

**Fourth 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
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
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	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>	Fort Whyte	
<i>Vacant</i>	Thompson	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

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

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

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 15—The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act**

**Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the members—honourable member of—Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage (Mr. Smith), that Bill 15, The drivers and vehicles amendment and highway traffic amendment, be now read for the first time.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, seconded by the honourable Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage, that Bill 15, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Piwniuk:** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to introduce Bill 15, the drivers and vehicles amendment and the highway traffic amendment act.

This bill amends The Highway Traffic Act and The Drivers and Vehicles Act to modernize and clarify requirements for the Medical Review Committee and to allow the Licence Suspension Appeal Board to hear appeals from commercial vehicle operators.

These changes will improve service delivery to citizens who access driver-related appeal services. This bill also modernizes the public submits—police reports to motor vehicle collisions.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Bill 16—The Financial Administration Amendment Act**

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** I move, seconded by the Minister responsible for Natural Resources and Northern Development, that

Bill 16, The Financial Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la gestion des finances publiques, be now read a first time.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, this bill makes important amendments to The Financial Administration Act. These amendments increase transparency and accountability of the government by clearly specifying the borrowing authority limits for the provincial government and for Manitoba Hydro.

The bill also adds further transparency and accountability by increasing the information that must be included in the Estimates of expenditure and its supplement. By taking this action, Manitoba adopts the approach taken by the federal government and other provinces that have moved to replace annual loan act appropriations with borrowing authority limits.

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

**Bill 222—The Pay Transparency Act**

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from St. Vital, that Bill 222, The Pay Transparency Act; Loi sur la transparence salariale, be now—be read for a first time.

**Motion presented.**

**MLA Marcelino:** Madam Speaker, I'm honoured, on International Women's Day, to introduce Bill 222, The Pay Transparency Act.

This bill would be a step towards stopping 'gender,' disability and racial discrimination in the workplace. It would require private employers to post rates of pay on job postings and file a public pay audit report detailing the position, voluntarily disclose self-identifying information and the rate of pay to help close pay gaps that exist because of gender, race and disabilities.

On International Women's Day, this is a step towards pay equity for all and I look forward to unanimous support of this bill.

Thank you.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Families and Status of Women, and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

#### International Women's Day

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** I rise today to recognize International Women's Day on behalf of our first female Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) of Manitoba.

International Women's Day is a time to celebrate how far we've come as women and to acknowledge how much farther we have left to go.

Just outside this Chamber, there is a tribute to trailblazers of the first 100 years of women's suffrage in Manitoba. When members leave the House today, I encourage them to pay special attention to the names and faces of the women who grace that hall. They include Edith Rogers, a proud Métis woman who in 1920 became the first female elected to Manitoba's Legislative Assembly. They include Thelma Forbes, the first woman to serve as a Speaker of this House. They include Rosemary Vodrey, the first woman to serve as the minister of Justice and Attorney General.

And, Madam Speaker, of course, the face that stands out to me the most is that of Bonnie Mitchelson, Manitoba's longest serving female MLA. Bonnie was the first woman to lead the Manitoba Progressive Conservative Party, and she's been a tireless advocate for newcomers in our province, helping pioneer Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program.

Madam Speaker, I note that your picture is on the wall outside this Chamber, as well, recognizing your work as the founder of the Nellie McClung Foundation that was so instrumental in installing a monument to the Famous Five right here on our Legislative grounds.

I would also like to highlight that the member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin) is proudly recognized as the first Indigenous woman elected as MLA in this Chamber. As well, we have our wonderful

Clerk, Patricia Chaychuk, who is recognized as the first woman to serve as Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

On International Women's Day, we should take the opportunity to acknowledge all those women who came before us and who created the conditions for success. But we must also acknowledge how much more we have left to do in encouraging more women to live out their dreams and achieve their destiny.

Madam Speaker, I hear from many young women who feel called to contribute in new ways, by running politically or pursuing careers in business, law, medicine or many other fields. These women are often worried about the toll their career will take on their personal lives and families. They worry about juggling their career with the demands of being a wife, a daughter, a sister, a mother.

I want to send a message to all of them today: There is no better time to be an ambitious woman than right now, in 2022. You have the access to a network of support and advice from all those women who blazed the trail before you, and there is no ceiling on the success that you can strive for.

But as we continue to work to encourage women in these ambitions, we must also eradicate those things that continue to hold women back in society. Madam Speaker, it is a sad reality that I must highlight, on this International Women's Day, the fact that family violence has been exacerbated these last two years in this pandemic. We must remain vigilant in providing women the supports they need to escape abusive relationships and achieve their destinies. That includes educating men on how to be better allies to the women in their lives and to call out abusive behaviour wherever and whenever they see it.

Madam Speaker, we must also never forget that there are women around the world who are fighting for basic rights and freedoms that we all take for granted. Far too many girls are growing up in countries that deprive them of the right to an education and the right to hold political office. So, even as we celebrate our success and strive to improve the lives of Canadian women, we must never give up on the fight for equality for women around the world.

Madam Speaker, I stand here today to recognize International Women's Day. I'm here because of the trailblazers who came before me, and I am so proud to serve under this administration with our first female Premier.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** I rise today in honour of International Women's Day. Although women in Manitoba have made great strides for equality and accomplished extraordinary things that challenged stereotypes, the reality is that even in 2022 women across Canada still do not receive the same recognition and benefits as men.

\* (13:40)

According to the Canadian Women's Foundation, Canada has the eighth highest pay gap. A comparison of full-time workers shows that women make on average 75 cents for every dollar that a man makes. The pay gap widens for newcomer women earning 71 cents to the dollar, racialized women earning 67 cents on the dollar and Indigenous women earning 65 cents to the dollar. The gap is even wider for women living with a disability: 54 cents to the dollar. For every 100 men that are promoted and hired to manager, only 72 women are promoted and hired.

It is also important to point out that women are overrepresented in low-wage sectors such as the care sector, which is highly feminized. Women make up the majority of workers in child care, home care, long-term care and community assisted living. Now, this work is vital and valuable, yet the majority of workers are making mostly minimum wage and receive very low benefits.

We know that many women still face systemic barriers to economic advancement and it's time for change. Having women in leadership positions should become the norm, not the exception.

Our caucus and I stand together with women today to say there is still much more work to be done. The fight for equality is far from over, and I'm excited to see what we can all accomplish together.

Thank you.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Madam Speaker, I seek leave to speak in response to the minister's statement.

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

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I had prepared a statement to share with the House, however, after this morning's incredibly disappointing Chamber decorum, I've decided to share some different remarks.

Today is International Women's Day, and this morning we debated a resolution recognizing the historic role women have played in politics. Madam

Speaker, this is a day you would like to think that members of this House could unanimously get behind and support, and even if for whatever reason members couldn't, that's why we have a democracy. I think it's fair to expect a certain level of respect, and this was not demonstrated this morning.

Madam Speaker, this morning, while debating the historic role women have played in this House, I was hearing hurtful and disrespectful comments being made, so I started to make a note of what I was hearing. I also want to be clear that this is not pointed at any party or even any individual because we all stood by as bystanders as it happened, so we're all guilty of it.

Madam Speaker, here's a bit of what I heard: (1) a male shouting to a female who was reading her speech about being a woman in politics: who wrote that for you? And, later in her speech, when she was saying she's proud to be a female in this Leg., another individual shouted: that is not a victory.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, three individuals having a full and loud conversation about how there are no feminists across the way. This is disgusting and completely anti-feminist, and by taking this blaming stance, they are actually obstructing any systemic change.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, we had a male member bluntly accuse—thankfully, he retracted it—several members in these Chambers as mean girls.

Lastly, Madam Speaker, we had members mocking other members on International Women's Day as they sang the song Stand By Your Man.

Madam Speaker, I'm blown away at this level of disrespect in these chambers, and I'm ashamed, because Manitobans deserve better.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

**Alexa Scott**

**Hon. Alan Lagimodiere (Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations):** I stand before you today on International Women's Day to celebrate one of Canada's amazing women athletes who displayed her skills and talents on the world stage at the 2022 Olympic Games held in Beijing, China.

Here, she competed against the best of the best in the world. I'm speaking of Manitoba's very own Alexa Scott from Clandeboye, Manitoba. While watching the 2020 Olympics, Alexa's dreams emerged. She hung up her figure skates to try speed skating.

With hard work, dedication, training and support of her parents, Malcolm and Judy Scott, Alexa would go on to represent Canada at the ISU world junior championships in 2018, 2019, and 2020. In 2020, Alexa competed in her first senior international event, winning a silver medal.

When the COVID-19 pandemic emerged, plans were put on hold. However, Alexa did not give up on her dreams. She continued to focus on training. At one point, Alexa recalls training at an outdoor facility, bringing back fond memories of her home club in Selkirk, Manitoba.

Alexa's goal in 2021 was to make the World Cup circuit to compete and learn from the best. A year of pandemic training would lead to Alexa being named to the World Cup circuit in October of 2021. Alexa exceeded her goal by earning a spot on the 2022 Canadian Winter Olympic team. Alexa attributes her success to support and encouragement from her parents, her coach, Tyler William *[phonetic]* Derraugh and the entire Interlake community.

At the age of 20, Alexa was among one of the youngest athletes to compete in the Winter Olympics where she finished 12th in the finals of the 1,000-metre speed skating event.

Madam Speaker, I would ask all my colleagues to join me in celebrating Alexa Scott in her success and in sending her best wishes on her path to the 2026 Olympics.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine)? No?

The honourable member for Notre Dame.

#### **John Lloyd Barrion**

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** On February 15th, our Filipino community experienced a devastating loss when a young man, John Lloyd Barrion, was killed during a robbery while working the night shift at a Notre Dame beer vendor and hotel.

John Lloyd graduated from Tec Voc High School last year and just celebrated his 19th birthday. He was responsible and very sensitive to his family's needs: walking his younger siblings to school, saving for culinary school, paying for household bills, food and clothing for his younger siblings. The Barrions are a loving family.

Whenever John Lloyd would work the closing shift, a parent would always wake up at 3 a.m. to drive him home. John Lloyd leaves behind his beloved

parents, Maria and Manuel, siblings John Emmanuel, John Christian, John Paul and Maria Angela.

Amidst the family's intense grief, there is a yearning for justice. Unsafe working conditions at Manitoba Liquor Marts led MGEU to demand security measures to protect employees. We ask that the Province work proactively with employers in this sector to ensure that workers have access to security measures that can protect lives.

Our Filipino community is standing united for safer communities. We have learned the brutal way that the safety of our children in this place that we've immigrated to is not a given. It's not enough to work hard, study hard, go to church, stay out of trouble. We live in the poorest urban neighbourhoods in all of Canada. Crushing deprivation like this leads to low school graduation rates, poor mental health and addictions outcomes and higher incidence of violence.

As his brother implored to the crowd gathered at the prayer vigil after John Lloyd's death: a safer community for everyone is one where everyone's basic needs can be met, where young people and anyone who needs it can access mental health and addictions supports.

The Barrion family would like to thank the community for their prayers, all their kindness and the donations that were given to them at this difficult time.

Thank you.

#### **Shea Fust**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Today, on International Women's Day, I am pleased to recognize the very special person who is an amazing coach, leader and mentor. Shea Fust is a business owner who has her degree in kinesiology, is a certified personal trainer, nutrition coach, former bodybuilder and university soccer player.

Shea Fust operates Shea Fust Fitness and has deep passion for helping others and loves to see her clients thrive on a multitude of levels. She has helped hundreds of people transform their lives through fitness, nutrition and her positive energy.

In 2021, the Portage and district Chamber of Commerce honoured Shea Fust for the Outstanding Business of the Year Award.

When the pandemic arrived in Manitoba, Shea Fust rolled with the punches and adapted her business to offer virtual fitness classes with outstanding

success. The flexible combination of live and recorded classes made it possible for participants to feel connected, interacting with others and staying active.

Shea kept her business running through the lockdowns, expanding her network and access to reach people from across Canada and beyond.

Shea Fust's program encompasses all fitness levels, with clients ranging in age from 17 to 70. Each workout is made with the intention of creating a fun, dynamic and inclusive experience for all. Shea's motto: If It Doesn't Challenge You, It Won't Change You.

I ask my colleagues to join me to congratulate Shea Fust for her many accomplishments and commitment to improving the mental health and wellness of others.

\* (13:50)

### International Women's Day

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Today, on international woman's day, it's a critical day for intersectional feminists to honour women, celebrate our achievements and recommit to the fight for women's equality, including campaigning for women most impacted by armed conflict and climate change, often as the result of the actions of men in positions of power.

The UN Refugee Agency states that women and children make up more than 50 per cent of any refugee population and cites that 82.4 million people worldwide are forcibly displaced, with the greatest numbers coming from Syria, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar. Two million refugees have now been displaced from Ukraine, with two-thirds being women and children.

Refugee women and girls are not inherently vulnerable, but rather the situation that they find themselves creates a vulnerable environment, with millions enduring the horrors of rape, sexual abuse, lack of access to reproductive health services and vastly over-represented as victims of gender-based violence.

Women also constitute the majority of the world's poor, particularly women in the southern hemisphere and where women depend more on their local climate to survive and thrive.

The 'intern-governmental' panel on climate change released its latest climate report. It is important that human activity is impacting on the right of

women and children to live and thrive. This is why it's important for women and girls to be at the forefront of creating transformative change to protect our planet.

I celebrate intersectional feminists who are not only stepping up to sit at decision-making tables, but are actively working to dismantle the institutions of sexism, misogyny, racism, white supremacy and patriarchy.

Happy International Women's Day.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, earlier today, I joined others at a breakfast celebrating International Women's Day organized jointly by the Afghanistan task force group, Manitoba, and Manitobans for Human Rights. The focus was on women in Afghanistan.

Both organizations are working with Hospitality House to support Afghan refugees to come to Winnipeg and to live with family members already here. The stories we heard were difficult.

Currently, in Afghanistan, the situation is horrible with women's rights being taken away. Most young women aren't allowed to go to school. Women are not allowed to work, even with training as doctors, teachers, midwives and judges.

Women are being persecuted. Women are not safe. Many are fleeing or trying to flee Afghanistan.

Kobra Arianta, a member of the Afghan community in Winnipeg, she has relatives in Afghanistan who need and want to escape and come to Winnipeg. She described these horrors.

Ariana Yaftali, a leader in Winnipeg's Afghan community, talked of her important work to help new immigrants from Afghanistan settle in our city.

Karin Gordon of hospitality house described the critical work of helping refugees who come to Winnipeg to transition to life here. She emphasized the contribution that refugees make to life in Manitoba.

Lloyd Axworthy provided a global perspective of the refugee situation. He stressed the importance of improving the infrastructure for welcoming refugees to Canada. The current infrastructure is too slow and needs major improvements and better funding.

We have many refugees, especially recently from Afghanistan and Ukraine. On International Women's Day, it is important we're aware of the situation of women globally and that we work together to improve

the situation of women here in Canada and in the rest of the world.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech. Dyakuyu.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### International Women's Day Personal Acknowledgements

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Happy International Women's Day, Madam Speaker.

I want to take this opportunity to celebrate the many amazing women in my life and, of course, to women around the world. I'm very lucky to be surrounded by many strong women: colleagues, staff that I work with, and, of course, my wonderful family. And so today is an opportunity to pay tribute to them. I also want to acknowledge yourself, the Clerk and, of course, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), who is the first woman to occupy that seat.

I do have a question about ICU capacity, but I wanted to begin with those words.

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Premier):** Thank you for those—the words. I appreciate the Leader of the Opposition putting those comments on the record.

Some impassioned speeches this morning in terms of International Women's Day. I, too, want to congratulate all women across Manitoba for their great service to our communities, and certainly to those involved in politics. I know it certainly can be a struggle for a woman in politics, and I appreciate the work that you do in—day in and day out to accomplish what you have accomplished.

And together we can do more great work here in Manitoba. I think there is more work ahead of us, as we recognize women in Manitoba. I think we, as government and legislators, have to work together to achieve more.

Thank you.

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

#### Transfer of ICU Patients to Ontario Government Knowledge of Transfer Plans

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The Premier continues to mislead Manitobans about when she knew about the plan to move ICU patients out of province. The CEO of Shared Health met with Thunder Bay's hospitals about our ICUs on May 13. The Premier was briefed by him

on the same day. Five days later, the Premier misled the House about ICUs, and yesterday the Premier denied misleading Manitobans.

But the Premier is parsing words. What we are pointing out is that the Premier was aware of the plan to move patients out of our ICUs and to Ontario.

When—which day—did the Premier find out about the plan to move ICU patients out of province?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Premier):** Well, that joyous occasion was pretty short-lived.

Madam Speaker, you know, clearly the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), and all ministers of health, are facing challenges. This pandemic has brought considerable difficult times for Manitoba families. We have always acted in the best interests of patients and patient safety. We've taken directions from clinical leaders, and clinical leaders are facing those tough decisions, as well.

And certainly we were forced to make some changes that we didn't want to make as government, in terms of moving people to other locations for patient care. But let's just rest assured, patient care is priority 1. It has been and always will be.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** I will repeat: On which day did the Premier find out about the plan to move ICU patients out of Manitoba?

**Mr. Cullen:** I think the member opposite will recognize these are tough decisions to make. We, as government, rely on the clinical leads to make these decisions.

Clearly, during the pandemic, there was a really rapidly evolving situation. We had a spike—certainly, a spike in the patients that appeared both in hospital and in the ICU rooms, and as a result of that decisions have to be made on a fairly quick basis.

Again, patient safety is first and foremost. Patient safety has been, in the past, during the pandemic, and will continue to be, first and foremost. Patient safety is No. 1 for our government.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** I'll repeat my question again.

On which day did the Premier find out about the plan to move ICU patients out of Manitoba?



**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** It is my understanding, and the members opposite may want to check on social media and other platforms, that Shared Health has just moments ago put out a statement which clarifies the baseless accusations of the opposition.

\* (14:00)

But I thank the member opposite for allowing me the opportunity to discuss the amazing vaccine implementation program that was done right here in our province to keep Manitobans safe.

Today, Madam Speaker, 87.7 per cent of the population 18 and over: fully immunized, Manitoba Speaker; 5- to 11-year-olds: 36.4 per cent; 12 to 17: 80.1; and for those 50 and over: 90.9 per cent.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, Madam Speaker, I'm not sure if there's an issue with my microphone here, so I'll go ahead and ask the question again, one more time.

When did the Premier—on which day did the Premier find out about the plan to move ICU patients out of Manitoba?

**Ms. Gordon:** If the member opposite would like to continue down this line of questioning, I will continue.

This is completely false, Madam Speaker. The opposition accusation is completely groundless, and it is them who are misleading Manitobans on such a critical issue as the care of Manitobans during a difficult pandemic.

Just yesterday, the Premier stated that she was completely unaware of the potential transfers and that has been corroborated by Shared Health.

Will the member opposite stand up in this House today on International Women's Day and apologize to our Premier and all the women in this Chamber?

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Let's review, Madam Speaker.

So, even though the CEO of Shared Health knew on May 13th about ICU patient transfers, even though the Premier had two briefings on this, even though Lanette Siragusa said publicly there was a plan to send

patients away on May 7th and May 17th, the Premier would have us believe that she only find out—found out about the plan for ICU patients after the first patient left the province.

That defies belief. It means either the Premier misled Manitobans or she was not aware of what was happening in the Department of Health under her watch during the most critical period of the pandemic.

So I will ask again: On which day did the Premier find out about the plan to send ICU patients out of province?

**Ms. Gordon:** Madam Speaker, the Premier was doing a difficult job during a difficult time. Just yesterday, the Premier stood in this House and stated she was completely unaware of the potential for transfers when she spoke in the House on May 17th.

And, you know, this is the problem with the members opposite digging up calendars and making stories out of things that they're not aware of. They need to do their research, Madam Speaker, but, of course, they don't because it's much easier—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —to stand in the House and try to connect the dots—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —where there is no connection.

They don't know how to run a health system and, Madam Speaker, the Health ministers that have sat in the chair that I'm in now will tell them that it is a difficult job and we do the very best on behalf of—

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

#### **Community Corrections—Gladue Reports Court Report Writers—Staff Levels**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** In our criminal justice system, judges must consider the historical and individual circumstances of Indigenous peoples before passing sentences on them, which is meant to ensure a fair sentence.

A Gladue report is written—is a written document that interviews families, elders and community leadership sharing an individual's whole story. A Gladue report seeks to document the impact that colonization has and continues to have on Indigenous peoples in conflict with the law.

In Manitoba, both court report writers and probation officers are charged with writing Gladue reports. Many court reporter writers have not been hired back after COVID.

Why?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Madam Speaker, the member will know that in Manitoba, like in every jurisdiction in Canada, there have been challenges when it comes to—continue to keep the courts operating, and it has resulted in some courts having to be closed, has resulted in some more electronic hearings having to happen.

Maybe those are some lessons that'll continue on, but I know in speaking with Justice officials and the judiciary, they would like to see things more normalized, Madam Speaker, even if there are benefits.

When it comes to a Gladue report, it is certainly something that is important, it is something that's part of our law, something that is seen as important by the Supreme Court of Canada, and seen as important by the Province of Manitoba as well.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Gladue reports are entrenched in the Criminal Code of Canada, meaning that they're integral to the sentencing processes of the courts and integral to ensuring that Indigenous peoples get a fair sentence.

Community Corrections was underspent by \$3 million last year, despite the essential nature of their work. This includes laying off court report writers who write Gladue reports and transferring said responsibilities to probation officers. Many court writers have not been hired back, and I've heard from many, many people working in the justice system raising the alarm Indigenous peoples' rights and access to Gladue reports are in jeopardy.

Will the minister rehire these court writer—court report writers immediately?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Madam Speaker, Gladue reports are important when it comes to the issue of sentencing. They have been important for a long time. It's been a fixture within the Canadian system for a long time as well, and I think that all those in the legal system understand why they are important and how they've made a difference.

That includes in Manitoba as well, Madam Speaker. That practice continues. It needs to continue. It is legislated to continue and it will continue.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** There's no formal standard across Canada for how Gladue reports are to be written, but it gives opportunity for us to consider the important aspects of our justice system and how they're being implemented.

We're concerned about the timely access to Gladue reports and their overall quality. We know that writing Gladue reports should be understood as a very specialized skill designed to present the whole picture under colonization of an Indigenous person in conflict with the law.

Community Corrections was underspent by \$3 million again last year.

Will the minister commit to staffing up and improving Gladue reporting today?

**Mr. Goertzen:** We certainly support Gladue reports and the basis by which they were determined that they were necessary within the Canadian legal system many years ago.

Member opposite refers to the fact that there aren't standardizations when it comes to the Gladue reports, but there are principles, Madam Speaker, and that is because it weaves together a story of an individual offender. It is based on interviews with the family. It's sometimes based on interviews with the community. It's based on individual experiences. And so that is probably part of the reason why there aren't standardized forms.

It is supposed to be individual, Madam Speaker. It is supposed to tell the context of an offender and how it is that their individual background may have impacted them.

### **Pay Transparency Legislation Request for Support for Bill 222**

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** Madam Speaker, everyone deserves equal pay for work of equal value.

Public reporting of positions and pay by the private sector is an important step to help stop pay discrimination in the workplace. Conducting pay audits will make sure employers identify any pay gaps that exist because of gender, race and even disabilities. Bill 222 will do exactly these things.

Will the minister support pay transparency legislation today?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank the member for this very important question on equal pay.

\* (14:10)

And before I answer that, I would like to just ask all members of this Chamber to pause and look around and notice how few women there are in this Chamber. We are predominantly a Chamber of men. Four to one, actually. And I think we've all come to this place at some point in our political careers with a desire to make this a more equitable Chamber, to bring more women into these seats that we all occupy.

And I would just argue, Madam Speaker, respectfully, on International Women's Day, if we could all remember that calling women names, calling us mean girls, is not a way to enhance women participation in this Chamber.

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

**MLA Marcelino:** As life gets more expensive for working families, we can't ignore gender discrimination on the pay scale. Women make on average 75 cents for every dollar a man makes—75 cents. But, unfortunately, it gets even worse. That pay gap widens with newcomer women earning 71 cents for every dollar a man makes; for Indigenous women, only 65 cents on the dollar.

It's shameful, Madam Speaker, and it's something, as legislators, we should work to end.

Will the minister support pay transparency legislation to help close the pay gap today?

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services):** I appreciate the comments from my colleague earlier about the participation of women in this Legislature, and I want to reflect on my career in the past, where I was a president of the chamber of commerce.

And we had a young woman, Lori Dangerfield, was the vice-president. Another past president and I encouraged her to move on to the chair—to the presidency of the chamber of commerce, and we worked hard to make sure that she understood that we would gain so much from her participation.

And finally she said, you know, you don't understand, as a man. You just move ahead and work

and get things done and it kind of happens. But for me, I have to think what are the barriers to me.

So, I learned a lot from Ms. Dangerfield.

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

**MLA Marcelino:** Manitoba was a leader in pay equity. Pay equity legislation was passed by Manitoba in the 1980s. It revealed women were paid 20 cents less than men in similar jobs, and that was wrong.

Now, today, it's time to be a leader again and address pay discrimination that exists in society, because everyone deserves a fair paycheque.

On International Women's Day, will the minister commit to supporting pay transparency legislation today?

**Ms. Squires:** I appreciate the member opposite bringing up this important issue.

We do agree that all women deserve equal pay, and that is one of the reasons why our government has been working hard to ensure that women-led sectors, predominant women in sectors—are receiving a pay increase. And that's why I was very pleased to stand with our government when we announced pay increases for all those working in the child-care sector, which is predominantly led by women, and to make it more inclusive and accessible.

That is just one of the things that our government is doing to make the workplaces better and more equitable for women in the province of Manitoba.

### **Menstrual Product Availability Request to Supply Schools**

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** Again, on International Women's Day, the NDP has to stand in this House and ask the PC government to end period poverty for children and youth.

Last year, a minister inexplicably offered them USB data blockers, but it's no surprise to anyone that some students are still missing school because of their period. Ontario, Nova Scotia, BC and PEI have all launched programs.

Will the Manitoba government finally follow suit? Will the Minister of Education commit to making menstrual products free and accessible in all Manitoba schools?

**Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** I'd like to thank the

member opposite for the question, because it is an important topic when we start talking about accessibility to menstrual products for our Manitoba students, Madam Speaker.

That is why, just a few weeks ago, we launched the poverty and education task force and, actually, we've made a subcommittee within that poverty and education task force to strictly, specifically look at accessibility to menstrual products.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Ms. Naylor:** It's just sad that a year later we have to get up on the same issue.

A poverty task force today? We've been talking about how children need to be fed and people need menstrual products for years. In 2019, the minister for the Status of Women said the Province was considering making tampons and pads free and available to students in grades 7 to 12. That was three years ago.

So, it's three years later. There's been no movement on this issue. There's a poverty task force perhaps being struck and students are taking it upon themselves to stock washrooms with free pads and tampons for their peers—don't have to miss school because the government is failing them.

Will the Minister of Education commit to making menstrual products—

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

**Mr. Ewasko:** I didn't quite hear a question there, Madam Speaker, but I do want to talk about the good work of our poverty and education task force that we actually did launch a few weeks ago.

So, it's unfortunate that even the member across the way didn't—was aware of that. But within that poverty and education task force, we actually put in a subcommittee so that they're looking at accessibility to menstrual products.

And I know first-hand, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —that, working in the schools and the school divisions, you know, the—partnering with local businesses, with local organizations to make sure that accessibility for menstrual products for young Manitoba students is possible, Madam Speaker.

So, thank you for that.

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

**Ms. Naylor:** I'd like to offer my services to save the government a whole lot of money and let you know that children are hungry and sometimes they bleed, and one third of Canadians who menstruate under the age of 25 struggle to afford menstrual products. The period poverty gap is growing and this government is still refusing to do anything about it.

Students should not have to miss school because they can't afford menstrual products. They've written you petitions. They've put on events. They've spoken and we've spoken on their behalf in this House. I don't understand why you can't hear it.

Will the Minister of Education eliminate this barrier and commit to making menstrual products free in all Manitoba schools today?

**Mr. Ewasko:** We on this side of the House have done more in six years to reducing the barriers to education for all genders, Madam Speaker, than the NDP did over 17 years.

Matter of fact—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —I'm proud of the—this government listening to—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

The honourable Minister of Education.

**Mr. Ewasko:** On International Women's Day, it's too bad that there's so many on the opposite benches that are being so disrespectful today, Madam Speaker.

We know that—listened to the K-to-12 commis-  
sion—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —and we struck—we know that through our—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Ewasko:** —education partners and stakeholders across this great province of ours, Madam Speaker, wanted us to do something in regards to poverty within education. That's why we launched the poverty and education task force.

More to come, Madam Speaker.

Thank you.

### **Seniors Advocate Request to Establish**

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Madam Speaker, we know the pandemic has taken a heavy toll on seniors in this province, and the Stefanson government's response has only made things worse. Action is needed to ensure our seniors are protected.

After the tragic loss of life at private personal-care homes, now is the time to establish a seniors advocate and for comprehensive reform of the systems that care for our seniors.

Will the minister commit today to the establishment of a seniors advocate?

**Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I do appreciate my first question as a minister in the House and, Madam Speaker, may I say how proud I am to be responsible for this new portfolio: Seniors and Long-Term Care.

\* (14:20)

Our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) recognized that seniors does need advocacy and determined that the best way to have that advocacy is by actually having a Cabinet minister at the Cabinet table.

Madam Speaker, I look forward to continuing to advocate on behalf of seniors and, certainly, deal with the challenges they have long term.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Madam Speaker, we all know that COVID-19 has taken a toll on our seniors in care homes, and it's tragic. It's exposed the strain under which these centres were operating. Unfortunately, many centres didn't have proper staffing before the pandemic.

This government's cut has hurt our seniors. Tragically, the result of their mismanagement is that lives were lost.

So, I'll ask the minister, will they support our call for a seniors advocate today?

**Mr. Johnston:** Our government continues to take the initiative to focus on seniors' needs. That's a commitment that our Premier has made, and that's a commitment that I will make to the House long term.

In regards to dealing with seniors' issues, I can tell you, Madam Speaker, that I will be bringing forward the recommendations of the Stevenson report very shortly. Our government will be adopting all 17 recommendations.

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Madam Speaker, too many Manitobans have lost their loved ones at personal-care homes, and the deadliest outcomes occurred at for-profit facilities.

Now, we're all deeply saddened by the events that occurred at Maples care home and at Parkview personal-care home. A former Conservative Health minister believed that these deaths were unavoidable and that he questioned the motivations of the health staff that were fighting on behalf of their patients.

We can do better. We need to amplify the voices of those advocating for seniors and the health of Manitobans, not try to stifle them.

Will the minister take action today and support our call for a seniors advocate?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for Union Station—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —for the question.

The tragic loss of life of our seniors is very sad and our government is taking steps to ensure that does not happen again, and that is why we have committed as a government to implementing all 17 recommendations from the Dr. Stevenson report.

I also want to highlight that in Budget 2021 our government invests over \$653 million in personal-care homes, and that's more than the NDP ever spent, Madam Speaker. And we will continue to ensure our seniors and our vulnerable populations are looked after in this province.

### **Donations to Ukrainian Canadian Congress Matching Provincial Program**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Today is International Women's Day. In 1920, the first woman MLA, Edith Rogers, was elected. And though it took a little over a century, we can all celebrate that Manitoba, at last, does have a woman Premier.

This morning, my fellow Manitoba Liberal MLAs and I joined a breakfast for Manitobans for Human Rights, where women from Afghanistan spoke of the

horrific oppression that is returning under the Taliban, as well as the many millions of refugees leaving Ukraine who are women and girls, many mothers and—with children, who are fleeing for their lives.

Ukraine still needs more humanitarian aid, Madam Speaker. Alberta is committing over \$11 million. We're not Alberta, but we can and must do more than \$150,000.

We ask again, will this government stand with Ukraine by committing to dollar-for-dollar matching of donations from Manitobans to the U-C-C-C-U-F.

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Finance):** I thank the member for the question.

We are all concerned about the continuing situation in Ukraine and with the aggression of the Russian government. We are responding, of course, first of all with a \$150,000 donation immediately to the Ukrainian congress. But, of course, as we have said very clearly and our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) has said, that is only a starting point.

I can update this Legislature and indicate that there has been a committee struck of deputy ministers and leadership across this province that is interacting with federal officials, with international officials, with aid organizations. We're bringing to the table education, immigration, finance of various departments and expertise, including emergency measures, and we will continue to provide leadership and we will continue to respond.

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

#### **Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program Request to Increase Applications from Ukraine**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I believe the Premier has said that they will do everything they can, but we would like to see the receipts.

Over 2 million people have fled Ukraine, and our province has had the ability to do much more than they currently are to support refugees here in Manitoba. Immigration is federal, but settlement is provincial.

On March 2, the Premier said the province will expedite 100 provincial nominee applicants, which seems like a drop in the bucket. We believe Manitoba as a province can and—do much more.

Will the Province commit to raising the number from 100 applicants to at least 1,000 and commit to meaningful funding to assist local agencies with

ramping up capacity for resettlement services so we can respond to the crisis right now?

**Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration):** We've heard and seen of the mass exodus of the Ukrainian people because of Putin's defiance on democracy. We've also seen the mass exodus of international students from Nigeria, Egypt, India and other nations trying to leave the Ukraine—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Reyes:** —that are experiencing having issues when trying to enter those neighbouring countries.

Manitoba will work with the federal government to help immigrate individuals and families here regardless of where they come from and welcome them like, you know, how we can here in friendly Manitoba.

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

#### **Women Refugees Support Services**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** This morning, I attended an International Women's Day event hosted by the Afghanistan task force group, Manitoba, and Manitobans for Human Rights. At this event, I learned more about what is happening on the front lines in Afghanistan and some of the dire situations women have been forced into.

What is this government doing here in Manitoba to specifically help women refugees fleeing violence?

**Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration):** We know that it's very important that when we welcome future Manitobans—immigrants, refugees, anyone that comes from around the world to our province—that we have a key investment into our newcomer integration support programs.

So that's going to be very important moving forward, because, whether they come from India, Afghanistan, the Ukraine, we know that labour is going to be a crucial—immigration is going to be a crucial enabler for the economy, and we'll ensure that we work together with these newcomer support programs.

Thank you.

### WPS Victim Services Extension of Pilot Program

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** Over the last year, our government has been running a pilot program in conjunction with the Winnipeg Police Service. That program provides better access to victim services staff as early as possible. I've been very encouraged to hear about the success of this program, especially for women in our province.

So does the minister agree that this program is a success, and does he intend on renewing it?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Madam Speaker, while the member for Radisson was being heckled by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) on his question, I want to commend the member for Radisson for being a strong advocate for the extension of this program. And it's because of his advocacy that I can announce today that we have extended the pilot project between the Winnipeg Police Service and the Department of Justice.

I know the Leader of the Official Opposition doesn't care about these sort of programs, but I can explain it to him. We have two justice officials who are embedded in the Winnipeg Police Service at headquarters, who, when they get calls that are domestic related but maybe don't relate to a criminal matter, those individuals can provide service and give a direction to the Winnipeg police and those who need victim services. More than 600 calls have been served.

I want to thank the member for Radisson. Because of his hard work and advocacy, this program has been extended.

### Minimum Wage Request for Increase

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** I know a lot of working mothers and working women. None that I know would forget to claim \$31 million worth of real estate. In fact, they're all struggling because of this government and their lack of wanting to increase 'mimumum' wages. In fact, they only gave 'mimumum'—gave those mothers and working women 5 cents, Madam Speaker.

\* (14:30)

Will this government ever listen to working women in this province and actually give them a living wage?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** While the members opposite choose to disparage women on this International Women's Day, on this side of the House, we want to take a moment to highlight some of the accomplishments of our first woman Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) in this province.

For example, this first woman Premier, she brought in the reduction of child-care fees that have never been seen in this province before that will help a lot of women get back to work. She also brought in presumptive cancer legislation for firefighters, which will really help women who are in the firefighting field and, of course, if they have the female reproductive cancers, that would be covered under this 'presumptiative' legislation. She also brought in an Immigration Advisory Council and—prioritizing immigration reform.

Madam Speaker, I could go on about what our government and our first female Premier has done for women in—

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

The honourable member for Point Douglas, on a supplementary question.

**Mrs. Smith:** For years, this government has been nickeling and diming working mothers and working women, but then the PCs decided to actually keep that dime.

The last increase to 'mimumum' wage was a mere, lousy 5 cents. The cost of housing has gone up, the cost of food has gone through the roof, the cost of gas is way up. Working mothers and working women need a break. They need a living wage, Madam Speaker.

Why is this government standing in the way?

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services):** I thank the member for the question, and I'm thrilled to serve under the auspices of our female Premier, the first in Manitoba. It's a great job that they do here.

So, in Manitoba, we have a predictable increase, that's linked to the cost of living, to minimum wage, unlike the members opposite, who makes it—make it political. We've also increased the minimum personal exemption, and this—totally, in all contexts, is more—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Helwer:** –beneficial to women in Manitoba than anyone else.

Don't forget that we reduced the PST, and the NDP increased it not once, but they also talked about increasing it twice. Perhaps the member opposite was party to those discussions and agreed to take even more money away from Manitobans.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** Tens of thousands of working mothers and working women make 'mimum' wage. Manitoba's 'mimum' wage is the second-last in the country, and a nickel is not going to cut it.

Fresh fruit has gone up by 8 per cent. Bread has gone up by 7 per cent. Gas to get to those 'mimum' wage—well, it costs about 50 cents more a litre.

This government is out of touch with Manitobans. Working Manitobans need a lifeline.

Will—when will this government support a living wage?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, let's not forget that the NDP wanted to shut down all manufacturing in Manitoba during the pandemic. They called for Maple Leaf to be shut down, throwing thousands of Manitobans out of work, Madam Speaker.

They wanted to shut down the entire economy, creating ruin and devastation for thousands of employees in Manitoba. They planned to destroy and devastate our economy, all the while they collected their guaranteed paycheques from home. The New Devastation Party. There're no lessons from members opposite, Madam Speaker.

#### **Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act Request for Government Support**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I've introduced Bill 203, the abortion protest buffer zone, now, in this Chamber four times, and in the last four years Manitobans could have been protected while trying to access abortion services. But instead, all of the members opposite have stood up and voted against this important legislation.

Manitobans and health-care providers deserve to be protected from harassment, intimidation and persuasion.

Will the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) get up today and support in creating a buffer zone?

Miigwech.

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** On this side of the House, we believe that all Manitobans should access health care free of intimidation and bullying.

And in closing, on this International Women's Day I'd like to wish all the women in this Chamber and in the province a happy International Women's Day.

And at 5 o'clock, I'd like to ask anybody who's able to join me and many other members of this Legislature to the Clan Mothers Healing Village walk at The Forks; 5 o'clock, hope to see you there.

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

### **PETITIONS**

#### **Foot-Care Services**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

(4) The northern regional health authority—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** –N-R-H-A, previously provided essential medical foot-care services to seniors and those living with diabetes until 2019, then subsequently cut the program after the last two nurses filling those positions retired.

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

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

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

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



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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by Melissa Spence, Joe Roque, Louise Baker and many other Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Further petitions?

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

### **Cochlear Implant Program**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

People who suffer hearing loss due to aging, illness, employment or accident not only lose the ability to communicate effectively with friends, relatives or colleagues; they also can experience unemployment, social isolation and struggles with mental health.

A cochlear implant is a life-threatening electronic device that allows deaf people to receive and process sounds and speech, and also can partially restore hearing in people who have severe hearing loss and who do not benefit from conventional hearing aids. A processor behind the ear captures and processes sound signals which are transmitted to a receiver implanted into the skull that relays the information to the inner ear.

\* (14:40)

The technology has been available since 1989 through the Central Speech and Hearing Clinic founded in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Surgical Hearing Implant program began implanting patients in the fall of 2011 and marked the completion of 250 cochlear implant surgeries in Manitoba in the summer of 2018. The program has implanted about 60 devices since the summer of 2018, as it is only able to implant about 40 to 45 devices per year.

There are no upfront costs to Manitoba residents who proceed with cochlear implant surgery, as Manitoba Health covers the surgical procedure, internal implant and the first external sound processor. Newfoundland and Manitoba have the highest estimated implantation costs of all provinces.

Alberta has one of the best programs with Alberta aids for daily living, and their cost share means the patient pays only approximately \$500 out of pocket. Assistive Devices Program in Ontario covers 75 per cent of the cost, up to a maximum amount of \$5,444, for a cochlear implant replacement speech

processor. The BC Adult Cochlear Implant Program offers subsidized replacements to aging sound processors through the Sound Processor Replacement program. This provincially funded program is available to those cochlear implant recipients whose sound processors have reached six to seven years of age.

The cochlear implant is a lifelong commitment. However, as the technology changes over time, parts and software become no longer functional or available. The cost of upgrading a cochlear implant in Manitoba of approximately \$11,000 is much more expensive than in other provinces, as adult patients are responsible for the upgrade costs of their sound processor.

In Manitoba, pediatric patients under 18 years of age are eligible for funding assistance through the Cochlear Implant Speech Processor Replacement Program, which provides up to 80 per cent of the replacement costs associated with a device upgrade.

It is unreasonable that this technology is inaccessible to many citizens of Manitoba who must choose between hearing and deafness due to financial constraints because the costs of maintaining the equipment are prohibitive for low-income earners or those on a fixed income, such as old age pension or Employment and Income Assistance.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to provide financing for upgrades to the cochlear implant covered under medicare, or provide funding assistance through the Cochlear Implant Speech Processor Replacement Program to assist with the replacement costs associated with a device upgrade.

Signed by Jason Gobeil, Ray Inglis, Sharon Richardson and many, many other Manitobans.

### **Abortion Services**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba women, girls, two-spirit, genderqueer, non-binary and trans persons deserve to be safe and supported when accessing abortion services.

(2) Limited access to effective and safe abortion services contributes to detrimental outcomes and

consequences for those seeking an abortion, as an estimated 25 million unsafe abortions occur worldwide each year.

(3) The provincial government's reckless health cuts have created inequity within the health-care system whereby access to the abortion pill, Mifegymiso, and surgical abortions are less accessible for northern and rural individuals than individuals in southern Manitoba, as they face travel barriers to access the handful of non-urban health-care professionals who are trained to provide medical abortions.

(4) For over five years, and over the administration of three failed Health ministers, the provincial government operated under the pretense that reproductive health was not the responsibility of the Ministry of Health and Seniors Care and shifted responsibility to a secretariat with no policy, program or financial authority within the health-care system.

(5) For over four years, the provincial government has refused to support bill 200, The Safe Access to Abortion Services Act, which will ensure the safety of Manitoba women, girls, two-spirit, genderqueer, non-binary and trans persons accessing abortion services, and the staff who provide such services, by establishing buffer zones for anti-choice Manitobans around clinics.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately ensure effective and safe access to abortion services for individuals, regardless of where they reside in Manitoba, and to ensure that buffer zones are immediately legislated.

Signed by many Manitobans.

### **Foot-Care Services**

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by many Manitobans.

#### **Diagnostic Testing Accessibility**

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

(5) COVID-19 emergency rules have resulted in long outdoor lineups, putting vulnerable residents at

further risk in extreme weather, be it hot or cold. Moreover, these long lineups have resulted in longer wait times for services and poorer service in general.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

#### **Lead in Soils**

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

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) In December of 2019, the provincial government's commissioned report on lead concentrations in soil in Winnipeg was completed.

(2) The report found that 10 neighbourhoods had concerning levels of lead concentration in their soil, including Centennial, Daniel McIntyre, Glenelm-Chalmers, north Point Douglas, River Osborne, Sargent Park, St. Boniface, the West End, Weston and Wolseley-Minto.

(3) In particular, the predicted blood lead levels for children in north Point Douglas, Weston and Daniel McIntyre were above the level of concern.

\* (14:50)

(4) The Weston Elementary School field has been forced to close down many times because of concerns of lead in soil and the provincial government's inaction to improve the situation.

(5) Lead exposure especially affects children aged seven years and under, as their nervous system is still developing.

(6) The effects of lead exposure are irreversible and include impacts on learning, behaviour and intelligence.

(7) For adults, long-term lead exposure can contribute to high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney problems and reproductive effects.

(8) The provincial government currently has no comprehensive plan in place to deal with lead in soil, nor is there a broad advertising campaign educating residents on how they can reduce their risks of lead exposure.

(9) Instead, people in these areas continue to garden and work in the soil and children continue to play in the dirt, often without any knowledge of the associated risks.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to take action to reduce people's exposure to lead in Winnipeg, and to implement the recommendations proposed by the provincial government's independent review, including the creation of an action plan for the western neighbour–Weston neighbourhood, developing a lead awareness communications and outreach program, requisitioning a more in-depth study, and creating a tracking program for those tested for blood lead levels so that medical professionals can follow up with them.

This has been signed by Godfrey J. Araboy, Raymond A. Araboy, Rose Fabro and many other Manitobans.

### Health-Care Coverage

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to 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.

(2) 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 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, dependant children of temporary residents and undocumented residents.

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

(3) To urge the Minister of Health and Seniors Care to inform all health-care institutions and providers of expanded coverage for those without 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 protect the safety of residents with precarious immigration status and ensure that they can access health care without jeopardizing their ability to remain in Canada.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

### Eating Disorders Awareness Week

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

An estimated 1 million people suffer from eating disorders in Canada.

Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses affecting one's physical, psychological and social function and have the highest mortality rate—mortality rate of any mental illness.

The development and treatment of eating disorders are influenced by the social determinants of health, including food and income security, access to housing, health care and mental health supports.

It is important to share the diverse experiences of people with eating disorders across all ages, genders and identities, including Indigenous, Black and racialized people; queer and gender-diverse people; people with disabilities; people with chronic illness; and people with co-occurring mental health conditions or addictions.

It is necessary to increase awareness and education about the impact of those living with, or affected by, eating disorders in order to dispel dangerous stereotypes and myths about these illnesses.

Setting aside one week each year to focus attention on eating disorders will heighten public understanding, increase awareness of culturally relevant resources and supports for those impacted by eating disorders and encourage Manitobans to develop healthier relationships with their own bodies.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support a declaration that the first week in February of each year be known as eating disorders awareness week.

This has been signed by Jolene Schnerch, Shauna Thompson, Carrie Gingras and many other Manitobans.

### Foot-Care Services

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This was signed by many, many Manitobans.

### Road Closures

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba Infrastructure has undertaken the closure of all farm-access roads along the North Perimeter Highway, forcing rural residents to drive up to six miles out of their way to leave or return to their property.

(2) The provincial government's own consultations showed that closing the access of some of these roads, including Sturgeon Road, was an emerging concern to residents and businesses—business owners, yet the North Perimeter plan does nothing to address this issue.

(3) Residents and business owners were assured that their concerns about access closures, including safety issues cited by engineers, would be taken into account and that access at Sturgeon Road would be maintained. However, weeks later, the median was nonetheless torn up, leaving local residents and businesses scrambling.

(4) Closing all access to the Perimeter puts more people in danger, as it emboldens speeders and forces farmers to take large equipment into heavy traffic, putting road users at risk.

\* (15:00)

(5) Local traffic, commuter traffic, school buses, emergency vehicles and commercial traffic, including up to 200 gravel trucks per day from the Lilyfield Quarry, will all be expected to merge and travel out of their way in order to cross the Perimeter, causing increased traffic and longer response times to emergencies.

(6) Small businesses located along the Perimeter and Sturgeon Road are expecting to lose business, as customers will give up on finding a way onto their premises.

(7) Residents, business owners and those who use the roads have been left behind by the provincial government's refusal to listen to their concerns and that closures will only result in worsened safety and major inconveniences for users of the North Perimeter.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Infrastructure to leave residents access at the Perimeter Highway at least every two miles along its length, especially at intersections such as Sturgeon Road, which are vital to local businesses; and

(2) To urge the Minister of Infrastructure to listen to the needs and the opinions of the local residents and business owners took the time to complete the Perimeter safety survey while working with engineers and technicians to ensure their concerns are addressed.

This petition, Madam Speaker, is signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

*(Continued)*

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### House Business

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** On government business, pursuant to rule 33(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 put forward by the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler). The title of the resolution is Reducing Barriers for Ukrainians Seeking Refuge.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that, pursuant to rule 33(7), it has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot, and the title of the resolution is reducing barriers for Ukrainian seeking refuge.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Could you please call this afternoon for debate Bill 5, Bill 4, Bill 12 and Bill 9.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider the following bills this afternoon: second reading of Bill 5, debate on second reading of Bill 4, second reading of Bill 12 and second reading of Bill 9.

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 5—The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act

**Madam Speaker:** I will therefore call second reading Bill 5, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, that Bill 5, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Bill 5, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act, recognizes the polar bear as a provincial—official provincial emblem to recognize the important role that the polar bear currently plays internationally and as a symbol of Manitoba.

*Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Northern Manitoba is known internationally for its polar bears. Tourists come from around the globe—and I know that the pandemic over the last couple of years has disrupted that and there's been a return to international tourists to Churchill more recently—have come to Churchill to see and to be amazed by the natural beauty of the community, the surrounding area and, of course, the polar bear.

Recognizing the polar bear as an official symbol of Manitoba helps build on our province's brand as the polar bear capital of the world and a must-see, one-of-a-kind tourism attraction and for visitors of all ages. This is particularly relevant as tourism begins to recover from the detrimental impacts on the industry due to COVID-19 and the pandemic.

Manitoba's tourism industry is a key contributor to the provincial economy and polar bears represent significant draw to tourists across Canada and across the world.

Manitoba has already made significant investments to protect polar bears and their natural habitat with the creation of the polar bear protection area, as well as providing significant financial support for the creation of a Polar Bear Conservation Centre at Assiniboine Park Zoo. Of course, the well-known, internationally renowned Assiniboine Park Zoo. And many improvements under our government, and I would say under the previous government, as well. Everybody recognizes how important the zoo is to Manitoba.

The polar bear will become the second official mammalian emblem of Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker. In 2014, the North American plains bison was officially recognized as a mammal emblem, and this is important because there—we'll have, then, a mammal that is largely symbolically recognized with the North, and one that is more recognized with southern Manitoba.

In addition to the polar bear and plains bison, Manitoba currently recognizes the great grey owl, the pickerel, white spruce, prairie crocus, big bluestem grass, Newdale soil and the mosasaur as official natural emblems.

Members of the Chamber and, I hope, all members of the public will be able to see them soon as this building starts to reopen again for tours, will notice that there are statues that have been put into place in the building and the enclaves within the building, that for 101 years have been empty.

Now, in the original designs of this building, those spaces were earmarked for statues, although it's not entirely sure what type of statues were going to go into those places within the building. But they stood empty because, as a lot of things that happens in government, I understand as they were building this particular building, they ran out of money and they never put in the statues in those locations.

So, Manitoba 150, as part of their work in celebrating the 150th anniversary of Manitoba, saw fit with—after discussions with others, to put into those long, empty spaces in this building statues of our natural emblems in Manitoba.

And so some have already gone into place. I know the mosasaur is there, and the great grey owl is also—was the first one that was put into place. Beautiful artwork, Manitoba artwork, Brunet Monuments in Saskatchewan have done the moulding, but those are Manitoba artists who've designed the statues, and the base is also a Manitoba artist. And I'm always amazed, when you look at that base, it looks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, like it's been there for 101 years.

There was some degree of concern when we approved this project. What would it look like? Because we all have such a connection to this building, and we understand how beautiful it is, and any time you make a change to it, you know, you're really messing with history in some ways. But I'm really, really glad how it turned out, and I think that all members—and I've heard from other members of the Assembly how beautiful they believe the statues are.

The polar bear has long been associated with Manitoba, which is home to one of the largest known maternity denning areas located in Wapusk National Park on the shores of Hudson Bay. The polar bears and the town of Churchill are globally famous and a tourist attraction known, of course, as the polar bear capital of the world. Dennis Fast, who is a constituent of mine, a former teacher—not of mine, but a teacher within the Hanover School Division—has become a world-renowned artist of nature, and some of his polar bear pictures from Churchill have also become internationally known and famous.

I was fortunate in the fall of last year to be able to visit Churchill. I visited with the chief of protocol for Manitoba, the consul generals of the United States, Iceland, India and the United Kingdom. And it was common, at one point, for MLAs to bring diplomats up to Churchill. I know that the town of Churchill very much appreciates it. And it allows those diplomats,

then, of course, to go back to their own individual countries and promote Churchill as a tourist attraction.

And while this is about polar bears, and we're talking about polar bears, Churchill is very much expanding their tourism operation. The northern lights tours are a big part of what they do, and, of course, the beluga whale season in the summer—significant part of the tourism destination.

So, polar bears is part of the tourist attraction of Churchill, but I wouldn't want to leave the impression that it is the only tourist attraction. They continue to expand the seasons in which they are drawing tourists into Churchill.

I had the pleasure—and I would say it was a pleasure, and I wasn't sure how I'd feel about it. But to take the train from Thompson to Churchill—it's a relatively slow moving train, but I think that every Manitoba should do it. You know, it's cheap—it was \$50, I think, to take the train and, you know, I was amazed as we started off.

\* (15:10)

After about 45 minutes, the train stopped and I wasn't—I looked out the window to see which community we were stopping at and it wasn't any community at all. And one of the people informed me that it's a flag stop; somebody just flags down the train and the train stops and then the person gets on the train. It might be a hunter or somebody else from a nearby area, and it's just, you know, it's almost like a bus and that was a really, really unique experience, and I loved it. I really enjoyed it. I think that every Manitoban, if they get the opportunity, should not only visit Churchill, but if they have they opportunity to take the train, it is a unique Manitoba experience.

So, Madam—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is brought forward, of course, as a non-partisan bill. I think we all appreciate the polar bear as a symbol of Manitoba. When we do school tours in this building—and, hopefully, we can start to do them again soon—I often ask the students, what to them is the most recognizable symbol of Manitoba, and, you know, more than half of them usually say the polar bear. It has just become, by its own sort of organic nature, become a symbol of Manitoba.

So this codifies and makes it official, but I think it makes official what many Manitobans and those around the world already believe. So I suspect that this bill will get unanimous support in the Chamber and I look forward to its passage and all of us being able to celebrate it together.

## Questions

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister and by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I am also really happy to celebrate polar bears, but I'm wondering if this government will use this occasion to commit to policies that will lead Manitoba to achieve Paris climate accord and IPCC recommendations and targets which would actually help protect our polar bear habitats and population.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I thank my friend across the way for the question.

There are always opportunities to have those types of discussions and I anticipated that there might be questions about, well, is there going to be more money for this or more money for that.

And when I talked to Manitobans about this bill and recognizing the polar bear as an official symbol, you'd be surprised that the first question isn't, well, is there more money? They sometimes just go, that's a really good idea and we support that. It doesn't mean there can't be discussions about those other things at different times, but that is not what this specific bill is about.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** The polar bear is clearly an iconic symbol of Manitoba and this bill is some—certainly some positive features. But one of the questions here is that the predictions are that the polar bears may vanish from Manitoba by the end of the century if there's no plan to make sure that they stay in Manitoba.

What is the minister's plan for making sure that we have polar bears for a long, long time into the future?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bill doesn't presume to solve every problem in the world. It doesn't presume to solve climate change and it doesn't presume to solve the diminishment of the number of polar bears. But the member is right. It is a



challenge and it is a problem, and climate change plays into that.

And I know that there are many organizations like the international polar bear association and others who brought forward initiatives in trying to ensure that the polar bear is with us for a very, very long time. That isn't specific what this bill is about, but by promoting the polar bear, I think it does bring awareness and might, in fact, in a tertiary way, help that cause.

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** While I appreciate the member opposite for introducing this bill, when we talk about polar bears we talk about nature and its creativity.

I would like to ask this: Why were regional vehicle permits for polar bear tourism given out against the advice of the government's own analysis and without the input of the local community, Indigenous community or environmental organizations?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think that the member opposite, his question is a bridge too far and a bridge by about 100,000 miles, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I'm not trying to say that he doesn't have a right to ask questions that are important to him or to those he may be representing on that particular question. This bill is specifically about making the polar bear a symbol of Manitoba, one of the emblems. It is not about solving climate change; it is not about ending world hunger; it, sadly, will not bring peace to the world, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It will not solve all the problems of the world. But it is important to recognize that it is an important emblem of Manitoba.

**Ms. Naylor:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, well, this government's consistent. They want to make—they want to recognize the importance of women without making society better for women and they want to recognize the importance of polar bears without making the world better for polar bears.

So, my next question is: Why did this PC administration abandon plans for a polar bear park after championing it, even after taking office in 2016?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I think the member opposite, while her question might come from the right place in terms of her heart, I think she misses some of the importance of recognition and what recognition can do.

Recognizing the polar bear as a symbol of Manitoba can have lots of benefits in and of itself. It brings publicity; it can bring attention, maybe, to some of the issues that the member opposite is trying

to raise, and I think I understand that this is politics; she's trying to make other political points. But I think she also knows that simply the recognition will have benefits that we might not always be able to see initially, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now I might be wrong. She might vote against this bill. But I suspect she won't because she also knows that this can have positive effects for—

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** I'm a little leery of the minister bringing in a bill to make a symbol of Manitoba a polar bear, which is maybe going extinct in Manitoba without even a plan to make sure that it stays here for a long time.

And I would urge the minister to work with his minister who's responsible, which I think is the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Johnson), to make sure that there is a long-term plan.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I don't disagree with the point. I would have to point out, of course, though, that the mosasaur is a symbol of Manitoba and it is extinct, and we're not going to try—or we might try to revive the Mosasaur in some way. Maybe that member opposite—that's his goal, but clearly I think all of us have a vested interest and want to see plans—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Goertzen:** —and this government and other governments have brought forward plans when it comes to ensuring that nature is preserved, the polar bear being one of those. I absolutely think it's an important idea to bring forward ideas when it comes to polar bear preservation, as this and other governments have, but we can't disqualify the mosasaur from being a symbol, as the member opposite seems to want to do.

**Mr. Brar:** As expressed by the member opposite, I understand that this bill talks about emblems and symbols. But I'm also pretty sure it doesn't just talk about just symbols. When we talk about symbols that has some significance that why we're talking about symbols, because we care about polar bears; we care about the environment.

So I would ask: One of the main recommendations of the Tourism Carrying Capacity Review of the Churchill WMA is that the government try to resolve conflicts between different tourist operators.

Can this government address what steps it has taken to address local conflicts over polar bear conservation and tourism or if they have not taken any, why—

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

**Mr. Goertzen:** The member opposite said in his question that he's pretty sure that the bill doesn't just talk about polar bears as a symbol, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would encourage him to read the bill because that is exactly all that it speaks about.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Are there any further questions?

**Ms. Naylor:** The minister is correct. I would definitely be in support of this bill because I think it is important to recognize symbols that are important to us. I know that this has meaning.

I also know that a hundred years from now, when children or anyone are—is looking at that emblem, they're going to say, what animal was that, because polar bears are expected to go extinct by the end of the century.

So will this government take steps to commit to creating a polar bear park which will help to protect the species and investing in mitigating climate change?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm glad that the member opposite has indicated she'll support the bill.

I think that what she's done—and I really do appreciate her saying that. I think she indicates by that support that she recognizes that there is value, not just symbolic value, though, of course, this bill brings symbolism to the polar bear being a symbol of Manitoba; but that it can have other positive benefits, that it can encourage others to do research. It can encourage others to have interest. It can, of course, continue to ensure that the government, all governments, see the polar bear is an important part of Manitoba and Canada, and the world.

So I appreciate the fact that she's indicated her support. I think by doing so, she recognizes the various ways this bill can be beneficial. And the things that she's—

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

**Mr. Brar:** I appreciate the member opposite and I appreciate this bill as well, but this is an opportunity to talk a bit more about it.

What's the government's response to Indigenous leaders like Chief Morris Beardy of Fox Lake Cree Nation who said, in response to new vehicle permits, that there was no consultation with our resource management board or our community that shares these traditional lands. Indigenous communities must be part of decisions that affect our territories and our communities must be part of opportunities to promote and expand tourism in the North.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I'm sure that in his next question the member will try to draw the relationship between creating a provincial symbol and the question that he asked, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because relevance is important in this House.

But I do appreciate he indicated at the beginning of his question that he does support the bill, and I think he, like his colleagues, support the bill because they see that it is something that can have other benefits under other than symbolism to the province of Manitoba, and that it can lead to things that are tangible when it comes to the polar bear. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't recognize the polar bear as a symbol of Manitoba.

So I appreciate him offering his support to the bill.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, my question to the minister is this, last year—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** —the Fox Lake First Nation was not consulted.

Did the minister consult the First Nations whose traditional territory is the territory of the polar bears before bringing in this bill?

**Mr. Goertzen:** I've certainly had discussions with First Nations. But on this bill I specifically consulted with the Inuit Association, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because, of course, their close connection to many of the areas where the polar bear would be considered a natural habitat for.

**Ms. Naylor:** I can appreciate the value of looking at a polar bear on an emblem and I can appreciate the value of visiting polar bears at the zoo, but I would like to know what this government will do to ensure that polar bears can continue to exist in their habitat 10, 50, 100 years from now.

What is the investment and how can you make sense of honouring polar bears in this way without making that investment?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, I know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when the former NDP government brought in symbols and emblems in the House—and they did at times, and I don't believe we ever opposed it—they didn't bring it in as a money bill with all sorts of money attached to the value of the emblem. I mean, that is not what this act, let alone this bill, is intended to do. She can go back and look at history and see that that's not what her former colleagues did.

But that doesn't mean that the—bringing in a new symbol doesn't lead to those sorts of discussions, or doesn't bring more focus or highlight more attention on it. But this bill doesn't in the same way that the bills that her colleagues under the NDP didn't either, in the past.

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

Are there any further questions?

Seeing no questions, there is a small administrative matter we need to clean up. The clerks are arranging for that as I speak. Just bear with us for a moment.

### House Business

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** This is a matter of House business, actually.

Reverting back to the announcement for next—for the—next Tuesday's private members' resolution, I read into the record, if we review the tapes, that the title of the resolution will be Reducing Barriers for Ukrainians Seeking Refuge, but I understand that the presiding officer in the Chair at that point may have read back reducing barriers for Ukraine seeking refuge. They might not have made it plural because I think the script that they were provided might not have had a plural.

So, it's simply a mistake, we want to ensure the House understands that the resolution is Reducing Barriers for Ukrainians Seeking Refuge.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be put one—will be one put forward by the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler). The

title of the resolution is Reducing Barriers for Ukrainians Seeking Refuge.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Now, back to the other business of the afternoon.

### Debate

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Seeing no further questions, the floor is open for debate on Bill 5.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** The provincial government—the PC provincial government is pretending to champion our polar bear population, but their actions consistently work against the interests of this mammal.

They scrapped plans to protect polar bear dens through the establishment of polar bear provincial park; they increased the number of vehicle permits for polar bear tourism against the advice of experts and for the benefit of one of the PC party's biggest donors; and their failure to address climate change are further harming our polar bear population every day. This government says one thing but does another. And they say they want to honour and respect Manitoba's polar bear population, but their actions show the exact opposite.

In 2013, the NDP announced plans to begin consultation for a provincial park on the Hudson Bay coastline to protect polar bear denning areas.

At the time, it was heralded by environmental groups as an excellent initiative to protect the species. The Manitoba chapter of the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society wrote at that time, with polar bears facing an uncertain future, as climate change alters their winter sea ice hunting grounds, protection of large areas of their land-based habitat will provide a greater opportunity to adapt to these changes. By far the largest park in Manitoba, if created, will serve a huge diversity of species in this northern boreal region, including caribou, Arctic fox, beluga whale and the thousands of migratory birds that flock here to breed in summer.

This is incredible news, both for wildlife as well as local communities and the province at large. As—at—as the central draw of an increasingly popular ecotourism industry in the region, polar bears are a critical component of our northern economy. If established, the park would allow the expansion of this economy while ensuring the persistence of the species and ecology it depends on.

\* (15:30)

Through a process that includes full consultation with local First Nations, we help Manitobans support this initiative as a wise path to integrating healthy environmental and economic values. And that was from an article in CPAWS, November 27th, 2013.

Back in 2016, the PCs said they were going to support the NDP's plan. The then-minister—or, they indicated it anyway. The then-minister of Sustainable Development told the press that the long-term sustainability of polar bears is important to Manitobans and definitely important to all of us, so we want to move forward with polar bear park in conjunction with First Nations people.

But since then, provincial officials have confirmed that the PCs have completely abandoned this initiative, you know, so much so, I was in a briefing last winter with the minister when we asked about the status of polar bear park. And it was obvious to me that the minister had actually never heard of it, and granted, she was new on the file, but that's how long ago they had already abandoned the plan.

It's worth noting that CPAWS continues to advocate for a polar bear park. Only last year, CPAWS Manitoba chapter executive director, Ron Thiessen, said that the park presents a sterling opportunity to protect the terrestrial habitats polar bears need to give birth and raise their young.

This government wants to designate the polar bear as one of the designated mammal emblems of Manitoba. But they're failing to address climate change, which is an existential threat to polar bears. Due to their inaction, Manitoba's greenhouse gas rates are at an all-time high and are growing faster than ever under the PC government. In fact, CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have increased by 10 per cent since the PC government took power in 2016. The rising temperatures will be particularly impactful on polar bears who rely on rapidly melting sea ice for movement.

Their plans to address climate change are a joke and an international embarrassment. No other province has adopted plans that would allow a rise in GHG emissions to still be considered meeting their goal. If the PCs were truly concerned about protecting our polar bear population they would get on track to meet the targets under the Paris climate accord, but so far they failed to do so. Instead, they've spent their time, energy and Manitobans' tax dollars fighting the federal government's carbon tax in court in a case they lost.

The PCs have also abused the federal Low Carbon Economy Leadership Fund, using it to backfill expenses through Efficiency Manitoba that already should've been funded.

They cut clean energy programs like Manitoba Hydro's hugely popular solar rebate program. They cut funding to Winnipeg Transit and mismanaged Efficiency Manitoba.

They cut funding to environmental organizations like the Green Action Centre, Climate Change Connection and the Manitoba Eco-Network.

None of these actions indicate a true desire to protect Manitoba's polar bears. This government wants to designate the polar bear as one of the designated mammal emblems of Manitoba while actively taking steps to hurt the population.

Since 1984, the Manitoba government has issued 18 tundra vehicle permits for companies to facilitate polar bear tourism in the North. This 18-permit limit was a good balance between preserving the Churchill area's ecosystem and allowing its tourism sector to remain strong.

In 2015, a report commissioned by the Province recommended maintaining the current number of allowable vehicles. However, apparently, without consultation with Churchill residents or informing them beforehand, the Province awarded two additional permits to an operation owned and operated by a former Conservative Party of Canada candidate and PC party of Manitoba donor. To the best of our knowledge, other business owners were not given the same opportunity to bid on these permits. The PC government's choice to go against expert advice to protect our polar bear population has upset three important groups: members of the business community, First Nation leaders and environmental groups.

John Gunter, a Churchill business owner, said that he is extremely disappointed in the government's actions and that—he said, I just don't understand. I'm stunned. It seems like there's two sets of rules and I'm not sure why that's the case. That was quoted on CBC in April '21.

Another business owner named Caleb Ross echoed those concerns. According to media reports, he only found out through the grapevine that the new permits were being awarded to the PC donor's company and said that it was surprising and a bit disappointing that the rest of us weren't given the option.

Chief Morris Beardy of Fox Lake Cree Nation, whose traditional lands include parts of the Churchill Wildlife Management Area, noted that his community was not consulted before this decision was made. There was no consultation with our resource management board or our community that share these traditional lands. Indigenous communities must be part of decisions that affect our territories and our communities, must be part of opportunities to promote and expand tourism in the North.

And, finally, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society said they are highly concerned that the government is departing from the area's management plan. Ron Thiessen, the Executive Director of the group's Manitoba chapter, says they've been informed that there was no scientific assessment or consultations with local communities associated with this decision that may very well pose additional challenges to this threatened species.

Long-term-time-researcher Andrew Derocher also shared his concerns about the new vehicle permits in a letter he wrote to the Province, which reads in part: Increasing the number of tundra vehicles is a change to the existing situation, and for a population of polar bears in decline and under increasing pressure from climate change, a precautionary approach is advisable.

The government wants to designate the polar bear as one of the designated mammal emblems of Manitoba, but organizations like CPAWS see that this government isn't committed to protecting polar bears and their habitat.

The Manitoba NDP position is clear. This PC government is letting down Manitoba's North, Manitoba's environment and Manitobans' polar bears. But the members opposite don't need to take our word for it. They can read the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society's 2021 report card on the Manitoba government's progress in protecting its land. The report began by noting that between 2010 and 2015, the Manitoba government designated 15 new protected areas that covered more than 20,000 square kilometres. But since 2015, the report notes, there has been little on-the-ground progress because the current Manitoba government has made little progress in expanding the provincial protected area system including in the North of the province.

In fact, between 2015 to 2020, the Manitoba government added 177 square kilometres of land. This is less than 1 per cent of what the NDP government had added in the preceding five years.

The CPAWS report also noted that the Manitoba government sent a very worrying signal about the future of Manitoba's provincial parks by commissioning an assessment to determine which parks and services could be divested, decommissioned and/or potentially privatized.

We need to encourage Manitobans and tourists to spend more time outdoors, but instead, this PC government is considering park privatization across the province while simultaneously placing our polar bear population at risk.

The CPAWS report went on to note an important reminder to this PC government as it seeks to implement their harmful environmental agenda in the North and across the province. Privatization will undermine the critical role parks play in the accessible, affordable public service at a time when parks are needed more than ever for Manitoba's well-being.

The assessment also includes exploring how to achieve greater financial stability for Manitoba's parks. This seems to ignore evidence that public investments in parks generate significant positive economic impacts, including job creation and significant savings in health-care costs.

The gap between park revenues and operating expenses is appropriately filled by Manitoba's provincial budget because the social, economic and environmental values parks hold are essential services for citizens. End quote.

\* (15:40)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, only days ago, on Monday, February 28th, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released their most dire report yet on the future of the planet, warning that if we do not take drastic action now, we will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.

No animal is more famously associated with the dangers of global warming than the polar bear. We've all seen images of polar bears stranded on melting ice. These images are not misleading. Manitoba's polar bear population is, in fact, at high risk due to global warming.

A comprehensive Royal Society review concluded that the loss of Arctic sea ice owing to climate change is the primary threat to polar bears throughout their range. Our findings support the potential for large declines in polar bear numbers. Studies show that global warming is heating the Arctic at least twice

as fast as the global average, and additionally, sea ice cover is diminishing by nearly 4 per cent per decade.

You know, I've spoken with a Canadian scientist who studies what's called pizzly bears. This used to be a rare form of bear when it was first discovered, but increasingly pizzlies are becoming more common. And a pizzly bear is the hybrid between a grizzly and a polar bear.

This isn't something that's supposed to happen in nature, and it's being caused because polar bears must journey further afield and further south to search for food. With climate change happening, grizzly bears are also coming out of their dens earlier in the spring.

And so these two types of bears that never might have met in the past are now seeing enough of each other that there is a new species of bear—bear that has developed, which is the hybrid pizzly bear, and we're going to continue to see more of this as the polar bear gradually becomes extinct. And many experts believe that will happen by the end of the century at the rate that we're going.

No polar bear will realize that they became one of Manitoba's official mammals, but they will feel the rising temperatures and the water in their lungs when they're drowning due to the lack of ice.

So if this PC government truly wanted to honour our polar bear population, it would begin by getting a serious climate-change plan in place today that would actually help our polar bears.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** And I'll pause for just a moment and say congratulations to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on your appointment, and I don't think we're allowed to reflect on the Chair. I'll just pause by saying looks great on you. You look great in the Chair.

We're speaking today about Bill 5, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and the Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act, which will designate the polar bear as an official provincial emblem.

And it does actually recognize the importance of the polar bear to Manitoba, and I'd like to thank the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) for this—probably one of the more important pieces of legislation he brought forward.

It was pointed out to me, and I'm learning a lot about the new role I have, that I'm not allowed to get

up and ask questions, and that I would say to the opposition members, they failed the Chamber. There were some very important questions that should have been asked of the Minister of Justice. Like, for instance, when did he meet his first polar bear? You know, it would have been important to note. Seeing as he brought this very important piece of legislation forward, the least we could have known is when he met his first polar bear. But evidently we're not allowed to ask questions.

**An Honourable Member:** And how long he—how long did he spend in Churchill?

**Mr. Schuler:** Yes, and how long did he spend with the polar bear, would be another question we would have liked to have asked.

But we'll move on, and this is actually a great thing that we're doing. I would like to point out to the Manitoba Legislature that, like, we do have the bison and we do have other animals that we use, but the bison, or in the United States, the buffalo, is used by many jurisdictions as a designated animal for themselves.

For those of us who have been part of the midwest legislative conference, we've been to other legislatures and we would know that.

The polar bear is very unique, and I would say if we were doing a poll to see how the polar bear does, probably one of the best things would be is using those little pins we hand out, and if you say to schools or to classrooms, what kind of a pin would you like to have, and you'd say, you know, you can have the bison or that just—you know, knock them out of the park. The Manitoba flower, you know, or there's the Manitoba tree, which is just, you know, you lay it all out for them. Or, you suggest to them that you could have a polar bear pin. You know, usually, the polar bear pin wins, and it just—like, the kids just love those. They absolutely love them.

And I would suggest that if we were doing a poll according to the amount of pins we hand out, the polar bear would definitely win the pin poll, totally. So I think this is a great step for us as a province. I understand we are going to have a polar bear statue here in the Legislature. As we all know, for those of who have been here for a while, there were all those alcoves that were supposed to have been filled with the building of the Manitoba Legislature, but was not quite completed, and now we are seeing all kinds of different statues.

And I don't know if you've noticed, but we haven't had a lot of tourists in the building, but we certainly have had other visitors and guests, even staff and MLAs, and people do stop and have a look at them. They are incredibly well done. They are a great addition to this building, and I know when tourists come by, they're going to absolutely love them. You'll see a lot of photos being taken and the fact that we're going to add the polar bear to that mix is going to be really good.

And I think the fact that we've heightened our whole polar bear population, for those of us who've been up to Churchill, which is a really interesting trip. There is the polar bear jail, where we discourage polar bears from mixing with local population. It was pointed out to us when we were up there that vehicles are discouraged to be locked in Churchill because if there is a polar bear that is coming at people, that they can quickly jump into vehicles and protect themselves. So, when polar bears do this kind of activity, yes, there are repercussions for polar bears. They are put in the polar bear jail.

And the—in Churchill, I mean, there is a thriving industry. I think the world loves to see the polar bear. There used to be this little polar bear that found his way into the Berlin Zoo and his name was Knut, K-n-u-t, and he was just the cutest little polar bear. And they had a naming exercise, and that's how he came up with his name. And he grew to full size. Unfortunately, he ended up having health complications and he passed away, and it was a very sad day because people love the polar bear. It's just such an adorable animal.

I point out to individuals that perhaps you shouldn't approach them and try to show your love and affection for them because they would probably more than not view you as dinner rather than as a friend. So, you know, we always have to be careful and mindful when we take tourists up there and they go and visit. We know they stay in their tundra buggies and are kept away from the polar bears.

So the—I would point out to this Legislature, we have that great display at the zoo here in Winnipeg, and we've had many, many tourists over the years. In fact, we had—the midwest legislative conference was here in Winnipeg, and it was an absolute hit. They had—we had a really nice dinner there, many of us were part of that. And then we had where you would walk through, and all the legislators brought their children and they threw some food in for the polar bears. And as we know, there's like a rounded cave

and it's made of glass or Plexiglas, and the polar bears would swim around. They just absolutely loved it.

And what a great way to promote Manitoba and promote tourism and also to promote the protection of a species that has been under pressure to highlight the fact that we have to protect these species, that we've got to be careful that we protect the environment that they live under. They are just an amazing animal and the fact that we can teach people about them and how they live; and they can swim for days. They—one of the most interesting things is they dry themselves by pushing themselves along on the ice and that dries their fur.

\* (15:50)

Anyway, it's just really interesting for children. And for those of you who haven't yet been to that display, it is really worth going. Every time we go, we take tourists there and people coming in from across the country or internationally. They absolutely love going to the polar bear enclosure here in Winnipeg.

And certainly, what's going on in Churchill is very important. We're pleased with the way that's being done. We thank Churchill for always being so courteous and so open to all the tourism trade that's coming in, and we know that they appreciate them as well. It certainly does put northern Manitoba on the map. It puts Churchill on the map. And we are very pleased with the way that it has rolled out.

There have been major, major investments in our polar bear population, with the kinds of enclosures we have and the protections. We also know that we are trying to ensure that polar bears no longer are part of a circus. And I know there were some polar bears that ended up in South America and they were being terribly abused. And we're trying to repatriate those, bring them back to Canada to enclosures, or at least enclosures where they are treated appropriately.

So, the fact that we're going to make them one of our official emblems is a great move. It is good for Manitoba. It's good for the people of Manitoba. We are known for it. We are the capital of the polar bear.

And I would like to once again commend the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen). I know he has worked very hard on this piece of legislation, and we know that this is, you know, one of those pieces of legislation that dominated a lot of his time. And he finally got it done and it's before this House, and I would recommend to all members, let's move it forward.

I would suggest—we had a member opposite who ended up being fairly negative in her speech. I would suggest stop stealing the polar bear's day today. This is all about the polar bears, and this is their day and we should celebrate them. We should herald the fact that they are so important as part of the ecosystem up in Churchill, and they are so important to Manitoba that we are going to recognize them.

And perhaps someday even, we will have a major significant polar bear sculpture someday. I know we're going to do one here in the Chamber, but maybe somewhere on the grounds that we could show exactly how large they are, the life size. We do have the two bison which are interesting because you actually can say to people, that is—they are life size. That is actually how big they are.

And perhaps someday, somewhere in the building, we'll have a life-size polar bear, but we will have to wait for this legislation to pass before we can have that conversation.

Thank members for this legislation. Let's get it passed and give the polar bear their day.

Thank you.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Are there any further speakers?

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** First, let me begin by saying that we support this bill, this legislation. We think that it is a worthwhile initiative for polar bears to become a mammalian emblem for Manitoba.

*Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

Polar bears are amazing mammals. They have captured our imagination. Churchill in Manitoba is one of the few places in the world where tourists come in substantial numbers to see polar bears. Our Winnipeg Zoo has a special display for polar bears where they can be swimming and living in a model polar bear environment.

A number of years ago, Robert Taylor presented to the world his iconic photos of polar bears, and they remind us of the beauty and the majesty of this bear to this day.

Yet there is, at the same time, a real threat to polar bears in our province. With global warming, it is predicted that polar bears may not survive in Manitoba by the end of this century. The polar bear in Manitoba is listed as a species which is threatened. It is threatened at least in part because the warming

climate may so change the environment along Hudson's Bay in northern Manitoba that it's no longer hospitable for polar bears. And yet, sadly, associated with this bill, there is no plan to ensure polar bears will survive in Manitoba into the next century.

It would be uncommon, to say the least, for a province or a country to name, as a symbol of its jurisdiction, an animal which would not be around for long term in our province unless there is a newly developed and innovative plan to enable polar bears to survive here.

The minister brings up the case of the mosasaur. The mosasaur, of course, is a different type of symbol, a symbol of the time many, many thousands of years ago when mosasaurs lived in Manitoba, and all we have is skeletons. This is very different from the case of the polar bear.

I have seen no exhibitions of skeletons of polar bears. People are interested in seeing the real bear and photos of the real bear. I hope the minister is not planning to display a skeleton of the polar bear like that of the mosasaur. We hope it will always be live polar bears and not a skeleton, which is the symbol—a mammal symbol of Manitoba.

The government could have done much better. The government could have provided a plan for the future of polar bears in Manitoba, but it has not. The government could have provided an updated plan for the region around Churchill. The government could have consulted with local Indigenous groups, like the Fox Lake First Nation. The government could have considered making changes, like moving the current wildlife management area to become a provincial polar bear park. But, sadly, none of these have happened or is happening.

The—a year ago, the government made changes to the use of the current wildlife management area near Churchill to issue new permits without reviews, without an open process so that various people could apply, but rather with a process which only offered two permits to a major Progressive Conservative party donor. The minister spoke of this subject being not a political subject, but, indeed, it is his government which has made it a political subject.

Sadly, the polar bear should be an unblemished, pure symbol for Manitobans, and that is how, I think, most Manitobans would consider it. And we would hope that in the future, whatever governments are present, that they will provide more open and transparent processes and make sure that there is the



wildlife studies which support the decisions which are to be made.

So, in the future—as we move to the future, we need not only to consider and support, as we are today, making polar bears a symbol, a mammal symbol of our province. We have work to do to ensure the survival of polar bears in Manitoba. We have work to do to make sure that we're symbolizing real bears and not skeletons of bears, and we have work to do in the planning that needs to be done in the future around the city of Churchill so that it will be open and transparent and fair. And if we move forward in a co-operative spirit and not in a politicized spirit, as the government has been doing.

\* (16:00)

With those words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will end my remarks. I look forward to this bill going to committee and discussions there. And I hope that it moves forward so that we will have the polar bear as a symbol of Manitoba, and hope that the real polar bear survives as well, so that the symbol and the real bear can proceed for many, many long years into the future.

Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** Are there any further speakers to Bill 5?

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 5, The Coat of Arms, Emblems and Manitoba Tartan Amendment Act.

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

#### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

##### Bill 4—The Path to Reconciliation Amendment Act

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** We will now move on to debate of second reading of Bill 4, standing in the name of the honourable member for Flin Flon, who has 26 minutes left.

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** You know, the other day, I started on this and I've kind of lost my train of thought, but—

**An Honourable Member:** Try it again.

**MLA Lindsey:** I will.

You know, this government, much like polar bears, they like to put words on the record. They like to introduce legislation that's words, but they don't want to do any substantive things to back those words up.

And, certainly, that is more than true with the reconciliation and the reconciliation act, is they're adding more words onto the paper, they're adding more words into the legislation, but their actions clearly speak louder than words.

Or, I guess I should say, their lack of actions, actually, on reconciliation. Their lack of action on recognizing the importance of Indigenous people to this province, to this country, but also recognizing the historical and ongoing systemic racism that affects those people.

You know, I have the honour and the privilege of representing quite a few Indigenous communities throughout the North. And all one has to do is go there once—just once—and if you don't come out of there with the sense that there's something seriously wrong with the world, then there's something seriously wrong with you. When you see the state of housing in those communities. When you see the state of everything in those communities.

You know, the other day I talked very briefly at a member's statement about a house fire that took the lives of three kids. And yes, there's house fires that happen outside of First Nations communities, but most of us have come to expect that there's a fire hydrant somewhere close by. But in Cross Lake, in that part of the community, there is no running water, they have to depend on a truck to bring water. Well, a truck only carries so much water.

You know, one of the things that I suggested at that point in time was something that they did in BC. A very positive and real, tangible thing that this government could do to really put those words into action on reconciliation: the simple measure of adding smoke detectors to houses in First Nation communities, and having inspectors to go and check them every now and again.

When BC did that, the number of fatalities and house fires on First Nations communities in BC went to zero—to zero. Because people knew something was wrong.

Now, imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there's 15 people living in a house that was designed for four or five people, at best. And it's not like, if something gets broken, that they can just run to the hardware

store, because there isn't one, particularly in communities like Tadoule, Brochet, Lac Brochet, Pukatawagan, where everything has to be brought in over winter roads—winter roads that the season is getting shorter and shorter and shorter every year.

So what is the government doing to address some of those issues with climate change and how it's going to negatively affect people in northern Manitoba?

Well, they're doing nothing. They're doing nothing to try and ensure that those winter roads are sustainable or that something else comes to take its place. Those are issues that we need to talk about. Those are issues that we need to address.

We need to really educate people outside of the Indigenous communities as to what life in those communities is really like. You know, when you go to those communities as an outsider, like I have, you will meet the most welcoming people that you would ever want to lay eyes on. Not once in those communities have I ever been told to get off their doorstep. They may sometimes disagree with me, but they're willing to listen and be respectful. And the very least that we could do is do the same thing: listen to what they're telling us are their issues. That's really the spirit of reconciliation: listen to what they have to say and then start acting to do something about it.

So let's talk about some of the other things that the government could do. In fact, some of them, the government has made big announcements that they're going to do. I'm talking about things like cellphone service, high-speed Internet. They've made big announcements with big numbers attached. Do you know what actually has changed in those communities in northern Manitoba? Absolutely nothing. Not one thing has changed, and when I speak to the company that got this big contract, they have no plans to do anything in northern Manitoba, not anytime soon.

So, once again, it's a big announcement that does nothing to improve the lives of Indigenous people, particularly in northern Manitoba. It's going to help some people in rural communities, which is good for them. But when can people in the North actually see some changes? Not anytime soon and probably never with this government.

What other positive things could this government have done to really honour the spirit of reconciliation? Well, we recognize that access to health care is a basic human right, unless you live in northern Manitoba. And then this government has systematically, since they got elected in 2016, done everything in their

power to deny people in northern Manitoba, to deny Indigenous people the right to health care.

They have refused to properly fund the Northern Health Region. They have refused to properly fund the Northern Patient Transportation. In fact, while they claim they've never cut that program, they've never cut the funding; that's not true either, is it?

In fact, they've gone back to the interpretation that was in place in 1995, which doesn't accurately reflect the world as it stands today. Nobody went for an MRI in 1995. Well, apparently, they're going to have a hard time going for one now, in 2022, if you live in northern Manitoba, because they've cut the amount of funding that goes towards supplying access to the basic human right of health care for particularly Indigenous people in this province.

\* (16:10)

We talked earlier about residential schools and the bodies of children that have been unaccounted for. And when this first came to light again, I'd written to ministers of this government asking them to have those conversations with, particularly, two communities that I represent, Cross Lake and Norway House, because when you talk to the leadership of those two communities, they all recognize that some of their citizens are buried in those residential school sites, but they both had different wants, needs and desires as to what should be done about that.

So, what has the government done? Well, as far as I know, nothing. They haven't talked to those communities. They haven't supplied the funding that they talked about supplying to help identify where those children may be buried. They haven't done any of that. So, again, words on a paper are completely meaningless without action to back them up. And, again, we still have not seen that action.

So, we've talked a little bit about Manitoba Hydro at various times in this Chamber. What an ideal opportunity there would be to show a spirit of reconciliation, to actually sit down with those Indigenous communities that have been so severely and negatively impacted by Manitoba Hydro dams.

And the impacts could certainly be seen in very dramatic fashion this year. Last summer, when there was a drought and Manitoba Hydro slammed the dams closed, held back as much water as they possibly could so that they would have power to supply us in the south, the levels of the waterways in the North that Indigenous people, in particular, depend on for their livelihoods was probably as low as it's ever been.

When I look at the land mass that all of a sudden appeared in places like Cross Lake—it used to be a lake—and all the negative impacts that that has—South Indian Lake, O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation, we talked to people there, and they had ideas and suggestions, they—they're not stupid. They realize that nobody's ever going to blow these power dams up and go back to the way it used to be.

But folks there suggested a simple thing as listening to what Indigenous elders had to say about weather patterns and changing how the licence would allow for these extreme fluctuations in water levels, because if we could get rid of the extreme fluctuations, they may be able to have more sustainable fishing, hunting, things that sustain their actual lives at those communities.

But this government went ahead and fined the—signed the final licence for that extreme fluctuation to be allowed because they didn't listen to folks in those Indigenous communities because they didn't care. And they can say, well, it was Brian Pallister. It was him that had us all scared into submission so we couldn't stand up and say anything. But each and every one of them supported Brian Pallister, and never once—until one of them broke ranks and said this can't continue. But it has, and it does.

You know, we asked a former minister of Indigenous northern relations—and that's one of the things that our former colleague, Danielle Adams, asked in Estimates—to try and get an answer as to what that minister actually did to assist Indigenous communities. And every question that was asked was answered with, yes, that's not my department; no, I don't look after that; no, that's got nothing to do with me.

We never did find an answer as to what that minister did other than travel around the North from time to time, and that person had some respect for—from some of those northern communities because at least they showed up and listened. They didn't act, but they at least showed up and listened. So that's really—I mean, that there's so many instances of things that we could do differently.

One of the things that took place last year was the first-ever Orange Shirt Day. So, in my home community of Flin Flon, I attended that gathering that they had. Anybody want to guess how many non-Indigenous people were there? Well, I'll tell you. There was one, and that was me, because most non-Indigenous people don't understand what residential schools were all about. They don't understand

treaties that were agreed to but not followed. They don't understand what took place between successive governments of Canada and provinces that led us to the place where we're at now, because there's nothing in an education system, up until very recently, that talked about any of that stuff.

Certainly, when I was kid going to school, there was nothing in any class that I took that ever talked about Indigenous relations, that ever talked about residential schools, that ever talked about the creation of reserves, that ever talked about treaties, that ever talked about anything to do with Indigenous people.

Now, in today's world of mass communications, the excuse that, well, we didn't know becomes less and less and less and less of a real thing because people can know, people can find out.

But, again, it's—what can a government do to put meaning to words on a paper about reconciliation? Education is one of those things that can go a long way: education for non-Indigenous people and Indigenous people, who—many of them also don't understand the full history of this country and how we landed up at the place we're at today.

But it's about education in another vein, as well, that—education funding on First Nations communities is dramatically less per student than education funding on non-Indigenous communities. So then, when people say, well, gosh, they should just get a job. And what job should they get is the question, when the education system in many of those communities is substandard.

You talk about test scores, and this government and various ministers of Education have talked about those test scores being the be-all and end-all of how education should be reviewed. It's little wonder that we have lower test scores when we have so many kids in First Nations communities that don't get the access to a proper education that kids in other communities take for granted.

\* (16:20)

So there's things that a government can do about that. There's things that a government can do about health care. Both communities—Cross Lake and Norway House—want to build hospitals and are in the process of doing that. Anybody want to guess how many provincial dollars have gone into building those facilities? None. None.

So, two of the fastest growing communities in this province—not just in the North but two of the fastest

growing communities in this province—are left to themselves and the federal government to supply proper, adequate health-care services to them. That's not reconciliation.

I could, you know, talk about a lot of different examples of actions that could've been taken, that can be taken, things like vital statistics so that Indigenous people can have their proper names on their identification, not some anglicized name that somebody once upon a time decided that they should be called Smith [*phonetic*] and Jones [*phonetic*]. The government could do that. This government could do that. Have they done it? No. But they'll put more words on a paper which become meaningless if they don't have the action there along with them.

So I'm sure there's other folks that want to get up and speak some more about reconciliation, about truth and about all these things that this bill claims to address, but, clearly, doesn't—simple things like supporting the United Nations declaration of rights of Indigenous peoples, putting meaningful action towards recognizing that and doing something with that.

We talk about resource development in northern Manitoba—actually having meaningful consultation with those communities as to what resource development—not just what it means, but how can folks in those northern Indigenous communities in particular, how can they benefit from resource extraction on their traditional lands. They have, certainly, some fears about entering into agreements because they've seen any number of times that agreements haven't been followed.

Now, I can report that the community of Norway House has entered into an agreement with a mining company so that they can get in on the ground floor.

One of the things I talked about with chief at Cross Lake when I was first running for election is, why don't First Nations people, why don't Indigenous people have their own exploration companies, have their own geologists so that they can explore the resources on their homelands without somebody else coming in and doing it, and throwing them a few crumbs. So that if the resources are going to be developed on their traditional lands, they can be the ones that reap the benefits because for so many years they've been left as being the ones to deal with the degradation that sometimes has happened. Because if folks are involved right from the start, a lot of those issues can be dealt with right from the start.

But it has to be meaningful. It can't be just lip service or words on a paper. It actually has to be consultation and not just yes, yes, we heard what you said, but we're going to do what we want. It has to be for mutual benefit and it has to recognize that sometimes the benefit is outweighed by the negative impacts that may affect those communities. If we recognize that—if we recognize that in the consultation process, then you can address it before it becomes an issue.

So, the business of this bill, The Path to Reconciliation Amendment Act, is more words on a paper. We need to hold this government to account to put actions in to back those words up. And that needs to be done now and it needs to be done every day.

So we need to do what we're doing here—talking about it. Hopefully, the members opposite have been listening, not just to me, because I'm certainly not an expert. But I've been to a lot of those communities and listened to people's concerns, and hopefully I've put some of those concerns on the record and, hopefully, some of the members opposite have listened to what those concerns are and are willing to put actions into words—or, words into action, I guess, is the right way of putting it—to make this act and reconciliation meaningful, something that all Manitobans could be proud of.

So with those few words, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** The importance of reconciliation cannot be overemphasized. The need and the approach that this bill takes, which is including calls to action from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, is reasonable. But we are still left with many unanswered questions.

One of the major focuses of the national inquiry into missing and murdered women—Indigenous women and girls was looking at violence against women and girls. And, clearly, we have a problem in Manitoba because we have some of the highest rates of violent crime in all of Canada. In fact, we would be, last time I looked, about twice as high in terms of violent crime rates as the average of the rest of Canada.

It is not a good record, and the government has not yet brought forward its approach to reducing violent crime. And successive NDP and Conservative governments have failed to move us in a better direction when it comes to violent crime.

So there is a disconnect between the approach being suggested here and what is actually happening in Manitoba, and it is time that we had a government which had a better perspective on how to go from talking about reconciliation and talking about doing something to address the calls for action in the national inquiry on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and actually achieving results.

\* (16:30)

This is true, not just when it comes to violent crime, but it's also true when it comes to education. While over the last 20 years, there have been improvements in the graduation rates for non-Indigenous students in Manitoba, there has been very little change when it comes to the graduation rates for Indigenous students.

And the—sadly, the graduation rates, grade 12, for Indigenous students are about 50 per cent, which is far too low, and the ineffectiveness of the government of Manitoba which was in place from 1999 to 2015 in moving this at all, has become adequately apparent to observers who've been watching the scene and taking note of what the assessments have shown. And, sadly, there has been little movement under the current government, from 2016 to the present, in terms of graduation rates for Indigenous students.

And it's not clear why both NDP and Conservative governments have been such failures in this respect, but it's readily apparent to anybody who looks at this carefully, that there has been a complete failure of education policy in this respect, and that is one of the major reasons—perhaps the major reason—for the poor overall results for Manitoba.

So, while we support this legislation and the added attention to the calls for action from the inquiry, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, we call for much better approaches which actually get results in terms of violence, reducing violence against women and in terms of results which get results in terms of improving graduation rates for Indigenous students.

So I conclude with those few comments and thank members for the opportunity to say a few words.

Merci. Miigwech. Dyakuyu.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** It's my pleasure this afternoon to put a few words on the record when it comes to Bill 4, The Path to Reconciliation Amendment Act.

And, you know, it's clear that, as Manitobans, that reconciliation needs to be a priority. We as a community need justice; we need truth. These are things that not only do the—does the Indigenous communities in our province call for but all of us as Manitobans are truly asking for. Manitobans want to reconcile and build relationships. Manitobans want to have that connection and want to build the bridge between Indigenous communities in Manitoba and non-Indigenous communities in Manitoba so that all people can feel more connected, and that starts, that connection starts, as we journey on reconciliation.

Now the idea of having—referencing a National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to The Path to Reconciliation Act, this is an idea that we can get behind. It's clear that when it comes to reconciliation, that the actions that are behind the words often miss the mark when it comes to this government. We like the idea that missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls should be considered as part of this act, but we want more.

We want to call this government to put more action to support the words that they say. Like I said, this bill amends The Path to Reconciliation Act to include references to the national inquiry into missing and murdered 'indigenen' women and girls and, in addition, the calls to the action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the principles of the United Nations declaration of the rights of Indigenous peoples. The calls for justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls are to guide the government of Manitoba's commitment to reconciliation.

Now, as we support and show solidarity to the families of MMIWG, it is—that support ought to be more than just words. As a government in this province representing all the people, this ought to be more than just words. More than just a few lines in legislation. It requires, and it calls on us, demands of us, quite frankly, real action.

This requires financial supports to deal with not just the trauma of many of these incidences, but to deal with those underlying issues that contribute to these situations, that contribute to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

And so, as we deal with these issues, we must consider how we support, not just in words but in action, and oftentimes with financial supports—dollars behind this—the families to deal with these issues, to survive through traumatic events. But also to look at

how we prevent and stop these sorts of incidences from happening again.

Dealing with those root causes, dealing with those underlying issues, are what we ought to be doing as a people in Manitoba, and as the government ought to be leading the charge in this, so that we can reduce the numbers and actually stop a problem from happening to our Indigenous communities in this province.

And it's clear that in the three years since the completion of the national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous girls and women, that we all continue to fight for justice. It didn't stop just with that inquiry. And the unfortunate part of what we've seen over the last few years is that this PC government has not supported those calls and that commitment, that commitment that the inquiry calls for. They have not showed the commitment for meaningful purpose to solve these issues.

The budget for family infill has been discontinued. These funds are critical for the engagement of families as part of the implementation of the recommendations that came out of the inquiry. And if we're not—if we're serious about reconciliation, we're serious about tackling the recommendations that came out of the inquiry, then we also have to be serious about the amount of money that these programs are getting and how we're supporting them financially and how we're supporting them through our actions.

And so, you know, we simply see a government move on and make an announcement and make the—say the words, and make a press conference—something splashy—and then move on for it, move on to the next thing. But what we really need is a change of approach—a change of approach to stay in the moment and deal with the real issues that the trauma having a missing or murdered Indigenous woman or girl puts on a family, puts on a community, puts on a group of people, to deal with something as tragic as that.

And, you know, when you stay in that moment and you try to deal with that, you realize how much support is really and truly needed. Now, I can't speak to these issues first-hand, but I can speak to them of someone who's listened to the stories, who's listened and understood the trauma that these types of events have, not only on a direct family, but on a larger community. And it's not only disheartening to see and hear about these stories; it's also and even more disheartening to know that a government who has the resources, who has the ability and claims that they want to make a difference—it's disheartening to see them choose to not do that.

\* (16:40)

And that's where we're at with this government in this bill. We see them make an action—a call to action, the words to put action—words to put action into reality. But the willingness to do so is not there. The financial backing to do so is not there.

And I don't need to remind this House or Manitobans about the discoveries and disclosures of the unmarked graves that we've—saw over the last few years become revealed for the public in Manitoba. And it's been very evident for all of us to see. We've all come to grips with that reality. Many Canadians, Manitobans were well aware of this reality, but for many peoples, the first time that they had learned or heard about unmarked graves and residential schools and all these discoveries.

And while that discovery and those—that initial big discovery was—occurred, we, as a community and as a society, now have the responsibility and the duty to use that knowledge to make our communities better.

And what have we seen from this government? Have we seen this government use that knowledge to make our communities better, make the lives of those impacted better? Have we seen them put money behind supporting the victims and their families of those who attended residential schools and supports for those families? Have we seen the government put forward dollars to support uncovering of unmarked graves and finding where those are in our province? Have we seen the government put dollars and financial supports behind memorializing some of those unmarked graves?

Now—and we're not just talking about a few graves. We're talking about hundreds of mass graves that are not just in a far-distanced province or across the country—that are right here in Manitoba. Many, hundreds more graves were found in Brandon alone, estimating at a hundred—over a hundred graves.

And we know that there were 14 residential schools in Manitoba, and with the knowledge of these unmarked graves it ought to be all of our responsibilities acted through the government's funding to look in these sites, and search these sites and realize that part of our work in reconciliation isn't complete until we search these sites and memorialize those unfortunate to have been left undiscovered in an unmarked grave because of our—the residential school system in this country.

And so it's on us to make the action that we, as all Manitobans, are calling for. And, you know, so when we look at the bill as a whole, we look at the many of the actions, the many of the words in this bill and say, yes. We should include MMIWG in it as part of our path to reconciliation. Sure. That makes sense, but it's not enough just to say the words. You have to put some substantial action behind it.

And so, again, when I look at how we really commit to this action—when I look at how we commit to this action—what are some of the things that we should be doing, Mr. Deputy—Acting Deputy Speaker. Sorry. So what are the—some of the things that we should be doing to act on this? Well, we can start by doing proper consultation with our Indigenous communities.

We can 'stot' by talking to them and not just talking to them or talking at them. We can start by listening to what they have to say, what the Indigenous communities in our province have to say and hearing about how we can address these issues through their lens and through the—with the best tools that they see fit. Not what works best for government, what the government might deem as the most efficient way, but by listening to these communities and seeing what they are calling for, what they are asking for for support when it comes to reconciliation and when it comes to MMIWG, because often, the solution that might be presented by government in no way, shape or form matches what is being called for by community.

And I want to, again, illustrate how government's words don't always match the government's actions. And I think one spot you can look at that—to see an example of that is in the national truth and reconciliation—National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

And as we know, that centre is located at the University of Manitoba, and it's a national centre for truth and reconciliation. It's on the Fort Garry campus of University of Manitoba, for those who don't know. And it's a valuable resource for those who are interested in learning the lasting—the long-lasting legacy of residential schools. And it's the permanent home for statements, for documents, for other material gathered by the TRC and has played an important role in guiding our commitment to reconciliation.

Now, that's a very critical and important centre, not just locally or provincially, it's critically—it's a critical centre nationally.

But how is the government of Manitoba supporting a centre that's right here in Manitoba, right on the University of Manitoba campus? Well, we've seen funding for the University of Manitoba shrink and decrease each and every year. And by that budget—at the University of Manitoba—decrease, it makes it harder for the national centre of truth and reconciliation to do the very important work that is needed to further our path to reconciliation.

The calls in the TRC that the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation is trying to act on and trying to—has the supporting documents for is being undercut by underfunding of our university—by the University of Manitoba. The consistent and chronic underfunding by this government for the University of Manitoba hurts the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation and, therefore, weakens and delays our path towards reconciliation.

This is another example how the government's inaction, lack of funding and lack of consultation simply doesn't match the words that they try to put forward and sell to the rest of Manitobans.

And so, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, I'll wrap up my remarks by saying that, while the words that we see here put forward in Bill 4 seem to be a step forward on the path towards reconciliation, we call on this government to simply do so much more.

They—the government needs to put the actions, the true actions, on display and meet every word that they are saying with a real commitment, a financial commitment of support, to move us all on—all Manitobans—on the path to reconciliation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** I want—thank you, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. I want to thank my colleagues for that enthusiastic response. It always adds to the positive atmosphere here in the House.

I want to begin by piggy-backing on the remarks made by the member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey), the member for Saint Vital (Mr. Moses), and talk a little bit about how important a path to reconciliation is and how important it is to put action behind the words that are indicated on this bill.

Absolutely, reconciliation needs to be a priority, and the best place for reconciliation to begin and to show how important you take reconciliation is to begin in public schools and in those schools that are

religiously based. Schools are the place to put forward this path to reconciliation.

\* (16:50)

I'll get into that in a minute, but I also want to remind the House that support and solidarity with missing and 'burdaded' Indigenous women and girls and 2S families is absolutely important because it really reflects then on what are our moral basis and foundation, what our ethics are. It's just the right thing to do. And we have to put resources behind the right thing to do.

And here is—when governments have this opportunity, because government is all about opportunities—important opportunities like this one, where we can't drop the ball. People are watching. People watch Manitoba. We have an outsized influence in this country because of our large population of Indigenous peoples that have been here for centuries, generations: know the land, know what it is to be a steward of the land, to be a steward of culture, of heritage and of tradition. All very important pieces.

And what can really help, of course, is the emphasis that we put on education and what's happening in schools. As stated in the report on the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and 2S peoples, real action needs to be taken. Public education and a greater awareness of violence against Indigenous women and girls and 2S peoples are an absolute important piece that has to be included.

Now, we know since 2016, since the TRC report—the TRC calls to action—the education calls to action 62 to 65. Every educator in this province has that memorized. And every educator in this province is waiting for some leadership from this government to enact those very calls to action. We talk about a path to reconciliation; here's a direct path in schools. And, like I said, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, not just public schools, all schools.

Because one of those calls to action specifically states that in schools, and I'll quote it directly: that they provide the necessary funding so that schools outside the publicly funded realm also have access to Indigenous elders and professional development, so that can—they can be part of the education that they're also receiving. And it's a very important thing to do. So here's an opportunity.

And if I can suggest, I don't know, I guess an amendment, or some addition to the bill, would be to have this part included.

And I can go on, and I'm going to go on, because in 62 it also called with a consultation and collaboration with survivors of families that have been impacted by MMIWG2S and how that's impacted their families, because we need to hear these stories.

It's more than—as my colleague, the member from St. Vital, said—more than just words on the paper. It's talking about actions, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. And it's important that we take those actions.

Another one is that, just like—again, I have to keep referring back to the member from St. Vital because he made a lot of good points, especially the part—here, the University of Manitoba.

Why was that chosen as a repository for the TRC findings and recommendations? Why? I can tell you why. Because this place has an important history that doesn't get told.

And, like I said earlier, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, when you have an opportunity like this that's been presented to this government, you have to take it.

And the best place to start is in schools. It's in curriculum. Since 2016—we're at 2022, six years later, and I know the former minister of Education, the member from Portage la Prairie, I know had that as part of one of their priorities. Unfortunately, it didn't come to fruition.

It's something that's really important and I look forward to hearing something from this government that indicates they're really going to work on the curriculum piece that the TRC recommended in 62—not 1962, but in recommendation 62. That even pre-dates me, actually, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. But, you know, I digress, and I don't want to do that because this is a very important subject.

Another part, especially recommendation 63, the TRC called upon the council of ministers of education to maintain an annual commitment to Indigenous education issues.

Some of the best professional development I ever did was at the Treaty Relations Commission, at the time led by Jamie Wilson. And that PD was specifically on treaties with Elder Bone, I think you know that person, member from Portage la Prairie.

And we did an exercise called the blanket exercise, I know some of us here in the House have done the blanket exercise. Talk about meaningful, impactful professional development that every Manitoban needs to have access to.



And where can you get that? You get that in schools. Kids are in schools. And there is an opportunity there that this government needs to take to ensure that every person, every child in Manitoba, has that experience because you have to experience what it is like to be marginalized, disrespected, et cetera.

So with those few words, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, I just want to conclude by saying I want this government to take the opportunities that are in front of them and ensure that they're serious about this path to reconciliation.

And I thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** Does the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) wish to speak to this?

Are there any further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** The question before the House: second reading of Bill 4, The Path to Reconciliation Amendment Act.

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

## SECOND READINGS

*(Continued)*

### **Bill 12—The Peak of the Market Reorganization Act**

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** We will now move on to second reading of Bill 12, The Peak of the Market Reorganization Act.

**Hon. Derek Johnson (Minister of Agriculture):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks (Mr. Wharton), that Bill 12, The Peak of the Market Reorganization Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Administrator has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

\* (17:00)

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** It is—it's been moved by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, seconded by the honourable Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks, that Bill 12, The Peak of the Market Reorganization Act—of the market—now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Administrator has been advised of this bill, and I table the message—the message has been tabled.

**Mr. Johnson:** This legislation will deregulate the table potato and root crop industry in Manitoba—

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Agriculture will have unlimited time on this speech.

The hour being 5 p.m., the House is recessed and—*[interjection]*—oh, sorry—adjourned, and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

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