

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

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

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

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Matthew and Shawn Thompson

**Hon. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness):** Madam Speaker, Matthew and Shawn Thompson are siblings who attend St. Norbert Collegiate and have been actively involved in sports for the last nine years. Their love of sport and dedication to being the best in their field have earned them positions in their respective sports to represent Manitoba at the North American Indigenous Games in Halifax this July.

Matthew will be graduating high school this year and will be attending North Dakota Williston State College baseball program in the fall. He started playing baseball at the community club level at the age of eight. At the age of 11, Matthew began playing AAA baseball for the south Winnipeg wolverines. He has competed competitively in Grand Forks, Fargo and Minneapolis.

Matthew excels as an outfielder, and in the last few years has also started pitching. Matthew attended Home Run Sports academy fall and winter programs, which led him to participate in the Canada Summer Games for Team Toba last year. Matthew tried out for the North American Indigenous Games and, as they say, the rest is history.

Shawn has also enjoyed playing baseball. After playing at the community club level for a couple years, he tried out for the south Winnipeg Wolves AAA team and played there for four years. This year he decided to devote his time to basketball at the South Winnipeg Community Centre.

Shawn, at six foot tall and only 15, practises three times a week and plays at the elite level with the Attack Basketball Club. Shawn's exceptional skills have earned him a position to represent Manitoba at the North American Indigenous Games.

I would like to welcome Matthew and Shawn to the gallery and ask my colleagues to join me in

wishing them all the best as they represent Manitoba in Halifax this summer.

### Book Banning

**MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** It's outrageous that in 2023 we find ourselves standing up against book banning in Manitoba. But here we are.

The removal of books from libraries, schools and other public spaces because someone doesn't like the ideas within those books is a dangerous practice that has no place in Manitoba.

There's a strong connection between book banning and the rise of fascism. Fascism attempts to control the flow of information to shape public opinion. This involves the banning of books, newspapers, and other forms of media deemed to be subversive or dangerous.

Book banning is a tool of oppression. It is a way for the small minority to control narrative and shape public opinion to suit their own worldview.

In this case, it's against 2SLGBTQIA that continues to face discrimination, censorship and erasure.

As allies, it is our responsibility to stand up for, and with, the community. That means actively working to dismantle systems of oppression that lead to discrimination, which includes book banning, seeking to erase the existence of 2SLGBTQIA peoples.

We, as legislators, must stand up against book banning. This means speaking out when books are being challenged or removed from public spaces and supporting libraries and schools and their staffs.

It is so disappointing to see this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) stand against the human rights of certain Manitobans. It's cowardice to stand by while library—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Fontaine:** —and school staff are called pedophiles and groomers. That is not leadership—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Fontaine:** —and that's not a leader for all Manitobans.

Our NDP team supports our schools and libraries—

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

### St. James Canucks

**Hon. Kevin E. Klein (Minister of Environment and Climate):** Today, I rise to celebrate the St. James Canucks, for their outstanding achievements this season.

The St. James Canucks have consistently demonstrated their teamwork, determination and resilience, which led them to a historic run and a second consecutive championship. The team has shown great integrity, respect and fair play on and off the ice, which make them role models for young hockey players in our community. The support of fans, families and volunteers has been instrumental in the success of the St. James Canucks.

Let me mention just some of the milestones achieved by the team members: capturing their second straight championship, sweeping the St. Vital Victorias last month; defenceman Rory Neill playing 114 games over two years with 88 goals and 194 points, to be named MVP for the '22-23 season; forward Tyrone Willan won the scoring title in '22-23 with 91 points; captain Kale Price had 63 goals and 159 points in his 87-game regular season, plus 15 goals and 48 points in the playoffs—15 of the goals were game winners; defenceman Brady Whitely racked up 124 points in 103 games; goaltender Noah Gilbert had, in the last two seasons, a .912 save percentage and a 2.53 goals-against average.

And one player mentioned to me that we missed on the list that I want to make sure we include is Magnum Glendale [*phonetic*]. He mentioned that he scored 60 goals in practice, and some of them actually had a goalie in the net. So, we want to make sure we mention him.

Head Coach Blair Mooney picked up his 200th win in the team—with the team and, since his takeover, the team has won two championships.

I would ask the members of this Chamber to join me in showing our gratitude to the St. James Canucks and congratulating them on a successful season.

*St. James Canucks team roster:*

*Players: Tristen Arnason, Troy Borthistle, Aiden Bruce, Liam England, Noah Gilbert, Zachary Greenwood, Magnum Grindle, Griffin Haight, Liam Johnson, Matthew Mason-Vandel, Dylan Morden, Rory Neill, Caden Ostermann, Jacob Phillips, Kale Price, Layne Richardson, Ethan Robson, Ashton Romaniuk, Jarrett Ross, Matthew Smith, Trent Thorsteinson, Brady Whitely, Tyrone Willan, Cole Younger.*

*Coaches and Managers: Justin Steeves, president and GM; Gavin Mclachlan, vice-president/treasurer; Mike Mooney, Jerry Jones, business operations; Kyle Brazeau, assistant GM; Sean Martin, hockey operations; Blair Mooney, head coach; Blake Harris, Jordan Mikkelson, Mike Sigfusson, Scott Forcand, assistant coaches; Kira Putnam, Dakota Bruneau-Bushie, athletic therapists; Brandon Hughes, equipment manager.*

### Danielle Adams

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** I rise today with a heavy heart.

I chose today, with my final member's statement of this session, to lift up our colleague, our sister, our friend, Danielle Adams. Danielle was one of us and will forever remain a part of who we are as legislators here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, as we come to the end of this legislative session, I think of members past and present who, on their own terms, have chosen to retire and move forward to begin new chapters in their lives, with everyone hoping to spend more time with family.

Madam Speaker, our sister, Danielle, did not have that opportunity. Danielle did not have the opportunity to say goodbye to her family, her friends and her loved ones. She gave her life in the hopes of making Manitoba a better place for her family, for Thompson and for all of us.

Madam Speaker, the life of a politician is not just a job, it is a lifestyle, and we should all look up to the life of Danielle. Her passion, her commitment and her dedication to family should be something we all aspire to emulate.

Sometimes in politics, it's not about what you can do, but sometimes it's about what you've already done. And in her short time with us, Danielle accomplished so much.

Madam Speaker, I ask the questions: Did she show us how great her potential was? Did we get to see how bright our future would be with her as a community leader? Did young Danielle, that overcame so many barriers and challenges in her life, make the most of her time here on Earth?

And I say a resounding, yes.

Danielle left a legacy that she would be proud of and her husband, her children and her family can be extremely proud of as well. Family was everything to Danielle. Even while working and focusing on her role here in the Legislature, Danielle always thought

of her family, especially her husband, Bill, and her sons, Nic and Joe.

In fact, Madam Speaker, most conversations with Danielle, no matter what the subject would have been, would have always had a reference to my boys.

On behalf of myself, all of my colleagues here in the Chamber and all Manitobans, I want to thank her husband, Bill, her sons, Nic and Joe, for sharing your partner and your mom with all of us.

Madam Speaker, as much as I began by rising with a heavy heart, I end by saying how much more complete my life and the lives of all Manitobans is for having been graced with Danielle's presence and influence.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me for a moment of silence for Danielle. While she may not be physically here with us in the Chamber, she is absolutely with all of us here in the Chamber.

We love you, Danielle.

Miigwech.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave for a moment of silence? [*Agreed*]

Please stand.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

\* (13:40)

### Allied Health Professionals

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Four days ago, the Manitoba Nurses Union stood outside the Legislature calling for better health care, more nurses, better supports and less clowning around by this government.

Earlier today, there was a rally outside the Legislature for allied health. They highlighted the action that needs to be taken immediately and how fixing the staffing crisis begins by negotiating a fair contract with allied health professionals, who have been without a fair contract since 2017.

No wonder why health-care retention is such an issue here in the province of Manitoba. A new, competitive contract with a fair salary and good benefits will significantly help attract and retain health-care professionals, and these are just two examples of health-care groups over the last four days that demonstrate the dire need of changes that need to be made to our health-care system.

Health-care workers have been disrespected, they have been taken advantage of, they have been overworked and they have had expectations placed upon them that no one should ever face.

This week is Allied Healthcare Professionals Recognition Week.

There are health-care workers in many roles all over our province, many who work in hospitals, clinics, payroll, medical records, lab technicians, paramedics, some working on Manitobans' physical health, others on mental health. And it is overwhelmingly evident that this provincial government has not fulfilled the role that they are responsible for.

Madam Speaker, I want to thank those who are working in our health-care field. No matter the department, whether you're in Winnipeg or rural or northern Manitoba, thank you for keeping Manitobans safe and healthy.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Allied Health Professionals Collective Bargaining Negotiations

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** For seven years, this PC government has disrespected people who work in our health-care system, the folks at the front lines who take care of us each and every day.

Manitoba Association of Health Care Professionals members took a vote to strike. Of those 7,000 members, 99 per cent voted to take strike action. It's a testament to the poor job that this Premier has made in managing—or perhaps we should say mismanaging—our health-care system. Those workers came to the Leg. today asking for a fair deal.

Will the Premier tell the House if she will give allied health-care professionals a fair deal tout de suite?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Madam Speaker, that is the right of these health-care workers, and it's also their right to a fair collective bargaining process. And that's a process that we, certainly, on this side of the House, are in favour of moving forward on.

The Leader of the Opposition will know, and others will know, that we are not—government is not the employer in this; it's Shared Health. And we encourage them to come to a swift conclusion, as quickly as possible, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, this government created Shared Health. They appoint the board of directors of Shared Health. They control Shared Health entirely. And, yet, it's under their watch that there's been no deal.

These allied health-care professionals, the front-line heroes, whether they're the rural paramedics or the people working in community-care teams here in the city or lab or X-ray technicians, these are the folks who take care of us.

And yet, this government has forced them to incur debt, taking their cuts onto their personal lines of credit and credit cards. That's the impact—the grinding impact—during a cost-of-living crisis.

How does the Premier explain the terrible job she's done with disrespecting these health-care professionals?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is disrespecting these health-care professionals by not respecting the collective bargaining process. We, on this side of the House, don't believe in the fear mongering by the Leader of the Opposition.

We want to ensure that Shared Health, the employer, as well as the union, come to a fair and equitable agreement between all parties.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** I'd like to share with the House that not only do these health-care professionals do a remarkable job of taking care of us on the front lines of the health-care system—they also watch question period.

And so, they've heard these lines from the Premier before and they see them for what they are: a desperate attempt by a failing government to distract from the terrible job that they're doing on health care.

And, by the way, these workers see it as disrespect. Not only has this government frozen their wages for more than half a decade, now they come through and try to throw up their hands and say: It's not us; we had nothing to do with it. Everyone can see transparently through the terrible job this government is doing with health care.

Will they finally give these professionals what they deserve: a fair deal right now?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is inflaming the situation and that doesn't help the collective bargaining process.

We believe that that's an irresponsible approach. Members of the public should know that all other health-care collective bargaining agreements have resulted in retroactive implementation of those agreements, and we expect this to be the same, Madam Speaker.

Now, the Leader of the Opposition can fear monger all he wants, but we will respect the collective bargaining process.

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

### **School Libraries Containing LGBTQ2S Content Government Position of Call for Book Ban**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, liberty, freedom, justice; these are some of the principles that lead us, on this side of the House, to say that books should not be banned in Manitoba. *[interjection]*

I hear heckling from the PCs right now. Perhaps they'd like to listen because this is a very important question. When we see that two-spirit and LGBTQ content is being the subject of fodder for people with extreme right-wing views in our province, it's important for reasonable Manitobans to stand up and take a stand against that.

You would think, in 2023, it would be very easy for the Premier of this province to say that books should not be banned, and yet we're still waiting. Yesterday, the Premier said it's up to a school division—it's up to school divisions to stand up for human rights.

Can the Premier state clearly today whether she wants to see a book ban in Manitoba or if she's going to stand up for reasonable—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —approaches to defending human rights for all Manitobans? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Madam Speaker, we, on this side of the House, believe in diversity, we believe in inclusion and we believe in supporting a safe learning environment for all of our children, no matter where they learn across this great province of ours.

Madam Speaker, we also believe in local autonomy and when it comes to this particular issue, it's—we believe that the school boards make those decisions. We know that the Leader of the Opposition, other

members have said in the past, they believe in local autonomy when it comes to school divisions.

Now, all of a sudden, they're not for that. Where are they today, Madam Speaker? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** I just want to point out to people watching at home that it's the members for Fort Whyte and McPhillips who are heckling during these questions.

When we're talking about human rights, where we are today is the same place we've always—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —been as the Manitoba NDP. We defend human rights. We defend human rights for people in the two-spirit, L-B-G-T-T-Q+ communities.

Now, unfortunately, some people are calling for books to be banned in this province. It's been a disappointing response from the Premier so far, who says, and I quote, that it's up to those school divisions. End quote.

Will the Premier show leadership? Will she simply say today that there should be no book ban of 2SLGBTQ+ content?

**Madam Speaker:** I am going to call the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage and the member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin) to order, please.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, we believe in diversity, we believe in inclusion and we believe that our children should learn in a safe environment within our schools.

We also believe in local autonomy, Madam Speaker. And as the leader of—or sorry, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor) has said—and that she believes also in local autonomy. She said, and I quote: the Premier's decision to dissolve all school divisions eliminates both the democratic system and parents' direct line with trustees to raise concerns. Instead, parents will be forced to take up any issues directly with the Premier. End quote.

\* (13:50)

So, I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition agrees with the member for Wolseley or is that just another faction in his divided caucus?

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

**Mr. Kinew:** I think it's very clear why people are sick of the PCs. People in Manitoba are hungry for a serious approach to government, and you're just not seeing that in this PC caucus.

When we're talking about a potential ban on books with 2SLGBTQ+ content, we're talking—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —about an issue with human rights. This is something that a Premier should be able to speak clearly and unequivocally on.

And yet, we know that this government brought in bill 64, which would have abolished all school divisions in Manitoba. That's why we can plainly see that this is nothing but an attempt to distract and try to evade answering what is a very clear question.

For the second day in a row, multiple questions in sequence, I will ask again of this Premier: Does she believe that books should be banned simply because they feature 2SLGBTQ+ content?

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** We listened to Manitobans, and that's why we scrapped bill 64. But when it comes to the member for Burrows (Mr. Brar), who also apparently agrees with local autonomy with our—within our school divisions.

He said, and I quote: School boards are local voices. School board trustees are the people who local people, school parents trust. That's what the member for Burrows said.

So I wonder: Does the Leader of the Opposition agree with the member for Burrows, or is that yet another faction in his divided caucus?

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

#### **Riverbend School 2SLGBTQ+ Books and Items Stolen Call for Government to Condemn Actions**

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Riverbend Community School has recently been subjected to targeted attacks.

An entire section worth at least \$600 of books were stolen from a teacher's classroom, including 2SLGBTQ+ books, Indigenous books and affirming books for girls, and more.

As well, the school's 2SLGBTQ+ flag, their Pride flag and pole were stolen over the weekend. This is no easy task. It would have required a ladder and tools, so it's clear these attacks were deliberate and targeted.

We stand together—rather, we need to stand together unequivocally against these discriminatory attacks on the community, as well as other equity-seeking groups.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) be clear and condemn these attacks today?

**Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** I want to be very clear when I say this: We stand unequivocally with the community. We stand unequivocally with the 2SLGBTQAI+ community.

We stand for inclusivity and diversity on this side of the House. I don't know how many more times we can say it, but we stand for all Manitobans proudly on this side of the House.

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Actions speak much louder than the words of that PC caucus, including that minister's. Staff, students and parents at Riverbend Community School are reeling from these recent targeted attacks at their school.

An entire section of representative books were stolen from a classroom, and the school's 2SLGBTQ+ flag and pole was stolen over the weekend. This is not just attack—an attack on the school; it's a hate crime, and an attack on the very existence of members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community, as well as other equity-seeking groups.

We need to stand with the school and with the community to make it clear that we all support them, and actions need to be taken to ensure these attacks don't continue.

Will the Premier provide that commitment today?

**Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** We do condemn any actions that are unlawful within classrooms or within society. And our thoughts are with the school community if they're feeling threatened. And, certainly, this action is being investigated by the schools, and we will watch for the outcome of this.

We are sorry for these events and how they've unfolded, and we hope to hear more details of what has transpired here. But we absolutely support the community of the LGBTQ communities.

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Madam Speaker, that's the third PC member, including the Premier, who has failed to commit to taking any action to stop these attacks.

We have recently seen a movement to ban books in Manitoba, just because they feature 2SLGBTQ+ communities. Let's call it what it is, Madam Speaker. These are targeted attacks on equity-seeking groups, and now these attacks have become even bolder at Riverbend Community School. *[interjection]* Even the Premier right now—the Premier herself right now—heckles during this incredibly important question. Their books were stolen out of their classrooms, and a flag and pole as well.

We have to stand up and call out these kinds of harmful rhetoric and actions. We need to take action right now to stop this violence in all forms.

Will the Premier commit to taking real action today?

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

**Mr. Khan:** I will reiterate that we on this side of the House, and I think everyone in here, stands with an inclusive and diverse community and supporting all communities in Manitoba.

I want to be very clear to the Leader of the Opposition and his entire caucus and everyone over there: there is no book ban in this province. So, whatever they're doing on that side is misleading and putting more false information on the record. There is no book ban in this province. We don't stand for a book ban in this province.

On this side of the House, we stand for freedom. We stand for the ability for people to make their decisions, to go to libraries, a welcoming and inclusive space.

What they're doing is just fear mongering and adding more misinformation on the record, like they've always done, Madam Speaker.

### **New School Construction Use of Public-Private Model**

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** Manitobans know this PC government cannot be trusted to properly fund our schools. They have consistently underfunded public education since 2016, and even hid their secret new funding model.

Now, they want to bring back Brian Pallister's debunked model of building schools using P3. This PC government retained KPMG, Madam Speaker, to do a study on using P3s for schools in 2018, and the results were clear: it was a bad move. Brian Pallister did the right thing and he backed off.



Normally, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) loves finishing whatever Brian Pallister started, so she—can she tell us why she thinks he got this one wrong?

**Hon. James Teitsma (Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services):** Madam Speaker, we're a government that builds schools. We've already got 14 of them under way or completed. We have nine more planned.

The members opposite, when they were in government, well, they seemed more interested in building portables, enough to hold 9,000 students.

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

**Mr. Altomare:** Still no coherent answer as to why they're using a P3 model. That's their approach: distract, deflect and don't answer any questions.

The Auditor General himself in five provinces found that P3s was the wrong approach. In 2018, we learned the Saskatchewan government had to pay four times more just to maintain schools built using a P3. That same year, this PC government abandoned their own plans to use P3s to construct schools. The Premier knows that P3 models don't work. Her own report told her so.

So, finally, I'll ask again, Madam Speaker: Can the Premier explain why she's committed to using a P3 process even though they cost taxpayers more money?

**Mr. Teitsma:** Madam Speaker, our priorities are the priorities of Manitoba families, of Manitoba students. They want to learn in beautiful, equipped schools. They do not want to go back to being stuck in hundreds of portables like the NDP wanted to do.

\* (14:00)

So, if the member wants to know, why am I advocating this approach? Because I want to build nine new schools, high quality and quickly.

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

**Mr. Altomare:** So, a minister of consumer and corporate affairs defends using a more expensive model to build schools; this creates worse outcomes, Madam Speaker, for kids, families and our communities. Now they're recycling this failed idea.

This PC government clearly cares more about privatization than doing what's best for our public schools.

Will the Premier finally commit to scrapping this failed P3 model and properly invest in building schools today?

**Mr. Teitsma:** Well, Madam Speaker, by now I think Manitobans can see this line of questioning for what it is: a desperate attempt to distract from their legacy and their leader.

What I will simply say is that we are building high-quality schools. We're building them quickly. That is our point. We want to ensure that students are taught in these beautiful facilities. That's why we made building schools a priority. We had committed to building 20 schools; now we're going to build 23. We committed to getting them done by 2029; now we're getting them done by 2027.

That's three more schools, two years sooner. That's real results for Manitobans.

### **Health System Workers Deloitte Report Findings**

**MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** For seven years, the PCs have refused to listen to nurses, doctors and allied health professionals.

Instead, they paid a consulting firm, Deloitte, to prepare a report on how they could fix the crisis that they created, and the findings weren't surprising. Health-care workers are dealing with the burnout that's forcing them to consider quitting altogether.

And then it gets better, Madam Speaker. The Health Minister herself never even read the report that they paid so much money for. And she still hasn't committed to reading the report.

Can the minister and the Premier explain why they haven't read the report that they paid hundred of thousands of dollars for?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, health care has always been the top priority for this government. That is why we created the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force, which is providing tens of thousands of additional procedures to improve the lives of Manitoba patients living in pain.

That is why we created the health human resource action plan, which is supporting doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and adding more health professionals to the system. That is why we are making historic investments in new health infrastructure to allow more Manitobans to get the care they need faster and closer to home.

We, on this side of the House, are committed to making health care stronger and more sustainable for all Manitobans.

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

**MLA Fontaine:** If the minister got off her couch and actually spoke to front-line health workers, she would learn that they're facing record levels of burnout that is forcing them to consider quitting a profession that they love, altogether.

Instead, they've spent even more money to consultants instead of spending it on the front lines. The Health Minister couldn't even be bothered to read the report that they paid hundreds of thousands of dollars to. That's how little she cares about our Manitoba health-care front-line workers.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and her Health Minister show some leadership and commit to reading the report that their government paid for, today?

**Ms. Gordon:** Madam Speaker, I'd like to table for the members opposite—and I hope they'll read it—a transcript of an interview from yesterday and the comments from the province of Manitoba head of surgery, Dr. Ed Buchel: We are above 2019 numbers; that's no small feat. We're recruiting and retaining net positive numbers of surgical specialists.

Our numbers are going up. We are recruiting cardiac surgeons—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —thoracic surgeons, and we're being successful at doing this.

High-end specialities are getting more people to come and help our people because we're developing the environment that is enticing. Surgeons are coming to our province in spite of significant recruitment in BC, Alberta and Toronto.

We're net positive, year over year, in terms of our recruitment—

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

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

**MLA Fontaine:** The bottom line is that Manitobans don't believe this Health Minister. Health professionals don't believe this minister, and health-care workers don't feel supported by this minister or the Premier.

And that's certainly no surprise, Madam Speaker; even when the PCs commission reports to see how they can fix the crisis—again, that they've created in health care—they don't even read them. They can't even take the time to be bothered to read them. That's not leadership; it is appalling incompetence.

And the Premier and her Health Minister still haven't committed to reading the report that they paid hundreds of thousands of dollars for.

Will the Premier and her Health Minister provide this commitment to reading the report and hearing from health-care workers today?

**Ms. Gordon:** Madam Speaker, more from Manitoba's head of surgery, Dr. Ed Buchel: We are recruiting more arthroplasty. We are recruiting more ortho surgeons in general. Again, we're above 2019 numbers; that's no small feat. We're recruiting and retaining net positive numbers of surgical specialists.

And, Madam Speaker, nurses in this province know that our government listened to the front lines, implemented the health human resource action plan, \$123 million for nine nurse incentives.

I'd like to share some of them: \$8.4 million to reimburse the cost of nurses' professional licensing fees, an incentive for nurses who have previously left the profession but choose to return—

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

#### **Project Nova Budget and CEO Travel Expenses Request to Call MPI Standing Committee**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, the mess at PUB—Manitoba Public Insurance somehow got even messier.

A week after we raised the issue of the PCs' hand-picked MPI CEO receiving two raises and racking up \$88,000 in travel costs, we've learned that the MPI board chair has now resigned; the same PC-appointed board chair who signed off on these raises and travel costs.

It's clear the PCs have lost all control of the situation, and their mismanagement is going to continue to cost taxpayers more. Manitobans deserve answers.

Will the government call a meeting of the MPI committee today?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation):** The member will know that when it comes to PUB-approved rate increases or decreases, that they are

significantly lower under our government than they ever were under the former NDP government.

Having said that, I do welcome the new board chair to MPI, Ward Keith, who has more than three decades of experience in the public insurance sector. I know that he's already been well received in terms of his appointment, and we look forward to the work that he'll do at MPI.

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

**Mr. Wiebe:** Chaos is the only word that can sum up what's going on over at Manitoba Public Insurance under these PCs.

Project Nova costs have ballooned \$200 million over budget and, at the same time, the PCs' hand-picked CEO received two raises and racked up \$88,000 in travel costs. The entire hand-picked board and the minister signed off on all of it.

And now, after we raised this issue, the board chair all of a sudden announces his resignation. Manitobans want true accountability from these PCs.

Will the minister commit to calling a meeting of the MPI committee today?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Manitobans can look at the track record of the PUB-approved rate increases or decreases under our government over the last seven years, compared to under the former NDP government. Manitobans are getting a good rate for their insurance because of good management, Madam Speaker.

However, it is important that we continue to ensure that the people on the board and at the top of the board are the best qualified that we can find, and Ward Keith is certainly among those, having had three decades of experience at MPI and getting promoted under a number of different governments, including Gary Doer's government, Madam Speaker.

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

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Wiebe:** For months, Madam Speaker, the PCs twiddled their thumbs as Project Nova ran \$200 million over budget. At the same time, the hand-picked CEO was racking up \$88,000 in travel costs and received two raises.

PCs' hand-picked board and the minister signed off on all of it. Yet the PCs continue to try to avoid any

accountability for the mess, and it's Manitobans' MPI rates that continue to go up under this PC government.

Will the government simply show some level of accountability and call an MPI committee so that Manitobans can finally get some answers from this PC government?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Once again the member opposite is wrong. The track record, when it comes to the PUB-approved rate increases or decreases, speak favourably of this government. Of course there were times when rate increases under the NDP were 3 and a half, 4 per cent because costs were out of control. And, at that time, that member sat in the government and did absolutely nothing.

In fact, what they did was they ended up firing CEOs, giving them big severances, and then turning around and hiring them back days later at a hundred— at hundreds-of-dollars-an-hour contract. That was their view of how to manage the corporation.

Under our government, MPI has been one of the leaders in terms of keeping rates down for customers.

#### **Small Cannabis Retailers Black Market Cannabis Sales**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Last week at committee, we heard some eye-opening testimony about the PC government's terrible treatment of locally owned cannabis stores. The government charged a social responsibility fee in the millions of dollars that drove stores out of business and was never spent on protecting the public.

We also heard that those high taxes spent on nothing drove entrepreneurs, who risked everything, out of business and virtually nothing is being done to crack down on the black or grey markets.

We were told there are plenty of local online sales and storefronts that are openly selling illegal cannabis and flooding the market with products that could be tainted. When it comes to being tough on crime, this government is all talk.

Why isn't this government supporting local small business, enforcing the law and shutting down black-market cannabis sales?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance):** I think, for the member's information, for the members in the House, their information, we think we have now cornered 50 per cent of the black market in Manitoba through the very robust retail market we have in Manitoba.

We've asked the—made the conscious decision to ask the private sector to get involved in retail in cannabis here in Manitoba. We now have 175 stores serving all corners of our province and we believe in delivery of the private sector here in delivering cannabis in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** Madam Speaker, this PC government charged high taxes for nothing, they drove locally owned family businesses into bankruptcy and there's been a complete lack of law enforcement.

It's not up to the private sector to enforce the law. These are family-owned Manitoba businesses that have put everything at risk. Cannabis stores can't use banks. They can't get loans. This government put people's homes and livelihoods at risk by mismanaging the rollout of cannabis sales in Manitoba.

When one presenter said he was opening in Point Douglas knowing there were multiple black-market stores selling all kinds of drugs, the minister's response was, hopefully your fight goes well against the black market in Point Douglas.

It's not up to cannabis retailers to get rid of a black market. That's the government and the police's job.

Why aren't they doing it?

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Madam Speaker, I think we should all reflect back that it was the federal Liberal government that got us into the cannabis business here in Manitoba, and quite frankly, across the country. They have asked us to figure out the retailing of cannabis. That's why we've gone to the private sector. We know members opposite might take a different course and not use the private sector.

We're certainly working with the private sector. We're working with the police forces, as well, to reduce the black market.

And I will say, Madam Speaker, once we reduce—eliminate the social responsibility fee, we will have one of the most competitive pricing for cannabis in the country.

#### **Patient Care at St. Boniface Hospital Constituent Request for Meeting With Minister**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, Wayne Robert developed sores on his feet, and his feet were never examined by the home-care nurse in spite of pleas by his wife Susan.

The sores progressed. His toes blackened. Months later, the severity was finally appreciated at the St. Boniface Hospital, but it was too late.

A mix-up meant his wife and family were not able to visit him for a critical week while he was still conscious in the days before his death. In the ICU, the bracelet to identify him had another patient's name on it.

Susan was promised a meeting with the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), but it never happened. She's in the gallery today.

Will the minister meet with Susan after QP? She's looking for closure and wants to do what she can so that no others go through what Wayne went through.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I certainly am very sorry for the situation that the individual that the member references, and I can certainly indicate that Seniors, working with the Department of Health, continue to evaluate our processes and determine what further initiatives we can take to ensure the situations that the member references don't continue to take place.

As per the information that the member has brought forward, I would look forward to having some further discussion with this particular issue with the Minister of Health.

#### **Building Sustainable Communities Program Announcement of Recipients for 2023**

**Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere):** In 2019, our government created the Building Sustainable Communities program to support important community projects at a local level.

Since its creation, the annual grant stream has been immensely popular across the province and has led to the funding of 1,745 projects, leveraging \$185 million from other funding sources, with \$82 million in provincial government investments.

For the benefit of the House and members opposite, would the minister please tell us about this morning's announcement for this year's Building Sustainable Communities recipients?

**Hon. Andrew Smith (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I'd like to thank the member from Rossmere for that great question.

I know I was joined by a number of stakeholders and community groups this morning, the member from

Rossmere and the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), when we announced 25—in fact, over \$25 million in project funding across this great province through the Building Sustainable Communities fund.

Our government created this in 2019, and in the past under the NDP government, they had all kinds of confusing streams. We consolidated that into one, and not only did we consolidate it, we upped it to \$25 million in '22-23.

Some projects that we announced today—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Smith:** —was a \$600,000 expansion of the Boys and Girls Club in Thompson; \$400,000 renovation in Dakota Community Centre; \$200,000 project in—

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

### **Drug Overdose Death Reporting Request for 2022-23 Data**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** The PC government refused for months to release the number of Manitobans who died from overdoses in 2022. Now we finally have the preliminary data, which shows that at least 418 Manitobans have died in the past year.

This PC government has failed to take any meaningful action. In fact, they've tried to make it harder for those on the front lines to do their life-saving work. This is shameful. We're four and a half months into 2023 and we still don't have the definitive numbers for 2022.

When will this minister release those definitive numbers of overdose deaths for 2022?

**Hon. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness):** As the member opposite knows, and was informed in Estimates and in prior discussions, those numbers are released by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, and when he has them on his site, once the preliminary numbers are out, he puts them on his site.

Once they've been verified, they go on our site. She just needs to wait for him to do his job.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** The medical examiner has been doing their job. They've now been silenced from releasing any of those numbers to groups that approach them to ask for those numbers.

That minister has access to those numbers, and it's under their portfolio, and they have the means to be able to release those numbers.

\* (14:20)

So this time I'll ask: When is this minister going to release the numbers for 2023 overdoses—overdose deaths? We still don't have those numbers, and we're four and a half months into 2023 already.

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** I want to thank all the individuals who do the work in the fields, who go out and meet with the families, who offer the supports.

And I would not want to begin to tell an individual when they should be preparing the numbers, when they should be putting them on their websites. I will wait for the individual—the doctor to do his job.

**Mrs. Smith:** These numbers help guide the front-line workers in doing their work, and they should be guiding this government in the supports that are needed to save lives here in Manitoba.

Manitobans continue to die. We don't even know how many Manitobans are dying with an overdose death, or what even drug they're dying from, because this government refuses to be transparent with Manitobans.

So I'll ask them again: Will they release those numbers, will they commit to opening a safe consumption site and will they start to be transparent and release those numbers in a timely manner to the public, along with the drugs that are being overdosed on, so that we can help save Manitoban lives?

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** I, again, want to applaud the individuals who are working in the field: the nurses, the social workers, the peer support workers; all of the individuals who are providing support for individuals seeking support for their substance abuse.

I also would like to say that, had opposition supported our Bill 33, there would be a lot more safety in place for the community and for Manitobans so that individuals who are seeking the supports for their mental health and their addictions would have them in place.

### **Personal-Care-Home Beds Constituent Case Concern**

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Vince Guay lives in Thompson. He's been unable to leave his bed, apart from medical appointments and hospital stays, for the past four years.

Vince lives with a spinal condition. It's left him unable to walk. He's on a waiting list for the Northern Spirit Manor in Thompson and the Fairview Personal Care Home in Brandon, but there's no end in sight for how long he'll have to wait.

PC government hasn't built PCH beds since taking office; in fact, we've lost nearly 200 PCH beds in this province.

Will the minister do the right thing for people like Vince: ensure that every Manitoban who needs a PCH bed can actually get one?

**Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care):** As I've indicated in the House several times, this government is aware of the needs of seniors in Manitoba and the care of Manitobans.

And that's why, Madam Speaker, I've indicated several times that this government is in design and planning of additional personal-care homes, as well as other initiatives, that we will be bringing forward in the very near future for the betterment of all Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

### Speaker's Ruling

**Madam Speaker:** And I have a ruling for the House.

Prior to routine proceedings on Wednesday, April 19th, 2023, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader (MLA Fontaine) raised a matter of privilege contending that the honourable First Minister and the honourable Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) had deliberately misled the House by questioning the existence and legitimacy of letters on the subject of health care tabled in the House on the previous day by the official opposition.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader concluded by moving, and I quote "that this matter be immediately referred to a standing committee of this House for debate and review."

The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) and the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) also offered contributions to the Chair.

I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for a matter of privilege to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege: Was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity, and was sufficient evidence

provided to support the member's claim that their privileges or the privileges of the House were breached.

On the first issue of whether the issue was raised at the earliest opportunity, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader indicated that the issue was raised at the earliest opportunity, and I accept the word of the honourable member.

On the second issue, whether sufficient evidence was provided, there are a number of considerations to explore, particularly with regard to charges of deliberately misleading the House.

The first consideration is that allegations of deliberately misleading the House should be raised as a point of order and not a matter of privilege.

Joseph Maingot in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege in Canada* advises on page 241 that, and I quote: To allege that a member has misled the House is a matter of order rather than privilege. End quote. He goes on to advise on the same page, and I quote: to allege that a member has deliberately misled the House is also a matter of order. End quote.

Second, as I ruled on April 19th, 2023, the member so accused needs to say on the record that it is their intended purpose to deliberately mislead the House. Short of such an admission, the onus of proof cannot be satisfied. There is a lengthy body of precedence from Manitoba Speakers supporting this finding, including Speakers Rocan, Dacquay, Hickes, Reid and the current Speaker, as well as the findings from the 50th report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs.

Third, it was ruled by Speaker Hickes on December 6th, 2005, and March 8th, 2006, and also by Speakers in the Canadian House of Commons that, in situations concerning whether or not answers offered by ministers are false in comparison with their information, it is not the role of the Speaker to adjudicate on matters of fact. Instead, this is something that is left up to the House to form an opinion on.

For all of these reasons, I must respectfully rule that a prima facie case of privilege has not been demonstrated.

Although I was not able to rule that a prima facie case of privilege was not demonstrated, I would like to share the observation that it would not be a good look for our democracy if a minister were to say one thing in the Assembly Chamber and then say something completely different outside of the Chamber to

the media. It could give the appearance that an answer provided in the Chamber was not completely accurate, and it could also lead to confusion as to whether accountability has been provided.

## PETITIONS

### Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** 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) 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.

\* (14:30)

We therefore 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 petition, Madam Speaker, is signed by many Manitobans.

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

### Security System Incentive Program

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

The background of 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 businesses' insurance costs.

(3) Whole neighbourhoods benefit when more homes and businesses have these 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 to 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.

This petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the member for Notre Dame wish to read a petition?

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Notre Dame.

### Health-Care Coverage

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

children of temporary residents and undocumented residents.

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

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

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

This has been signed by Emily Hiebert, Sara Bruce, Taylor Maciejkow and many other Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

## GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

### House Business

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** A couple of matters of government business first.

Pursuant to rule 34(7), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be the one previously put forward by the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer). The title of the resolution is Committing to Balancing Future Budgets While Keeping Life Affordable for Manitoba Families.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one previously put forward by the honourable member for Brandon West. The title of the resolution is Committing to Balancing Future Budgets While Keeping Life Affordable for Manitoba Families.



**Mr. Goertzen:** After some consultation with the Opposition House Leader, I'm announcing the cancellation of the previously announced Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development scheduled to meet on Wednesday, May 17th, 2023, at 6 p.m. to consider Bill 230, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment Act; Bill 231, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2); and Bill 235, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that there's a cancellation of the previously announced Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development scheduled to meet on Wednesday, May 17th, 2023, at 6 p.m. to consider Bill 230, The Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Amendment Act; Bill 231, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2); and Bill 235, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Goertzen:** For this afternoon, Madam Speaker, could you please call for a third reading, bills 17, 7, 16, 27, 8, 13, 24, 31, 25, 36, 29, 21 and 22.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the following bills will be considered this afternoon: concurrence and third reading of bills 17, 7, 16, 27, 8, 13, 24, 31, 25, 36, 29, 21, 22.

### CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

#### Bill 17—The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (2)

**Madam Speaker:** I will therefore start by calling concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (2).

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mr. Khan), that Bill 17, The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (2), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Ms. Gordon:** Madam Speaker, I'm pleased to rise for a third reading of Bill 17, an act respecting amendments to the regulated health professions act or RHPA. This bill will enable the minister responsible to take action in the public interest to address issues relating to the administration and operation of a health

profession regulatory college that has not yet transitioned to the RHPA or the state of practice of the profession.

\* (14:40)

This will ensure that there are the right tools in the toolkit and, if required, can improve matters related to health, safety and quality assurance in the practice of the regulated health profession.

The work to complete the regulations required to transition a profession to the RHPA is complex and takes a considerable amount of time to complete.

Currently, there are five health profession regulatory bodies under the RHPA, and 17 are still governed under their own professions' specific legislation while waiting to transition to the RHPA.

Resources, including a workbook and a guidance document have been developed to help the colleges complete the work they need to do to transition to the RHPA, and work has begun on the reserved act review process for the professions of licensed practical nursing, physiotherapy and medical laboratory technology.

These changes will help keep Manitobans safe and healthy as we move past the pandemic and continue to work to transition all regulated health professions to the RHPA.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further members wishing to debate?

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** I'm happy to put a few words on the record in regards to this bill.

You know, I've—I think I've spoken to this bill at length previously but certainly I appreciate the opportunity to put some more words on the record.

This bill, you know, it is amending The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act. There are a few reasons why it's being brought forward and I've had the opportunity to ask the minister questions about this, get clarity as to why.

And I've also had the opportunity to meet with a number of organizations, a number of different professional regulatory entities, to hear about what their experiences have been, trying to bring themselves up to date, up to speed, in regards to falling under this act.

And, you know, something that was raised pretty consistently was the lack of appropriate resources and

supports from government in order to support organizations and being able to do so.

I actually met with a couple of organizations, one in particular, that specifically stated that they have reached out to the government in the hopes that they would be able to transition under the act because they are prepared to do so. They've gotten themselves organized; they've done all the heavy lifting; they've done all the work. But, unfortunately, they were told that—wasn't enough resources to support them in doing so.

So, at this time, they are unable to make that transition even though they're prepared to do so.

And I think what that speaks to, Madam Speaker, is the ongoing lack of human resource within aspects of the Department of Health under this minister and this government.

There seems to be a resistance or a hesitancy from this government to adequately resource their own departments to make sure that when, you know, bills or amendments are brought forward that are meant to see regulatory entities make that transition, there's enough capacity in order to support those folks to do so.

And I do think that's a really important area of concern, again because we know that it's been very slow moving. The ability for entities to fall under the act has moved very slowly in recent years. You know, this is a source of frustration for different regulatory bodies.

You know, there are larger organizations that have made that transition, but there are other organizations that are eager to do so but have not been met with the sort of support and energy that they would hoped from this government in order to make that happen.

And so I do think that that's a really important concern to put on the record again because we continue to hear it from folks in the community.

I do think that, you know, there's some areas that are important for us not to talk about, and you know the area of internationally trained health-care workers has been a hot topic across the country in recent years, but certainly here in Manitoba. And we've seen that, under this government, there's been inadequate efforts made to ensure that internationally trained health-care professionals can work in Manitoba in a timely manner.

I would say, you know, my colleague, the MLA for Notre Dame, is incredibly well versed in this area. She's done a tremendous amount of work meeting

with folks in communities to listen directly to them and hear about their experiences not being able to put their health-care expertise into practice in Manitoba, especially during a time when we really need every single health-care professional possible working in our health-care system in Manitoba.

And, you know, it is—it's very concerning that this government, despite the actions they claim they're taking, continue to fail these health-care workers.

You know, we saw recently that the Minister for Immigration, just as one example to really illustrate what I'm talking about here, took a trip to the Philippines, you know, came back, and the government touted that trip was a success, that we'd have all of these health-care workers from the Philippines, nurses working in Manitoba in short order.

Now we know that's not even anywhere near happening. We know that's not going to happen anywhere near the timeline that this government said it would happen. We know that there are some barriers that remain in place that this government hasn't addressed.

And, again, that speaks to this government bringing forward, you know, initiatives or legislation or making announcements, but actually not having the details worked out or having a plan or strategy in place at all to speak of that would realize what it is that they're talking about.

In the meantime, what do we have? We have a health-care system in Manitoba that is, some people say collapsing, some say in crisis, some say on fire; there's a whole lot of ways that people are describing what's happening in health care in Manitoba.

What else do we have? We have health-care workers who are leaving our health-care system in droves still, despite the fact that this government did what it does. They went out and made an announcement, said they hired hundreds of health-care workers. Basically, the same day, almost in the same breath, you've got people who are saying to this government, you know, you bring forward bills like Bill 36, you make announcements like you've hired hundreds of health-care workers, but in reality, you're not doing anything near what is necessary to make those things be realized.

You know, we know that actually we've lost a ton of health-care workers from our health-care system, but this government won't be honest about that because, you know, they'll do anything that they can to distract from the truth and the reality of things.

We also know, like I said, in terms of Bill 36, that they don't actually want to do the work to make sure that their own announcements and commitments can be followed through on.

And so that's just an example—just an example—of, you know, how it is that this government continues to fail health care in Manitoba. And the reality of it is this: that Manitobans are the ones who pay for it. Manitobans are the ones who have to live with the consequences of this government's failure to actually follow through on anything they say that they care about in regards to health care, which is really shameful.

You know, this government has a pattern of waiting until they are forced to address a situation to even acknowledge the situation is taking place. And I could give countless, countless examples to illustrate that, Madam Speaker. I recognize, though, that I'm talking about Bill 36, so I want to make sure that I can draw on an example that speaks to Bill 36.

So I guess a good example would be, you know, Bill 36 has different regulatory entities that are required to meet certain standards; for example, complying with regulations as it pertains to English or French language proficiency. That's a really good example. Those are testing requirements for domestic and internationally educated individuals, right? That's just an example of one of the criteria that, you know, would be—needed to be—is needed to be met under Bill 36.

But, you know, we've seen, under this government, that there are folks working who would like to work in Manitoba, who are born and raised and educated in Manitoba—you know, got their education at post-secondary institutions in Manitoba—who unfortunately have not been able to practise their profession—in this case in particular, nursing—because this government failed to take the necessary steps to recognize that that is a ludicrous barrier to these folks who want to practise in our province, to the point where some of these nurses—and these are specifically Indigenous nurses, born and raised in Manitoba, educated here—who have not been able to practise in Manitoba actually had to take contracts in Saskatchewan, Ontario, elsewhere.

Because this government, despite what they say they want to make happen or they are making happen under bills like Bill 36, this government is actually failing those very nurses and not doing what is necessary for them to be a part of our health-care workforce in Manitoba during a time where we need to retain every single person possible and make sure

that we've got a strong health-care system so that, not only are we retaining our health-care professionals, but we're also setting the stage to be able to successfully recruit health-care workers into the system in Manitoba.

\* (14:50)

And so, you know, I want to make very, very clear that Bill 36 is, you know, making some amendments and changes that are needed and, you know, that will support regulated health-care professional entities in being able to come under the act. But none of that can actually happen in a timely manner; it can't be realized in a way that really supports these entities, because this government isn't adequately resourcing the department in order to support them in doing so.

And, again, that speaks to a pattern this government has of under-resourcing the essential services that we have which would ensure that our health-care system and the organizations that support our health-care system can function in a way that sees our health-care system be strong here in Manitoba.

And so I felt it really important, Madam Speaker, to make those few points.

You know, we're in a time in Manitoba where, you know, even what seems to be pretty straightforward, common sense legislation brought forward by this government is met with doubt and scrutiny and a lack of trust by the general public and by organizations providing health care or regulatory bodies in this province.

And that has been well-earned by this government. They've worked very hard since 2016 to completely erode the trust and confidence of Manitobans across the province. And, unfortunately, they're working less hard, they're putting even less effort into repairing and rebuilding that trust and relationships.

And so I hear on the doorsteps every day, whether it's—I'm door knocking in Fort Richmond, if I'm door knocking in Southdale or Assiniboia, you know, if I'm door knocking, you know, in Kirkfield Park—I was there a couple of weeks ago—and what I hear from Manitobans is very clear: they don't trust this government with their health care and they want a government in place that's going to work in partnership with regulatory bodies and organizations to strengthen our public health-care system and empower the professionals who provide direct front-line care. And that team that's going to get that done is our NDP caucus.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, this bill, which is now at third reading and has been through committee, is basically a bill which substantiates the fact that the government has failed to put resources in to get the organizations which we're talking about through this process.

We've heard again and again from individuals that the government has delayed and delayed, and that they've delayed because they haven't had—assigned the resources and the individuals to be able to accelerate this process.

You know, one of the examples was provided by a presenter at the committee meeting, and this was a presenter who was presenting on behalf of the Remedial Massage Therapists Society of Manitoba. And she said that, with the massage therapists, they were approved for regulation in 2015 to begin the process, and in eight years, there has been no steps following that. She says in her comments, this is unacceptable. Massage therapists were told the new regulations for massage therapists could take two to three years to complete.

And she also points out that, even if they started today, we'd be looking—they'd be looking at 23 years from when the initial bill was passed to when they are registered. That's not a realistic timeline for processes, even for government.

I think it needs to be very clear that the fault here is both with the NDP and the PC governments, that the excuses have been plentiful, but the action has not been.

The government has repeatedly used COVID as an excuse, as a scapegoat for things which didn't get done. And yet, as we have pointed out on this side, that very frequently, that the COVID was an ideal time to get moving on some things which had stalled.

Saskatchewan—the massage therapists have gone through processing levels and are on their way to completing the development of their college by the end of 2023. And this compares to what's happening in Manitoba, where the massage therapists are stuck at the starting gate. Indeed, they were dismayed to learn that massage therapists weren't even on the list of—that was provided by the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon).

It is a sad and 'storry' comment on what's happening in health care in our province, that one of the building blocks which was supposed to be an important building block for health-care professions, for regulated professions, has gone so slowly and has taken so long.

This bill would not have been necessary if the process had moved quickly. It is now being introduced as an alternative to the process, when, in fact, the answer should have been to accelerate the process and make sure that the colleges, the regulated professions, were, in fact, incorporated under the act.

The minister makes the excuse that this is due to the complexity of the process, but it's become quite clear that it's primarily a big bottleneck that the government has put in place by not having sufficient staff.

And it is a sad commentary that there are, in many areas of health care, not sufficient staff, and that we are being hampered in the delivery of care. There is a suspicion that the problems that I described with Mr. Wayne Robert earlier today, many of them were related to a shortage of staff. If you don't have enough staff, you can't get things done well and people will start cutting corners and things don't go as well, and often, they cost a lot more.

So the government would've been much smarter to put in place the staff—the staff to get this job done, the staff to get many, many other jobs in health care.

Ensuring that we have enough staff in allied health fields is critically important. We had a big rally at noon today, many objecting to the fact that it was more than five years and the allied health union has still not—allied health professionals still don't have a contract. This is clearly not acceptable, and this government is causing problems for itself and for the province, and for health care in our province.

Allied health professionals are among the most critical of all. They perform many, many duties which are essential in health care, and this government should have been paying a lot more attention to them and making sure that they had a decent contract, because without that being settled, more and more are looking elsewhere where they're able to get bonuses and where they're—appear to be better supported.

So this bill is here because it shows and highlights a major failure of this government and the government before them.

So, Madam Speaker, with those comments, I will sit down and will pass on. And I hope the government will hire the people and get the job done fast, but I am not optimistic, given their track record.

Thank you.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I just want to make a few points with respect to Bill 17, the regulated health professions amendment act. And, first, I want to begin

by saying that, today, we were fortunate to have members of MAHCP here at the steps of the Manitoba Legislature.

*Brad Michaleski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

That's health professionals in our province who are currently looking to negotiate a contract and get a fair deal for themselves with this province.

\* (15:00)

And these health professionals are looking to work here in Manitoba. They're the folks who are working day in and day out to keep our health-care system working in conjunction with doctors and nurses.

Health-care professionals are the ones who service as the backbone. They're the diagnostic professionals. They're the X-ray techs. They're the paramedics. These are the people that keep our system moving from one spot to the next and they're critical to our health-care system.

They're critical to health of Manitobans, and for them to be ignored by this government the way they have been for over the past five years without a contract not only disrespects them but it hurts Manitobans who are looking for a robust health-care system, a health-care system that they can rely on and one in which we can all have some confidence in. And that's all in jeopardy because of the decisions of this current government.

Now, with respect to Bill 17, it's important to note, first of all, that there are many health professions that are and have been seeking regulation—to be regulated as part of this act for a number of years. And it's in part due to the under-resourcing of folks within the government that has delayed this process for many health professions.

And I know that has a significant impact. I've been a part of organizations that have rolled into The Regulated Health Professions Act, and it's important to understand the amount of work that goes into it, the amount of time that it takes to complete the job.

And even while staffed, it does take quite a significant amount of work, effort and time. But you can imagine how much more it takes and how much more time eventually is wasted when departments are under-resourced as they have been under this government.

I know there's health professions that have been trying to get under this act and be regulated for the better part of the last decade, and it hasn't happened,

in large part, due to the short-staffed nature of the Health Department. And so I think that is certainly a frustration for many health professions.

And the other point I want to make on this is, simply put, that many of the health professions and our health-care system in general, has been misstaffed in quite a way.

You know, it's a frustration for Manitobans, the Manitobans that I speak to across Winnipeg, across the suburbs of Winnipeg, across Manitoba, quite frankly, who expressed to me their frustration when they see announcements roll out around X millions of dollars and this much going here, but then they don't actually see action taken from this government.

They see, perhaps, numbers, and they don't see that translate into meaningful steps to make our health-care system better, and I think this is a prime example where we've seen health-care workers and allied health-care workers have been left back, been left behind.

You know, when we see health-care dollars go and we see large bureaucracy created, but then those monies don't actually get trickled down to health-care workers; when we see health-care workers not get listened to, or not be respected in the way that they should be, especially since they have been doing the work for many years, not just in the last few years when they've been so incredibly inundated with shortages of health-care staff, but right through the pandemic.

You know, there's a worker who expressed today her own story of going to work through the pandemic and being feared for her own well-being during that experience, coming home when you think you'd get a reprieve from the stress of a work environment, of working in health care during the pandemic, only to isolate, to have to self-isolate from her family just so that she can go back out the next day and provide health care to Manitobans.

Now, that's dedication and that's sacrifice. And what does that dedication and sacrifice from our health-care workers get in return from this government? Well, it seems that they get disrespect without having a contract, without having a fair negotiation for over the past five years.

And I think it's important to note all this with respect to Bill 17, that it's important for any government to build a good relationship with health-care workers, with the workers that are asking to do as much of the heavy lifting to support health care in our

province, and this government hasn't been able to do that. They seem unwilling or incapable to do that—perhaps both. I know on this side of the House we take that very seriously, and if we're given the opportunity, I think that we will certainly make those efforts in—for the workers in Manitoba.

With respect to internationally trained health-care workers, who also will be impacted by the changes in Bill 17, it's important to note that there have been significant barriers that the internationally trained health professionals have faced.

It was said very eloquently by my colleague, the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara), earlier today, as well the—my colleague, the member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino), in previous opportunities to speak in this Chamber, who've expressed the need to reduce barriers for folks who have been trained in health-care professions and want to come to work here in Manitoba.

We all know the challenges around health-care shortages; that's been shared by many members, including the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) herself, around national shortages in health-care workers. And so when we have the opportunity to welcome in people into our province here in Manitoba, but also welcome in the people who are already trained in these health-care professions, why wouldn't we take every opportunity to let these people into our province and work in their field in our province?

There are many things, many steps, that we can take to make sure that these people have and can have their credentials recognized and have any bridging programs looked at and making sure that the path is not just laid out for them and it's—that they don't have to take an assess—but that we simply look at the credentials they have and find ways that they can help to work in our health-care system and at least create a system in Manitoba where they have a shot—a realistic, affordable chance—of actually working in their health profession in Manitoba.

Because, right now, for many internationally educated health professionals, the path is just impossible; it's just impossible with the current system that this government has set up; it's just impossible.

And so we need to make that avenue more clear for people to follow, for internationally educated professionals to come into Manitoba and ensure that they are not only going to come and live here and raise a family and stay here, but that they can work and help

to meet—help our province meet the health-care needs and the health-care challenges that we all face.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also want to mention, you know, discussion I've had with some individuals who have been—who will be impacted by Bill 17. And, in particular, a discussion I had with an individual who's a psychologist.

And, you know, she, you know, expressed, you know, some concern with respect to the regulated health professions amendment act. And she expressed this concern with the act in a couple of regards. I think the concern, first of all, came from her honest intention that—I think every health professional's intention—to do right by their patients and by community to ensure that there is healthy, vibrant communities in Manitoba.

Now, she expressed to me the concern about her profession, whether it would—in the future, after this bill passes—whether there would be a master's level requirement for psychologists here in Manitoba. And I think when we're thinking about any health profession and we're thinking about the requirements and educational requirements and needs to meet credentials and accreditation, it's important to think about how we can maintain a high level of standard so that Manitobans who are seeking those services know that they're going to be able to receive the best quality care.

And for this professional, who's thinking about the people and the Manitobans that she serves, this is on top of mind: How does she continue in the future to serve Manitobans as best as she possibly can, and how can she ensure that her profession is able to do this across the board? Regardless of the region and 'recarless' of the type of service that they're able to provide in her profession, how does she ensure that it's going to be of high quality?

And so, you know, this is something that she concerned with respect this bill. And I would urge the government to make sure that all professions who are going to be moving forward in a health—a regulated health professions amendment act are going to be ensuring that there is a high quality of care delivered by health professions and that those requirements are there as well.

\* (15:10)

But I think the concern that this person shared with me when it comes to the act and what it meant for her profession, it also stemmed from the fact that she's very hesitant to trust this government when it comes to changes in our health-care system. And that

comes from the fact that this government has, quite frankly, turned its back on many health-care workers over the past number of years, when it comes to deleting positions, when it comes to cutting funding for health-care services, and that's both in the health-care department, but even in the Department of Education, which funds schools, for example, school psychologists or other health-care services that are provided there. When there are cuts to other agencies that provide community-based health care, that provide services that—for getting—receiving health, that might not touch a hospital.

And it's important to recognize that these services play critical factor in the well-being of Manitobans. And so when you talk about how we ensure, you know, quality of care, and how do we ensure that Manitobans are able to receive the health care that they need, it's important that you also consider the areas that Manitobans might be receiving the type of health care not always directly funded through the Department of Health.

And when we consider all that, it's—I think it's—we would clearly see that this government has failed when it comes to providing a holistic approach to ensuring that Manitobans are as healthy as possible. And I think that, you know, that what we can do better, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is assure that we listen to those front-line staff, listen to the people who are servicing Manitobans day in and day out, understand the conditions within their—that they're working in, understand how we can lift them up and provide more resources for what they do and ensure that we listen to how they best think we can make the system work for more Manitobans, so that we can have more Manitobans access the care that they need, when they need it and where they need it.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll leave my comments there. Suffice it to say that we need to do a better job, and we call on this government to do a better job when it comes to supporting health-care workers in our province, making sure that they not only have the resources to do their job, making sure that they are adequately compensated for doing their job, but that Manitobans can access health-care resources and ensure that they're going to be receiving the best quality of care.

These are the sort of things that the Manitoba NDP will have as a No. 1 priority, and we continue to have as a priority, to ensure that every Manitoban can access the health care that they need.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Is there any further debate on this bill?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 17, The Regulated Health Professions Amendment Act (2).

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

I declare the motion carried.

We'll now move on to Bill 7. *[interjection]*

### Point of Order

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** The honourable Minister of Environment and Climate, on a point of order.

**Hon. Kevin E. Klein (Minister of Environment and Climate):** Earlier today, I acknowledged the accomplishments of the St. James Canucks hockey team, and I neglected to ask for leave to include the names of all the players on Hansard. And I would ask for that ability now.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Is there leave—for the minister's request to include the members of the team in Hansard and put it in there after his member's statement? *[Agreed]*

### Bill 7—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** The honourable—okay. We'll return back to Bill 7, the liquor and gaming and cannabis control amendment act.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 7, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Thank you.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Goertzen:** So, I've put significant words on the record regarding the details of this bill at second reading in addition to taking questions at that stage.

The bill really provides for greater flexibility in the framework, allowing more businesses and service

models. The system in which our liquor is regulated in Manitoba is very complex with a number of different licences. And as a result of a number of different business models and those looking for flexibility in how they serve alcohol, it has been shown to be a—not a very nimble system and not very open to new models of business that are being seen in other provinces and that are desired here in the province of Manitoba.

There have been a couple of things that have occurred. As an example, The Beer Can across the street is opened every summer, and there's been a bit of a workaround in terms of how that can work in the current regulations for licensing of the serving of alcohol, but it's complicated and it's not exactly what the business, I understand, might be looking for. And so this allows for greater flexibility.

Two examples came at committee. There was a company or an organization called the Pedal Pub, which has a very—I try to describe it the best I can—a very large bike where individuals face inward towards the table that's in the centre of that bike. And in other provinces, they can license, they can serve alcohol on the Pedal Pub and they aren't under our current regulations and licensing system.

The other company that came forward at committee was Little Brown Jug, and they were concerned about the serving sizes they're allowed at events that are not in line with other provinces as well.

So our executive director of the LGCA made a commitment that, with the passage of this bill, regulations would be developed that would benefit those two particular businesses. Of course, there'd be many others of—that would be benefiting as well, and they have been—I know the critic indicated that that seemed like a kind of a rash decision, but they've been writing in for many months, if not years, to look for that change.

So, with the passage of this bill, I understand that work can begin, and they're obviously desirous of having that in effect for summer and for the festival season, which, if you were to walk outside the Legislature today, you would realize is quickly upon us.

So I look forward to this bill passing. I thank those who came to committee for their presentations and I thank the liquor, gaming and control authority for their work in drafting this bill, which I think had been stalled by the opposition once in a previous session, but is now, I believe, ready to proceed for third reading passage and hopefully royal assent before June 1st.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record. *[interjection]* And I should allow for all of the applause to conclude because I know, for Hansard, I know it's difficult for them to pick up on.

But, you know, I'm just so eager to speak to Bill 7, and I know that I have the support of my colleagues in doing so, so maybe I will just move forward and put just a few words on the record with regards to Bill 7.

We certainly are in support of those businesses operating in Manitoba who, as the minister mentioned, came to committee and identified specific issues that, you know, they had with the current regulations, the current legislation as it stands.

And we're certainly encouraged to know that the government is starting to listen to those independent businesses, understanding that they are doing their level best to serve responsibly in this province, to provide a service and to do so in a very responsible way. Any way that we can support them, we certainly want to send the message that we are in favour of doing so.

\* (15:20)

There was some concern, I will add, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in the committee process, you know, a presenter presented a specific situation which then prompted the minister to go over, talk to officials, and sort of come back and, on the fly, announce what regulations may or may not be, which I think is quite unprecedented in terms of the process; is very, very strange for a minister to do—operate in that fashion.

I would imagine there are a lot more people in the industry who have other situations that they'd like to bring forward to this government who just happened to not be at committee and so didn't get an assurance from the minister that their specific situation would be addressed. And it really does speak to our major concern with Bill 7—I should say one of our major concerns about Bill 7—because I will address both of our major concerns.

The first major concern is that the minister is making up rules on the fly, that it's all being done through regulation. And at a time when we're trying to seek some clarity about this government's actual motives and intentions for the distribution of alcohol and spirits in this province, that instead of giving us that information, being transparent about what they're going to be doing, in this case they said, well, just trust us; we'll put it all in regulations. And I guess the minister will, at the public presentation table, take suggestions about



what those regulations should be and just implement them, you know, willy-nilly.

I don't think that's the way that anybody expects government to be operating. I think that people expect that the rules that we set are in the best interests of the public, work with industry that is working collectively with government. I think that's the way that people expect that regulations are developed and legislation is put forward.

But, of course, we don't see that in this bill. What we see is another, just trust us and we'll get it right. Well, Manitobans have seen what this government's intentions truly are when it comes to alcohol sales in this province. And that's, I think, why—as the minister, you know, indicated—this bill has seen some road bumps, some speed bumps as we've been going through the process.

Of course, we work with industry; we want to see this move forward. But the government hasn't shown all their cards. They've been very, very secretive in their plan, and we know why now because, of course, the other piece of legislation on the order paper—sorry, before this Legislature—that we did manage to kill are bills that specifically privatize our liquor system here in this province. And most Manitobans would understand why that's a bad idea.

But, just in case they don't, I'll spend some time reminding them, you know, just what kind of benefits we see from having a strong Manitoba liquor control commission that is delivering alcohol in this province in a very tightly regulated way.

First and foremost, of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you'll know that the profit that MBLL receives goes directly back to the people of Manitoba. This is a—you know, there's huge profits involved when it comes to selling alcohol in this province, and Manitobans have said very clearly that if we collectively manage and responsibly deliver that, that we could see the benefits, in terms of the profits, going directly back to the things that matter: health care, education and, you know, so on down the list.

The is the kind of thing that Manitobans expect, that if we understand collectively that we can distribute it responsibly, that we should all then share in any kind of profits, and it should be for the benefit of Manitobans. It should be a positive—a net positive.

Manitobans also understand that things like safety and security are important, right? So, you know, just in the last couple of years we have seen rising rates of violence; we've seen rising rates of theft, and those

were, in many cases, concentrated at our MBLL locations. Those places in our province were targeted in many cases, and employees were put at risk. The public was put at risk.

And we needed to take decisive action because, again, it's distributed centrally by the provincial government. We were able to force the government to step in, to listen to those employees, to the MGEU members that represent those workers there, to step in and say, we need to do something differently, we need to make it safer, how can we do that?

So it's upgrades to security, it was a whole new system that was implemented in terms of how ID was checked and how it was tracked. This was all done because we had some level of control over the distribution at the consumer level.

This was, you know, a huge change in how we operate here in this province that wouldn't have been possible if it was sold at every single, you know, store across the province with very little regulation. And we know that's what the provincial government, this PC government, is now trying to do.

And, lastly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that this provincial government, you know, is trying to open up the floodgates when it comes to who can distribute liquor in this province. And the most damning evidence of that has been their recent meeting with executives or representatives on behalf of convenience stores like 7-Eleven. You know, as soon as this privatization legislation was introduced, they sat down right away with people in the convenience store industry.

And, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are very concerned about that. We don't think that that is the way that Manitobans want to see liquor distributed in this province: without regulation, at convenience stores, in every community throughout this province. That's not who we are.

We understand that we want to serve the customer. We want to make sure that it's a good customer experience. I think most people—well, we know for a fact that it's been rated by Manitobans as a good customer experience at our MBLL locations. That's what we want to promote, and that's the kind of responsible distribution that we want in this province.

The government has taken a different track. Now, they're going to go out, they're going to knock on doors and they're going to get—hear from Manitobans. And I think Manitobans are smart enough to say—to

reject this kind of short-term political play and understand that, in the long run, this will hurt us as a province.

So, you know, this bill probably would have moved through the legislative process much quicker had the government not been on a privatization—had a privatization goal in mind with regards to distribution of alcohol in this province.

And I think that, you know, had the minister been more upfront about exactly what regulations, what changes are being in the legislation, been more specific, I think there would have been, you know, more support going forward.

That being said, we did listen to the presenters at committee. There, I'm sure, are many more in the industry who are willing to work with government. I hope that they'll take the initiative to work collectively with them. You know, listen to the message that they're sending, that they are trying to be partners in this and they're trying to be responsible and they simply want a government that will listen to them.

So, we do support this bill moving forward, and we do expect that, you know, we'll hear much more from the industry as times change, as expectations of consumers change and we hope to continue to listen to that as we go out and send a message that we support our public workers, we support those in the industry.

And we'll send that message every day on the doorstep in the next election.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I'm happy to rise this afternoon and share a few words about Bill 7, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act.

I recognized it is a piece of legislation that has been debated and brought forward a few times, and many members of the House have had opportunities to debate the legislation, and so I'll keep my remarks short here this afternoon.

The bill creates more opportunities for businesses and restaurants to sell liquor with delivery and takeout, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I know when this bill was first introduced this time around, the government had made an announcement about how this would really help businesses that had been struggling throughout the pandemic.

And I actually respect this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that is a wonderful asset and part of this legislation. But it does make me question why the government didn't do more during the actual pandemic. You know, during the pandemic, there were many different grants and ideas that could have been brought forward to help more small businesses and businesses throughout the entire province.

And we did see some come from the federal government. Here in Manitoba, we did have the Manitoba Bridge Grant. But I think there were more that we could be doing at that time, and it's disappointing that we had to wait until now to, sort of, outreach our hands and help the small businesses, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

\* (15:30)

I think it's important that we flag that, when it comes to this legislation and alcohol being delivered, that there is an adequate screening of sorts taking place, ensuring that, when those who are ordering alcohol, whether it through—be through apps or through the restaurants, ensuring that those planning to partake in the alcohol are over the age of 18.

And that was not debated here in the House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think it is really important that we have a strong understanding of that, we have the confidence in the legislation that those who are purchasing are being adequately screened.

I know at committee last week, we had a few presenters, and they shared wonderful presentations and had many members of the committee questioning different parts of that legislation, and it was very thoughtful perspective being brought forward. And I think that this legislation, it would, if I understand it correctly, help better utilize cups for one, and this could be—go toward being environmentally friendly and using the resources that we have in Manitoba, and it allows for our vendors to actually fill cups.

And I'm thinking about, for example, at music festivals. Manitoba, we take a lot of pride in our music festivals. We have Folk Fest, and I'm sure some of my colleagues maybe participated in Folk Fest over the years themselves. And we've got Rainbow Trout and Harvest Moon and jazz fest, and at all these festivals, they will be affected by this legislation in the sense that they will be able to fill cups differently.

And it was just an interesting perspective to learn and hear about at the committee stage, and I want to thank the presenters for sharing that with us.

And I recognize we're May here in the Legislature. That means we're almost in the summer. We can argue it's summer out there right now; it's quite hot. And that means this bill has to be not only passed but implemented if we want—very soon, if we want our Winnipeg and our Manitoba music festivals to be able to take advantage of it this year.

With those few words, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to the bill at third reading.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Is there any further speakers?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** The question before the House is concurrence in third reading of Bill 7, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

### **Bill 16—The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act**

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** We will now move on to Bill 16, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (Ms. Squires), that Bill 16, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

#### ***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Goertzen:** The legislation, as it is presented before the House, I've spoken to it in detail at second reading.

It really is a response to the work that's been happening within the family court system in trying to ensure that there are more avenues and ways for individuals who are dealing with family issues, sometimes involving domestic violence, but often more resulting in family disputes that have protection orders then levelled against individuals, to try to deal with those matters out of court.

We know that dealing with them in court often results in more conflict, certainly more costs and not always the best outcome for the individuals who are

in a family court proceeding, and often not the best interests of the children.

So there's been a great deal of effort by this government to ensure that there are other avenues by which these disputes can be dealt with, and dealt with in a way that's more sensitive to the families and to the children—so even when it comes to sharing custody or being able to be in agreed-upon mediation, even if there's a protection order in place, for the parties agree to be into—in some sort of a collaborative effort and a family sharing arrangement.

The challenge is that, with protection orders, often folks in the system are finding inadvertent breaches of protection orders where the parties themselves had agreed to participate in some sort of a process by which they could try to resolve issues or mediate issues, but an individual who had a protection order against them would then be inadvertently breaching the order by participating.

So that, again, is one brief example. There were others that I provided at second reading. But this is a response to the fact that we are trying to, where possible and where appropriate, allow for families and others who are in domestic disputes to move those disputes away from the court system and to find a resolution in a way that often provides a better result.

Thank you very much.

**MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Well, I want to thank members opposite for the warm welcome to the debate this afternoon, and I am pleased to put a couple of words on the record in respect of Bill 16, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act.

So, I did speak to this bill on—at second reading, Assistant Deputy Speaker—or, Acting Deputy Speaker—and I would suggest or I would hope that everybody in this House would appreciate and concur with the Minister of Justice that we do—you know, when we have opportunities that we can strengthen legislation in respect of the protection of women or families, I think that we can all stand behind that.

And so, certainly, as I said in debate on second reading, we are supporting Bill 16.

You know, families have enough to navigate when they are in the justice system, whatever that may look like. You know, either it's custody arrangements or case conferencing at, you know—developing, you know, child maintenance and custody arrangements. And often there are scenarios in which there is a protection order against one of the parents. And so, I think it is

an opportunity to do things in a better way that hopefully works to safeguard families and certainly puts the best interest of children at the forefront.

As I said in second reading debate, you know, one of the things that I am concerned with—which, you know, I would suggest that the minister hasn't necessarily, you know, put on the official record anything to, kind of, alleviate those concerns—but one of the things is that, you know, when there are protection orders, particularly in respect of domestic violence and stalking.

And, you know, now we're putting in legislation that would allow folks to come into some semblance of contact with one another, my fear—and some of the fears that I've heard from different members in the community—is that, when you create an opportunity for contact and whatever that may look like—you know, perhaps those folks are still not talking, or whatever—but an individual knows where another—where the individual that has a protection order against them, where they're going to be, it does certainly raise the risk to that individual.

And so, you know, that's something that I think we need to be very cognizant of as Bill 16 receives royal assent and becomes law in Manitoba. You know, how do we offer those protections to ensure that if an individual comes into contact, for whatever the reason may be, even though—if that contact is lawful, it does put a person at risk.

And we know the nature of domestic violence and stalking is that if somebody wants to get to you, if somebody wants to do harm to you, often people will be very methodical in that. Often they will plan that out. Often they will obsess on how they're going to see you again, how they're going to get into contact with you, where you're staying, where you're at, who you're with, who you're hanging out with, who you're talking to.

\* (15:40)

And so, you know, that is the nature of domestic violence; that is the nature of stalking.

And so, I really hope that alongside this legislation, that there are those additional protections and measures to make sure that everybody is safe.

And, you know, in respect of protection orders—and I know that the minister will know this—that, you know, we on this side of the House have been raising concerns in respect of protection orders and the ability for predominantly women to be able to get protection orders actually ordered for their very protection.

And we know that just a little while ago there was a lot of concern coming out from community that, you know, half of the protection order applications were denied, and they were denied because of, you know, the context or the interpretation of what constituted, like, imminent danger: Was this individual who was applying for a protection order in imminent danger?

And so, I still think that there's a lot of work that needs to be done to protect protection orders.

And I shared during the second reading that I was actually working with two different Indigenous women that were trying to get protection orders, and despite them feeling that they were in imminent danger, them and their children were in imminent danger, both of their protection orders—it involved the same individual.

So, they both went for protection orders. They both felt that they were imminent danger. They both felt that their children were in imminent danger from this common individual that was in their lives. Both of their protection orders were not approved; they were declined.

And both of those folks had to go again and reapply. They had to get lawyers. They had to pay lawyers for advice, and they had to go again to get protection orders. And they did. But some of those protection orders were not long lasting.

And now the individual—which is exactly what's being laid out here, is they do have now protection orders against them—but this individual is applying for full custody of both of these individuals' children. And so, this legislation will bring in—these women, because of this legislation, will be in some form of contact with this individual.

So, it is certainly something that we need to be very cognizant of and certainly something, like I said, we still have a lot of work to do in this province, not only with respect of protection orders but just in general in respect of domestic violence or gender-based violence and stalking.

I don't think any of us in this room should be proud of the fact that we have some of the highest levels of violence, gender-based violence, against Manitobans. That's not something to be proud of.

And I would suggest to members in the House that that number has only grown exponentially in—you know, after COVID, like during COVID and certainly after. And those numbers have only grown exponentially.

And one of the reasons why—you know, we know what the pandemic did. It forced people to be stuck

together in a residence or in a space. People couldn't leave. We know that, you know, shelters were not allowed to take anybody. Everybody was in lockdown, and it forced you to be with your abuser, with no way to escape that.

But what it—but what's also happened, Acting Assistant Deputy Speaker, is that there's been significant cuts to those social services, or those social services infrastructure, that typically helped folks in—who are facing domestic violence or stalking or gender-based violence.

And so, what we've seen since 2016 is like just these, you know, cuts and cuts. And, you know, here's a really good example, and I remember—I know that members opposite remember this very well, was, like, I think it was more than \$100,000 that was cut from the North Point Douglas Women's Centre. And that was during the early years of—under the Brian Pallister PC administration.

Those cuts have real consequences. They have real consequences in the lives of women and in the lives—in their lives in respect of the domestic violence or the gender-based violence that they face.

I know that, myself, I've never forgotten that cut. I know that North Point Douglas Women's Centre hasn't forgotten that cut. And I know that all of the women and all of the community that organized—we—there was actually a huge rally at that time.

And I remember, it was actually during Estimates. And we were getting ready to go to the North Point Douglas Women's Centre, to go support and stand in solidarity with the North End—North Point Douglas Women's Centre. But it was actually Estimates, and I was in Estimates in Executive Council—or 'execut'—Exec Council.

And actually Brian Pallister was up. And I remember him and I was asking him questions. And I asked him, at that time, I said, if he was planning on coming to the rally to actually hear directly from folks in the community about what his cuts were doing.

I even offered to drive him. I offered to drive him; him and I could drive together to the North Point Douglas Women's Centre. And I asked him repeatedly, like, you know, I'll drive, I'll go take my car for a car wash; I'll make sure that the car is nice and clean. I even went so far as to say that I would bake him his favourite treat just to have him come and listen to the community on what that cut means to the community.

And so, again, it's good that, you know, the minister is attempting to strengthen—*[interjection]* Well, the minister has gotten cookies. I gave you cookies.

**An Honourable Member:** Yes, but that was a long time ago.

**MLA Fontaine:** Well, how many cookies can I bake?

So, again, it's good that the minister is strengthening this, but, you know, we're dealing with the aftermath of years of cuts and it falls on—and it—and who bears the most of those cuts are women; predominantly women; predominantly Indigenous women in the province of Manitoba.

And so, you know, a lot more has to do—and I would hope that, you know, the government would, at the bare minimum, while they're, you know, making all these announcements because, again, we're in—we're on the cusp of a provincial election. And now, all of a sudden, the PCs have, you know, they're—have opened their purse strings and are like just you get money, you get money, you get millions of dollars, you get millions of dollars.

They may want to consider, you know, reinstating the dollars that they cut from women's resource centres, and they could start with the North Point Douglas women's resource centre and give those dollars back.

And, again, I wish I can remember the amount, but I feel like it was like \$160,000, somewhere along that—that's a lot of money. And, you know, so while the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and ministers are out there making announcements worth millions of dollars—and while, as well, concurrently, MPI is, like, you know, over \$200 million over budget—I would suggest that one way to strengthen this bill so that we don't have to have all of these protection orders is to announce, like, now or tomorrow, that they're reinstating that \$160,000.

And actually, I would, you know, include the, you know, inflation and all of that. So, you know, I would encourage them to announce significant dollars to support that North Point Douglas Women's Centre, who work directly on the front lines of supporting Manitobans in respect of gender-based violence.

But I would go even further. I would, you know, make those announcements for the North End Women's Centre. I would make those announcements for the West Central Women's Resource Centre.

\* (15:50)

I would make those announcements for the resource centres that we have in Dauphin and in Thompson and in The Pas because, again, what we're doing is—this is, at the end of the day, this is just a band-aid fix to what is a systemic issue that has only been exacerbated by the cuts that the members supported, voted in favour for and ultimately celebrated under both the former premier, Brian Pallister, and the current one right now.

Miigwech.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I'm glad to have the opportunity to rise this afternoon and just speak a little bit to Bill 16, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act.

Feeling very good about this bill moving forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I've had the opportunity to speak about the bill and about the legislation with quite a few people in my constituency, and they're happy that it is being brought forward and it's been introduced and it's been debated, and it seems to have all-party unanimous support. I think it's a positive step forward.

It's important to note that women account for almost eight in 10 victims of intimate partner violence, and Manitoba has the second highest rate of intimate partner violence in the country, which sort of speaks to the importance of this legislation. We need to make sure we're always striving to make it more safe for people to be able to come forward, whether it's making reports or even just talking about incidents that have happened, or making plans for their own safety, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And we need to make sure that the process doesn't become overly burdensome. This needs to be rolled out in a way that it is accessible for those who want to access it; it doesn't create extra work, because often-times, those who are accessing it are actually in danger at that time. And so just making sure that it is easy to access, it is easy to understand, that there are people to talk through about the application process.

Makes me think and reflect a little bit about some of the work that I've had the opportunity to do in the past, specifically with immigrant women here in Manitoba who were in abusive situations; and this abuse may extend to physical, emotional, spiritual, even financial abuse, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And I've heard stories of how women—and, again, this is right here in Manitoba—having to create escape plans out of their very own homes, strategically placing phones in certain positions in their houses in case they needed to grab it, strategically unlocking windows

when their partner may be using the washroom, in case they need to be able to sneak out.

I think it is often underestimated what people have to face when they are going through any form of domestic abuse or domestic violence, and I think that this legislation is a positive step in helping these individuals, but, again, that's why it's so important that we make sure it's easy to access, and we're doing everything we can as legislators to make it easy to access.

Ultimately, we are glad it's coming forward, and again, we just want to see it rolled out as smoothly as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** Is there any further speakers?

If not, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 16, The Domestic Violence and Stalking Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

### **Bill 27—The Intimate Image Protection Amendment Act**

**The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski):** We will now move on to Bill 27, The Intimate Image Protection Amendment Act.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 27, The Intimate Image Protection Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and be passed.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Goertzen:** So, this bill deals with the reverse onus provision related to the distribution of intimate images in a civil proceeding.

So, as it currently stands, the legislation would require an individual to—who's had their intimate image disclosed in whatever form or fashion that is—often it's on the Internet—to demonstrate, to prove that they didn't provide consent for their intimate image to be distributed.

This bill would reverse that 'onus' and it would require the individual who took the intimate image of somebody else and distributed it on the Internet, or through a text or other means, to prove that they had permission.

So, it assumes, essentially, that an individual didn't have permission to distribute the intimate image of somebody else, and the onus then falls onto that individual to prove that they did, as opposed to the individual who is the victim, essentially, to prove that they'd given permission.

So, this has been supported by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. It's been replicated in other provinces already, and it's well regarded as the standard by which to go to.

It does allow me, because it's relevant, briefly, to speak about reverse onuses generally.

This morning in Ottawa, the federal Liberal Minister of Justice, the—Minister Lametti, brought forward a number of changes to the Criminal Code as it relates to reverse onuses, including on reverse onus for 'fiolent'—violent offenders, repeat violent offenders who use weapons, including a new reverse onus for an individual who has a prohibited weapon and—which is loaded or could easily be loaded—including reverse onus provisions for some instances of domestic violence where a charge has been discharged previously and a number of other areas where reverse onuses didn't exist before in the Criminal Code, but now exist.

This follows the call of ministers of Justice across Canada over the last year, led by Manitoba starting last summer, led by the premiers, led by our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) in Manitoba, calling for these changes. Haven't been able to read the legislation in detail; did have a conversation with Mr. Lametti this afternoon. It certainly appears, at first blush, that the concerns that were raised by the premiers and the minister of Justice, that those are contained within this federal bill and we'll look to do more analysis on it.

I know that the opposition NDP, led by the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw), were very, very opposed to changes and to implementing these reverse onus provisions. He and others in the NDP stood alone on that in Canada. And now even the federal Liberals have understood how important this is.

So, the NDP are, again, isolated when it comes to their views on justice, and I hope, at least on this narrow bill, they'll understand the importance of it, even if they don't understand it more broadly when it comes to violent offenders generally.

Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

**MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I'm just getting so many applause this afternoon. It's great. I think that the members opposite are excited to hear what I have to say, and I appreciate the welcome to the Chamber.

As I previously shared in second reading of this bill, we are supporting this bill, assistant—Acting Assistant Deputy Speaker.

Again, similar to Bill 16, it's important that we strengthen legislation, and certainly this is a piece of legislation that needs to be strengthened, you know, particularly as more and more things are online and we see examples of pretty harmful and grotesque behaviours that some individuals choose to engage in when they release intimate photos and imagery without the consent of that individual.

So, we certainly do support that this bill now reverses that onus, that that individual who posts or releases information, intimate images, now has to prove that, in fact, they had the consent to be able to do so. I think that that's a positive step, and certainly we will be supporting of Bill 27.

I think it goes without saying that every Manitoban, every individual has the right not to have their intimate images distributed. It is such a violation of one's privacy and it's such a violation of that intimate act in which that image was distributed to the individual, then, that released it without the consent.

\* (16:00)

And I know some people kind of, you know, well, you shouldn't have done that—it happens. Individuals take intimate images and they share it with their partner, as is their right. There's nothing wrong with doing that.

Where it becomes something wrong is when that individual, for whatever reason—folks have broken up or whatever or, you know, whatever's happened—that individual chooses to release that image. Again, that is particularly harmful and grotesque behaviour.

And individuals that release those images, they know what they're doing. They know that they're attempting to harm in unimaginable ways and put at risk these individuals. They know what they're doing. It's calculated—it's a calculated decision to release those intimate images.

And I want to just say this. I—you know, we—I'm imagining that everybody remembers the case about Brittany Roque—I hope I'm pronouncing her last name

properly. But, in 2015, Ms. Roque had sent intimate photos to an individual by the name of Ryan Friesen, and he was a police officer with the Brandon Police Service. And, at the time, that police officer, Bryan [phonetic]—or, Ryan Friesen, was also—was in a relationship with another woman by the name of Terry Lynn Peters. And—which, again, I have no comment on any of that.

What I do know is that Ms. Peters found the images on Ryan Friesen's cell or laptop, whatever it was, and chose—made a conscious decision—to make copies of those pictures, and then to harass Ms. Roque and then ultimately made the decision to release those intimate images that she found.

And, you know, I—and then there were consequences for Ms. Roque. She was applying for a job with the Brandon police, and the leadership at the time told her not to apply, that they were pulling her application, that she couldn't apply.

And so, even though the act was against Ms. Roque in releasing these intimate images, Ms. Roque was the individual, then, that was penalized and—on top of the trauma and harm of having those images out there in the world, she was 'furner'—further penalized by not being able to apply or get the job that she wanted. And I think that is just so, so harmful; so, so hurtful.

Luckily—and, again, Ms. Roque shouldn't have had to go through this and have to do this—but, luckily, she is an incredibly strong woman—an incredibly determined and strong woman—and she filed a civil suit against Ms. Peters and—where it was proven by the judge at the time that what Ms. Peters did was done with malice. It was done with the intention to harm and embarrass. And that's just simply unacceptable.

And, certainly, the case of Ms. Roque is more recent, but certainly, that happens all the time.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

And, you know, I think that this bill goes—will help protect and strengthen that, but certainly I would actually say we even have to go even further than that. I—you know, we haven't seen much from this government as—in respect of, like, proactive actions on any type of, like, you know, public awareness campaigns about the distribution of intimate images and that you shouldn't be doing that and here's the law and here's why you shouldn't be doing it. We haven't seen any of that.

I would suggest that's something that we should be looking at in the future so that individuals know,

before they make that very calculated decision to harm by releasing intimate images, that they know what the consequences are.

And dare I say, I—you know, the consequences, you know, should be perhaps looked at as well because it is unacceptable—and let's just be honest—that predominantly, you know, we know that it is women that are victims, women and children that are victims of having intimate images distributed and released online.

And, tragically, it's children, as well, who are preyed upon and manipulated into sharing intimate photos, which is then distributed in a variety of different networks online. And we have seen across Canada children who, you know, are just children and don't have the mental or emotional capacity to deal with such harmful actions against them and their bodies; we've seen them choose to end their lives. And that is absolutely so hurtful and so traumatizing.

And so, we need to do more not only here in Manitoba but certainly across Canada. And I know that there are organizations, national organizations, that are working to protect children, and I applaud them, and I laud them for their work that they do trying to protect the most vulnerable.

But, you know, if anybody should be working on this to strengthen that legislation to protect women and children, certainly it should be legislators here, not only here in Manitoba but certainly across every jurisdiction and territory.

So, again, we do support Bill 27. It's a good start to protect, but we need to go further.

And I just, finally—as I shared earlier, I just want to acknowledge Brittany Roque. I just want to acknowledge her, and I've—I think I've spoken about her in the House one other time. But I personally think it is such an extraordinary act of courage to put all of that out there further, for further scrutiny and further commentary from people who are just horrible, in many respects, when they add further harms by commenting on this and blaming Ms. Roque.

It is extraordinarily courageous what she did. And, in many respects, she's paved the way for this legislation, and she's paved the way to protect women and girls in Manitoba by her act of courage and, really, by an act of resistance for what was done to her.

And so, you know, my hope is, is that at some point, she will see this or she will read this and that she knows that I am incredibly proud of her. I say



miigwech to her, and I'm glad that she did what she did.

And I'm sorry that she was forced and pushed to do what she had to do. Nobody should go through that. It is absolutely devastating, and I'm sorry that she had to go through it, and I lift her up today. And I lift up every single person that goes through this; it is utterly, utterly devastating to have to go through something like this. That's it.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** It's good to be able to rise today at third reading of Bill 27, The Intimate Image Protection Amendment Act, and just put a few more words on record.

Madam Speaker, there's very limited data on the non-consensual distribution of intimate images. However, we know, over the last six months, Cybertip, specifically, has seen a 100 per cent increase in reporting of intimate images.

I think this speaks a lot to the advertising that Cybertip has been doing, and I really want to commend them for that, and anything that we can be doing as legislators to continue, whether that be advertising or awareness or services towards Cybertip and other businesses that are here to help those who need the help right now, let's continue to build on that, Madam Speaker.

A recent survey of adults ages 18 to 54 discovered that 10 per cent, so one in 10 ex-partners, have actually threatened to expose intimate photos of exes online. This is very real, Madam Speaker. If you think about it, with reflection to all of us here in the Chamber, 57 MLAs, that would be two of us. And that is a high number when you bring it down to the grassroots of it all.

\* (16:10)

Nowadays, images that were not consented to be shared are shared all over many, many different platforms. We can talk about the social media platforms of Instagram and Facebook, and I know Snapchat is a dangerous one. I'm not personally on Snapchat, Madam Speaker, but I understand it's a media platform where you can send—take and send pictures and they erase after certain amount of time, which, in short, provides a platform for people to feel that this may be a fun or a good idea in any context.

And I think we just need to make sure we're doing our job, whether it be as legislators and teachers and

those who have children, as parents, to talk about the importance of how we want to conduct ourselves online. And we need to make sure that we create a safe atmosphere for people to come forward, as we're all human, Madam Speaker.

You know, I've spoken with a lot of younger people on this over the years, and I think the first time I had ever had a conversation about intimate images being passed around online was actually from a committee I sat on when I was working for the Senate, on Parliament Hill. And I was quite young at the time—I would've been 19 or 20 years old—and we had a committee where individuals came down, some of them with their parents, and they shared the experiences that they had of cyberbullying, and many of these experiences actually included intimate images being passed around.

And back then, we didn't have as many social media platforms. And while technology and advancement is such a great tool that we need all around the world, we also need to make sure we're putting up—putting structure in place to ensure that people have the services they need and protections that they need and deserve, Madam Speaker.

I'm very glad that this legislation is being debated and that it's going to be passed here in the House today, pass third reading, and I hope that we introduce more legislation along these lines.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 27, The Intimate Image Protection Amendment Act.

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

### **Bill 8—The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act**

**Madam Speaker:** I will now move to Bill 8, and I would like to put on the record that the Minister of Justice will be bringing forward bills this afternoon, on behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development (Mr. Nesbitt).

So Bill 8, The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** As you mentioned, on behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development (Mr. Nesbitt), I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), that Bill 8, The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Goertzen:** Significant words have been put on the record regarding this bill by the minister of Natural Resources and Northern Affairs; as well, I think there's been a fair bit of media coverage, I believe, on this bill as well.

We know that those who are off-road users, ATVs and other sorts of vehicles, for a great deal of time been looking for a mechanism, a bill that would ensure that they would have resources to maintain trails not just for recreation—although that's important—but also, and most importantly, for safety of those who are riding off road.

So, this bill establishes a \$25-dollar user fee—fee for the registered ORV, off-road vehicle, owners, with revenue dedicated to the ORV trail development, upkeep and rehabilitation of lands damaged by ORV use, ensuring safety for all.

So, it has both a safety component, it has a recreation component, and, of course, it then also has a rehabilitation component. The upcoming provincial trails strategy and action plan will provide a co-ordinated approach for managing Manitoba's trail network and ORV user fees contributing to key priorities.

I recognize there's been many, many advocates for this particular bill to advocate on behalf of the ORV community. It's been some time to get to this point, but I commend all those who have worked to see this bill get to this stage. I know a number of them joined, I think, in the House for the first or the second reading declaration of the bill, and I know they'll be excited to hear about its passage here this afternoon.

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I know I've spent a lot of—*[interjection]*—thank you. I've spent a lot of time talking to the actual minister responsible on this bill and trying to confirm things that were of concern to us.

Some of those concerns were that, particularly up north, there's a lot of people that still rely on trapping as a way of life that would feel somewhat hard done

by to have to pay another \$25 to carry on an already precarious lifestyle. The minister has assured me that that is not the case, that those folks are exempt from having to pay this. There's also other folks that are exempt from paying this particular fee, so I think most of my concerns with that have been addressed.

Certainly, when it comes to things like using some of this money to address safety issues for off-road use, I think that's commendable in the sense that there are way too many fatalities and accidents that do take place with particularly some of the quads—side-by-side's a little bigger, more protection, roll bars and a lot of them have doors and everything else; they're—probably cost more than what my car does—so, some of those issues. I'm glad that there's at least some mention of that in this bill that will, hopefully, go towards addressing some of those safety issues.

I guess that's one of the things we have to take a leap of faith with the government, that some of those training and safety issues will actually be addressed once the money has started to be collected. Safety on some of these trails, particularly some of the trails in the more southern regions, I guess, where people haven't been as accustomed to using some of this equipment as what a lot of people in the North have been doing it for years.

Some of the concerns, again, that we had up north were that there's people that have had traditional cabins that they've spent—maybe their grandparents cut the trail out to their cabin and they didn't want to be paying a fee to travel on a trail that they're—have been responsible for making and maintaining, and the minister has, again, assured me that that is not the case. So, I—hopefully, that is the case and that people in the North can be assured that the—things won't change for them in that regard.

When it talks about rehab, certainly, as more people take to the outdoors and more equipment such as this becomes available and the equipment becomes bigger, maintaining some of those trails and the fact that they are going to land up being made bigger and wider—I mean, I look at some of the Snoman trails and they're like superhighways through the bush now. Which is good for people that are riding their snowmobiles and it makes them safer in one sense and less safe in another, in that the machines can go wide open on these really well-groomed trails now.

So part of that, also, is the education that some of these—money that's being collected, hopefully, will go towards teaching people about the need for wearing the proper safety equipment. And we still see a lot of

people that are travelling around, particularly on quads—not as much on snowmobiles anymore—but a lot of quad operators aren't wearing helmets. And, hopefully, this education piece that the government is talking about in this bill will come to pass, and we can see an actual decline in the number of accidents—particularly the number of fatalities—that take place.

Hopefully, some of this money will be put aside—and I'm not sure what the actual lens will look like when it comes to rehab, because rehabbing these trails when they're going to be in use and growing, I don't see that happening anytime soon.

\* (16:20)

So I don't really have a lot of issues with the bill itself. It talks about a lot of things that we're not opposed to.

Some people, I know, were very concerned about having to pay this \$25 fee when they may not use the trails that have been designated as trails but they may cross some of those trails or they may use a portion of it as part of their business. But, again, I've been assured by the minister that that is not the intent of this fee and it's not the case.

And I know the member from Elmwood is more than happy to pay the additional \$25. He quite often takes his side-by-side for a drive up and down his driveway. Unfortunately, that's about as far as he can go with it because there aren't designated streets in the city of Winnipeg.

When you come to northern Manitoba, for example, there are designated streets that you could drive a quad or a side-by-side on to get from your house to the bush. And certainly, we see a lot more of that happening nowadays, so maybe that's something the member from Elmwood will advocate for at some point in time. I guess time will tell.

But I just want to not spend a lot of time talking about this because it's an important piece, certainly, for people that maintain those trails.

It's unfortunate that what we've seen from this government is a lot of privatizing services within parks and park systems that will negatively impact people and their ability to get out in the great outdoor. And it'll make it more expensive in a lot of cases, and this will be one more expense, perhaps, that will really limit people's ability to be out in nature and enjoying it.

We know that they've basically privatized at least one park and that the cost became prohibitive for a lot of people being able to use that.

We know that there's certainly things that they're contemplating that they haven't announced yet, and probably won't prior to an election because a lot of people might be upset with where they hope to go with some of their talks on how park users or people that access parklands may be impacted with some of their plans that will lead to more expense for services.

So, while they haven't said that they're going to privatize parks per se, if a lot of the services—and, certainly, trail riding within those parks is one of those services that we may see that the government turns those public trails into private entities, which will then impact people who are trying to ride their quad.

So, we always need to be wary of what the government is trying to do, even with bills that seem relatively 'innocuous', such as this one, that will have some benefits. It's trying to scope out what the bigger picture is; what's their end plan? What's their game plan down the road? So, that's one of the things that we're concerned with in this particular piece of legislation.

I really hope that this bill is something that can be positive and that can work for the majority of Manitobans that enjoy our outdoors and enjoy our parks, that this bill will be of a benefit to them. The \$25 fee won't be such a deterrent that people can't get out and enjoy.

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

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, just a few words on Bill 8, The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act.

We had presentations at committee from Mr. Wiebe, who was representing Snoman, and from Mr. Gary Hora, who was representing the All Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba.

It was apparent from both of them that the presence of these trails and these organizations made a significant difference for a lot of people during the COVID pandemic, because people could get outside and they could get on the trails, whether winter or summer. And this was a important way of getting not just outside but getting physical activity, and this—there was a substantial uptick in people using snowmobiles and in people using all-terrain vehicles as well.

So, it is proven to be a popular sport. Snoman's being going for 48 years, since 1975, and has done amazingly with currently about 13,000 kilometres of groomed

trails in the province, the longest trail system in the province and well used.

And safety is a key factor in the organization, and clearly, the use of the groomed trail has proved to be a safety measure. And so this legislation will provide important sustainability for the snowmobile trail network in Manitoba and, I think, in an ongoing way, will be an important contribution.

Mr. Hora mentioned that there are currently a number of clubs that they have, seven clubs. They have approximately 155 kilometres of designated trails that are maintained by the All-Terrain Vehicle Association of Manitoba clubs. It's an organization which is considerably younger than Snoman; it's been around only since 2009 and clearly in a growing phase, and this bill will provide an important measure of sustainability to the all terrain vehicle association.

I think this is a popular sport. I'm sure it's going to grow, and I think that this bill, which we support, it is a good step forward both in sustainability but also in the measures that are taken by the associations and the clubs to improve safety at the same time.

So, we're in full support of this bill and look forward to it passing shortly.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 8, The Off-Road Trails Safety and Maintenance Act.

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

### **Bill 13—The Wildlife Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** I will now call Bill 13, The Wildlife Amendment Act.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** On behalf of the minister of natural resources and northern affairs, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), that Bill 13, The Wildlife Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

#### ***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, this bill streamlines residency definitions for hunters and anglers, aligning them with Manitoba fishing regulations and simplifying online licence purchases. The primary change is

that the permanent residents of Canada will now qualify for Canadian resident licences instead of non-Canadian licences.

Additionally, Bill 13 removes an outdated clause prohibiting Sunday hunting, reflecting its authorization under Manitoba's hunting regulation since the 1990s.

Lastly, the bill clarifies the distinction between guiding and outfitting services in Manitoba's regulations, offering increased flexibility for the outfitting industry and their clientele.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Again, Madam Speaker, the actual minister responsible for this piece of legislation and I have had many conversations about it to try and clarify some of the issues and try and make sure that some of the things that were contemplated weren't as bad as what they initially seemed.

And I can say, Madam Speaker, that I did receive messages from several hunters who come from other jurisdictions that were concerned with some of the provisions in this piece of legislation.

\* (16:30)

Some of their concerns were—I'm not going to say valid or not valid, but their concern was based around the fact that they had, at their own personal expense, bought properties within the province of Manitoba and they liked to invite some of their friends to come up every year and go hunting with them. And they were concerned that that would not be the case.

Now, my understanding is that there is an exemption for some existing property owners, so that they can still do some of that and so hopefully that is the case, to calm those folks.

One of the issues that was raised was that it appears that the bill forces more non-resident hunters in particular to use the services of outfitters, which isn't bad for local outfitters, to help them survive in sometimes tough economic times. It was some of the concerns that were expressed to me from out-of-jurisdiction hunters that their needs weren't being met.

And, I guess, for us in the province of Manitoba and as legislators looking out for the province of Manitoba, it really is our job to make sure that various acts and regulations are what's best for Manitobans, Manitoba businesses and in this case, for Manitoba wildlife as well. We want to make sure that the laws

are there to protect our wildlife, to make sure that it's properly managed.

Now, the minister did lead me to believe that it—some of these existing operations, I guess you could call them—even though they're not legal entities, as far as being outfitters or guides—that bring family and friends north to hunt are grandfathered. We want to make sure that in the process of supporting lodge owners, outfitters, that the government isn't picking winners and losers, that all those businesses that rely on hunting and—certainly, are able to compete on equal footing and survive.

We need to make sure that a lot of these bills that get brought in don't impact Indigenous hunting rights, that don't impact Indigenous rights to access land and be able to carry on traditional ways of life. There were some concerns that that might be the case; I think this bill doesn't necessarily impact that, although I think there'll be some other members, maybe, that can speak and add any clarity to that, if they need to.

The allowance for doing away with the ban on 'sunding' hunting—Sunday hunting—my understanding, again, is that ban has pretty much been, every year, overruled or allowed an allowance for Sunday hunting. So, for a lot of people, particularly hunters, the weekend may be when they can get time off work to do things such as hunting, such as provisioning for their families.

So, recognizing that we live in a multicultural society that doesn't always have the same set of beliefs and stuff that were traditional within our colonial mentality, if someone is of a belief that they shouldn't do certain things on a certain day of the week, there's nothing in this bill that forces them to do something. It merely allows people that have different beliefs to exercise their rights to carry out, in this case, hunting on a Sunday. So, this—that particular provision really has minimal impact on anyone.

We need to just make sure that, as we see with a lot of what the government does, the shortage of conservation officers may impact this bill and the ability for the government of the day to properly manage our wildlife and make sure that any harvesting that is done is done in sustainable ways that respect the laws of the province.

And certainly we've seen, in some of the news releases that the government puts out on enforcement, that there's been a number of hunters that were trying to cross borders and had, in fact, violated any number

of hunting provisions and killed more animals than they ever should have and didn't have proper licences.

So, we know that if there's a couple that have been caught up in that, there's probably more, so we need to make sure that the government also does their job properly in ensuring that there's enough conservation officers on the ground to ensure that laws are actually being followed.

Now, we've had any number of conversations with the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development (Mr. Nesbitt) on the shortage of conservation officers, and he's told us that there are some that are in the queues that are getting trained and will be available at some point in the future.

And I think the number that he talked about probably still wasn't enough to ensure that conservation officers are allowed to make sure that they're ensuring that the provisions of not just this particular piece of legislation, but several others that are before us, the conservation officers need to make sure there's enough of them to be able to carry out their duties properly and safely and make sure that they can do that.

It's unfortunate that the government didn't prioritize making sure there was sufficient conservation officers to carry out their jobs and making sure that those conservation officers are trained and aware of, again, Indigenous hunting rights, so that they're not trampling on those rights when they should be focused on doing other parts of their job properly—so that they work with the Indigenous communities and Indigenous hunters to make sure that everyone has the best hunting experience possible. Keeping in mind that so many Indigenous communities in particular have a different custom when it comes to what they do with the animals, that they're shared amongst the community, as opposed to being every hunter for himself and just taking enough to feed himself.

And I know that, certainly, up north there was a long history, in the Sayisi Dene, of Europeans not understanding the traditional way of hunting and the traditional need of supplying enough meat to get through the winter, and it led to that whole sad story of how they were shipped from their traditional lands; the people were forced to live in Churchill, basically feeding themselves out of a garbage dump until they led themselves to Tadoule Lake.

So we need to make sure that when we, as legislators, are making laws that we recognize the importance of traditional ways of life and that we actually do the proper job of consulting with Indigenous communities,

Indigenous nations, Indigenous peoples, to make sure that the laws we're making are reflective of their traditions as well as what we think might be the right answer.

So I know the government does a really poor job of most of their consultation with those groups, and I encourage them to do a better job and to actually go out and talk to people and make sure that what they're doing is the right thing.

With those few words, Madam Speaker, I just want to make sure that the government understands that they need to monitor these changes that they've made to make sure that they are in the best interests of Manitobans, to make sure they're in the best interests of Manitoba wildlife, to make sure that they haven't done anything that's going to negatively impact that.

\* (16:40)

So, I would hope that part of the scope of implementing this particular piece of legislation will be to actually carry out the monitoring, going forward, to ensure that the proper things are in place to protect Manitobans and to provide the best experience possible for Manitoba hunters and to provide sustainable wildlife management.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, just briefly, Bill 13, The Wildlife Amendment Act, makes some relatively small changes to the residency definitions for hunters and anglers to align them with the fishing regulations and to simplify online licence purchases.

One of the changes will allow permanent residents of Canada to qualify for Canadian resident licences instead of the non-Canadian licences, as they were previously. The bill also removes an outdated clause prohibiting Sunday hunting. These are, in the scope of things, relatively small changes, and we have no problems with this bill.

It would've been nice, perhaps, to have members of the hunting community to present at the committee meeting and to give us their perspective on wildlife management in the province. But that didn't happen on this occasion; hopefully it will be next time this bill is up for amendment.

That's my comments, Madam Speaker, and let us move this forward.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 13, The Wildlife Amendment Act.

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

#### **Bill 24—The Wildfires Amendment Act**

**Madam Speaker:** I will now call Bill 24, The Wildfires Amendment Act.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** On behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development (Mr. Nesbitt), I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Johnson), that Bill 24, The Wildfires Amendment Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and now read for a third time and passed.

#### ***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Goertzen:** This bill will modernize The Wildfires Act, aligning Manitoba with other provinces, like Saskatchewan and Alberta, by providing the necessary tools and resources for officers to mitigate human-caused wildfires and protect our communities and natural resources.

I not only want to commend, of course, the Manitoba Wildfire Service officers and department staff, but I want to recognize—I think we'd be remiss to not recognize—the challenges in Alberta today with the fires that they are experiencing throughout that province. And, of course, if you leave the Legislature, and when we do later today, I think we'll smell in the air the outcome of what's happening in Alberta.

And so, I think all provinces, including Manitoba, are supporting the firefighter effort—fire-fighting effort in Alberta. And so, we want to, of course, remind everyone and to state emphatically that our thoughts are with the people of Alberta.

We are supportive of their efforts to try to get those fires under control as they protect not only property for those who are in peril of being close to the fire, but also animals and others who might be impacted by the fire. There's a lot of different things that are at risk because of the fires in Alberta, and we're very supportive of those who are working to get those fires under control, including those who are from Manitoba who are aiding in that effort as well.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I do want to commend the forest firefighters in Alberta and those from

Manitoba that have gone to Alberta to help them. The other thing that we have in common with Alberta, of course, is that the Alberta government did away with their initial attack crews that attack fires from helicopters, which has led to fires getting bigger.

And what's that go to do with us? Well, this government did away with a lot of the initial attack workers that could be in place to stop the fire from spreading before it ever got too big.

Now, in this particular piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, I've had many conversations with the actual minister responsible, and some of the concerns are that he's added a bunch of extra duties onto conservation officers when we already know that conservation officers are in short supply and that they can't be everywhere to do everything that they need to do because there isn't enough of them.

And at the same time that the minister's added extra duties onto them, he hasn't added extra pay onto them. And, in a lot of cases, the government doesn't really have a strong track record of when it comes to addressing proper 'renumecration' for things like conservation officers.

The one big concern I had with this particular piece of legislation is the doing away with the permits. People used to have to contact the government offices to find out what they needed to have in place before they could do actual burning in the area.

Now, it's up to the individual themselves to know what they can and can't do, that those requirements won't be explained to them upfront. It'll be left up to them to figure it out. And while the conservation officers and others have expanded powers to investigate after the fact, that doing it after the fact won't prevent forest fires. We maybe took the wrong path there with loosening the restrictions for permits.

I've voiced those concerns with the minister on numerous occasions. I hope that what I'm concerned about doesn't come to pass, that people will be aware of what the rules and regulations are, that the government will actually do a decent job of educating people so that they know what they need to do to have in place to prevent fires.

I hope they do. I don't have a lot of confidence in that because, as we've seen with the water bombers and the initial attack crews, the government is more concerned about saving money than they are about saving forests.

Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, a few comments on Bill 13, The Wildlife Amendment Act.

This bill makes some modest changes to The Wildlife Act. These—to The Wildfires Act. And the significant things really here are changes in appointments, updating officer designations, adding separate officer inspection investigation provisions, granting the officers the ability to issue stop-work orders and so on.

The concern here is that we have a lot of communities in the North that we need to protect, and I don't see the planning or the work with First Nations or Métis communities to make sure all communities are well protected. And I think that there should have been some effort here to incorporate approaches which would provide for better planning, better early detection of fires, better ability to attack fires early on.

\* (16:50)

If anything, under the government, there's been a reduction in the number of people locally who can address fires and—when they are small and make sure that the fires don't spread. I think that this is a really critical need and it's—can't be emphasized enough that it's much easier to put a fire out when it's small than it is when it's large.

And I think we could do with, from what I've seen, some improvements in planning and in the approaches which will allow fast response.

As the member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey) has pointed out, some of the changes in terms of the fleet—having planes which are contracted instead of having a government fleet of water bombers—that there could be delays. There could be—fleets that have gone to fires in Saskatchewan and Alberta are not as available to Manitoba.

We think that there's some real concerns here but it—we will have to wait and see how things play out, 'til we have a fire season which, this year, has started very aggressively in Alberta, which is now affecting significant parts of northern Saskatchewan.

And we hope that we don't have intensive fires in Manitoba and that the wildfire services in our province are up to the job to make sure that fires are caught very early and put out quickly so that we don't have the kind of large-scale fires that we've had in the past, which will threaten communities, which will cause large-scale evacuations. Those are the things that I think are particularly concerning.

With those few words, Madam Speaker, I'll look forward to the changes here but I really think that there could have been much more done in this area than was accomplished in this legislation.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 24, The Wildfires Amendment Act.

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

### **Bill 31—The Animal Care Amendment Act (2)**

**Madam Speaker:** I will now call Bill 31, the animal care amendment act.

**Hon. Derek Johnson (Minister of Agriculture):** I move, seconded by Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations, that Bill 31, The Animal Care Amendment Act (2), reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, seconded by the honourable member for Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations, that Bill 31, The Animal Care Amendment Act (2), reported from the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

**Mr. Johnson:** This bill will transform The Animal Care Act to make some operational changes to the Animal Care Appeal Board as an independent body.

The bill provides a timed limit for an appeal may be extended by the Animal Care Appeal Board. It establishes time limits and processes for filing animal-care appeals. As the Legislative Assembly has heard, the appeal board may also dismiss a matter without a hearing in certain circumstances.

The bill makes administrative amendments regarding notices of appeal filed with the appeal board. It modernizes the appeal board process by allowing appeals to be submitted and heard by electronic means. The bill also provides for the collection of costs under the act.

The proposed animal care amendment act will improve Animal Care Appeal Board operations to hear and decide appeals in a more flexible, effective and timely manner.

The bill establishes conditions under—the Animal Care Appeal Board can dismiss an appeal.

The amendments will all serve Manitobans who come into contact with The Animal Care Act.

As sponsoring minister, I move that Bill 31 be concurred in at third reading today and passed on to royal assent. I recommend that this bill be adopted and come into force on royal assent.

Thank you, Ms.—Madam Speaker.

**MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I am pleased to put a couple of words on the record—*[interjection]*—thank you, thank you very much—in respect of Bill 31.

Madam Speaker, treating animals ethically is very important, and there must be repercussions for those that do not. Bill 31 would change how the animal-care board hears and 'processees'—or, processes appeals, to make the process more flexible. Under Bill 31, the time limit for an appeal may be extended by the board; an appeal board may also dismiss a matter without hearing certain circumstances.

Madam Speaker, I'm going to keep my remarks super, super tight, here. I just want to say this—*[interjection]* Thank you, thank you.

I just want to say this: I think that Manitoba still has a long way to go to ensure that animals in our province are treated ethically and are taken care of in a way—we know that Manitoba is actually, again, across Canada, has some of the largest numbers of dogs in northern and rural communities that do not have homes and that are feral. And that we do have a number of front-line rescues that go into communities doing spay-and-neuter clinics and actually often put up their own money and remortgage their house.

And we have a lot of work to do in this province to safeguard animals.

Miigwech.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, a few comments on this bill.

Animals are clearly important, and it's important that we look after them well and care for them well. The—we heard presentations from Brenda *[phonetic]*—or, Brenna Mahoney with the Keystone Agricultural Producers, and Cam Dahl with the Manitoba Pork Council about the changes which have been brought forward. They are certainly very supportive.

I might've expected other presenters to come forward, but we did not hear other presenters, and we



look forward to vigorously monitoring how things are working and whether this legislation achieves the goals of—that are desirable in terms of protecting animals. And—but also at the same time allowing people in agriculture to work and to provide food for Manitobans and for elsewhere.

We respect that the hog industry and agriculture industries are very important for our province, and—but want to make sure that we're all working together to achieve some strong future for animals and for Manitoba.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 31, The Animal Care Amendment Act (2).

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

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Is it the will of the members to call it 5 p.m.?

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

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 16, 2023

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Gerrard	2416

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
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