallister) reminds them, had policies that were identical, although perhaps slightly milder than the PC—than the current PC government's policies, that what we're doing is doubling down. And the reason why we are at—why Manitoba is where it is at right now is that we've been following the same policies under different governments.

So when the NDP will complain about closed hospitals and closed rural services, of course, they get it thrown back in their face. When we talk about EIA and the fact that nobody's had an increase in EIA since 1992 when it was rolled back to 1986 levels, and when we talk about child poverty, with child poverty's getting worse again after getting slightly better—these are all things that—these are all massive dynamics. But

the fact is, is that the—many of the policies have been on autopilot for about 20 years.

And the perception that the NDP did pretty often, very often, also cut taxes. They cut the small business tax to zero. They cut property taxes for people with cottages. I think in 2009, they boasted of the fact they had cut a billion dollars at the time in taxes, and that is bound—and that was just before—just before the 2008 financial crisis, which nearly melted down the entire global economy.

We're facing—I don't mean to be—look, I mean, some of this is just, I feel I have to be honest. We are facing major challenges with the housing market because we're—because we've had an enormous amount of cheap debt and easy money flowing into the economy, which is making it impossible for younger generations to buy, to find housing. It's getting too expensive for rent for people and businesses alike.

So these are all—these are all big macroeconomic decisions, and I think what's happening is that—especially with this budget and especially with this government's entire legislative agenda—it's using a lot of bills that are based on the premise that there's a huge amount of fat to cut. But also, they're—I do see that they're imported somewhat from—and very similar—I could name about six bills, at least—not more—maybe more, which are very similar to bills that have been used in the United States, and the goal of those bills goes beyond saying, well, let's be efficient, or let's cut taxes. It does have—it is about reducing people's ability to participate in democracy.

And, ultimately, we are all in this together—is that we can be very divided about this as Manitobans; we can pit Manitobans one against the other, but that's been happening for a very long time. We do have to realize that different solutions are going to work in different parts of the province, that what works for downtown Winnipeg may not work in Steinbach or Dauphin or Morden or Thompson. But the other is that we have to recognize that what works in Virden, Rosburn or Plum Coulee may not work in Winnipeg either.

So—and that's the challenge, is that ultimately, we have to be able to govern here and we have to be able to govern fairly for everybody recognizing the differences that we live in a province the size of many countries, with only about 1.3 million people.

* (16:40)

I am ultimately optimistic about what we can do. However, it needs to be about more than just cutting. And the one thing that I will say, I think just before I wrap up, is that when you look at this government's record over the last five years, they're very good at not doing things, they're very good at cutting, they're very good at not spending money, they are very good at taking things away. But they've had enormous difficulty actually accomplishing things.

So when it comes to actually having a health-care system that works properly after the reforms that has not worked very well. When it comes to the vaccine response and the whole pandemic response and setting up responses like that, it has not worked well. It is hard to do things. It is easy not to do things and it is easy to cut things. But we—but if we're actually going to get things done in this province, we have to be willing to do things and not just undo them.

And I think that's part of what—that basically sums up what's wrong with this bill. It's much more about undoing things. And many of the things, in the larger historical picture, so much of what I see in this, this is about dismantling—dismantling projects, programs, red tape that's been in place for—sometimes for—red tape or regulations that've been in place sometimes for years, sometimes for decades.

But what I recognize is that this is a libertarian project to dismantle the new deal. But the new deal regulations and policies were put in place because of a colossal disaster, to protect people after things went horribly wrong. And my concern about this is that the more you take these things away, the more you're taking away the safeguards that kept people safe and actually helped people prosper for years and years.

So it's about kicking away the ladder for future generations, and that's really unfortunate, because we need to do—we have a greater obligation than that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Bill 55, the reducing red tape and improving services act. This bill amends and/or appeals various acts including The Adult Literacy Act that's repealed.

This bill also repeals several clauses in The Advanced Education Administration Act, which requires that the mandate of the minister is to monitor and evaluate and conduct research and analysis about post-secondary education and adult learning.

The other clause that's repealed is the section which says, which gives the minister the ability to

request an adult literacy agency to provide information to the minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bill 55 also repeals The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act (Public Works Contracts), which requires that all public works contracts hire apprentices.

It also amends The Wildlife Act so that private land owners and municipalities may remove beaver dams and lodges on their land without government authorization. Persons may kill wild animals to defend their property on agricultural land that they lease from the Crown.

Bill 55 also amends The Family Farm Protection Act so that the Manitoba Farm Industry Board are removed from the act, and the board no longer has responsibility for investigating and mediating financial disputes between farmers and their creditors. Creditors continue to require leave of the court when executing against real property held by farmers.

Bill 55 also amends The Farm Machinery and Equipment Act so that creditors no longer require leave of the Manitoba Farm Industry Board to repossess farm equipment for a failure to pay. The act is also updated to remove licensing requirements for dealers and vendors of farm equipment, and to allow notices to be provided by email instead of fax.

Bill 55 also amends The Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Fund Act, initiatives that enhance the populations and habitats of fish and wildlife that are fished, hunted and trapped by licence holders, and these may receive grants.

The minister must seek nominations from organizations representing licence holders when appointing subcommittee members, and this bill also amends The Planning Act so that the validity of certificates of approval for subdivisions is extended from 12 months to 24 months and the time period for withholding a development permit is shortened from a maximum of 125 days to a maximum of 90 days. A notice of hearing may reference the civic address of a property in addition to its legal description.

With Bill 55, yet again, this government continues to put forward these so-called red tape omnibus bills, but in attempt to hide several shameful changes and avoid scrutiny of the individual changes. Many of the amendments or repealed acts proposed in this bill have absolutely nothing to do with red tape nor are they related to one another.

For instance, how does The Adult Literacy Act reduce red tape? Or how does removing the requirement that apprentices are hired on public works projects reduce red tape? The reality is that these changes will hurt everyday Manitobans.

This government seems to be caring more about reducing red tape than it does about improving the quality of life for Manitobans. And we know—and Manitobans have come to learn—that red tape is simply a guise for more cuts and the removal of important regulations that protect consumers, that protect the environment and more erasures of important legislation.

Will Bill 55, you know, this is another bill that attacks labour. This government continues to advance its anti-labour agenda with this bill. And this bill repeals The Apprenticeship Employment Opportunities Act, the public works contracts, which requires that all public works contracts hire apprentices.

This change will make it harder for young Manitobans to complete their apprenticeship hours and become certified journeypeople. This change actually increases red tape for apprentices as it will become harder for them to find work and become certified.

This is another change within a matter of weeks that this government has advanced that hurts Manitoba's apprentices. They recently increased the apprenticeship to journeyperson ratio from one-to-one to two-to-one, and we know that unions and families and apprentices themselves are very concerned about the changes to the ratio. Manitoba Federation of Labour president, Kevin Rebeck, has said that he's deeply worried that we may see losses of life before government decides to reconsider.

We know that four construction associations and the Manitoba building trades wrote to the minister for economic development and training, expressing their deep concern about this as well, and they said that many in the industry were unaware of the changes, but that they wanted to still work collaboratively with the minister.

You know, unfortunately, this is not the first time that this government has attacked the workers in our province. The government introduced Bill 16, which impedes an employee's ability to be able to fairly negotiate with their employer. It makes it easier for employers to fire workers who engage in their right to strike.

They've interfered in a myriad of labour negotiations, including with school-bus drivers in the Winnipeg School Division, the University of Manitoba, with Manitoba Hydro and MPI. They've also reduced the number of workplace safety inspections.

Bill 55 repeals The Adult Literacy Act, and this is one of the most shameful changes in this bill. This government, by repealing The Adult Literacy Act, continues to show that adult literacy is not a priority, and we know that under this government, adult literacy outcomes have fallen under their supervision.

*(16:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's a trend with this government that outcomes are getting worse and that when things are failing, they don't take action to improve them.

The Adult Literacy Act that's being repealed by Bill 55 was introduced by an NDP government in 2007 in attempt to improve adult literacy rates in our province. It established the Manitoba adult literacy program, which provided funding for agencies that offer literacy programs for adults seeking to improve their literacy skills. And criteria for government funding was rigorous. Only non-profits, libraries or registered adult learning centres could qualify for government funding.

With this act, it was a deliberately targeted approach to ensure that agencies were actually working to ameliorate adult literacy rates. This act also allowed for the minister to request information from agencies to evaluate the job that they were doing, including surveying adults taking part in the programs, access to their documents, inspection of facilities, the ability to observe classes and other steps necessary to evaluate the programs.

So, by repealing this act, the government has removed from its mandate the goal of improving adult literacy rates and holding adult literacy centres accountable.

We know that higher literacy skills help people find good jobs and lift their families out of poverty and that they give people confidence to achieve their goals. Unfortunately, adult literacy outcomes have declined in the last few years, which means that this repeal makes very little sense. The total number of learners, for instance, enrolled in adult literacy programs has fallen from 2,182 in 2015-2016 to 1,956 for 2018 and 2019, and the data for 2019-2020 is not available yet.

As well, the number of learners registered at adult learning centres has also consistently fallen every year since the PCs took office from 8,450 in 2015-2016 to 7,409 in 2018 and 2019. Likewise, the total number of graduates has fallen from 1,256 in 2015-2016 to 1,138 in 2018 and 2019. Clearly, more needs to be done to improve these outcomes and removing reporting requirements will only hide this blatant issue, because we need to be able to hold the government accountable for literacy targets and outcomes so we can improve adult literacy and ensure our economic recovery is just and equitable.

As the member for Notre Dame, with me, every day, I have to carry this mantle about anti-poverty because, well, when I first was interested in running and I got to meet the Elections Manitoba officer, she, in fact, told me that Notre Dame, as this constituency, is the second poorest constituency in all of Canada. And I said to her, oh, do you mean in all of Manitoba? And she said no, it's in all of Canada. There's a poorer constituency in northern Quebec. That was quite a shock to me.

And with whatever I try to do for my constituency, I keep that in mind, what this Elections Manitoba official told me, as well as the statistic, unfortunately, for Notre Dame constituency that one in every two children live in poverty. Adult literacy is one of the things that we can do as this government to lift people out of poverty and it's definitely an issue that affects the residents in Notre Dame.

You know, recently, I went to a school vice-principal and I had a draft of a note that I was hoping that she would consider to give to the parents of the children, because we were hoping to get some more awareness, public awareness about how to combat lead contamination in soil and how to prevent, you know, children from, you know, getting the effects of lead contamination in soil, which is a big issue in Notre Dame constituency and across other parts of Winnipeg.

And the vice-principal told me, we don't send notes home to parents. And I thought maybe—and I explained—this isn't a political note or anything like that; this is really just a public awareness issue. And the vice-principal told me that; this is going to be a concern because parents can't read. Quote, unquote.

I was completely floored that it's to that level of illiteracy that we're having in our constituency that I can't—that the parents and teachers, they can't even send notes home. So, anything that we can do to

help improve adult literacy, is something that we need to try to do.

I was present at the committee hearing for Bill 55, and we had a very, very impassioned and very well-researched committee presentation by Jim Silver, who is a U of W professor in urban studies and inner-city studies. And he's also one of the main researchers at the CCPA, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives here in Manitoba. And he told us that even currently—or even, I guess it was five years ago—we were having only one per cent of those folks who actually needed adult literacy actually getting to be participating in these programs.

Only one per cent. Yet, at the same time we know that with adult literacy, if adults are able to get their high-school diploma and graduate, the outcomes and economic outcomes would pay for themselves as a return on investment—even for governments—that this is a really a no-brainer kind of issue.

And after the committee hearing, because I was so impressed with what Mr. Silver was able to send to us and explain to us, I reached out to him and I asked him if he would be willing to participate in educating me further and participating in a small committee between me and him and some principals of some adult-learning centres to see if we could maybe research this issue more, and also see what a properly funded adult-literacy program should look like in this province. What would the components be like?

And I'm just happy to say that tonight's actually our very first meeting. It's going to be on Zoom so that we can learn more about this really, really important issue, and get some overall overarching policy directives going with adult literacy so that we can see what we can do here for this province.

I also reached out to some principals at adult-learning centres in Winnipeg, you know, to try to get some feedback about what the repeal of this act would mean for them. And I'm not going to mention the principal's name, but he is a long-time principal of an adult-learning centre here in Winnipeg.

And he told me—you know, first of all, I asked him: how many centres are there? Well, there's about 35 adult learning centres. I asked him: you know, we're seeing that the number of graduates are decreasing year after year, the number of enrolments are decreasing year after year; could you tell me a little bit more about why that—why you think that's happening?

And this principal told me; well, it's really shocking, but I've had to personally turn away thousands of students from enrolling. And I said, why is that happening? And he said, well, it's because in the past, we used to have social agencies that would provide funding for board and lodging and food for adults so that they could, you know, take the time and—you know, out of trying to work or do other things—and then those supports were in place so that they could go to school. And now, those supports are not here.

This government has not funded those social supports and social agencies that adults who really,

really need the services of adult-learning centres require so that they can successfully go to school.

Another issue that this principal flagged for why the graduation rates are decreasing is because again, with this—when this government came in—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

When this matter is before the House, the honourable member for Notre Dame (Ms. Marcelino) will have 12 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m., the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 15, 2021

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

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