

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

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

Vol. LXXVII No. 33 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, March 22, 2023

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 231—The Residential Tenancies
Amendment Act (2)**

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), that Bill 231, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Michaleski: It's an honour to rise in this House today and introduce this bill that will make it easier for those in our communities who face intimate partner violence, or any form of violence, to live safely.

I have heard from many Manitobans who are survivors of violence, and who have struggled to get out of a housing situation in which they feel unsafe. This bill will expand and make it easier for survivors to leave these situations.

I look forward to bringing this bill for debate and passage in this House.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes' notice to routine—prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 27(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

Ramadan

Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): Madam Speaker, peace and blessings to you and everyone else here today. Ramadan Mubarak. *[Have a blessed Ramadan.]*

Today, I rise in the House with a tremendous amount of humility and love for this House, this province and this country.

Today is the first day of the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, the holy month of Ramadan, a month celebrated by nearly 1.9 billion Muslims around the world and over 25,000 Muslims right here in the great province of Manitoba.

The start of Ramadan changes every year by 10 days, moving forward 10 days each calendar year. This is because the Islamic calendar is based on a lunar calendar, which follows the cycles of the moon, which is only 28 to 29 days. As the new crescent moon appears, the Muslim community in Manitoba and across the world will focus on their spirituality and reflect inwards, dictated—dictate themselves to prayer, forgiveness, acts of kindness and charity. But most of all, Muslims will fast from sunrise to sunset.

Each day begins with a pre-fast meal before the sunrise, called suhoor. Muslim families across the country and around the world will wake up before the sun rises, eat a meal together, pray and start the day.

During this month, Muslims will also refrain from negative thoughts and actions that would affect their lives and faith. Muslims, like I said, will abstain from

food and drink from sunrise to sunset. That's right, no food, no water from sunrise to sunset. Right now that is 7:27 a.m. until 7:43 p.m., almost 13 hours with no food and no water.

While many would think this will be exhausting and it'd overtake our bodies, it's quite the opposite. Throughout the day, Muslims will be engaging in community services, communal prayers, family gatherings, knowledge seeking. Working through the hunger pangs forces Muslims to think of those who do not have a warm meal waiting for them at the end of the day, those who struggle to feed their families day in and day out. It teaches us to be truly grateful for everything we have. Fasting is an exercise of self-control and patience, which is called Sabr.

At sunset, the fast is broken with a meal known as iftar. Families will end the day traditionally with a khajoor, a date, which is sunnah. Sunnah means that the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, used to eat a date every time he fasted with a big glass of water.

As I mentioned, the date is a big part of our culture, tradition and faith. To share a part of it—you—to share a part of my faith and culture and religion with you, I have presented every one of my colleagues with a date that was individually wrapped, stuffed with pistachios, almonds and covered in chocolate. Due to the rules I was not allowed to bring the food in here too, but I did have it delivered to everyone's caucus. So, I hope you enjoy that.

Post iftar, the sunset prayer of Maghrib is performed, followed by a big family meal and communal prayers at the mosque, in which a sense of community is the highest point during this sacred month.

Madam Speaker, I am honoured to acknowledge this important day, along with many Muslims and many Manitobans as the first Muslim minister in the history of this province. It is an honour beyond words for me to stand here. I know my late father is overcome with joy as I deliver this address here today.

Even if we are not fasting and we are not Muslim, there is valuable lessons to be learned during this month. I encourage everyone to try and be kinder, patient, understanding, give more in charity and help each other in need.

I wish everyone in Manitoba and across the world a peaceful and happy Ramadan. Ramadan Mubarak [*Have a blessed Ramadan*] to everyone.

I would now ask that my colleagues stand and rise, the Manitoba Muslim community that has shown up today for this historic day in the Legislature.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): As-salamu alaykum [*Peace be upon you*], Madam Speaker. This evening marks the beginning of Ramadan, and it is my honour to rise and celebrate all those who will be participating in the tradition of fasting this month.

Ramadan is the holiest time in the Islamic faith, as followers commemorate the revelation of the Quran to Prophet Muhammad. It is celebrated to show gratitude for our many blessings and reflect on the values of peace, compassion and generosity.

* (13:40)

Even for non-Muslim Manitobans, the values of Ramadan are worth celebrating. It is a time for detaching oneself from material things and worldly possessions.

Ramadan is observed by nearly 2 billion people around the world each year. The acts of preparing for the fasts and breaking the fasts are a time of celebration within families and communities as fellow worshippers come together to pray and eat during these holy times.

As one of the five pillars of Islam, this month-long spiritual journey is a time of fasting, charity and prayer. When night falls, families and friends traditionally gather to enjoy iftar, the meal that breaks their fast at sunset.

Ramadan is also an opportunity to recognize the many contributions Muslim Manitobans have made and continue to make to our province. Every day, they help build a better Manitoba by giving back to those less fortunate, by volunteering to serve important causes and through consistent acts of kindness upon their communities and neighbours.

Manitoba is the proud home to many Muslim families and vibrant communities that use this time to make important contributions to our province. We wish them peace as they embark on this month-long religious journey.

Ramadan Mubarak [*Have a blessed Ramadan*] to all.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon to extend our warmest wishes to Muslims and people who practise Islam around the world as we enter the holy month of Ramadan.

On the Islamic calendar, Ramadan is the ninth month. It's recognized as the ninth month for Ramadan because this is the time that Muhammad received the initial revelations of the holy book, the Quran.

During Ramadan, the community comes together in practice of compassion and understanding to help build our world to be a better place. Prayer and spiritual contemplation is a focus during this holy time, and members of the community give generously to others. They appreciate one's own blessings through gratitude, and people practise discipline, selflessness and patience through fasting, one of the five fundamental principles of Islam.

During this time, those observing will fast from dawn 'til sunset. However, once the sun goes down, families come together and celebrate over a shared meal that emphasizes equality before God and before the law. I look forward to joining members of the community in two evenings for iftar.

This year, we welcome new people to the Manitoban community, in particular from Afghanistan, and we remember those who are still struggling in Afghanistan, Pakistan or elsewhere.

I thank the minister for bringing forward this statement and wish happiness and peace to all who observe this holy month.

Ramadan Mubarak. *[Have a blessed Ramadan.]*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Francis "Frank" Crew

Hon. Greg Nesbitt (Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development): All financial gifts received by community foundations across Manitoba are truly appreciated, but a donation of nearly half a million dollars is extra special.

A dedicated citizen, who assisted in countless ways to keep his Birdtail valley community flourishing, has left a lasting legacy to continue his volunteer work.

The late Francis "Frank" Crew generously donated \$468,000 to the Birtle and District Foundation.

Half of the bequest will be used for educational purposes to establish a community volunteer award fund. The other half of the donation will be invested in the foundation's community fund and held in perpetuity. Interest from the fund will be used for projects as decided upon by the board of directors each year.

Born and raised in a family that believed in volunteering, lending his time and talent came natural to Frank. Over the years, Frank volunteered with 13 different 'majin' organizations in Birtle and area. His dedication and service in this small rural community impacted many lives in one way or another.

The Francis William Crew community volunteer award will honour the man who truly dedicated his time, passion and a willingness to make his home a better place to live. The legacy of this man, who passed away at the age of 79, will be forever etched in the growth of the Birtle community.

It was Frank's belief that giving of one's time and volunteering was of the utmost importance to the well-being and growth of a small town. With his gift to the Birtle and District Foundation, that tradition will continue, exemplifying the Foundation's vision that the entire community continues to grow in a healthy way.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Graduation Pow Wow

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Last weekend I attended the long-awaited return of the annual Graduation Pow Wow at the University of Winnipeg, alongside several of my NDP colleagues.

The University of Winnipeg hadn't held their annual celebration for four years, and it cannot be overstated how great it was for community members, students and families to be able to return to this milestone event. It was my first opportunity to attend this event as the MLA for Union Station, and it was an absolute honour to do so.

For years the pandemic has been hard on Manitobans and has made gathering very difficult at times. This has made it even more powerful, however, when we get to celebrate the accomplishments of those completing their education, which has been so affected by the pandemic.

It was a wonderful opportunity for the community to come together and to honour the hard work of

students, staff, faculty, families and to celebrate the amazing accomplishments of the next generation of leaders.

There were young people there, like 10-year-old Tatum who danced in the powwow, and he was inspired to see everyone being celebrated for their academic achievements.

The ceremonies, dancing, drumming, singing, ribbon skirts, ribbon shirts, the dancers and singers of all ages filled the Duckworth Centre, and our team and I were humbled and honoured to be part of the grand entry. And I have to say, Madam Speaker, that was truly a powerful and beautiful experience to be part of.

We were able to see the leaders of tomorrow at a nexus point, where they have completed one journey and are just about to embark on another very important one.

I'd like to extend to all of the more than 50 graduates, including Celina Clements, a big congratulations and wish them well as they continue their academic careers, pursue their next steps and their dreams moving forward.

Miigwech.

Joyce Halldorson

Hon. Derek Johnson (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I rise today to honour Joyce Halldorson, a health-care aide from Oak Point, Manitoba, and she joins us here in the gallery with her family.

Joyce started working in Winnipeg when she was 16 as a nurse's aide at the Tache Hospital. After finishing high school, she worked at Winnipeg General Hospital. But in 1982, Joyce moved back to Oak Point with her husband and two children, where she began her career as a health-care aide at the Lundar Personal Care Home. At that time, the Lundar PCH was a new building, and there was no equipment to assist with lifting and moving. They relied on muscle and back power alone.

On November 8, 2022, at age 75, Joyce celebrated 40 years of service as a health-care aide in Lundar. She continues to work hard alongside her colleagues in the health-care field to create a family-like atmosphere for residents. She can always be counted on to pick up shifts and has no intention of slowing down anytime soon. Joyce says, if you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life.

In her time off, Joyce also is a dedicated volunteer. She volunteers at Oak Point Community Club,

St. Laurent legion, St. Laurent parish church bingo, St. Laurent rec centre bingo, Lundar legion, St. Olaf's Parish, Lundar rec centre and is a big fan and supporter of the Lundar Trap Club. Best of all, Joyce loves spending time with her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

When asked about work, family, her busy schedule, Joyce says life can't get any better.

Madam Speaker, colleagues of the Legislature, please help me to congratulate Joyce on an amazing career and a lifetime of volunteerism.

Ken Ellison

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): I rise today to pay tribute to a former teacher and educator, Ken Ellison, respectfully known by all as Mr. Ellison.

* (13:50)

Mr. Ellison graduated from St. James Collegiate and went on to a teachers college and the University of Winnipeg. Mr. Ellison began his teaching career in Kinonjeoshtegon First Nation, also known as Jackhead, in 1963, where he met and fell in love with his adoring wife of 55 years, Ida.

Mr. Ellison later taught at Lake St. Martin before spending the last 25 years of his career with the Frontier School Division at Wanipigow School on the Hollow Water First Nation. Many remember Mr. Ellison for his larger-than-life personality, often referred to as their favourite teacher by his students. Mr. Ellison always greeted people with a handshake or a big friendly wave.

Madam Speaker, I would have to say within the community if you ever gave a big friendly wave to anyone, you would be told you're just like Mr. Ellison.

Mr. Ellison was a staunch supporter of the NDP, both provincially and federally. Many NDP candidates throughout the years could depend on Ken's campaigning and support. Mr. Ellison hosted many future politicians in his little house, including Eric Robinson; former Manitoba premier Gary Doer; the late Elijah Harper; and, little did he know, also this future politician when I was just 10 years old.

Raising seven children in their small home, many of his children were destined to be in education, or, heaven forbid, politics. I would say good on them for going along the path of education, becoming principals, teachers and EAs in their own careers. At one point, one of the boys asked their dad, why don't you run for office? And his response was in true Mr. Ellison fashion and

he replied, because someone needs to dot the I's and cross the T's and that's my role.

Mr. Ellison was truly a one-of-a-kind individual; he knew how life in a First Nation community is, and he welcomed the challenges and truly immersed himself and his family in the community to make it a better place for our young people.

I had the opportunity to visit Mr. Ellison just after my election in 2019, and—while he was in the Grace Hospital. I knew in that moment that I wanted to have Mr. Ellison and his family join us here in the Legislature, to honour Mr. Ellison's life accomplishments.

Unfortunately, Madam Speaker, we never got that opportunity as Mr. Ellison's health over the last few years made it challenging for him to be out. Mr. Ellison passed away on March the 4th with his family by his side, but I know Mr. Ellison is listening to us today.

In closing, Madam Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to thank his wife, Ida, his children and his grandchildren for sharing their husband, their dad and their papa with all of us.

Madam Speaker, I am honoured to have Ken's wife Ida and his family join us in the gallery. I ask all my colleagues to join me in showing our appreciation to Ken Ellison, simply known as Mr. Ellison.

And in true Mr. Ellison fashion, Madam Speaker, I will not end with a word, but simply a Mr. Ellison wave.

Swan River Snowmobile Clubs

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Today, I would like to recognize two snowmobile clubs in my constituency, the North Mountain Riders and the Swan Valley Snowmobile Association.

These non-profit clubs are made up of a group of volunteers who dedicate countless hours to maintaining 900 kilometres of groomed trails in the Duck, the Porcupine mountains and surrounding area.

This is truly a sledder's paradise and you have to see for yourself and experience this pristine wilderness. With flat running fields, winding scenic wooden terrain, meadows, swamps and rolling hills and ravines, there is something for all.

The two clubs have a combined total of 13 well-stocked warm-up shacks with wood-burning stoves and outdoor firepits, including solar-powered lighting and barbecues. This year, the Whitefish Lake warm-up shack even took on wind power.

The trails are well signed and mapped and link with neighbouring trails to the south and in the north on to Saskatchewan and northward to The Pas.

Swan River is the head of these trail networks and is a sled-friendly town and the hotels, motels are trail-side, as well as restaurants and fuel stations. This past winter, sledders came from near and far to experience what Manitoba has to offer.

As Ken Kennedy summed up his day in the Porcupine mountains with sledding friend Jamie Kruetza: For us, it was a world-class day out in nature and if there is award where volunteers are recognized by Travel Manitoba for enhancing tourism in the province, North Mountain Riders would definitely be a candidate.

Madam Speaker, these are words shared often complimenting the Swan Valley Snowmobile Association and North Mountain Riders on their volunteering efforts.

Madam Speaker, this is a destination warrants exploring, and before those warm spring days are here, I encourage everyone to come for one last Ski-Doo adventure. You won't be disappointed.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I have some guests that I would like to introduce to you. Seated in the public gallery, from the Public Service Commission, we have seven people under the direction of Tolu Bolaji.

And also in the public gallery, from Fairholme school representing Oak Bluff, Valley View, Oak River, Vermillion, Wingham, Decker, we have 22 grade 9 students under the direction of Evelyn Maendel. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program Government Knowledge of Staffing Difficulties

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Trigger warning that this concerns sexual assault.

I think everybody who experiences a sexual assault in this province deserves access to health care. Yesterday, we were shocked to hear about the resignation of many nurses who worked as part of the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program.

Now, this development should come as no surprise the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson). It was more than two months ago that we stood with nurses and their representatives to call on the Premier to fix the issues with this program. It's clear that the Premier was aware of the dire situation at SANE and yet chose to do nothing.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) tell the House when she received her first briefing about the issues at the SANE program?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I want to start by saying that sexual assault is trauma, and it is very, very serious, and our government takes it very seriously.

As a result of what was a casual Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program being underserved and underfunded by the former NDP government, our government recognized the need to stabilize the program at the Health Sciences Centre.

And I'd like to table today, Madam Speaker, the news release from April 7, 2022, when I stood in this Legislature with the Minister of Families to announce the creation of the new provincial Forensic Nurse Examiner Program, something the NDP never did.

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

Mr. Kinew: Well, we'll get to the Minister of Health's evasion of accountability soon enough, but first I'd like to focus on the Premier.

The Premier met with these nurses from the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program directly. Why didn't the Premier tell her Minister of Health to fix the issues there?

That's why it's important for the Premier to answer these legitimate and important questions right here in the House. We cannot have the evasion of accountability when it comes to an important issue like this one.

Alongside nurses and representatives, ourselves, many people have been raising issues of concern and asking for action—not press releases, but action—to address the concerns. We know that not only nurses, not only victims, but also law enforcement have serious concerns about what is taking place.

Will the Premier tell the House when she first received a briefing on the crisis at the SANE program?

Ms. Gordon: It was our government that recognized that the program needed to be stabilized, Madam

Speaker, at the Health Sciences Centre. We moved to create the provincial Forensic Nurse Examiner Program, to invest \$640,000, to add seven full-time staff. They were casual under the NDP, with individuals picking up shifts all across the system, but we moved to make the positions permanent, to create dedicated space at Health Sciences Centre because we know that when individuals of—that experience sexual assault come for help, they need to be in a dedicated space with dedicated staff.

We are committed to making that happen.

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

Mr. Kinew: One of the issues is that there was no movement.

There was a press release, there was an announcement, but where do we stand today? Nurses have resigned from the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program and there are fewer nurses at the bedside to help sexual assault victims as a result.

Law enforcement is concerned about this. Police need evidence to lay charges, and police know that time is of the essence. The Premier's failure and mismanagement on this issue is putting criminal cases at risk. That's the consequence of the crisis with these nurses.

Will the Premier tell the House why her government is failing victims of crime by refusing to address the issues at the SANE program?

* (14:00)

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Our government will always stand up for survivors of sexual violence, unlike members opposite—unlike the Leader of the Official Opposition, whose own attorney, the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv), makes a living representing rapists and perpetrators, and pledges to beat them of their criminal charges relating to sexual violence. In fact, Madam Speaker, he openly advertises on his website, which I will table for the House's consideration, that he pledges to keep rapists out of jail.

I suggest that that member have a caucus meeting before he comes in this House and purports to be an ally for sexual assault survivors.

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

**Resignation of SANE Nurses
Minister of Health Resignation Request**

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): For months, we have raised grave concerns about the inaction of this government when it comes to the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program. I'm not sure why the Minister of Health is laughing right now; it's a very serious issue.

The government has claimed that everything is fine, but we know that front-line nurses are speaking out, and they've made it very clear that things are not well with this program. This is a program that serves people from across the province, should they be a victim of a sexual assault.

What has happened because of this government's inaction: these nurses have quit. Many of them have quit, and there are fewer nurses there to serve these victims.

Accountability means taking responsibility for failures of government. The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) needs to show leadership, and we need a different direction when it comes to health care.

Will the Premier—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew:—ask for the Minister of Health to resign today? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): We accepted accountability that the members opposite never did for this program, Madam Speaker. We invested \$640,000; six of the seven staff have been hired in—to full-time positions; dedicated space at the Health Sciences Centre.

I want to pose a question to the Leader of the Opposition. Will he accept responsibility for his member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) advertising openly—and here's the question: Facing sexual assault charges in Winnipeg? We can help. Want—thousands of successful criminal cases won. Avoid hours of community service, and we'll fight to keep you out of jail.

The hypocrisy from the members opposite—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

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

Mr. Kinew: The Minister of Health has tried to blame Shared Health for the problems at the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program.

But who created Shared Health? It was this PC government. Who populated the board of Shared Health? It was this PC government. And who continues to have the responsibility to oversee Shared Health right now? Again, it's this PC government.

And yet, rather than accepting responsibility to oversee a challenge in our health-care system, this Minister of Health, under the direction of this Premier, continues to evade accountability, and now they're blaming civil servants at Shared Health.

Will the Premier let her blame these civil servants, or will the Premier do the right thing and ask this minister to resign?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, the person that should be resigning this House is the member for Fort Garry.

Or at least he should be resigning from his law practice, in which he openly advertises and is accepting anybody who is accused of raping a child; that he will explore loopholes in his practice, as stated on his website, which I'll table for the House's consideration, where he openly asks, what is the legal age of consent. Because there are loopholes that that member will find to get sexual assault perpetrators off the hook and out of jail.

Madam Speaker, if anybody should be resigning in this House, it should be the member for Fort Garry and his law practice.

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

Mr. Kinew: The government is failing to provide a basic service that anyone in Manitoba would expect them to deliver, and that is ensuring that sexual assault victims have access to health care and that they have access to justice.

Now, that alone should be disqualifying, but to compound the issue, this Minister of Health has tried to blame civil servants at Shared Health in a fairly desperate bid to try and evade accountability.

The question needs rightly to be posed to the Premier: Is she going to tolerate this, or will she ask her Minister of Health to resign?

Ms. Gordon: Madam Speaker, they don't listen to Manitobans. They don't listen to nurses. Just yesterday in

the Committee of Supply, the member for Union Station said they were going to meet with front-line workers. They're always playing catch-up.

But our government doesn't play catch-up. We listen to front-line workers. I heard from many individuals who work at HSC, before this program was stood up, that something needed to be done about the mismanagement and underfunding of the same program under the previous NDP government.

We acted. We created the program. We invested. And we will get the job done.

Resignation of SANE Nurses Minister of Health Resignation Request

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): It's absolutely devastating. We went from a program where we had almost no vacant shifts and patients were always being seen to a program where there's constantly weekly vacant shifts. That is a direct quote from front-line workers, who told this government exactly that weeks ago.

Yesterday, we learned nurses resigned en masse from the SANE program because their helps for request were ignored. We have been warning this minister and Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) for months that this could happen.

Will the minister take responsibility for the chaos that is engulfing the SANE program?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): For 17 years, the members opposite took no action, Madam Speaker. I heard from front-line workers, before the member for Union Station felt that they could go and speak to front-line workers, that our government needed to do something about the SANE program.

We acted, Madam Speaker. We created the provincial Forensic Nurse Examiner Program. We invested \$640,000 to create seven new permanent positions. Not casual, pick-up-shifts-as-you-go-along system that was under the NDP government, but seven permanent positions, of which six of those positions have been filled. We invested dollars to create space-dedicated space—at Health Sciences Centre.

We are getting the job done. We are committed to ensuring sexual assault victims receive care.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, the minister cannot even take responsibility for her own government's failures.

She's done—she thinks when she's made an announcement, her job is suddenly just done and over, and that reveals just how incompetent this government is when it comes to health care. The actual work of ensuring nurses are listened to, that programs are properly designed and funded and that results happen—that's not the minister's job, according to her. What an absolute abdication of leadership.

Manitobans are suffering—suffering, Madam Speaker—because of the failures of this minister and that's why we need a change.

Will the minister resign and let someone else do her job today?

Ms. Gordon: Madam Speaker, I am so deeply concerned today in what I'm hearing in the House.

* (14:10)

No member from the opposite side of the Chamber has accepted any responsibility for the member for Fort Garry's (Mr. Wasyliw) open and public advertising that if you're facing sexual assault charges in Winnipeg, we can help. We can get you off—thousands of successful criminal cases. You can avoid community service. We'll fight to keep you out of jail.

It's okay for their member to sit in their caucus, and no one is asking for that individual to resign. That's shameful, Madam Speaker.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, it's clear that if the minister won't resign, then the Premier should demand it. The minister publicly stated that she is not responsible for the failures at the SANE program, and that is simply just not true.

Just like Brian Pallister when the PCs accused doctors of creating chaos in the health-care system, this minister is resorting to blaming health-care workers. It shows the depths of the mismanagement and the incompetence at the absolute highest levels in this PC government. It's a reflection of this minister's absolute inability to do her job and deliver the services that survivors are depending on, unfortunately, every day in Manitoba.

Manitobans deserve a new minister: Will the Premier agree to that today, yes or no?

Ms. Gordon: Madam Speaker, I just want to stand and say that, on this side of the House, what is the age of–legal age of consent is not open for discussion. It's not a loophole.

Members on the other side of the House, they don't want to reference any of the information that we've tabled today because they obviously stand behind their member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv), who happens to be, I'm told, the legal adviser for the Leader of the Opposition, so I guess he also won't be asking for the member for Fort Garry to resign.

Madam Speaker, we stand behind sexual assault victims. We created the program. We are committed as a government to ensuring that program is fully established and staffed. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Resignation of SANE Nurses Minister of Health Resignation Request

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): The chaos at the SANE program is the direct result of this minister's failure to prioritize sexual assault victims. Survivors of sexual assault from every region of this province aren't receiving vital health care because the calls of nurses for help have been ignored by this Minister of Health.

It also means that law enforcement can't charge people for sexual assault of some of Manitoba's most vulnerable peoples.

This is the result of the Health Minister—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: –full stop.

Will the minister take responsibility for the resignation of SANE nurses and for failing women, girls in our province and simply just resign today?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Our government will always stand up for survivors of sexual assault, unlike members opposite, who think that age of consent is a loophole to be explored in helping perpetrators and child rapists get off of that serious sexual offense.

That member has the audacity to come in here and talk about criminal charges and helping convict perpetrators of this crime. That member should turn around and speak to the member for Fort Garry before she styles herself as an advocate for sexual assault victims.

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

MLA Fontaine: The SANE program is meant to support survivors of sexual assault and trauma. The dedicated nurses who front–on the front lines have been raising their voices for months about how this minister has been ignoring their desperate calls and pleas.

Instead of listening, the Premier and the minister are blaming others. And according to the Premier, no one is responsible for health care on that side of the House. Manitobans must be supported if they become victims of sexual assault.

Will the Premier tell the House why her minister is failing survivors of sexual assault in our province?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): We listened to front-line workers. I listened to nurses from the SANE program. I heard many times while I was working in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority during the 17 dark years of NDP administration about the SANE program, about the casual nature of the staffing, that there was no dedicated space. I was aware of that even before I entered politics, Madam Speaker.

That's why I was pleased to stand with the Minister of Families to create the new provincial Forensic Nurse Examiner Program, because I listened, even before I entered politics, to front-line workers. They didn't listen to anyone for 17 years.

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

MLA Fontaine: Front-line nurses who care for the most vulnerable victims are speaking out and sending a clear message to the Premier and to this minister. They've had enough, Madam Speaker. The PCs' incompetence has destroyed an essential service for women, girls and gender-diverse folks across this province. That's why we need accountability from this Premier and her government and no more excuses and blame shifting.

Will the Premier apologize for ignoring the calls of SANE nurses and fix their problems that her government and her minister have created? And will her minister resign today?

Ms. Gordon: Madam Speaker, members opposite are very quiet today in the Chamber now that we've tabled the information about their member for Fort Garry.

Madam Speaker, when I met with front-line health-care workers, nurses, the nurses in the SANE program, you know what I heard? That in the 17 years that they were in office, not a single member ever sat around a round table to have discussions with front-line nurses. I have emails in my office stating the same. I've received calls from front-line workers. But yesterday, the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) decided to play catch-up and go and meet with front-line workers.

Madam Speaker, we'll take no lessons from the members opposite.

Health-Care System Management Concerns Working Conditions and Staffing Shortages

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Madam Speaker, through inaction or incompetence this minister isn't up for the job. For months and years, nurses at HSC have been raising the alarm about extreme staffing shortages and the lack of resources from this PC government. Yesterday, nurses with the SANE program resigned in protest of this PC government's failure to listen and provide timely communication, support and training.

How much longer will this minister ignore nurses and the problems that her PC government is responsible for creating in the first place?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Our government will always stand up for survivors of sexual violence. That is why we created the SANE program; that is something that the NDP never did. They ignored the problem for 17 years, just like they're all ignoring right now; they are not addressing the fact that they have a member in their caucus who is openly advertising and making a living off of representing rapists and keeping rapists out of jail.

Madam Speaker, that is shameful.

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

MLA Marcelino: Madam Speaker, nurses and other health professionals know they can't trust this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and the Health Minister's desperate election-year announcements after seven straight years of cuts and closures.

Last year, the Health Minister said that they would staff the SANE program 24-7, but it's a year later and it continues to fall apart. Working under stressful conditions leads to burnout, physical and mental injuries. And, finally, when there was no hope

of any real help being offered, it leads to nurses quitting.

* (14:20)

When will this minister stop with the talking points and show our health-care workers the respect that they deserve?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, let's talk about hope.

Let's talk about hope for victims of sexual assault. It was our government that came to their aid after hearing all the cries for help from the nurses, from the victims, the survivors of sexual assault, that the NDP had done nothing to stabilize the program.

It was our government that invested \$640,000, created dedicated space at Health Sciences Centre. And I know the member opposite probably didn't hear about why we need a dedicated space at the Health Sciences Centre, but there's a good reason for that, Madam Speaker, and we answered the call.

We are committed to ensuring the program is fully established and fully staffed.

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

MLA Marcelino: Every day, nurses are concerned with providing safe patient care, given the lack of support from health leadership, including this PC Health Minister.

And it's not just the chaos and overcrowding in the ERs or the SANE program; we know that the nurse staffing crisis puts patients at risk everywhere. Critical incident reports that were finally released after delays by this PC government include many incidents that the head of the Manitoba Nurses Union says were preventable. These critical incidents are linked to ongoing staffing shortages.

Will the minister finally admit that her government's cuts have directly increased the risk of critical incidents and have deprived sexual assault survivors the medical help they need?

Ms. Squires: Our government is committing to helping survivors of sexual violence.

That is why we established the SANE program with a \$650,000 initiative last year, and we are committed to that initiative so that all sexual assault survivors get the support and the medical help that they need. That is why our government is also investing in Toba Centre, which we know is going to help child victims. We also have doubled the funding

for all of our front-line agencies who are on the front lines of domestic and gender-based violence and sexual violence.

During the dark days of the NDP, all these women's resource centres were not properly funded. West Central Women's Resource Centre came knocking at the doors of the NDP, and what did they get? They got a no. North End women's treatment centre, the transitional beds—asked the NDP for funding. They got a no.

This government is making those investments so that all survivors throughout the province of Manitoba can get the support they need.

Health-Care System Management Concerns Impact on Nurses Mental and Physical Health

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): This PC government really has no clue how to start fixing health care because they consistently have not listened to health-care workers.

The PC Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has happily continued to support Brian Pallister's ideological agenda of cuts to health care despite the clear evidence that they caused direct harm.

SANE nurses have told us they resigned because they can no longer enable a system that doesn't support them or their patients.

When will this minister show some accountability and start listening?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I was so pleased to have the opportunity to meet with front-line workers at Health Sciences Centre, St. Boniface Hospital, Grace Hospital—leadership in the health system at various levels, Madam Speaker.

And what I heard time and time again was that, in the 17 years the NDP was in office, they never, never met with front-line workers.

Out of those discussions, Madam Speaker, came our health human resource action plan, an investment of \$200 million to add 2,000 health professionals. The \$123 million invested into incentives for nurses came about as a result of listening to nurses and acting on their advice.

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

Ms. Naylor: Let's be clear about this: the Premier supported Brian Pallister's cuts as Health minister, and

these cuts continue to create chaos every day as a result.

Health-care cuts have had a devastating impact on the personal lives of our health-care workforce with mandated overtime and burnout, and yet these workers are the ones that hold the system together. But nurses quit in desperation. They don't have the supports they need to do their jobs.

Has the minister heard of the concept of moral injury, and will she apologize for her ongoing role in perpetuating these injuries on nurses doing their best despite the government's cuts?

Ms. Gordon: As a result of our government listening to front-line workers, we have invested \$123 million for nine nurse incentives, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to share some of those: a new hourly premium for nurses who work weekend hours, up to \$10,000 for nurses who hold the equivalent of a full-time position, \$8.4 million reimbursing the cost of nurses' professional licensing fees, up to \$10,000 for nurses who are eligible to retire but choose to remain in the workforce, an incentive for nurses who left the profession and would like to return, a new refer-a-nurse program, a provincial pool, more and more investments as a result of listening to front-line workers.

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

Ms. Naylor: Unfortunately, this Health Minister shows no insights that her PC government created the problems.

Moral injury is psychological distress that results from events that go against one's values and moral beliefs. And this occurs for health professionals—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Naylor: —like the SANE nurses at HSC when they're unable to uphold the oath they—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Naylor: —took to deliver the best care and put the needs of their patients first because the system they work in is broken. Post-traumatic stress and compassion fatigue can lead to increased injuries, sick time uses—usage, with negative consequences for patients.

Will this minister stop with her excuses, stop blaming—

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

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Our government will always stand up for survivors of sexual violence, and that member has the audacity to come in here and talk about morals when our—on this side of the House, we do not see age of consent as a legal loophole.

In fact, our Justice Minister is working hard to ensure that perpetrators of violent offenses remain behind bars where they cannot get access to vulnerable people. We are working very hard to ensure that survivors are protected and get the services and the supports.

That is something that that NDP administration never did when they were in government, and they fail to grasp the concept now that they are in opposition.

Grace Hospital ER Patient Safety Concerns

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, 44–45 doctors wrote a letter warning the Grace Hospital ER may not be safe, and we recently heard from a patient, Heather Stewart, with a severe pain condition from a spinal injury that makes her legs weak.

Two weeks ago she tried on three occasions to get help at the Grace Hospital ER and described the experience as humiliating and traumatizing. At one point she fell in her room and was left on the floor; at another she had no food or drink for 30 hours; and while she was medicated, she was locked in a room with another agitated patient.

This is exactly the kind of unsafe care doctors at the Grace warned about, and this is not an isolated case.

Can the minister assure us that the Grace ER is safe to keep open?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, we want to, as a government, ensure that Manitobans who need care get the care they need and deserve, not just at the Grace Hospital, but at any facility that they access here in the province.

We are going to continue to support our physicians, our nurses, our allied health team, and I value and appreciate all the good work that is being done by the staff at Grace Hospital. And we will ensure that when Manitobans access care at the Grace, that they receive the care they deserve.

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

Health System Funding Staff Retention

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Since the day they were elected, the PCs have been engaged in demolition by neglect of our health-care system. They promised big, but cut anyway. And, as I table, this document from 2019 shows three years of cuts and freezes to Health, including a 3.5 per cent, \$240-million cut in just one year.

* (14:30)

The PCs ignored warnings not to close ERs. They ignored warnings from nurses in January 2020 that the HSC was going to be grey-listed as unsafe. And throughout the pandemic, they never stopped deleting and cutting costs.

This morning, we heard that a rural RHA is denying oxygen at home to a 93-year-old, and that seven nurses just resigned from the Glenboro hospital.

Where is the plan to retain people? Because it's not in this budget.

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I know that the member opposite has not had the opportunity to read our health human resource action plan commitment. It has three pillars: retain, train and recruit.

We have invested \$200 million to retain and add 2,000 health professionals, Madam Speaker. But I just also want to share some of our most recent announcements: 80 new physician training seats, premiums offered to family and pediatric clinics to extend patient hours, \$450,000 for physician mental health supports, \$6.6 million for the creation of a specialized CAR T CancerCare therapy program, \$5 million for the VECTRS program to virtually support patient transfers—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Health System Accountability Request for Support for Bill 217

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Decisions being made within our health-care system affect all Manitobans. It was upsetting yesterday, when the Minister of Health blamed senior management for their failure to properly staff a program that she, as the minister, was aware of was in crisis for months.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Health is ultimately responsible for how the system is being managed. Health care is the largest portfolio in our provincial budget, and that's why my colleague, the

member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), introduced a bill that would create accountability in health care.

Will this government support this legislation?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, again, our government is—took responsibility for the dire situation in the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program by creating the provincial Forensic Nurse Examiner Program, by investing \$640,000—something members opposite never did, by creating seven permanent positions. Six of those positions have been filled. The individuals are going through training.

There—prior to the announcement, the NDP was very satisfied with the position being casual, with individuals picking up shifts whenever they found an empty spot in their schedule, Madam Speaker. But we were not satisfied—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Infrastructure Spending Five-Year Plan Announcement

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Madam Speaker, throughout Manitoba, it is our network of roads and highways that keeps us connected.

Sit down for coffee in any community and you will hear of the specific needs of the local area that were deferred during 17 years of NDP mismanagement, be it washed-out roads, neglected maintenance and congestion. Each and every day, Manitobans depend on our infrastructure network and, under the previous government, that network was allowed to degrade and fail.

I understand the Minister of Transportation, Infrastructure has laid out a five-year plan to ensure Manitobans have access to a strong infrastructure grid.

Can the minister elaborate on this plan and how it will help Manitobans?

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I just want to thank my good friend, the member for Borderland, for a great question. He's my neighbour.

And under the dark days of the NDP, Madam Speaker, necessary infrastructure was underspent by eight—by billions of dollars—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Piwniuk: —Madam Speaker, in the last eight years, they deferred necessary upgrades and maintenance, and

with no reason. Our government is committed for cleaning up their mess.

That's why, in the first time in Manitoba history, Madam Speaker, that we outlined a five-year plan, historically about a—\$4.1 billion, which transportation industry has been advocating for, and we are delivering. Over 800 approved capital projects; \$75 million in northern airports alone; \$2.5 billion in highways alone, highway—building of highways; 71 kilometres of twinning of the—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Peguis First Nation Flood Evacuees Return to Community Timeline

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): Last year, thousands of Peguis First Nation residents were displaced, once again, by flooding in their community. More than 900 evacuees from Peguis can't return to their community nine months after flood waters ravaged the reserve. This includes my cousin and her very young family, who are still living at Holiday Inn on Pembina Highway.

Will this minister listen to Peguis community members and work with the federal government to ensure that everyone can safely return home?

Ekosi.

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I know the member for The Pas-Kameesak—I know the importance of Peguis, I know the devastation that the community had to go through last year.

I met many times with Chief Hudson to talk about this issue, and the thing is, Madam Speaker, I was in Ottawa to actually have conversations with Minister Patty Hajdu. And I had a number of lists that I actually came up with with—actually, Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse was with me. We had a number of lists, and one of the main lists on that list was the Peguis flood mitigation.

And we're going to want the federal government to come on board, and we're going to do—we're going to look at that flood mitigation and we're going to solve that problem after so many generations.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Bibliothèque Régionale Jolys Regional Library

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

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

(1) The Bibliothèque Régionale Jolys has been served notice by the Red River Valley School Division to vacate the premises currently situated in the auditorium of École Héritage school by March 31, 2023.

(2) The auditorium was originally built in the 1960s by renowned Manitoba architect Étienne Gaboury, and has been home to JRL for 48 years.

(3) A photo of the auditorium captioned the regional library is published in a 2008 document titled, heritage buildings in RM De Salaberry and St. Pierre Jolys. It is marked as an important modern building that could attain the status of a heritage site.

(4) JRL and Red River Valley School Division have flourished from a mutually beneficial memorandum of understanding for 54 years.

(5) Their shared collection boasts over 50,000 books and has the fourth largest collection of French-language literature in rural Manitoba.

(6) Students that are bused in from the neighbouring municipalities that do not have a public library, such as Niverville, Grunthal and Kleeferfield [*phonetic*], are provided with free access to the public library and its fourth largest collection of French books in rural Manitoba during the school year.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To request the Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services to consider granting the auditorium to the JRL by March of 2023.

(2) To request the Minister of Education to recognize the value that the JRL provides to the student population of École Héritage School, as well as the communities of St. Pierre Jolys and the RM of De Salaberry.

(3) To request the Minister of Education and the Minister of Francophone Affairs to recognize that a memorandum of understanding between the Red River Valley School Division and the JRL—lost my place—is mutually, financially and culturally beneficial.

(4) To request the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage to recognize the heritage potential of this important building and its status in the community; and

(5) To request the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage to prevent any renovations to the auditorium that would destroy and devalue the architectural integrity of this building.

* (14:40)

This petition is signed by Judy Maendel, Ray Maendel and Doreen Hofer, as well as many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

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

Provincial Road 224

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

Ekosi.

Security System Incentive Program

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Cities across Canada and the United States, including Chicago; Washington, DC; Salinas, California; and Orillia, Ontario, are offering home security rebate programs that enhance public safety and allow for more efficient use of their policing resources.

(2) Home security surveillance systems protect homes and businesses by potentially deterring burglaries, reducing homeowners' and business insurance costs.

(3) Whole neighbourhoods benefit when more homes and businesses have their security systems.

(4) A 2022 Angus Reid Institute poll found 70 per cent of Winnipeggers surveyed believed crime had increased over the last five years, the highest percentage found among cities in Canada.

(5) The same survey reported half of Winnipeggers polled do not feel safe walking alone at night, and almost 20 per cent of them said they were a victim of police-reported crime in the last two years.

(6) Although the public understands what the criminologists and community advocates point as the main drivers of crime, namely the larger issues of lack of food, addictions and poverty, they support rebate programs like these as they help the most vulnerable in our community by removing financial barriers for personal protection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to work with municipalities to establish a province-wide tax rebate or other incentive program to encourage residents and businesses to purchase approved home and business security protection systems.

And this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

Foot-Care Services

Mr. Eric Redhead (Thompson): 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 population of those aged 55-plus has grown to approximately 2,500 in the city of Thompson.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(8) The city of Thompson also serves as a regional health-care service provider, and the need for foot care extends beyond just those served in the capital city of the province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Lorraine Peters, Gianna Woods, Vanessa Greenfield.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

SANE Program

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(6) The provincial government has compounded its failure to provide supports for victims of sexual and gender-based violence by refusing to proclaim a bill passed in 2021 that would hold the provincial government accountable for providing resources available to child survivors of sexual assault. The bill, sponsored by the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak, is entitled The Reporting of Supports for Child Survivors of Sexual Assault Act.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by Keith Bellamy, Evan Krosney, Katie Sutherland and many other Manitobans.

Community Living disABILITY Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

* (14:50)

Very often, persons with specific or non-specific disabilities or a combination of those disabilities have specific needs related to their executive function for support when they are adults or are transitioning to adulthood, which are not necessarily connected to their IQ.

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

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

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

Newfoundland and Labrador have now recognized that access to services should be based on the

nature of the disability and the person's needs, rather than on IQ.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by Amboy Tortowa, Donald Glover [*phonetic*], Shane Buck and many other Manitobans.

Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) Manitoba has many good bilingual programs in public schools for children and teens available in other languages, including French, Ukrainian, Ojibwe, Filipino, Cree, Hebrew and Spanish. Punjabi bilingual programs for children and teens as well as Punjabi language instruction at a college and university level could similarly teach and maintain Punjabi language and culture.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to take steps to implement Punjabi bilingual programs in public

schools similar to existing bilingual programs and take steps to implement Punjabi language instruction in other levels of education in Manitoba.

This has been signed by Gurdev Singh, Navinderpal Hari, Baljeet Singh, Shamsher Singh and many more.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) Manitoba has many good bilingual programs in public schools for children and teens available in other languages, including French, Ukrainian, Ojibwe, Filipino, Cree, Hebrew and Spanish. Punjabi bilingual programs for children and teens as well as Punjabi language instruction at a college and university level could similarly teach and maintain Punjabi language and culture.

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

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

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

This has been signed by Tarandeep Kaur, Lovepreet Singh and Dharmpal Singh.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Could you please call—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: I'm just trying actually to—just trying to call—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —business here—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: I'm going to call for order. We've got somebody that is trying to raise something in the House. I can't even hear because of this heckling. I'm going to ask members to stop.

Mr. Goertzen: I'm not sure what's happening on the other side, but could you please call all stages of Interim Supply today.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider the Interim Supply bill this afternoon. The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the resolutions respecting the Interim Supply bill.

Will the Deputy Speaker please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Interim Supply

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. We have before us our consideration—we have before us for our consideration four resolutions respecting the Interim Supply bill.

The first resolution pertaining to part A, Operating Expenditures, for Interim Supply, reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2024, a sum not exceeding \$6,039,556,000, being 35 per cent of the total amount, for the purposes set out in part A, Operating Expenditures, of those Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen) have any opening comments? The Minister of Finance has no opening comments.

* (15:00)

Does the official opposition critic have any opening comments? No.

Is the committee ready for the question?

Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

The second resolution pertaining to part B, Capital Investments, for Interim Supply reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2024, a sum not exceeding \$752,141,000, being 75 per cent of the total amount for the purposes set out in part B, Capital Investments, of those Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance have any opening comments?

Does the official opposition Finance critic have any opening comments?

Is the committee ready for the question?

Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

The third resolution pertaining to part C, Loans and Guarantees, for Interim Supply reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2024, a sum not exceeding \$371,096,000, being 75 per cent of the total amount for the purposes set out in part C, Loans and Guarantees of those Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance have any opening comments?

Does the official opposition Finance critic have any opening comments?

Is the committee ready for the question?

Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

The fourth resolution pertaining to part D, Capital Investments by Other Reporting Entities, for Interim Supply reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to His Majesty, for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2024, a sum not exceeding \$685,430,000 being 75 per cent of the total amount for the purposes set out in part D, Capital Investments by Other Reporting Entities of those Estimates.

Does the Minister of Finance have any opening comments?

Does the official opposition critic have—Finance critic have any opening comments?

Is the committee ready for the question?

Shall the resolution pass? *[Agreed]*

That concludes the business before the committee.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION**Committee Report**

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Chairperson): Madam Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted four resolutions respecting Interim Supply.

So, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Cox), that the report of the committee be received.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Rossmere, seconded by the honourable member for Kildonan-River East—*[interjection]*

Order. I'm trying to read something that's quite important here.

So, it has been moved by the honourable member for Rossmere, seconded by the honourable member for Kildonan-River East, that the report of the committee be received.

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

Interim Supply Motion

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care (Mr. Johnston), that there be granted to His Majesty, on account of Certain Expenditures of the Public Service for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2024, out of the Consolidated Fund, the sums of \$6,039,556,000, being 35 per cent of the total amount to be voted, as set out in part A, Operating Expenditures, of those Estimates; \$752,141,000, being 75 per cent of the total amount to be voted, as set out in part B, Capital Investment, of those Estimates; \$371,096,000, being 75 per cent of the total amount to be voted, as set out in part C, Loans and Guarantees, of those Estimates; and \$685,430,000, being 75 per cent of the total amount to be voted, as set out in part D, Capital Investments by Other Reporting Entities, of those Estimates.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**Bill 37—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (Mr. Ewasko), that Bill 37, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023, be now read a first time and be ordered for second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

* (15:10)

Mr. Cullen: Second reading? *[interjection]*

An Honourable Member: Oh—oh.

Madam Speaker: Oh—the honourable Minister of Finance.

SECOND READINGS**Bill 37—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023**

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mr. Khan), that Bill 37, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023, be now read a second time and be referred to Committee of the Whole.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: What's next? I guess we would—*[interjection]*—that's perfect.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and I look forward to the speedy passing of this important bill, the interim appropriation act, so that we can carry on the business of government.

Thank you.

Questions

Madam Speaker: Do members have any questions on the bill?

The honourable—*[interjection]*—a question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The honourable member for St. Vital—of St. James.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I'd like to ask the minister if he can tell the House the current actuals for spending for health care in the third quarter of this year in the Health Department, the department of seniors and the department of mental health and recovery.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): I'll have to get back to the member for the details of those answers to that set of questions.

Mr. Sala: Concerning we can't get to, sort of, basic information about current actuals here.

Next question I'd like to ask is if the minister can tell the House the current actuals for spending in the third quarter for Health capital projects, and if he requires a little bit of time to get that information, that's okay. But, again, the question is: what are the current actuals for spending in the third quarter for Health capital projects?

Mr. Cullen: I think maybe these questions would be better in Committee of the Whole.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, my question to the Minister of Finance deals with—the minister has got a budget with a lot of spending, but I notice that the net debt of the Province is going up by \$1.642 billion. That's more than a billion and a half.

I wonder if the Minister of Finance could provide an explanation for the large amount of accumulation of net debt as a result of this budget?

Mr. Cullen: And I appreciate the question from the member.

Clearly, we're making significant investments in capital around the province. We're going to continue our investments in health care and capital investments in health care. We're going to continue our record investments in infrastructure as well—\$500 million to road construction alone in this particular budget.

We are also be going to continue our capital investments in schools. We've committed to 20 schools in the next few years, and we're—we've seven schools open, seven more under various areas of construction.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Sala: Does the minister anticipate funds from the Health Department lapsing in the current fiscal year?

Mr. Cullen: We don't anticipate funds to be lapsing in this current fiscal year. Of course, we're just to the third quarter now, so there certainly is a few months to go in this fiscal year.

We will look forward to that. Clearly, we're going to continue to make investments on last year's budget and you'll notice in this year's budget, there are record investments going forward, an increase of 9.2 per cent in the health-care operating budget alone.

That is, again, a historic investment: \$668 million for operating in the—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Sala: The Auditor General expressed significant concerns with the accuracy of some of the numbers that were put forward in Public Accounts last year.

I just want to ask the minister, just broadly speaking, does he have any concerns about the validity or the quality of the financial information being put forward, given the concerns that were expressed by the Auditor General?

Mr. Cullen: Well, I beg to differ with my colleague across the aisle. In fact, I certainly believe in the numbers that are being presented in this year's budget. I have utmost faith in both Treasury Board and the Department of Finance.

I would report, our last report—Public Accounts report—an unqualified statement, a review by the Auditor General, so there is certainly nothing untoward in that report.

He gave it a positive report and I have every reason that—to expect that this year, the 2022-23 report will have similar outcomes.

Mr. Sala: Yes, I'd like to ask the minister if he can share whether or not Manitobans can expect any fees to increase this year in relation to the budget that they put forward.

Will park fees or PCH fees go up this year?

Mr. Cullen: We certainly have done everything we can to keep fees within reason to—for Manitobans. I think this could be an opportunity as we just get into the Estimates process to ask the respective ministers and their respective departments those types of questions.

They would be more willing and able to answer those questions directly. I will say it's never been our intent to increase fees for Manitobans. We recognize there is an affordability crisis there now. That's why we're taking measures in this government to reduce personal income tax to historic levels.

Mr. Sala: The enabling appropriation of internal service adjustment increases by over \$100 million in this year's budget compared to last year's budget.

I'd like to ask the minister, why is that?

Mr. Cullen: I'll certainly have a look at that. Maybe we can discuss that in more depth when we get into Committee of Supply.

The internal service adjustments, I actually—I thought they were going down this year's budget, but we can work at that in depth and, over the course of the afternoon.

Certainly, the internal service adjustment is set aside for—I would call it figures that we don't really

know. So, those are sort of the unknown categories; hard to put a dollar figure amount to them. Those are items that are not placed in the department because of the uncertainty of those numbers.

That's why a lot of those items—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Sala: Yesterday, I had the opportunity in Estimates to ask the Finance Minister about his position on the increase on taxes on renters in this province: the increase of \$175 through their removal of a tax credit valued at \$700, and their reduction of that to \$525.

And he didn't express concern with those changes. I'd like to give him a chance again today, to share with the House whether or not he does have concerns about the fact that his government is raising, with this budget, again, taxes on renters by \$175.

Mr. Cullen: Well, I want to clarify for the member opposite—indeed, all members of the House—that that is actually a tax credit that Manitoba is providing to renters. I will go on to say that we have frozen rents in the province of Manitoba for two years in a row.

Certainly, if folks that own rental property are making additional investments in their property, they have to go to the Residential Tenancies Branch to seek any increases over and above zero per cent, so we're taking those measures.

We've also added—increased Rent Assist to Manitobans, making more Manitobans available for Rent Assist; in particular, low-income Manitobans.

Mr. Sala: And just, again, to correct the record, the minister does continue to suggest that the changes to the tax credit is somehow not an increase in taxes on Manitobans. I would argue the average Manitoban sees a reduction of \$175 in a tax credit; that is equivalent to an increase of \$175 in taxes on renters. There's just no way about it. That's just simply fact.

* (15:20)

Yesterday, I did also have an opportunity to ask the minister about some of the proposed tax changes that were brought forward, and I asked the minister if he had concerns about the disparity between the tax benefits that would be received by the lowest income earners in the province and the ultra-wealthy with the changes that are being proposed.

I'd like to ask him again here in the House: Has he reconsidered, or does he have concerns about the disparity—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, if the opposition would not hold up our budget and pass our budget, we could effectively allow Manitobans in July on their paycheques a \$75 reduction. The steps we've taken on the basic personal amount for this year's tax year amount to \$525 for most Manitobans. So, we would hope that the opposition would not hold this budget up and allow Manitobans to keep more of their hard-earned tax money beginning of July.

Certainly, our basic personal exemption amount will be taking 47,400 low-income Manitobans off of the tax roll altogether.

Mr. Sala: I'll take that as a no, that the minister has not considered that question.

And I'm going to ask a similar question, but just for another group here in Manitoba, which is middle-income Manitobans, everyday Manitobans who, through these changes, will receive approximately one third of what the highest income earners in the province will get in terms of tax benefits.

So I'd like to ask the minister: Does he feel that middle-income Manitobans are in less need of assistance than ultra-wealthy people in Manitoba?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, interesting line of questioning. I hope the member will take it upon himself to read some other comments from other Manitobans—in fact, actually, Manitobans. I know the document he was referencing, I believe, is out of Ottawa by an individual that is—has the title of senior Ottawa economist, who, in reality, has a bachelor of arts and a master of arts in philosophy.

I will take advice from the Manitoba taxpayers federation, where they say taxpayers should welcome the tax relief. The increasing of the basic personal amount is really going to help those families who are currently struggling with inflation, especially at the lower end of the spectrum. That's what the Manitoba taxpayers association said.

Mr. Sala: Interesting approach to attack the, you know, the background and the education of an individual who's doing that important work of doing analysis on this government's proposed changes.

You know, again, there's this repeated falsehood that somehow lower income Manitobans are benefiting from these changes. We know that's not true. We've seen that in the analysis that was presented to the minister: the lowest 20 per cent are going to get about \$72 extra a year—five bucks a month. So—and we

do know that the top 10 per cent are going to get 26 per cent of all the benefits from those changes. So I do encourage the minister to take a closer look at that document that we provided.

I would like to just shift back to asking the minister some questions relating to health budgeting here. Can the minister tell the House whether or not the government will spend the entire \$110 million—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Cullen: Yes, well it's Math with Marty here today in the House, Madam Speaker.

I know the—I did take a look at the document that the members opposite provided, the one individual that supplied some numbers, and clearly—I hope that the members would take a closer look at that document, compare it with other people are saying around Manitoba.

We recognize the lowest income Manitobans will benefit the most on a percentage-based basis. And I will say, as well, we have set aside in this budget, I believe it's \$130 million for our diagnostic and surgical backlog. Last year's budget was \$110 million for that. We're making progress on that, and we fully intend to and will be expanding that \$110 million.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions?

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I ask the Finance Minister: I note that there's a fair chunk of money which is coming from the Manitoba Hydro to the government and is counted as revenue. I would ask the Minister of Finance whether any of that money is going to reduce the debt of Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Cullen: Certainly, I would love to give the member a briefing in more detail in terms of Hydro and how it relates to our budget. Manitoba Hydro reports either the—I would say the cash outcome—the net at the end of the day. So that net, whether it be positive or negative, is reflected in our summary budget.

So the money that's coming from Manitoba Hydro would be reflective of fees from water rental rates and the debt guarantee that we charge Manitoba Hydro. And I would also remind the member opposite that this year this government reduced those rates in half. So \$190 million will be—sorry—\$180 million will be staying with Manitoba Hydro, not transferred to the Government of Manitoba.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I would ask the Minister of Finance: is the amount listed in the—as a revenue by

the Minister of Finance, which I think was more than \$600 million—is that before or after a contribution of Manitoba Hydro to pay down its debt?

Mr. Cullen: Yes, the number that the member is referring to would be a net income or net loss, and that would be what we are estimating the net income from Hydro would be. Manitoba Hydro would be responsible on their books for paying down the debt. So those line items we could review with the member at a future time.

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period is over.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak in debate?

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): It gives me a lot of pleasure to stand up in this House, as always, put some words on the record about the actions of this government. And, of course, to speak to this interim supply request.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

It's important, of course, that government continue to have the funds it needs to continue to operate, and we wouldn't want to, in any way, endanger the ongoing provision of health care and education in this province, or build on the risks that this government has created in any way.

But, of course, the interim supply process does offer us another important opportunity to reflect on this government's most recent budget, a budget that revealed to Manitobans just how incredibly desperate this government is.

We know that after seven very long years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, seven very long years of cuts to every single corner of government and untold damage to our health-care system, incredible damage to our education system, to municipalities, just failures across the board, this government brought forward a budget that contained a lot of big promises, a lot of promises that were focussed on trying to convince Manitobans that this government has changed their ways, that they're—they've turned a new leaf, and that they're a different party altogether.

And as I've said before here in the House in debate on the budget, they are effectively asking Manitobans to trust them and to trust that they've changed, that they are no longer that hard core Conservative party that they have been for the last

seven years, but they've turned a new leaf and they are different. They are more progressive; they're the progressive—they've gone back to their progressive roots, as we heard some members of this party describe this shift.

But, of course, Manitobans know we can't trust promises from this government. We've seen that over the last seven years. We see that proven day in and day out. Day in and day out Manitobans have seen that.

* (15:30)

And so, making, you know, again, a bunch of really big spending promises seven months before an election isn't a good look, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's not a good look. It's a desperate look and Manitobans can see it for what it is.

Does this government—does any member of this government actually believe that Manitobans are going to look at this budget and think, oh, yes, they've changed. This is a newer, softer version of the PCs. Of course, we know the answer to that.

The answer is no; Manitobans know better. They've got seven years of reasons to know they can't trust this government on anything. Every single person I've spoken to in my community about this has said the same thing about this budget, and about the work that this government is doing and about their recent spate of big promises and big announcements.

And that is—and this is, again, the word on the street from community members, just regular people in St. James and west Winnipeg, and I know my colleagues are hearing this, too, and that is they're not bringing forward these announcements because it's the right thing to do. They're not bringing forward these big promises to increase spending in a variety of government departments because they know that it's needed. They're doing it for one reason and one reason alone, and that's to ensure their re-election.

It's to try to save their political futures. That's the basis for it. It's not about Manitobans; it's about them. It's about trying to make sure that they can continue to get elected, and that is a very transparent move that we've seen from this government. They're simply doing this out of self-interest.

And I think we need to sit with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker; sit with the fact that Manitobans have been made to suffer for years to receive subpar health care; that kids have been forced to go to school hungry; that kids aren't getting the help that they need from EAs

due to cuts; that our classrooms are growing in size; that for years this has been happening, and the only thing that led this government to decide that they should consider doing something different is the fact an election is on the horizon.

It wasn't the needs of patients, it wasn't the needs of kids, it was them realizing, uh-oh, maybe we went too far; or, in fact, it looks like we've gone too far. We need to try to maybe convince Manitobans that we're going to go in the other direction because there's an election coming.

That's why they've brought that—this budget forward. That's where it's coming from. It's been a really long seven years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this province, a very long seven years. Again, I know I hear this all the time, I know my colleagues hear this; people feel beleaguered in this province. They're beleaguered, they're tired, they're frustrated, they're upset, and I hear this all the time.

I hear this all the time from people who've professed to have previously been PC supporters, people that once thought it was a good idea to support this party over here, who feel ashamed about what they've seen from this government over the last many years.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

That is, frankly, not surprising to me to hear that from folks in our community, from ex-PC supporters, because we can all see that this government has created a disaster end to end in nearly every single department.

And what do they say when I ask them about their thoughts on this government, on their performance? They often will just shake their head. They'll shake their head and they'll express embarrassment—embarrassment with their decisions, embarrassment with the dysfunction that we've seen from them.

And we're, of course, talking about dysfunction, their—this embarrassment that they're seeing, majority of this caucus running—you know, jumping ship because it's clear they don't have confidence in where this operation is headed in the next election and are saving themselves.

It's been a very long seven years, Madam Speaker. Thinking about, in health care, the impacts are hard to summarize here in debate because they're so enormous. My colleague, the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara), does an incredible job day in and day out, along with my colleagues—of course, our leader—in pointing out the unbelievable damage

that this government has done to our health-care system. And this budget, while it makes a lot of promises, Manitobans know they can't trust those promises from this government.

We saw, at the Grace Hospital—I heard a groan from the member across representing Kirkfield Park when I mentioned about the cuts to health care. Forty-five days ago, as we know, doctors at the Grace wrote, made public, the emergency at the Grace Hospital, which is located in the constituency of the member for Kirkfield Park (MLA Klein). I haven't heard him once stand up or speak publicly against his government's cuts and the damage that they've created and the absolute chaos they've created at the Grace Hospital, impacting his community members, the people that he purports to represent, who are made to be sicker because of the actions of his government. I hope he's tuned in to that, and I hope he takes that damage seriously and will stand up for the people in his community who are no longer able to get access to the emergency care they deserve because of the actions of his colleagues and his leader.

We're seeing doctors and people stand up in this province out of concern with the fact that this government has driven our health-care system to the brink. They're being forced to go public, putting their careers at risk, just in order to get the change that they know is needed.

We've got 170,000 people waiting for surgeries in this province, and diagnostic procedures. Those are our friends, our brothers, our sisters, our aunts and our uncles, people who are suffering, who are waiting for medical care because of years and years of cuts from this government, a very real and painful impact on so many families.

And I personally know people who've been impacted by those cuts and by delays in getting access to the surgeries that they need, seniors still being transferred around the province to get access to the health care they need, away from their families. And we know that when that happens, their health-care outcomes are worse because they're not surrounded by the people that love them and that can care for them.

And then, of course, today, with the discussion with the—in our question period debate, we know, just to raise this, because it's so salient right now, the SANE program at HSC and the disaster there and this government's failure to ensure that women and girls can get the help that they need, can receive the health care that they need in those times of crisis.

The list of failures and the list of impacts on Manitobans is long, Madam Speaker. It has been a long seven years.

In education, we're seeing the impacts of cuts from this government in education on our kids. I know that in my end of the city, in west Winnipeg and in St. James, we do hear from families who are deeply concerned about the actions of this government. We know kids aren't getting access to the EA supports that they need. We hear about years-long waiting lists or years-long periods of wait for kids that need psych assessments. We know classrooms are growing; we know that divisions are being forced to let teachers go.

And we know that kids continue to go to school hungry, that this government, through their cuts, through their failure to take action, have allowed this issue to persist. We know that the relationship between poverty and educational outcomes is strong. We know that the No. 1 thing we can do to respond to that issue is by simply starting out by helping ensure kids have full stomachs when they show up at school or when they get to school. And this government has allowed that to continue—that issue to continue, continuing to do damage to those lowest income, most vulnerable kids in this province.

It's been a long seven years, Madam Speaker, and in affordability, we've seen their failure to demonstrate any real action in response to the affordability crisis that people in this province have been facing for years.

In fact, instead of seeing action in making it better, we saw them make it worse. How did they do that? Instead of bringing forward policy or legislation that would seek to keep hydro rates as low as possible, instead they brought forward legislation, in the midst of an affordability crisis, that sought to raise hydro rates as quickly as they possibly could.

They brought in legislation that set unattainably high financial targets for Hydro, so high that the day after the bill received royal assent, the CEO for Hydro came out publicly and said, we simply cannot meet the financial targets outlined in this bill. Why? Because they couldn't raise rates fast enough. That's what this government brought forward in the midst of an affordability crisis. Instead of bringing relief, they brought forward higher costs.

* (15:40)

Rental—renters in this province, it is shocking to me—and the other night, two nights ago, I had the great pleasure of hosting a renters' town hall for St. James

for members of our community, because in St. James we have a lot of renters. We have one of the highest densities of renters in the province, a lot of low-income seniors, people with disabilities living in those apartments, relying on those rental accommodations to put a roof over their head.

And what did this government do to renters in this province? They raised taxes on them by \$175 in the middle of an affordability crisis. That's this government's idea of a good policy to support people in need in this province, to grow their burden by \$175 a year? Those who are facing the greatest struggles in this province?

And the most sickening part about that, Madam Speaker, the part that turns my stomach, is that they tried to present this as a benefit—and I still hear members across talk about—brag about—a \$525 renter tax credit, as though somehow that is something that they've produced as a benefit. When in reality what they did is they took a \$700 renters tax credit and they reduced it by \$175, changed the name and re-packaged it and are now trying to sell it to Manitobans as a benefit.

That is unethical and it's more reasons why Manitobans know they cannot trust this PC government. You know, what I heard from people in that renters' town hall two days ago when we had this discussion as a group, many of them didn't even know this had happened. Of course not; this government isn't going out of their way to announce that they've raised taxes on them. But the feeling that I got from that room was one of shock.

Why would they do that? Why are they making our lives more expensive? We're the ones who are struggling here. More evidence that this government has no idea what working families are dealing with, has no idea about the financial challenges that people with disabilities, that people on fixed incomes, that seniors are facing in this province. And that tax increase on renters is exhibit A, Madam Speaker. It's very upsetting.

University students are paying more tuition than they've ever paid in this province and, since this government came into power, they're paying 25 per cent more for their tuition than they did when they came in. And we're seeing this year, in this budget, they're promising another tuition increase for Manitoba students.

Because this government has to spread the pain around to everybody. So, not only are they going to make life harder for renters and seniors, people on

fixed incomes, they had to make sure that students also felt the pain. So they're raising their costs and, in the process, making it harder for a young person in this province to get ahead, to go get that education so they can further themselves and make a great career.

More and more challenges, and making life more expensive for Manitobans. And of course, they fund—they froze funding for municipalities for many years, and what's happening as a result of that? Those costs just get passed on down the line. We saw the City of Winnipeg, they've raised their taxes, of course. We're seeing other costs go up because they froze funding to cities and cities have to pass those costs on down to Manitobans.

Again, raising costs on everyone in the middle of an affordability crisis when inflation is out of control, what does this government do? They raise prices on Manitobans.

A tough seven years in this province. The reality is, Madam Speaker, if this government cared—if they cared about any of the things that they identify that they are planning or they're promising in this budget—if they actually cared about those things, they would've taken action a long time ago. They could've taken action last year, or they could've taken action the year before that. They could've taken action three years ago, but instead they waited until seven months before an election. Seven months before an election. Absolutely shameful.

Manitobans want—and desperately need—investments in health care, in education, in municipalities across government. They've dug us a deep hole; we desperately need those. But the approach that this government has taken, seven years of famine and then this huge feast, this roller-coaster ride that they're taking us on, is a wildly irresponsible approach to governance. It's wildly irresponsible.

We know that Manitobans don't want to have seven years of famine and then a giant feast, as they're proposing. Not that we can even believe that they're going to do what they say they're going to do in the budget. But we know that Manitobans don't want that approach. They want what previous NDP governments have brought forward, which is steady, responsible increases over time in the services that Manitobans need. Not seven years of massive cuts and then, when the election's coming and they know their jobs are on the line, suddenly a big change of direction.

That's not what Manitobans want. It's irresponsible. They've proven with this budget just how unbelievably irresponsible they are.

Because not only do we need to catch up, of course, to inflation and all the cuts that they've made, but now we have to deal with all of the pain and the challenges and the suffering and the additional costs associated with the seven years of cuts that they've brought forward.

I want to take a little bit of time now to focus on some of the greatest hits from this budget. They're not going to be the greatest hits that they want to hear; I'm going to just let the cat out of the bag. Let's just review some of the highlights from this budget, Madam Speaker.

And we're going to start with Health. They've, in this budget, refused to settle contracts with tens of thousands of health-care aides—the absolute lifeblood of our health-care system, the people who are working day in and day out to ensure that our health-care system can continue to function. Our health-care system, of course, isn't just made up of doctors and nurses; it's also run through the good contributions of health-care aides, who help to make our health-care system function. And this government continues to ignore them, and this budget—in this budget, we've seen that they refuse to settle contracts for tens of thousands of health-care aides.

This budget froze funds for EMS and ambulances in rural and northern Manitoba. What more can we say about that? We know that those needs are great. And, of course, this government is again failing rural and northern Manitobans, failing to ensure that they can get access to the health care that they need.

They froze the doctor recruitment fund. I can't even believe that I'm saying this in debate, knowing that this budget, again, has failed to respond to that incredible issue we're facing in this province. We clearly are in need of more doctors in this province. What does this government do? They freeze funding for recruiting doctors. They've frozen funding. What an absolutely shameful decision and what a massive, massive oversight in this budget. Manitobans know that that is clearly a terrible decision.

Seniors and Long-Term Care: not one new personal-care-home bed was announced in Budget 2022—not one. And we know—again, we want to talk about broken promises from this government, from every single member of this PC caucus. In 2016, what did they say? What did they promise Manitobans?

Twelve hundred new PCH beds—1,200 new PCH beds.

Have they built 1,200 new PCH beds, Madam Speaker? Can ask—Manitobans know the answer to that question. The answer is no.

They froze health-care infrastructure budget for the next three years—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: The Minister for Seniors and Long-Term Care can chirp away. I understand that he's embarrassed about the failure of his government. I don't blame him for getting worked up right now. I'd be pretty embarrassed, too, and I'd be getting a little bit worked up myself.

But what I'll hope he'll do is direct his frustration at the leader of his party and at the—his entire caucus for their failure to deliver for Manitobans. That's where his frustration should be directed if he wants to be productive about it.

And, frankly, he is accountable as the minister responsible for this file, and I hope that he'll actually leave today—leave this Chamber and take this away and actually decide to take action knowing that Manitobans need that support.

I do want to focus here a little bit on the proposed tax cuts in this budget. I talked a bit about this, of course, yesterday in Estimates with the minister. I do want to reflect a bit more about these proposed changes now.

As with any proposal from the PCs when it comes to modifying tax policy, Madam Speaker, you have to read the fine print. You always have to read the fine print. We saw that with the changes to the education property tax law that they brought in. We've seen how that—those changes provide wildly disproportionate benefits to the wealthiest people in this province.

* (15:50)

We saw Brian Pallister was getting \$7,000 cheques from those changes while lower income Manitobans were getting \$100 cheques. We saw that with those changes, and we saw what those changes, what did they do? They started—they decided to ship off million-dollar cheques to Cadillac Fairview, to out-of-province millionaires, to the Koch Brothers.

That's who this government seeks to fight for. That's who they represent. Now we know that. That's the—that's who this government is always fighting for.

And the tax changes that they brought in recently—or, that they're proposing here—the changes, as was discussed yesterday in Estimates, have similar fairness-related concerns. We know, of course, that low- and middle-income Manitobans are desperately in need of help right now. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Sala: We know that. But we also know that what the government has proposed in terms of these changes will provide wildly disproportionate benefits for the most wealthy people in this province, not for the people who really need help, but the biggest benefits are going to the very, very top: 26 per cent of all of the income tax benefits from their proposed change go to the very top. And what does the bottom get? One per cent, Madam Speaker; 1 per cent of the benefits.

As I said in questioning to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen)—and I know he's tried to attack the credibility of the national CCPA economist who did the calculations that were presented to him, but he can't hide the reality here. Seventy-four dollars a year, Madam Speaker; \$74 a year for the bottom two deciles. Five dollars a month, \$5 a month is what they're offering. And to the very highest income group, 26 per cent of the total tax benefits. In fact—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Getting very noisy in here, and I'm going to ask members to cease and desist with the heckling.

Perhaps everybody could bring their passion down a little bit; that might help us get through the rest of the day.

Mr. Sala: It's challenging not to become passionate here, on this subject, when we're talking about the decisions that this government is making and the absolutely wildly unfair distribution of the changes that they're proposing.

Beyond the fairness concerns that have now been well documented—I know that the Minister of Finance seems to refute, but, unfortunately, reality is reality; it is what it is. Beyond those fairness concerns, there's also the simple question of the fiscal responsibility of bringing in tax changes that will provide such an enormous benefit to the ultra wealthy—to the wealthiest people in this province at a time of great fiscal uncertainty.

And we have to look at our current fiscal situation carefully, Madam Speaker. We have to see—we could

see that we're in receipt of bonanza equalization payments right now, like never before.

Now, there is a possibility that another province in this country could join in and could suddenly be in receipt of equalization payments, which has happened in the past. We know Ontario ended up being in receipt years ago of equalization payments, and that significantly changed the balance of those benefits for provinces. But what happens, Madam Speaker, if suddenly, next year or the year after, that suddenly that—those equalization payments drop precipitously? What happens to our books?

We're not seeing this government make any kind of case or offer us clarity as to why we shouldn't be concerned about the fiscal risk that they're creating here by offering such a disproportionately large benefit for top, the highest, highest income earners in this province.

So there's genuine fiscal responsibility concerns here, Madam Speaker. And this government, again, just seems to be unwilling to recognize that. And it just furthers our concerns, and Manitobans' concerns—furthers what we know, which is that we can't trust this government. We know that they're not good stewards of our provincial economy or our books.

I want to end this debate on an important note, and that again goes back to this question of trust. And I want to say what I know my colleagues and I hear when we're out in the community, which is that Manitobans are tired of this, and they want to be optimistic again. They want to feel hopeful and trusting in their government, but they can't feel that way right now.

They deserve a government that they can believe in and that they can trust in. We know that this government cannot deliver on that; we know that Manitobans cannot trust this government.

Our side of the House, we're going to continue to fight for a better Manitoba and a government that Manitobans can believe and trust in once again.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I rise to put a few words on the record on this bill, which deals with money management by the government.

The—I noted that the government has a net debt increase this year of \$1.642 billion. That's a very large increase—one of the largest increases when there's not a flood or a pandemic. Clearly, the government is borrowing money for a lot of the expenses that it's

making, and that is causing an increase in the net debt of the government.

I also asked the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen) about Manitoba Hydro. Manitoba Hydro has a debt, as of September 30th, 2022, of \$24.6 billion. And I note in the Manitoba Hydro reports that there is great concern about the risk to Manitoba Hydro because of increasing interest rates. If Manitoba Hydro has to borrow money at significantly higher interest rates—interest rates have been going up—then this becomes a significant problem for Manitoba Hydro and the way that it manages its large, \$24.6-billion debt.

Now, I note also that in the next decade, Manitoba Hydro will either have to refinance or retire almost \$11 billion in existing debt. That is because those debts become mature, and they either have to be refinanced or retired. That is a lot of money.

Now, I note that under the arrangements with the government that Manitoba Hydro can use money from its sinking fund to pay down the debt. The only problem is that the sinking fund was completely eliminated in 2016 and, according to Manitoba Hydro documents, in order to put money into the sinking fund, Manitoba Hydro is now expecting to have to borrow money.

So I asked the Minister of Finance what he is doing in terms of this year's surplus. He has put this year's surplus from Manitoba Hydro into revenue, and is actively spending it for all sorts of other purposes. And Manitoba Hydro, it appears, would have to borrow money from the sinking fund—for the sinking fund in order to pay down debt. Now, that's a—really kind of a circular kind of proposition, to borrow money to pay down debt, and that doesn't sound like good financial management to me.

Now, I want to talk a bit beyond financial management, and talk about the problems with the current government in terms of health-care management.

* (16:00)

Almost every day, we're hearing and seeing major problems in health care, which have arisen because of a number of years—going back to 2016—of very poor management of health care by the current government. We saw, over the last few days, concerns raised by doctors about the operation of Grace Hospital, the concern that the conditions were not safe for patients. And we are hearing, as we did today—Heather Stewart—about situations at Grace Hospital which are very disturbing in terms of the approach and the management of patients.

So my guess is that if the NDP and PC governments hadn't taken over the management of Grace Hospital from The Salvation Army that the operation of Grace Hospital would likely have been much superior to what we're seeing today. And so we clearly have a problem in terms of management by the Health Minister and the way that things are organized.

In addition to the problem in the Grace Hospital, we are seeing major issues with a program which is of critical importance, and that is the assessment of sexual assaults. It is incredible that we have a lot of people who, working in this program, all of a sudden resigning because they are just not being treated properly by this government. We have—this, now, is a crisis in terms of how this whole program is being managed and how people are being assessed in terms of when there has been a sexual assault.

I could go on and on and on with examples of poor management in health care. We saw, in Estimates yesterday, a discussion of problems in northern health, and clearly, they are major. I don't have to go to the North or to Grace Hospital; there are major problems in many other areas in health care.

I talked recently with people in Grandview, and there is a shortage there of doctors and nurses. Again, this is poor planning—bad planning by this government right from the start of when they were elected in 2016, that they weren't paying attention to the fundamentals of good health care, making sure that there are adequate numbers of physicians and nurses and allied health-care workers.

And the excuse that this is somehow related solely to COVID is totally misleading. Indeed, there should have been accelerated training and bringing in of new doctors and nurses and allied health professionals during that period. And, in fact, the government did the opposite and seconded people from one place to another so that they could pretend that they could cover up temporarily in areas which seemed to be critical.

So, with poor management in finances, poor management in health care, you know, we think this government has a really bad track record and that this government needs to be defeated in the upcoming provincial election so that we could, at last, have a better—a Liberal government to replace it in order to have a province which is managed in a much better way than we've seen for many years.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is that Bill 37, the interim appropriation act, be now read a second time and be referred to a Committee of the Whole.

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

The House will now resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Bill 37, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023, for concurrence and third reading.

Will the Deputy Speaker please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 37—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023

Mr. Chairperson (Andrew Micklefield): Will the Committee of the Whole please come to order. We will now consider Bill 37, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023.

Does the honourable Minister of Finance have an opening statement?

The honourable minister does not have an opening statement.

Does the official opposition Finance critic have an opening statement?

We shall now proceed to consider the bill clause by clause.

The title and enacting clause are postponed until all other clauses have been considered.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; clause 6—pass.

Shall clause 7 pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Mr. Chairperson: Clause 7 is accordingly 'plassed.' [*interjection*] Passed. I'm trying.

Enacting clause—pass. Title—pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes the business before the committee.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Chairperson): The committee whole considers Bill 37, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023, and reports the same without amendment.

So, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), that the report of the committee be received.

I should write Brandon East on there.

Motion agreed to.

* (16:10)

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 37—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 37, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Cullen: We look forward to having this piece of legislation passed immediately.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Are there any members wishing to speak in debate?

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

* * *

Madam Speaker: The—as we have now moved through the Interim Supply procedure, the House will now proceed with royal assent.

ROYAL ASSENT

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

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

Madam Speaker: Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba asks Your Honour to accept the following bill:

Clerk Assistant (Ms. Vanessa Gregg):

Bill 37 – The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023;
Loi de 2023 portant affectation anticipée de crédits

Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk): In His Majesty's name, the Lieutenant Governor thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to this bill.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

* * *

* (16:20)

Madam Speaker: Please be seated.

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

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Introduction of Bills		Health-Care System Management Concerns	
		Naylor	1033
		Gordon	1033
Bill 231–The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2)		Squires	1034
Michaleski	1023	Grace Hospital ER	
		Lamont	1034
Ministerial Statements		Gordon	1034
Ramadan			
Khan	1023	Health System Funding	
Brar	1024	Lamont	1034
Gerrard	1024	Gordon	1034
Members' Statements		Health System Accountability	
Francis "Frank" Crew		Lamoureux	1034
Nesbitt	1025	Gordon	1035
Graduation Pow Wow		Infrastructure Spending	
Asagwara	1025	Guenter	1035
Joyce Halldorson		Piwniuk	1035
Johnson	1026		
Ken Ellison		Peguis First Nation Flood Evacuees	
Bushie	1026	Lathlin	1035
Swan River Snowmobile Clubs		Piwniuk	1035
Wowchuk	1027		
Oral Questions		Petitions	
Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program		Bibliothèque Régionale Jolys Regional Library	
Kinew	1027	Altomare	1036
Gordon	1028		
Squires	1028	Provincial Road 224	
Resignation of SANE Nurses		Lathlin	1036
Kinew	1029		
Gordon	1029	Security System Incentive Program	
Squires	1029	Maloway	1037
Resignation of SANE Nurses		Foot-Care Services	
Asagwara	1030	Redhead	1037
Gordon	1030		
Resignation of SANE Nurses		SANE Program	
Fontaine	1031	Marcelino	1037
Squires	1031		
Gordon	1031	Community Living disABILITY Services	
		Gerrard	1038
Health-Care System Management Concerns		Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools	
Marcelino	1032	Sandhu	1039
Squires	1032	Sala	1039
Gordon	1032		

ORDERS OF THE DAY			
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS			
		Questions	
		Sala	1041
		Cullen	1041
		Gerrard	1042
Committee of Supply			
Interim Supply	1040	Debate	
		Sala	1044
		Gerrard	1049
Committee Report			
Micklefield	1041	Committee of the Whole	
Interim Supply Motion		Bill 37–The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023	1051
Cullen	1041	Committee Report	
		Micklefield	1051
Introduction of Bills		Concurrence and Third Readings	
Bill 37–The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023		Bill 37–The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023	
Cullen	1041	Cullen	1051
Second Readings		Royal Assent	
Bill 37–The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023		Bill 37 – The Interim Appropriation Act, 2023	1052
Cullen	1041		

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>