

**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
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	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>	Thompson	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 16, 2022

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

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

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

Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

Oh—the honourable member for Keewatinook.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** On a matter of privilege, Madam Speaker.

## MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Keewatinook, on a matter of privilege.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** I rise today on a matter of privilege, Madam Speaker, and I do so today as this is my first opportunity to address this issue in the House.

Madam Speaker, on April 28, the Manitoba Legislature unanimously passed an opposition day motion, and I table the motion. Following the unanimously passed motion, a letter from the Speaker was then sent to Pope Francis at Vatican. And I table the letter for the House also.

Madam Speaker, as reported this past Friday, May the 13th, that as part of that—that as of that day, the Pope will not be including Manitoba as part of his visit to Canada.

Madam Speaker, it is imperative that we as MLAs continue to advocate on this issue and to truly do our jobs and our duties as MLAs. It is important that we continue to support and advocate motions and legislation that we all voted in favour of in this Chamber on behalf of Manitobans to ensure those commitments are followed through.

I—and I also sincerely appreciate your work on this matter, Madam Speaker.

This motion was brought forward in the true spirit of reconciliation not only for Indigenous people here in Manitoba but for all Manitobans. And by not further advocating to ensure the Pope includes Manitoba on his visit to Canada, this will hinder the path to reconciliation and furthermore hinder my and all MLAs' duties and ability to perform those duties, as here in Manitoba we have a legislative responsibility to reconciliation to Indigenous people.

Madam Speaker, we as legislators, as Manitobans, as Canadians, have a—have to do our part, but it also falls upon society here in Manitoba and Canada as well. This is not just a call to action for Indigenous people here in Manitoba to make, it is also a call that society provincially, federally and internationally has to make as well.

And while the Pope is the head of the Catholic Church, this call to action and the advocacy for the Pope's visit to Manitoba also needs to be voiced by church leaders, congregations, priests and bishops who are in their own—who are in our communities every day and I'm sure see the need and importance of this visit to happen here in Manitoba. So I call on and advocate that action and advocacy as well.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba has the path to reconciliation as part of a legislative duty and obligation and the legislative duty to develop a strategy for that reconciliation process. Our motion that we unanimously passed on April 28th shows that we, as MLAs, know and realize the importance of this process and this motion.

But it's simply not enough to send a document and feel that we have done our part to its fullest extent. So it is our legislative duty and obligation to do all we can, and we can do so by ensuring that we not only pass legislation in this House but ensure it ultimately achieves its intention.

And specifically to this motion, it is our duty and obligation to further advocate and ensure that the content and requests made in the motion are recognized by the Catholic Church and Pope Francis.

So, Madam Speaker, by not having Pope Francis include Manitoba as part of his visit to Canada, which we learned of on May the 13th, to apologize to Indigenous people here in Manitoba for the church's role in the residential school system and its impacts on Indigenous people here in Manitoba, this most definitely hinders my duty and ability to carry out my duties as an MLA here in Manitoba, as advancing reconciliation for Indigenous people here in Manitoba is the duty for all MLAs.

I call on all MLAs to further advocate in your circles and to do all we can to ensure that our—and yes, it is our motion—is fully recognized by Pope Francis, and so I move that the Legislative Assembly continue to advocate on this important issue and raise its importance for Manitobans.

Miigwech.

**Madam Speaker:** Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that remarks at this time by honourable members are limited to strictly relevant comments about whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a prima facie case has been established.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** I want to thank my friend from Keewatinook for again raising this issue.

Certainly, I think it was a good day when all legislators agreed and unanimously passed the resolution, the opposition day motion, to invite and implore the Pope to come to Manitoba to deliver, in person, an apology to those who have suffered from residential schools. All legislators agree on that.

I think that all legislators continue to advocate for a personal visit from the Pope in Manitoba. It is what we all want. And while we're glad that the Pope is coming to Canada to provide an apology, we would all prefer that it happens in Manitoba. So there is no disagreement on that. And I believe that all legislators, individually and collectively, will work to continue to encourage and implore the Pope to come to Manitoba to deliver that in person.

I'm not entirely sure the matter of privilege, who it's directed to. I don't believe that we can issue a matter of privilege against the Pope. The Legislature

can't. The Pope, ultimately, is not bound to the motion of the Legislature, so I'm not sure if this is a complaint against the Catholic Church or the Pope directly, so I don't believe it's an order in that way. But it is certainly true that all of us as MLAs should continue, and will continue, to advocate for the Pope to come to Manitoba during his visit to deliver the very important needed and long-overdue apology to survivors of residential schools in person.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, Madam Speaker, I will comment briefly on the matter of privilege, which has been brought forward. I want to make it very clear that all the Manitoba Liberal MLAs are very supportive of the Pope coming to Manitoba and hope that perhaps this will happen, even though, at this point, it does not look like that.

We also, however, are ready to acknowledge that it's incredibly important that he come to Canada, and we're very excited that he will be coming to Canada, to three places in Canada, to make his apology again and to meet with people who have been affected by the residential school system in Canada in different places.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** I would indicate, with all due respect, that this is out of order as a matter of privilege, as it does involve actions outside of the Chamber. The papal visit and the papal visit to Manitoba is not part of the proceedings of the Chamber. Parliamentary privilege only covers activities inside the Chamber as a proceeding of the Chamber. Although the Pope is not coming to Manitoba this time and it is the desire of all members to have the Pope visit Manitoba, it does not fulfill the criteria of a prima facie case of privilege.

\* (13:40)

That having been said, members can and should continue to work together on this issue to encourage the Pope to come to Manitoba, especially as this is Treaty 1 territory. So I would encourage all members to do that, but respectfully indicate that this is not a matter privilege.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee—oh, routine proceedings.

#### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I'm tabling today the recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee, 2022.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Health—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.

### Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** May is Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month.

This is a time to celebrate this tenacious community, remember the loved ones we have lost and raise our collective voices to continue pushing further for longer and healthier lives.

Cystic fibrosis is an inherited disorder that causes severe damage to the lungs, the digestive system and other organs. It is the most common fatal genetic disease affecting Canadian children and young adults.

On Sunday, May 29th, thousands of participants across Canada will join Cystic Fibrosis Canada at local community walk sites during CF awareness month to celebrate their fundraising efforts while imagining a world without CF.

The Manitoba CF chapter will be hosting a Walk to Make Cystic Fibrosis History at 10 a.m. at the Woodhaven Community Club.

I encourage all Manitobans to join family, friends, neighbours and co-workers to help further establish this year's theme of further together. The event will include activities for all ages, raffles, music and lunch. Funds raised will target world-class research, support and advocacy for high-quality, individualized CF care.

To register your team, please visit [walk.cysticfibrosis.ca](http://walk.cysticfibrosis.ca).

On October 22nd, 2021, I was pleased to announce that our government added TRIKAFTA, a treatment for cystic fibrosis, to the provincial formulary available through the Manitoba Pharmacare program.

Madam Speaker, TRIKAFTA is a triple-combination drug used not only for treating symptoms but also to target the fundamental defect from specific genetic mutations that cause cystic fibrosis. TRIKAFTA helps people better manage their illness and has helped tens of thousands of people with cystic fibrosis live their lives normally instead of struggling for every breath that they take.

Madam Speaker, I ask all members in the Chamber to please join me to recognize May as Cystic Fibrosis Awareness Month in Manitoba.

Thank you.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Madam Speaker, cystic fibrosis affects many Manitobans. Thankfully, recent medical advancements have been made that have allowed those living with cystic fibrosis to live longer and healthier lives. We now have new treatments that drastically improve the lives of many, such as TRIKAFTA, which has been described as the single greatest innovation in cystic fibrosis history.

Our NDP team is proud to have worked in solidarity with community advocates who have fought tirelessly and advocated by calling and writing MLAs and creating petitions that resulted in the PC government adding the drug to the provincial formulary. Since then, Manitobans living with cystic fibrosis have seen their condition improve dramatically, like 13-year-old Beckett Meyer, who no longer coughs and now has the energy to outrun his classmates during gym class. His mother told the press that, and I quote: There is no denying that this was the miracle we hoped it was going to be. End quote.

While these medical achievements should be celebrated, we also need to ensure that ongoing cystic fibrosis research is being supported so that further advancements can be made. This month, advocates for cystic fibrosis continue to work to increase supports for those living with the condition. We applaud Cystic Fibrosis Canada for their work and, in particular, Manitoba chapter president, Sheralin Spring. And I'd like to acknowledge Union Station advocate and local resident, Patti Tweed.

We also commend all those who continue to raise money for research, share their personal stories and all those who care for those affected by the condition.

And, Madam Speaker, I and several of our colleagues have had the pleasure of sitting with families who are affected by cystic fibrosis in one way or another and I can't thank them enough for sharing their

personal stories. It takes courage and bravery and Manitoba's health-care system is made better for it.

I want those folks to know, and all those living with cystic fibrosis, that the Manitoba NDP will continue to fight for better supports so that you may live a life of comfort and good health.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, cystic fibrosis month offers a chance to celebrate advances in treatment over the last several decades.

First, I pay tribute to the team of pediatricians and internists who are looking after children and adults with cystic fibrosis in Manitoba. They have done an excellent job. This is an area where Canada's medicare system has shown superiority to care in the United States. A careful study of individuals with cystic fibrosis in 2009 to 2013 found that the mean lifespan of a person with cystic fibrosis in Canada is 10 years longer than in the United States.

Second, contributions of Canadian research have been extraordinary. In 1989, the cystic fibrosis gene was discovered by Lap-Chee Tsui and his team at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto. The identification of the transmembrane conductance regulator or CFTR gene was seminal in leading to effective treatments for cystic fibrosis, including TRIKAFTA. In 2006, Lap-Chee Tsui was named one of the 10 giants of science. In 2012, he was inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame.

The CFTR protein is important for transferring chloride across cell membranes. Though there are varied genetic defects in the CFTR protein, the most common is in the ability of the protein to move from where it is produced in the endoplasmic reticulum to the outer cell membrane. The drug TRIKAFTA contains three components; two of these help the CFTR protein get to the cell surface and the third augments its action.

Though it doesn't improve individuals with all defects in the CFTR protein, TRIKAFTA, now approved for use in Canada and covered in Manitoba, has the potential to reduce severe disease in individuals with cystic fibrosis by 60 per cent. It's a major step forward on one of the big advances in medicine

in the last 40 years. It's an example of how individuals with diseases been—based on genetic defects can be helped and over time, may inspire treatments for many other conditions, as well.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

**Madam Speaker:** Further ministerial statements?

The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure—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 plead—please proceed with his statement.

### Flooding Update

**Hon. Doyle Pivniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) and myself had the opportunity to participate in a helicopter flood tour.

We toured communities in the Red River Valley such as Morris, Ste. Agathe, St. Jean Baptiste, St. Adolphe, Emerson and Gretna. We also toured First Nation communities such as Peguis First Nation and Fisher River First Nation.

The helicopter tour was humbling, as I saw the—first-hand the widespread devastation these areas are facing. My heart goes out to all those households affected, and the rest assured, our government stands behind you in the challenging time and will continue to support Manitobans to the best of our ability.

The aerial flood tour also provided insight to significant flood mitigation efforts and their effectiveness. If not for our government's significant investments in flood control structures, raising highways and the expansion of dikes, the damages this year would be more insurmountable.

\* (13:50)

We will continue to invest in flood mitigation for our communities and First Nations across the province to continue to protect Manitobans.

Our 'hydric'—'hyodric' forecast centre has issued an overland flood warning for the Parkland region. In addition, they are closely monitoring another weather system forecast to deliver significant precipitation near the end of this week. I will continue update this House for more information as we receive it, Madam Speaker.

The recent precipitation over the weekend combined with snowmelt in the higher elevations caused significant runoff, and that was overwhelmed creeks, rivers and drains, causing flooding and significant damage to crossings and other infrastructures in this region.

The Duck Mountain, the Porcupine mountains were the most affected, receiving more than 40 to 90 millimetres of precipitation, Madam Speaker.

Our provincial staff are on the ground in the Parkland region to assist with the significant damage to roads, bridges due to the flash flood that occurred. These repairs will be significant, as access to the limited and long-term detours will be put into place. Water moving through creeks, rivers, drains eastward off the escarpment may still impact downstream communities and infrastructure before reaching Dauphin Lake and Lake Winnipegosis.

The Red River has peaked in Ste. Agathe, St. Adolphe and the Red River Floodway inlet at May—on May 13th and is stable and declining in locations upstream of Winnipeg. And also, we were down in the Emerson area and, again, the levels were down. We saw the debris that was still left on the fields, showing that the water has receded in that region.

Madam Speaker, 33 municipalities and five First Nation communities remain in a state of local emergency. The most recent was declared in the RMs of Lakeshore, Minitonas-Bowsman, Ethelbert, Mountain and the First Nation community of Pine Creek. The water has been risen in the First Nation community, resulting in potential loss of road access to 17 homes. Evacuations have begun, and evacuees are staying in the community of Swan River.

Access out of these RMs and First Nation communities remain, so individuals are still able to evacuate via road access, Madam Speaker. Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations has requested 30,000 empty sandbags for each of the Northern Affairs communities of Camperville and Duck Bay to protect homes from the rising floodwaters. Our staff will work with these two communities to fulfill their request of the 30,000 sandbags.

Once again, Madam Speaker, I would like to commend our terrific staff, our MTI staff, for their continued efforts throughout this flood season. Our staff are working around the clock to keep Manitobans safe, and we are deeply thankful for their dedication.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Yesterday, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) toured the main flooded areas of Manitoba, 'borth'—both north and south of Winnipeg. This exemplifies how, in Manitoba, flooding should be a non-partisan issue that all parties agree needs our urgent attention. In times of crisis like this, everyone in this Chamber is ready to come together to work for the common interests of this province.

But while much of the focus is on the Pembina Valley and on the Interlake, we again recognize that communities all over the province have been impacted, including now more so in western Manitoba.

Highway 10, one of our main connectors to the North, was closed, and we thank those crews who are working diligently to reopen the highway. We look forward to further information from the minister with regards to the work and the status of that major connection.

Major damage has also been caused to roads in the rural municipality of Mountain. Bridges will likely be washed out near Mafeking and dike—a dike going through Pine River was breached on Friday.

Residents of Swan River and nearby First Nations like Sapotawayak Cree Nation are worried that they'll have to evacuate or risk being stranded if infrastructure and roads take more damage than they already have. If they do have to evacuate, they'll join almost 2,500 Manitobans who are currently displaced across this province even before a new round of rain and precipitation hits Manitoba this Wednesday.

We continue to salute all those workers and volunteers who are labouring to prevent even worse damage to our roads and to our communities, and we'll be ready to support the rebuilding of our damaged infrastructure as the floodwaters recede.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I seek leave to speak to the minister's statement.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** While this most recent flood is likely to have costs to communities ranging to hundreds of millions of dollars and enormous costs to individual homeowners, there are shortcomings with this government's intake for disaster financial assistance, or DFA.

Now, the DFA is supposed to help individuals, farms, small businesses, non-profit organizations and

municipal governments restore property to its pre-disaster condition. But the DFA application, which I table, reads in part that they have to get a DFA application by 'cogtacting' Manitoba EMO by phone at 204-945-3050 in Winnipeg to receive an application in the mail, or to visit manitoba.ca/emo to download an application.

They have to contact their municipal office, fill out the DFA application. Applications for property damage to private residences must be filled out by the owner. Applications for damage to personal possessions in rental properties must be filled out by the tenant. Applications for farmland that is rented must include a written authorization form completed and signed by the owner of the land. Then return the DFA application with all invoices, receipts, required documents, photos, et cetera, to Manitoba EMO by mail or email at: 1525-405 Broadway.

Now, Madam Speaker, that's quite a process to put people through when they may have lost everything. They will be going from hip-deep floodwaters to being up to the neck in paperwork, all—much of which could be handled online.

We certainly hope the government will put in the effort to modernize and stream this—streamline this process, to reduce red tape and ensure that Manitobans get their help without unnecessary delays.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Member's statements?

#### **Point of Order**

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (Mr. Piwniuk), on a point of order.

**Mr. Piwniuk:** Yes, Madam Speaker, I have a point of order on the member from St. Boniface and the member from River Heights. When it comes to our flood—like, when we're doing these ministerial statements, it's about making—keeping Manitobans aware of what's happening with the flood situation and having our colleagues in this Chamber to know what's happening, give us—give everybody updates to both opposition parties—the opposition party.

And the member from St. Boniface basically criticizes our staff. Our staff have been working round the clock for hours, for weeks, when it came to this flood. We've been saddled with the worst possible situation. Even in 1997, Madam Speaker, not—everything was actually isolated. Basically, it was in the

Red River Valley. It was actually one region that we had to focus on.

Now, Madam Speaker, it's been all over the province of Manitoba. We are now looking at floods coming from Ontario into lake—the Winnipeg river system. We're looking at the Duck Mountain, the Porcupine mountains where we have staff now being deployed into those regions. We're also looking at the Assiniboine when it comes to the potential precipitation forecast.

And the thing is, this is where we need to inform our Manitobans here, not to criticize and be partisan politics, Madam Speaker. That's the member from St. Boniface saying—and then, of course, the member from River Heights. I'm really disappointed because—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order. Order, please.

I am not going to be recognizing any other members. This is a dispute over the facts. It is not a point of order, and there was no breach of a rule or a practice of the House.

So with all due respect, there is no point of order.

#### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

##### **Pamela Rebello**

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families):** I rise today to recognize and honour a remarkable woman who lives in my constituency of Riel.

Since immigrating to Canada from India over 50 years ago, Pamela Rebello has worked relentlessly in our community as a prominent leader, educator, contributor to the performing arts and cultural sector, as well as a powerful advocate for Asian women.

Pam's service and appointments in the areas of arts, culture, education and women's advancements are boundless. She has served as the founder, first president and executive director of the world-renowned India School of Dance, Music and Theatre for 42 years. She is also the first woman to chair the Manitoba Intercultural Council, the first visible minority to be appointed to the Manitoba Arts Council and the first and only woman to chair the Raga-Mala performing arts council.

It is by her investment of time and talent that Pam has broken down barriers and built bridges as an immigrant, a visible minority and a woman, all the while working to build a more inclusive and 'diversive' arts scene here in Manitoba.



Pam's lifelong commitment to serving her community is truly inspiring and has earned her many accolades. Pam is a member of the investiture of the Order of Manitoba and the first visible minority woman to receive this honour. Pam is a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Golden Jubilee Medal and was recently awarded a leadership award by the Asian Heritage Society of Manitoba. She was also selected in 2021 as one of the 150 women trailblazers of Manitoba by the Nellie McClung Foundation.

\* (14:00)

Pam is a remarkable individual who, outside of her outstanding work, is a devoted mother to three children and a grandmother of five grandchildren.

I ask all my colleagues to help me honour Pamela Rebello for her contributions she has made to our great city and province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### West Kildonan Library

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** For the last 55 years, St. Johns families, students and citizens have enjoyed the West Kildonan Library.

The West Kildonan Library is where St. Johns constituents go to teach their children to read, take out books, print off their resumes for their first job applications and practise English after arriving to Winnipeg. The West Kildonan Library is an 'integral' part and community member in the St. Johns community, Madam Speaker.

But right now, this community staple is under attack. After years of failing to increase operating budget funding to match inflation, the City of Winnipeg is considering cutting costs by closing down the West Kildonan Library, moving it out of the heart of St. Johns to a windowless room in a shopping centre.

It's obvious to everyone in the community that this is a bad idea for St. Johns constituents. It's going to be much more difficult for those to make the journey there, and sitting in a windowless room next to the hustle and bustle of a shopping centre isn't conducive to reading and learning, Madam Speaker.

Thankfully, St. Johns residents are organizing to save the library. The Garden City and Seven Oaks residents' associations have been active in raising their concerns about the proposed move. One of the library's leading advocates, Daniel Guenther, has shared, and I quote: I had principals from local

schools reaching out to me, saying that this affects how they do their field trips to local libraries. A nice walk through the neighborhood now becomes an unsafe walk in an inaccessible mall, not a trip to the library. End quote.

I'm proud to stand with Daniel and Evan Krosney and nearby schools and students who are right now writing letters to the mayor to change their decision.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

#### Fundraisers for Ukraine

**Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin):** The people of my constituency of Dauphin have been deeply concerned as we continue to witness the ruthless attacks on Ukraine, a nation which which we share so much. While following the news of events in Ukraine, Dauphin and Parkland have shown their tremendous generosity and willingness to help through rallies, gatherings and fundraisers by organizations, clubs and individuals.

Some of the local fundraisers have included: Dauphin seniors centre perogy dinner; Zirka Ukrainian Dance Ensemble 50th anniversary spring recital; Birss Greenhouse sold blue and yellow flower baskets; Prairie Chocolate, in partnership with Café Trocadero, created a unique Pray for Ukraine chocolate fundraiser; Ukrainian Orthodox parish of St. George and Irving's Catering co-hosted a fish fry; and 13-year-old Blake Symchych raised funds by canvassing classrooms in his middle school on his lunch hour; and Canada's National Ukrainian Festival raised funds through a special ribbon campaign. These are just a few of the activities that are going on in Dauphin and the Parkland region.

The Parkland Ukrainian Family Fund was also established in order to assist and support the permanent placement of Ukrainian refugee families in the Parkland region. Volunteers quickly organized, and 100 per cent of donations going towards the cause. Thanks to groups that include the Ukrainian folk arts museum and Fusion Credit Union, this fund surpassed its initial goal in record time, and last week they saw the much-anticipated arrival of the first two families from Ukraine to the Dauphin region.

I congratulate everyone who worked together to make this a reality, and I am pleased to welcome the first of these new families to the constituency of Dauphin.

### Annette Giguere

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** Today I recognize Annette Giguere, a volunteer who has made extraordinary contributions to curling in St. Vital and beyond in her enduring commitment to the sport. Annette, after many dedicated years as a volunteer at the St. Vital Curling Club, is retiring.

Annette was first taught how to curl in 1984, but really began curling in 1992 by joining mixed, men's or women's leagues and entering countless bonspiels.

In 2006, Annette was awarded the Bryan Holt Award, awarded to the member seen as most outstanding by the fellow curlers. She then took on a greater challenge and found herself making history in 2009, becoming the first female president of the St. Vital Curling Club. Also in 2009, Annette was presented the Canadian curler association's volunteer recognition award.

Annette has served as the club's secretary since 2014 and she has overseen many projects, like the wonderful two golden mural, which has become a landmark in St. Vital. She also served as the president of the past presidents committee since 2015.

Over the years, Annette has helped out and organized many team send-off parties, including for teams Jones, Meakin or Birchard, and was often seen at the airport greeting Team Jones home after another win.

One of Annette's most memorable volunteer experiences was co-chairing the ceremonies committee for the Roar of the Rings in 2013 and carrying Team Jones' flag down the ice after their win to go the Olympics.

In 2019, Annette became an Honorary Life Member of the St. Vital Curling Club. Annette's passion for the club shows, and she is often considered the heart and soul of the club.

I invite all members to join me in celebrating Annette Giguere for her tremendous work and dedication to sports, of curling and the St. Vital Curling Club.

### Living Prairie Museum

**Hon. Scott Johnston (Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I am pleased to rise in the House today to recognize one of Winnipeg's finest natural areas, located in my constituency of Assiniboia.

The Living Prairie Museum and nature preserve is located between Ness Avenue and Sturgeon Road.

There are 30 acres of tall prairie grass Manitobans can enjoy. This large area of land holds a nature park and an interpretive centre for all types of family fun.

Annual seeding is done in the fall to replenish 150 varieties of tall prairie grasses and wildflowers. They host prairie planting workshops and school tours through the interpretive centre. The staff is passionate in promoting this natural environment. The centre also provides in-person learning programs in the spring through their environmental education program. In off-peak months, they groom the trails for cross-country skiing and also offer a speaker series with a variety of topics.

Madam Speaker, this break from city life takes you through the 'prall'—the tall prairie grass and into an oak and aspen forest. As you hike along the trails, you may also see a great deal of wildlife activity, with plenty of deer, ground squirrels, rabbits and maybe often a fox or two.

Madam Speaker, I'm very 'ploused'—proud to have this valuable resource located in my constituency. I hope that all Manitobans have the opportunity to enjoy its beauty and natural abundance. It is truly beautiful to see the prairie crocuses in bloom and I would invite all members to visit.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, we have some guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you. We have—as guests of the MLA for Brandon East, we have Bev Burgess and Cheryl Douglas.

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Passing of Clif Evans Condolences to Family

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I want to begin today by acknowledging the passing of Clif Evans.

\* (14:10)

Now, Clif was a long-time MLA for the Interlake, he was a staffer to Niki Ashton and he was a dedicated New Democrat, but he was also a servant of the people of his region, a tireless advocate for working people, for fishers and for people from all walks of life from his part of the province.

I want to express my condolences to Clif's wife, Linda, to their entire family and to Clif's many friends. He was, of course, also chair of the retired MLAs association. He will be missed.

I do have a question on the situation at the Grace Hospital, but I did want to put those words on the permanent record before I begin.

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Premier):** I do appreciate the words coming from the Leader of the Opposition. Certainly, our—as—speaking on behalf of the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and our caucus, we want to pass on our condolences to the family of—the Evans family.

Certainly, I got to know Clif over a number of years in his capacity as an MLA and in some of the roles he took on following his leaving as the MLA. So I always enjoyed conversations with Clif. He was always a straight shooter and you always knew where you stood with Clif, so I really appreciated his candour and his demeanour and certainly those conversations we had.

So, we do pass on our 'heltfelt'—heartfelt condolences to Clif and his family.

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

#### **Health-Care Services Wait Times and Staffing**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, it's becoming more and more apparent by the day that folks who are trying to access health care at the Grace Hospital are having tremendous difficulty doing so.

We hear about patients waiting for some 24 hours just to get admitted and then patients waiting in the ER after that for days and days and days. And I will spare you the very disturbing details of the conditions that they are waiting in.

Bottom line, this is not a proper place or a proper manner in which to receive health care. We know that there's a staffing crisis that's driving some of these waits. It does need to get addressed.

Will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) stop hallway medicine at the great—Grace Hospital and other sites across Manitoba?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Premier):** We certainly recognize there's challenges in the health-care system. I certainly know there's challenges in terms of recruiting and retaining staff at various different levels, in different occupations. That's why we've committed a

record investment to health care to the tune of \$7.2 billion in this year's budget, again, a billion-dollar increase to health-care funding over the last six years.

Madam Speaker, we've also increased the number of seats available for training of nurses in particular, and we're always, as well, looking to recruit doctors from wherever they may come to support our health-care system here in Manitoba.

So, clearly we recognize there's challenges in health care. A lot of challenges have been brought on by the pandemic, but we're committed to making changes to repair health care.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, I want to acknowledge advocates for international student health care who are here with us today. We see you. We support you.

On the topic of health care, it's an unfortunate situation that for people from all walks of life that hallway medicine has made its unfortunate return to our province. Patients are waiting for days at a time in hallways, in emergency rooms, even in staff lounges. We hear, in some cases, patients are waiting for some six days, Madam Speaker.

It lacks dignity, it lacks compassion and it lacks the fundamentals of proper care when it comes to things like infection control, I would share as one example. Clearly, it needs to stop.

Will the Premier commit to ending hallway medicine in Manitoba immediately?

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Madam Speaker, Manitobans have told they want improved health care. It's our goal to strengthen health care here in Manitoba.

That's why we've committed record investments to health care of \$7.2 billion in this year's budget. We're committing to improving staffing, whether it be doctors, nurses, health-care aides, whatever the case may be. We've opened up more seats for training. We're certainly looking at other jurisdictions to recruit those professionals into Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, we recognize there's challenges. The pandemic is clearly not done with us yet. But we recognize that we're going to make record investments to improve the health system here in Manitoba.

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

### Minimum Wage Increase Request for Future Increases

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, nobody who works full-time hours should have to live in poverty and, yet, that's what this PC government is committed to. This fall, Manitoba will have the dubious distinction of having the lowest minimum wage of any province in Canada.

Certainly, that doesn't show respect for those on the front lines that we've been calling heroes for the past two years. It also sends a very troubling message to young people, to people from all walks of life who are trying to get ahead, that you could work very hard each and every single day and still not get ahead. I'll say nothing of the dramatically increasing cost of living.

Will this government reverse course and simply announce that they're committed to a \$15-an-hour minimum wage, followed by a living wage after that?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Premier):** We certainly recognize affordability as top of mind for Manitobans now, and quite frankly, it's the same issue across the country. And, certainly, as prices soar, Manitobans have to take action.

We are certainly committed to having a look at the minimum wage. We're looking at what other jurisdictions are doing. I think the Leader of the Opposition will recognize we currently have legislation in place that we have to work with in terms of the legislative authority that that provides.

Madam Speaker, we are making moves in this year's budget to put more money back in the hands of Manitobans, and we're going to continue to do that.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, there's one argument that we still don't hear the PCs making. Why is it that anyone who works full-time hours should live in poverty?

I'll give the members opposite a chance to weigh in here. I'm sure many people on the progressive side of the spectrum would say nobody should live in poverty. But even if you looked at it from a conservative perspective, why should somebody who works full-time live below the poverty line?

That is the situation that we are in, in Manitoba right now. The situation will become more acute in

the fall, when our minimum wage becomes the lowest of any province in Canada. With the rising cost of living, with the rising cost of groceries and gas, surely we understand that working people need some help. We need to see a minimum wage that reaches \$15 an hour.

We're committed to it on this side of the House. Are they?

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Madam Speaker, I think we know the NDP's plan; it always has been tax and spend. That's where they're at.

Now we have taken concrete steps to reduce the tax burden to Manitobans. Where they increased the provincial sales tax—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** —we reduced the provincial sales tax. We also took sales tax off of lot of—a lot of other personal products, Madam Speaker.

We have, in this year's budget—again, we have indexed the personal income tax levels; so, taking thousands of Manitobans off paying tax altogether—*income tax altogether, Madam Speaker. [interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** We're working with the federal government on \$10 child care and, Madam Speaker, we've also introduced this year the renter's tax credit.

And, Madam Speaker, we're asking again today for this—the opposition to support a rebate to property owners on the education tax.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** But, Madam Speaker, let's hear it. Let's hear it from the PCs: Why should somebody working full-time hours live in poverty? Why would somebody on the PC side—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —advocate for this as a policy solution? What they have in response are ad hominem—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —attacks, shifting the blame, trying to change the subject but never engaging with the substantive issue, which is that people who work full-time in Manitoba right now are living in poverty.

The PCs have the ability to act here. They should take steps to ensure that we hit \$15 an hour, if not immediately, then surely by the time we get to the next election. Their position is indefensible. Their lack of a response reflects that, Madam Speaker.

Will they simply acknowledge today that they need to get with the times and increase the living— increase the minimum wage in Manitoba so that it's a living wage?

\* (14:20)

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Madam Speaker, for years, we've been taking steps to making sure that it's affordable to live in Manitoba. This year's budget does the same thing. We've done a lot of work on that front.

We've—also have over \$100 million in this year's budget for skills, training and knowledge strategy to make sure Manitobans that want to work have the ability to work. They can upskill their skills, and opportunities exist here in Manitoba.

Again, today, we're talking about a \$250 million support back to Manitobans. Will the opposition agree today to support Manitobans and offer that education property tax rebate?

#### **Health-Care System Bed Capacity Concerns**

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Madam Speaker, urgent care and emergency rooms in Winnipeg are facing a bed crisis. That's according to the chief medical officer of Victoria hospital.

HSC reported a 10 and a half hour wait to be seen last month. Doctors and nurses are reporting truly horrible conditions, Madam Speaker. The CEO of the WRHA says they're having trouble getting patients out of the ER and into a bed. The minister is proposing a couch tour of her constituency.

I'll ask her: Will she take her sofa to the front lines of health care to see what's actually going on, and will she do so today?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** Patient flow issues continue to be a concern for the health system. We are coming out of a unprecedented pandemic. Many individuals are presenting to our emergency departments, and we see the strain on the system.

I want to thank the leaders, the front-line staff that are doing everything to provide care in a timely and efficient manner. I also want to thank the individuals right at the hospital floor level that have come forward

with the ideas that have been implemented, such as expansion of the physician-in-triage program, the levelling of transport arrivals across sites and improving lab turnarounds.

I thank you for all your suggestions and stay committed to improving—

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

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Madam Speaker, the minister is well aware that these issues in our emergency rooms began before the pandemic and are a direct result of her and her government's cuts to our health-care system. And this summer, the minister has promised to take—to have a tour of her constituency on a sofa.

I encourage her to take that couch and sit down in one of our emergency rooms to see what's actually happening. She should go and see what's happening for herself. Health care in emergency rooms and our hospitals is the worst that it has ever been, Madam Speaker. It is a bed crisis.

Will the minister take her sofa tour to the front lines of Winnipeg's bed crisis today?

**Ms. Gordon:** Manitobans are fortunate that they elected our government to fix the mess that the NDP government created, and that they have emergency departments to—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —access, Madam Speaker. They continue to shout me down whenever I stand up.

Madam Speaker, in their time in office 18 emergency departments were suspended: Emerson in 2002; Pembina-Manitou in 2004; MacGregor, 2004; St. Claude, 2005; Gladstone in 2008; Vita in 2012. Eighteen. I have the list here. I'd be pleased to table it tomorrow.

Manitobans have emergency departments to access now because our government is in power. If they were in power, they would have closed more emergency departments.

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Madam Speaker, Manitobans do not trust this minister and this government with their health care.

This government—this government—closed 124 hospital beds across Winnipeg. Wait times at HSC have never been worse, at 10 and a half hours last month. The minister should go down to our emergency rooms and see it for herself.

There's just one problem with that, though, Madam Speaker. There isn't room for a sofa in our emergency rooms because every available room, hall and staff lounge is filled with overflowing—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Asagwara:** —patients.

Will the minister tour our emergency rooms and, more importantly, will she take the steps needed to bring an end to hallway medicine in our hospitals today?

**Ms. Gordon:** What the member opposite wants to deflect from is our government's investments in the health system: \$7.2 billion in Budget 2022, the most significant health-care investment in the history of our province.

And Madam Speaker, last week, when we were in Estimates, I presented all the investments in acute care that our government is making. The member for Union Station said Concordia Hospital was not acute care, said ICU was not acute care.

Madam Speaker, it's difficult for Manitobans to accept what the member for Union Station is saying when they don't understand the health system.

#### **Election Financing Rules Premier's Campaign Spending**

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** Madam Speaker, Conservatives and the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) believe there is one rule for them and one for everyone else.

Late last week, we learned the Premier once again was in breach of the rules. This time it was for breaking election financing laws. The Premier and her campaign were spending money before lawfully allowed.

Why is it one rule for them and one for everyone else?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Premier):** Obviously, Elections Manitoba had a look at the issue that the member opposite has raised. I think the elections commissioner has acknowledged the breach certainly wasn't intentional, and the Premier has already apologized for the unintended error.

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

**MLA Marcelino:** But Madam Speaker, this isn't the first time that the Premier has run afoul of the rules.

She failed to follow the rules and at—as an investment adviser, making a series of inappropriate trades. She failed to disclose \$31 million in personal property sales, despite clear rules from the Conflict of Interest Commissioner. And now she broke election financing rules that are meant to keep elections fair and democratic.

Manitobans hold their political leaders to a higher standard. It's clear that the Premier repeatedly has failed to meet that bar.

Why does the Premier believe it's one rule for her and one for everyone else?

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader.

The member might be on mute.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Can the members hear me now?

**Madam Speaker:** Yes, go ahead.

**Mr. Goertzen:** It's already been indicated this was an inadvertent breach, Madam Speaker. The Premier has addressed it.

The members will know that there is many things that members opposite have done, not inadvertently but on purpose, that have been addressed by Elections Manitoba. This—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

Go ahead.

**Mr. Goertzen:** This afternoon, members opposite will have an opportunity to do something purposeful, and that is to pass a tax decrease for Manitobans that they need in a time of unaffordability when it comes to high gas and food prices.

I hope they turn their attention to that and not these scurrilous matters, Madam Speaker.

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

**MLA Marcelino:** Madam Speaker, the Premier's inadvertent breach excuses just don't add up. She has been a representative for many years and knows the rules, but the reality is that in the contest for the premier's chair, she and those around her were willing

to do whatever it took, including breaking election financing rules.

This is a pattern with the Premier. She broke the rules as an investment adviser. She broke the conflict of interest rules as an MLA. And in her leadership campaign, she broke campaign financing laws.

Again I ask: Why does the Premier believe it's one rule for her and one for everyone else?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Again, Madam Speaker, it's already been indicated this was an inadvertent breach. It was already dealt with by elections of Manitoba.

\* (14:30)

But if the member wants to talk about patterns, there is a pattern. The NDP consistently has increased taxes on Manitobans at all times that they had their hands on the wheels of government, Madam Speaker.

Now, in opposition, they're trying to stop the largest tax decrease in the history of Manitobans. It speaks to what would happen in the future if, heaven forbid, they ever got back into power: they'd continue to increase taxes.

I ask the member opposite, why is it that that pattern of the NDP is to always make life less affordable for Manitobans, and will they change that direction this afternoon when they have the chance?

#### **Wrongful Conviction Claims Independent Review Body**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** David Milgaard, a victim of a wrongful conviction that robbed him of 23 years of his life, passed away yesterday. On behalf of our team, we offer our sincerest condolences to his friends, family and community.

After his release in 1992, David would spend the next 30 years advocating for reforms to the Canadian judiciary system. In particular, he wanted Ottawa to establish an independent body to review claims of wrongful conviction. Canada owes it to Mr. Milgaard and all the wrongfully convicted to take action.

Will the minister support the creation of an independent body and urge the federal government to act immediately?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I thank the member for St. Johns for that question.

I think everyone was saddened to hear of the death of Mr. Milgaard on the weekend, and certainly his story is one that all of us, you know, can learn from

when it comes to the justice system and how mistakes in the justice system can have tremendous impacts on an individual's life.

He dedicated his life for those who are wrongfully convicted, continued to be an advocate after he was released from prison. And I think all of us in the justice system understand and recognize that, because of his advocacy, the system is better. But it can be made better, as the member opposite is alluding to.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** David was only 17 years old when he was wrongly sentenced to life in prison. There he experienced further injustice, all for a crime that he didn't commit.

When David was exonerated, he used his life's experiences to advocate for changes within the judiciary. He wanted an independent body established to review claims of wrongful convictions. The federal government should establish one so that no one else in corrections is in there for wrongful convictions, Madam Speaker.

Will the minister support the establishment of an independent review body?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Thank you again, Madam Speaker, and for the question from the member for St. Johns.

It is my understanding that the federal government has been moving towards, and I believe is nearing, the completion of the independent body the member opposite speaks to.

Obviously, I'd like to see the composition and the form that that body will take place, but I do think it's important, when it comes to the plight for those who are wrongfully convicted, who might be wrongfully convicted, that there are, in fact, opportunities and tribunals and bodies to be able to have those cases re-examined in an independent way to bring justice where an injustice has been done.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** We can honour Mr. Milgaard's life by acting to ensure that no one else has to experience what he went through. One part of this is by establishing an independent review body.

The federal government pledged to establish one in 2019 and then again in 2021. We would like the provincial government to support this initiative and

urge the federal government to act now, in light of David's passing.

Will the Minister of Justice take the opportunity to urge the federal government to establish an independent review body today?

Miigwech.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Again, Madam Speaker, I certainly am willing to continue to advocate in that way with the federal government; I'm advocating with the federal government in other ways.

Disappointed to hear the Supreme Court decision on Friday to allow for a defence of severe intoxication when it comes to violent acts, particularly that often affect women and children. I'll be working with the federal government to try to ensure that that gap is filled so that a defence of severe intoxication—voluntary intoxication—is not allowed when it comes to violent offences, and will work on this particular issue that the member is raising, as well.

#### **International Student Health Care Request to Reinstatement Coverage**

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** Madam Speaker, it has been four years since the government cancelled international student health care: four years. And since then, we've heard from so many students having to pay tens of thousands dollars for their hospital visits, health-care services, mental health services and more.

Manitoba's health-care coverage was a major draw for international students. That's why cancelling it is such a mistake.

The good news, though, is the minister has an opportunity today to make things right. He could commit today to reinstating international health care.

Will he do it?

**Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration):** Our government wants to ensure that our post-secondary institutions remain competitive while providing quality education in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, while the opposition is fear mongering, as usual, let me assure all international students who are in Manitoba or are planning to come to Manitoba that you will have access to health care in Manitoba as part of your tuition.

Madam Speaker, international students continue to make Manitoba one of their top destinations of choice to study and stay, with over 11,000 students

attending all of Manitoba's post-secondary institutions during fall of 2021.

Madam Speaker, our government will continue welcoming thousands of international students every year seeking world-class post-secondary education here in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Moses:** Madam Speaker, perhaps the minister's forgotten, but international students already pay so much more for tuition. And him forcing them to pay even more for private health coverage increases their financial hardships.

And we know that there are students who fall through the cracks and are left with bills of tens of thousands of dollars. It's simply wrong.

Will the minister use his ability, in his office, to reinstate health care for international students today?

**Mr. Reyes:** Madam Speaker, we, on this side of the House, continue to make record investments in the post-secondary sector and we value our international students—numbering over 11,000—who choose to study and stay in Manitoba.

All 'internash' students must secure health-care 'coverage' for the duration of their post-secondary studies, whether there—are studying in Manitoba or any other province or territory in Canada.

Our government continues to invest more than \$1 billion in post-secondary on a yearly basis to make sure we provide world-class post-secondary education in Manitoba for our students, including international students, Madam Speaker, so they can study and stay in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Moses:** Madam Speaker, there are students and advocates here today who are calling on this government to reinstate international student health-care coverage. I'm pleased to be standing here to raise this important issue on their behalf.

Cancelling health-care coverage has forced many international students to pay out of pocket for services. There are other people who are following through the cracks, having to pay tens of thousands of dollars. Not only does this increase their financial



hardship but it also makes Manitoba a less attractive place for international students to come.

Will the minister do the right thing and reinstate international student health-care coverage today?

**Mr. Reyes:** The member continuously mentions how he always talks to students and how he has done his own consultations but—Madam Speaker, he may have talked to students, but has he really listened?

In many—in my many meetings with international students, they are fully aware that health-care coverage is included during their enrolment at our many fine post-secondary institutions in Manitoba. When I meet with international students, I always ask them: What made you come to Manitoba? What was your desire to study in our province?

Well, Madam Speaker, the response was—what I got time and time again was—because of our low tuition costs and quality of life here in Manitoba—high quality of life. And that is why our government will continue to support international students, not just to study here in—Madam Speaker, but to stay and be gainfully employed here.

Meaningful conversations, active engagement, proactive listening: that's what action is, Madam Speaker, unlike the all-talk-no-action NDP.

### Lake St. Martin Outlet Public Hearings

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** For a number of years, this government has been claiming that the Lake St. Martin outlet project is a priority, but they're not acting like it. The government says they've done consultation and they want to proceed, but there has been no public hearings for a \$600-million project.

\* (14:40)

First Nations and other communities in the area have reason to mistrust the provincial government since, in 2011, the Manitoba NDP chose to flood Lake St. Martin, Dauphin River, Little Saskatchewan and Pinaymootang, destroying homes and leaving people homeless and without compensation for years. The people affected sued the provincial government and won.

Given the massive impact of this project on communities, waters, lakes, fisheries and more, are there going to be public hearings on the Lake St. Martin outlet, or will the government proceed without them?

**Hon. Doyle Pivniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, this is exactly

where there—the opportunity for the member for St. Boniface to come and—actually during question period, so that I can actually answer the question that he has, instead of gaslighting and—being cowardly and gaslighting in his ministerial statement. So, here's an opportunity to answer that question.

When I—when it comes to Lake St. Martin channel, we are actually working with the federal government—his Liberal federal government—and working with—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pivniuk:** —the environment minister to make sure that we get everything that we need.

We're doing consultation with First Nation communities. Our department has been working around the clock, talking to First Nation communities in the area to—making sure that the consultation is done so that we can actually have the environmental licence approved and we can actually go and start the construction during this fall.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

I'm going to just encourage members to be cautious with their words that they choose. Sometimes these words can be very strong and provocative and cause some chaos in the House, so I'm going to encourage members to be careful with what they say.

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

### Alternative Routes

**Mr. Lamont:** I don't think that cowardly is a parliamentary expression; I'll ask the minister to apologize.

When this government sent in its application for the Lake St. Martin outlet, the federal government request for more information hit 27 pages. That's because the Manitoba government let out—left out absolutely basic information from the Lake St. Martin outlet project, including a map of Lake St. Martin and any maps of traditional Indigenous territories.

But this outlet is not the only solution they looked at. This and the previous government spent millions of dollars on potential alternatives, which were never mentioned.

Why are we spending \$600 million on a project filled with real risk? Why aren't we looking at alternatives before settling on one? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Piwniuk:** Madam Speaker, I'm not quite sure where this member gets his information from. This is—like, this calculating of information that he's putting on the record here.

Our department is working handily with the First Nation communities to—consultation on a regular basis—on a weekly basis. The unfortunate thing about—while—during COVID, 2020, it was very hard to meet with First Nation communities, especially when there was restrictions when it comes to meeting in person.

We have the opportunity now to meet in person, and we're having these meetings on a regular basis, and we're working with his—the federal counterparts in Ottawa, making sure that this project goes under way.

And the First Nation communities are understanding that we need to make sure that they're protected during the Lake Manitoba—like when a number of First Nation communities actually were—had to be evacuated and weren't able to go back in their homestead until after, Madam Speaker.

#### **Manitoba Housing Unit Reinstallation of Mailbox Panel**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** This government is not prioritizing the safety of our seniors here in Manitoba.

Just last week, my colleague from St. Boniface brought up the location on Marion and my colleague from Notre Dame brought up the location on Elgin. I currently have five senior constituents who were injured over the winter due to having their mailbox panel moved out of their Manitoba Housing unit.

Now an operations manager from Canada Post has informed us that if Manitoba Housing reinstalls the mailbox panel to its original indoor location, they will redirect the mail.

Can the minister responsible please provide assurance that the mailbox panel at 30-A Tyndall Ave. will be reinstalled to ensure the safety of the residents?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families):** Our government does believe that all Manitobans deserve a safe and accessible place to call home, and I thank the member opposite for bringing this information to my attention.

As the member opposite does know, in 2015 the federal government had moved towards community mailbox delivery, which Canada Post executed. And I

do—I can share with the member and for the House that our government did ask Canada Post to revert to community—or, to individual delivery of that mail, and that request was declined.

If the members opposite would like to write to Canada Post or the Member of Parliament or the Liberal government in Ottawa, I'd be more than happy to also co-sign that letter on behalf of the Manitoba government to see changes in the delivery for Canada Post mailboxes.

#### **Manitoba Camping Association Funding for Kids Summer Camps**

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** Madam Speaker, the school year is close to wrapping up. Summer is approaching, and children and their parents have begun looking for fun activities to fill their summer days. Attending an overnight camp—a summer camp—is again a possibility for Manitobans across our province.

Before the pandemic, this was a summer staple. These camps are where lifelong bonds are made and where kids can learn many important skills that they'll use in their entire lives. These camps, however, have suffered due to the pandemic, and they're in need of support.

Considering the importance of these camps, can the the Minister of Municipal Relations outline what our government is doing to support summer camps across this province?

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I thank my colleague for that question.

Camps are important parts of the summer for kids all across our province. This is why our government's providing \$750,000 to the Manitoba Camping Association to support overnight camps that have not—that have been impacted by the pandemic. We continue to strive to build thriving and sustainable communities all across Manitoba, and these camps are an important part of that goal. This one-time grant provides a maximum of \$50,000 per camp, and applications are open until May 31st. Please apply to [mbcamping.ca](http://mbcamping.ca).

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### **Education Property Tax Corporate Refunds**

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** Madam Speaker, last week, we learned that needed education dollars

are going out of province to other corporate landlords—\$1 million a year to Cadillac Fairview for Polo Park—rather than to help our kids learn and recover from pandemic-disrupted learning.

Educators like those in Seven Oaks and Brandon have been cut. Meanwhile, \$1 million a year is going to Cadillac Fairview just for Polo Park.

My question for the minister is: Why is this government and this minister so out of touch with the needs of our kids in this province?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Acting Minister of Finance):** Our government is very proud is hundreds of millions of dollars additional funding to the education system. We think that's truly important.

We're not surprised that the NDP is attacking businesses, but I can tell you, Madam Speaker, in terms of our education property tax, over 92 per cent of the rebates goes to residents as well as farmers. Those individuals need support because we know affordability is the biggest issue in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Altomare:** I just want to remind the minister, this is at the expense of 10-plus hour wait times in emergency rooms. This is at the expense of 170,000-plus Manitobans on a surgical wait-list. This is at the expense of increased class size and lack of support for kids, so, I will ask again—meanwhile we have Cadillac Fairview, an out-of-province landlord, getting a million-dollar cheque for nothing.

I'll ask again: Why is this minister and this government cutting teachers while giving millions away to corporate landlords?

**Mr. Fielding:** Our government knows the priority for Manitobans is making life more affordable, and that's exactly what this budget did, Madam Speaker.

Over 455,000 residents will get education property tax; that's if the NDP agreed to support it. That's real relief; that's real individuals will get support for this.

Madam Speaker, that's our plan. The NDP clearly do not have a plan for affordability.

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

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Altomare:** I want to remind everybody that inflation is running over 6 per cent.

Our kids need more to recover from the pandemic. Our school leaders are voicing their concern. They are forced to cut educators in divisions like Brandon and Seven Oaks. That won't help kids recover.

So, what of this government's priorities, Madam Speaker? Millions of dollars to out-of-pocket corporate landlords like Cadillac Fairview and other real estate investment trusts.

So, I'll ask again: Why is this minister cutting teachers while cutting cheques at the same time for multi-billion-dollar corporations that are out of province? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Fielding:** We're tired of hearing the alternative facts that the members opposite are putting forward.

What I can tell you is the real facts, Madam Speaker, in terms of, like, making life more affordable. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Fielding:** There's over 455,000 people will get needed tax relief in this budget. That's important, Madam Speaker.

What I hear from opposition members is they think that over 455,000 taxpayers are somehow rich and don't need the support. That's not true, Madam Speaker.

Our plan will put money—much needed money—in the pockets of Manitobans when they need it most. We have a plan, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Fielding:** It's time for the NDP to show us their plan.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The time for oral questions has expired.

## PETITIONS

### Health-Care Coverage

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

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) 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 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 the fear of being charged for the care, and some will fear possible detention and deportation if their immigration status is reported to the authorities.

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to immediately provide comprehensive 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 the 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.

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

Further petitions?

### Foot-Care Services

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** 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) 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 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 hub and health-care service provider, and the need for foot care extends beyond just those served in the capital city of this province.

We therefore 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 is signed by Brent Armstrong, Leonard Little, Carol Marshall and many more Manitobans.

### **Bibliothèque Régionale Jolys Regional Library**

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

The Bibliothèque Régionale Jolys Regional Library, JRL, has been served notice by the Red River Valley School Division, RRVSD, to vacate the premises currently situated in the auditorium of École Héritage school by March 31st, 2023.

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

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

JRL and RRVSD have flourished from a mutually beneficial memorandum of understanding for 54 years. Their shared collection boasts over 50,000 books and has the fourth largest collection of French-language literature in rural Manitoba.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

To request the minister of education to recognize the value that JRL provides to the student population of ÉHS, as well as the communities of Village de St. Pierre Jolys and the RM De Salaberry.

To request the minister of education and the Minister of Francophone Affairs to recognize that an MOU between the RRVSD and the JRL is mutually, financially and culturally beneficial.

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

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

This has been signed by Gail L. McLeod, Angela Hiebert and Doris Maynard and many other Manitobans.

\* (15:00)

### **Foot-Care Services**

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

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 has been signed by many Manitobans.

**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 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, Madam Speaker, has been signed by Robert Howard, Brent Chabot, Jack Dysart and many other Manitobans.

### Right to Repair

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Manitoba consumers believe that products should last longer, be repairable when broken, and

that planned obsolescence has environmental consequences that threatens a sustainable future.

(2) In 2001, the European Union set minimum design requirements for many electronic devices with new right to repair legislation.

(3) The Biden administration in the United States has formally backed the right to repair movements in January 2022, following the European Union's lead.

(4) Right to repair enables consumers access to the parts and repair manuals needed to fix and modify their products, appliances, including cellphones, washing machines and refrigerators.

(5) Right to repair also allows consumers and electronic repair businesses access to the most recent versions of repair manuals, replacement parts, software and other tools that the manufacturer uses for diagnosing, maintaining or repairing its branded electronic products.

(6) Right to repair further allows consumers to reset an electronic security function of its branded electronic products if the function is disabled during diagnosis, maintenance or repair.

(7) In addition, the right to repair ensures manufacturers replace electronic products at no cost or refund the amount paid by the consumer to purchase the electronic product where they refuse or are unable to provide manuals or replacement parts.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to adopt right-to-repair legislation, requiring manufacturers of electronic devices and appliances, including washing machines and fridges and farm machinery and equipment, to make information, parts and tools necessary for repairs available to consumers and independent repair shops.

And this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

### Foot-Care Services

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) A large percentage of 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 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 foot-care centres.

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this has been signed by Marie Linklater, Valoyd Linklater and Imethys [*phonetic*] Barlas and many other Manitobans.

### **Bibliothèque Régionale Jolys Regional Library**

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** Madame la Présidente, je désire présenter la pétition suivante à l'Assemblée législative.

Le contexte de cette pétition est le suivant :

(1) La Bibliothèque Régionale Jolys Regional Library a été avisée par la division scolaire vallée de la rivière Rouge de libérer les locaux actuellement situés dans l'auditorium de l'École Héritage school d'ici le 31 mars 2023.

(2) L'auditorium a été construit dans les années 1960 par le célèbre architecte manitobain Étienne Gaboury et BRJ y est installé depuis 48 ans.

(3) Une photo de l'auditorium intitulée la bibliothèque régionale est publiée dans un document de 2008 intitulé bâtiments patrimoniaux des messieurs

De-Salaberry et Saint-Pierre-Jolys. Il est indiqué qu'il s'agit d'un bâtiment moderne important qui pourrait atteindre le statut de site patrimonial.

\* (15:10)

(4) BRJ et DSVRR ont prospéré grâce à un protocole d'entente mutuellement bénéfique pendant 54 ans.

(5) Leur collection commune compte plus de 50 000 livres et possède la quatrième plus grande collection de littérature de langue française dans les régions rurales du Manitoba.

(6) Les élèves qui sont transportés par l'autobus des municipalités voisines qui n'ont pas de bibliothèque publique, comme Niverville, Grunthal et Kleefeld, ont accès gratuitement à la bibliothèque publique et à sa quatrième plus grande collection de livres en français dans les régions rurales du Manitoba pendant l'année scolaire.

Nous présentons à l'Assemblée législative du Manitoba la pétition suivante :

(1) De demander au ministre du Travail, de la protection des consommateurs et des Services gouvernementaux d'envisager de concéder l'auditorium à la BRJ d'ici le 1er mars 2023.

(2) Demander au ministre de l'Éducation de reconnaître la valeur que la BRJ apporte à la population étudiante de l'ÉHS ainsi qu'aux communautés du village de Saint-Pierre-Jolys et de la MR De Salaberry.

(3) Demander au ministre de l'Éducation et au ministre des affaires francophones de reconnaître qu'un protocole d'entente entre la RRVSD et G-R-L est mutuellement bénéfique, financièrement et culturellement.

(4) Demander au ministre du Sport, de la Culture et du Patrimoine de reconnaître le potentiel patrimonial de cet important bâtiment et son statut au sein de la communauté.

(5) Demander au ministre du Sport, de la Culture et du Patrimoine d'empêcher toute rénovation de l'auditorium qui détruirait et dévaloriserait l'intégrité architecturale du bâtiment.

Cette pétition a été signée par Jillian Wolfe, Geneviève Reflécher [*phonetic*] et Amélie Pelletier-Lavoie [*phonetic*].

### **Translation**

*Madam Speaker, I would like to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.*

*The context for this petition is as follows:*

*(1) The Bibliothèque Régionale Jolys Regional Library was notified by the Red River Valley School Division to vacate premises currently located in the auditorium of the École Héritage School by March 31, 2023.*

*(2) The auditorium was built in the 1960s by famous Manitoban architect Étienne Gaboury, and it has been home to the JRL for 48 years.*

*(3) A photo of the auditorium captioned "The Regional Library" was published in a 2008 document titled "Significant Heritage Buildings of De Salaberry and St. Pierre Jolys." It is marked as an important modern building that could attain the status of Heritage Site.*

*(4) The JRL and the RRVSD have flourished by means of a mutually beneficial memorandum of understanding for 54 years.*

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

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

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

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

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

*(3) To request the Minister of Education and the Minister of Francophone Affairs to recognize that a memorandum of understanding between the RRVSD and the JRL is mutually, financially and culturally beneficial.*

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

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

*This petition was signed by Jillian Wolfe, Geneviève Reflécher [phonetic] and Amélie Pelletier-Lavoie [phonetic].*

### **Foot-Care Services**

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

There is no adequate medical care available in the city and region, whereas the city of Winnipeg has 14 medical foot-care specialists—sorry, foot-care centres.

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

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—restore essential medical foot-care treatment to the city of Thompson effective April 1st, 2022.

And this has been signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?



**ORDERS OF THE DAY****GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Could you please call for debate, which I believe is still at second reading, Bill 39, The Appropriation Act, 2022 (School Tax Rebate).

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider debate on second reading of Bill 39 this afternoon.

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS****Bill 39—The Appropriation Act, 2022  
(School Tax Rebate)**

**Madam Speaker:** I will therefore call debate on second reading Bill 39, The Appropriation Act, 2022 (School Tax Rebate), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), who has eight minutes remaining.

Is there leave for the bill to stand in the name of the honourable member for St. Boniface?

**An Honourable Member:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** No. Leave has not been given for the matter to stand.

In accordance with the long-standing practices of this House and the rulings of February 7, 1990 and May 27th, 1987, when leave is not given, the honourable member in whose name the matter is standing must immediately speak or lose their right to speak.

I will therefore move on and call the next speaker, the honourable member for St. James.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** It's great to have an opportunity to put some words on the record today about this supplemental appropriation request that has been brought forward by the government for \$349 million.

Course, I think the first thing that needs to be commented on here today is that this is coming as an emergency request and that this is being brought forward seemingly without planning and is disrupting the operations of this House, disrupting our ability to ask important questions in Estimates, to help hold this government accountable on a number of other areas, and we're tied up debating this emergency request.

And it is kind of shocking that this government didn't see this coming, given the size of the cheque they're looking to write to, of course, some of these

big commercial landlords and others who are going to be benefiting so disproportionately from this tax cut.

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

You know, Manitobans are obviously facing huge economic challenges right now. We talk about it a lot on this side of the House. Course, we're deeply concerned about those economic challenges that Manitobans are facing. We're seeing massive increases in food costs for Manitobans. We're seeing huge increases, of course, in gas costs and inflation across the board, Mr. Deputy Speaker—north of 7 per cent, I think, in Manitoba in March alone.

So we know that the impacts of these increases are just hitting everybody, not just lowest income—our lowest income Manitobans, but even our middle-income Manitobans are feeling the struggle right now. And I hear that when I'm out in the community and I speak with people at the grocery store and in community parks when I have a chance to talk to them; that's a big concern for people right now. So it is important that we do look at ways of reducing the cost of living for Manitobans. And it's important that this government look at ways of exploring reductions in the cost of living for Manitobans.

And, of course, there are a lot of options that, it seems, weren't explored or haven't been explored by this government, which they don't seem interested in exploring. And the one that they do seem to be putting forward here, which is this education property tax cut, as we know, as we've been speaking about since they brought this idea forward a year ago, is massively unequal. It creates a huge, disproportionate outcome, and it allows for huge amount of money to be sent over to our wealthiest in Manitoba, to commercial property owners and to commercial property owners who are, in many cases, owned by businesses outside of the province that are not even located in Manitoba.

So they've chosen a poison-pill approach here that is really going to create a lot of tough sledding for Manitobans in the long run. And, you know, the impacts of this, which I'm looking forward to talking more about, of this request for—this \$340 million—\$349-million cheque that they're looking to write are going to be an increased share of the tax burden for lower income Manitobans—will be shouldering more of the costs of operating this province. Reductions in critical services like education and health and other key services here in Manitoba, which will continue to be underfunded; we've seen those services be underfunded by this government for some time.

But, again, gutting these revenues that used to be generated from commercial property owners and others, gutting those revenues is going to make it harder for us to fund those important services on a go-forward basis. Lower income Manitobans and middle-income Manitobans are going to be shouldering those burdens, and then, of course, it's simply damaging to our economy. We're sending millions and millions of dollars out of province unnecessarily that could stay here and help to fund those important services. There's no need for that to be happening.

So, you know, the first point here that I do want to touch on and focus on is to why this is simply a bad approach to improving affordability in Manitoba, and why this is simply bad policy is that it shifts the tax burden to lower income Manitobans. And what we're seeing here we saw just last week. This was, I think, a very troublesome story for the government, the story that came out in CBC which proved what we as the NDP have been talking about, again, since the moment that this government came out with this scheme to transfer wealth to the wealthiest in Manitoba.

\* (15:20)

That article found—that CBC analysis found that this approach that's being taken by the government will result in the top 10 per cent of Manitobans pocketing four times the amount of cash as those in the bottom 10 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Again, top 10 per cent are pocketing four times as much cash as a result of this decision as the bottom 10 per cent. Let that sink in for a second, about what that means.

We've been talking about this, again, for a very long time as the opposition, and I remember when this first came up and when we started to express serious concerns about how this tax cut will disproportionately benefit the wealthiest in Manitoba.

We heard scoffs from the members opposite. We heard claims that we were speaking mistruths in this House or that we weren't being honest with Manitobans. And yet here we are. We can see, again, truth is coming forward, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about how unequal this decision is and how this decision is going to benefit, again, the wealthiest here in Manitoba.

These costs, over time, as we lower that tax burden for the wealthiest among us, who are paying their fair share—and if you speak with wealthier Manitobans, I've had an opportunity to have some conversations with folks who are doing quite well—they'll tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they're happy to

be paying their fair share. They understand that that's the role of every Manitoban, to pay their fair share, to contribute towards the costs of operating this great province of ours.

But the decision that's being made by this government—again, to send millions and millions of dollars to commercial property owners out of province, in province; to disproportionately benefit those who have the largest real estate holdings, who own multiple houses in this province, will ultimately create a huge transfer of the tax burden.

Because right now, the system that's in place is a reasonably proportionate approach, where those who have more real estate wealth end up contributing more, contributing according to their means. That's something that right now ensures that those who are lower income, those who maybe don't have as much to offer aren't burdened with that share.

But this change pushes those finances, pushes those costs down onto the shoulders of lower income Manitobans over time. So what this sets to do—again, it's a redistribution of that burden onto lower income Manitobans. That is absolutely the wrong direction to be headed and this is the wrong time to be increasing costs on everyday Manitobans.

The other thing that's so perturbing and almost ridiculous about this request and about this direction that we're headed in is that government is borrowing money to fund this tax cut. When I speak with people in the community—you speak with people out and about, at events, grocery store, again, this comes up—when they learn that this government is borrowing money to fund a tax cut, that they're spending money that we don't have, they just shake their heads. They shake their heads. It's really hard for most people to believe that we're doing that.

And, you know, we saw in the Free Press there's been some analysis by Mr. Brodbeck stating that the PCs are going to be borrowing \$1 billion over seven years to pay for that—\$1 billion. Imagine what the interest payments alone on the amount being borrowed here could have done for critical services in this province—for health care, for education. Imagine what that could have done, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We're borrowing money to fund a tax cut—we're using money we don't have to fund a tax cut that will disproportionately benefit the wealthiest among us. That is absolutely and completely ridiculous. It's a ridiculous public policy. And, honestly, I can't find

anybody out—that I've spoken with that supports that idea. It makes no sense to anyone.

One thing I think about—I won't elaborate too much as—and I'm curious about members opposite, about how this aligns to Conservative principles, Conservative world view. Doesn't align very well, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't know how, again, members opposite are feeling about this, but this must be deeply embarrassing for them, and I think that is reflected in the fact that they're pretty circumspect about this. We know that we heard, at the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) breakfast last week to the Chamber, this wasn't even highlighted.

And I'm going to guess it wasn't highlighted because they're embarrassed about this. They recognize how outrageous it is that we're borrowing money to fund a tax cut, using money we don't have. And I think that's particular—you know, the awareness of how ridiculous this is, is particularly present among business people that I've spoken with. Talk to business people. You listen to them about their thoughts about this particular decision that this government's making, and they don't understand it. It doesn't make sense.

And, in fact, while it doesn't make sense, you know, and people are generally confused, the fact that this government is doing it is also not totally surprising for people out in the public because they've seen so many bad decisions from this government that this is just one of a long list of really bad decisions and financially irresponsible decisions that we've seen from them.

I think the third reason why this approach to improving affordability is bad public policy is because it's sending huge amounts of revenue out of province. Our leader, others have referenced this, but we know that—and this has been detailed as well in that CBC story—that massive corporate landlords stand to save millions and millions of dollars. I think the total is approximately \$40 million that we're sending to commercial property landlords who, I think it's fair to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have been doing quite well.

And we know that we have some landlords here in Winnipeg that are getting \$1-million cheques, companies that have \$22-billion market capitalizations—huge companies not owned in Manitoba. Out of nowhere, it must have been a great day around that board table when they found out, hey, Manitoba's sending us a million bucks. Well, they said, for what? We don't know, they're just sending us a cheque.

**An Honourable Member:** Throw it in the pile.

**Mr. Sala:** Throw it in the pile. Outstanding.

That is hard to believe, I think, for most Manitobans when they say, what? A \$1-million cheque we're sending to a company with a \$22-billion market cap, and they're not in Manitoba? We're just shipping out of the province? Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We're doing that. That's what we're debating here today.

We're debating how we're going to be contributing—no, of course, we're here today for the supplemental appropriation, government is looking for \$349 million, and we're going to be sending millions of dollars of this, this cheque that they're wanting us to help them write, to out-of-province companies. That money is leaving our province, it's leaving our tax base, never to come back. That's going to be very hard to bring those dollars back to Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

You know, if you came to the average Manitoba and you stated, would you like us to give \$1 million to Cadillac Fairview, or would you like us to invest that million dollars into helping people to get their surgeries faster? I don't think there's any question about how the average Manitoban would answer that.

That's the question that I think every single member opposite needs to be asking themselves today as they come here today, again, looking for us to help them write this big cheque. Why are they wanting us to send millions of dollars to out-of-province commercial landlords when people are still waiting—170,000 people are waiting their turn for surgeries, tests and procedures?

How do they rationalize that? How do they rationalize the fact that we're sending money out of Manitoba when we're not spending what's needed to make sure that people can get the care they need? That question about whether or not we would prefer to send \$1 million out of province to a giant commercial landlord or invest that million into health care should be an easy one for all of them to answer. It's shameful that we're here debating that today.

You know, there are a whole suite of other ways that this government could have helped to improve affordability in this province other than moving forward with a huge tax cut that disproportionately benefits the wealthiest among us here in Manitoba, one that shifts the tax burden to lower income Manitobans, sends huge amounts of our dollars out of province and which requires us to borrow money to do it.

One alternative to, again, this tax cut that disproportionately benefits the wealthiest, is they could have worked to keep our hydro rates as low as possible. That would've been another, you know, we're talking about—this is about improving affordability. One thing they could've done is to work to keep hydro rates as low as possible. And that could involve, possibly, giving the Public Utilities Board a mandate to ensure the lowest overall energy bill for Manitobans. That would've been possibly one approach as opposed to, again, gutting our tax base, giving a huge, disproportionate amount of that to the wealthiest.

\* (15:30)

They could've given the Public Utilities Board a mandate to ensure the lowest overall bill for Manitobans. That would, of course, involve strengthening the role of the Public Utilities Board, expanding their role as an advocate for all of us and ensuring that we have those lowest overall bills possible, ensuring that they're able, that they have what's needed to be able to do that. But, of course, the government's not going in that direction.

They haven't chosen that affordability improvement approach. In fact, they've gone the other way. They've gone the other way. What's happened instead of choosing this as a means of improving affordability is that we've, instead, chosen to raise rates, in some cases by legislation, which was, as you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the very first time in our Province's history that that had ever happened, the very first time ever that they raised the cost of living on Manitobans, raised their hydro rates by legislation. That's a massive concern.

We also saw, of course, they came forward with a 7.9 per cent rate increase, and thank goodness the Public Utilities Board was there as our advocate to defend us, to protect us, because they sent this government packing with a 3.6 per cent approval instead. You know, had that not happened, we would still today be paying untold millions of additional dollars that we didn't need to pay for electricity.

So, again, you know, instead of seeking to find other affordability approaches to improving affordability, they've chosen to do this. That's the wrong direction.

We could be working to keep our hydro rates as low as possible. You know, a brief aside here, as well: we know that building on—not only is this government not looking to keep our rates lower, they're actually

making them worse. Bill 36 is going to compound the pain and challenges that regular Manitobans are going to experience over the next few years because the government is legislating more hydro rate increases. They're taking away the role of the Public Utilities Board. Instead of strengthening it and saying to the Public Utilities Board, keep our energy bills as low as possible overall, they're actually going in the opposite direction.

They're moving rate-setting power to the Cabinet table, stealing that away from that independent process. And what's going to happen, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Our electricity rates are going to go up and up an up. We're all going to pay for that decision.

So they're not going in the right direction here. They're choosing to make affordability worse, and that's an easy way that we could've helped to keep costs in check for Manitobans.

Another alternate approach—instead of, again, a huge tax giveaway to the wealthiest Manitobans, to big—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. *[interjection]*  
Order, please.

Just would like to request if the volume in the House could go down a little bit. There are some members who are speaking rather loudly, and I would like to encourage them to have appropriate conversations on the luge, in the hallway, wherever it may be. Afford the member speaking the same respect one would hope or request for themselves.

**Mr. Sala:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I appreciate your words and I appreciate that you're encouraging, especially members opposite, to pay attention to what is, I think, an important debate here and a really important debate about what this government is seeking to do. I do hope that they, you know, have listened to you and choose to tune in a little more closely.

So, you know, the—as I was saying, we're not seeing this government look to a range of other approaches to improve affordability. We're seeing instead this giant tax giveaway, which we're here today to write this cheque, a \$349-million cheque, a huge portion of which is going to go to the wealthiest among us.

There are other alternatives that could've been considered, other affordability-improving approaches that we haven't seen this government decide to adopt. One good example of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are

out-of-control, above-'guineline' increase—rent increase issue that is making life less and less affordable for renters across this province. I just yesterday heard of yet another apartment building in St. James that is going to see an 18 per cent rent rate increase. Another apartment block—yet another.

We've seen apartment after apartment, and I know it's the same for members throughout this Chamber that are seeing their constituents experience massive spikes in their rent—18 per cent, another 18 per cent rent increase. That is not sustainable. That is going to absolutely crush the seniors, the people on disabilities and the people on fixed incomes living in that building in St. James that I referenced, as it has in every other building where we've seen these huge rent increases.

And this government had an opportunity—again, we're here today and really what we're talking about is ensuring that we help Manitobans in the midst of an affordability crisis. That's why the government says they're doing this.

Well, if we're talking about that, it's important to highlight that they're not taking these—this low-hanging fruit that's there that they could be using to help make life more affordable for Manitobans, and out-of-control AGIs are one of the biggest issues, as I referenced in my community. You know, the government is instead approving 100 per cent of those applications that are coming into the RTB—100 per cent of applications going in. We saw, because we did a FIPPA analysis, and we saw that out of 310 applications, 310 were approved and that amounted to over 200,000 apartments in Manitoba that were going to see these above-guideline increases. That's a huge increase in their cost of living.

We could have made it better. The government could have done something about this. They could have looked at the bill that we brought forward that would have helped to respond to this issue, that would have helped to moderate rent increases where they needed to happen. They didn't do it. That would have been a better thing that we could have considered here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I should add here, because I think it's worth mentioning, this is something that was revealed in their recent budget—you know, not only are we helping—not helping to make life more affordable for renters, we're actually making it worse and worse by not dealing with the AGI issue, but they're also making it worse and worse with the tax increase that's being applied to renters that we saw highlighted in this last budget. They've locked in that \$175 tax increase that was put

in place last year and then, you know, a lot of Manitobans were angry about that—rightfully so—our lowest income Manitobans were being penalized with that—with the loss of that tax credit; that increased their taxes by \$175 as renters.

And then, in this budget, this government turns around and tries to pitch it to them like they—now it's something that is being provided as a positive, it's as a benefit. They've tried to spin it around, say, no, no, we didn't increase your taxes by \$175; now that \$525 remaining tax credit is actually a new benefit. They've changed the name and they're trying to sell it as something that's new that's helping renters.

Manitobans see through that. Renters see through that. They're experiencing the pain that this government is creating for them, and they know what's going on and it's absolutely shameful that this government is piling on. That's a great example of how this government is making life worse, not better, for Manitobans.

You know, again, continuing on, talking about ways that we could—smarter ways that we could improve affordability for Manitobans, we could be looking at investing in a program of retrofits instead of this giant spend and giveaway, \$40 million to commercial property owners and others and a huge giveaway to the wealthiest among us who likely don't need this massive tax break. What about taking a portion of those funds and investing that into lowering energy bills for Manitobans in their homes?

We know how far retrofit investments can go in drastically reducing costs of living. For Manitobans, that's another huge opportunity that, again, this government isn't looking at. In fact, we've seen a huge moving away from those types of investments, and we've seen, instead, this government has been pocketing dollars that have come from the feds that were supposed to be used for those kinds of purposes that would have improved affordability for Manitobans, would have saved them thousands of dollars if this government had used the \$40 million that the federal government had sent to us for the purpose of investing in more home retrofits; we could have saved Manitobans, especially lower income Manitobans thousands of dollars. They chose not to do that.

So again, more solutions here to improve affordability instead of what this government is bringing forward. It's very, very concerning to see what this government is choosing to do.

\* (15:40)

And the last thing I think we need to—I just want to mention here in terms of alternatives is the minimum wage. It's shocking to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think everyone on this side of the House, and, frankly, it's wildly embarrassing to this government that we are about to be the last in the entire country for our minimum wage rate. We are going to have the lowest minimum wage in all of Canada come fall.

How do these members go to sleep at night knowing that they're allowing Manitobans to go to work full time, you know, work as hard as they can to put in those hours and yet still never have that opportunity to get ahead for their families?

We can do something about that. That's something this government can help to respond to. It's an easy affordability improving mechanism. It's low-hanging fruit. We can help to make life more affordable by improving the minimum wage, going to a \$15 minimum wage. This government knows what needs to happen. They should be listening to Manitobans, listening to those who are advocating to improve this wage to ensure that Manitobans aren't forced to live in lives of poverty and to live without dignity, even though they're continuing to work full time and doing everything they can to support their families. That's not right. That's an easy thing we could be doing here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, you know, in terms of alternatives that this government could have considered, I'll leave it there. Point here is that there are lots of other ways that we could have absolutely looked at improving affordability for Manitobans.

I want to talk now a bit about what this \$349-million cheque that's being written means in terms of impacts on services for Manitobans. The reality is, as we've said many times here, this is a tax cut that disproportionately benefits the wealthy. We're gutting all of these revenues from our tax system. We're sending all these revenues out of Manitoba, and we're doing all this while our health-care system is struggling like never before.

My colleague from Union Station, earlier today in question period, highlighted our health-care system has never been in a worse state than it is right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's never been in a worse state. This giveaway of these funds of millions of dollars that we're sending out of province, that instead of spending it on health care we're shooting out of the

province, it's almost criminal to me that we're allowing this to happen when our health-care system is absolutely in a state of crisis.

Every single dollar that is being sent out of province to Cadillac Fairview is a dollar that's not being spent in education and not being spent to help fix our crumbling health-care system to help people get the surgeries that they need, to make sure Manitobans don't keep being—getting shipped around the province to get care, away from their families, the people that love them; getting sent, you know, hundreds of kilometres away. And, of course, we'll never forget the 57 or 58 or so Manitobans that were sent out of province for care because of this government's underfunding of our health-care system.

An important thing to put in perspective relating to this question, this supplemental appropriation request, is that the additional 12.5 per cent that is being added on to the 25 per cent cut that was enacted last year has resulted in a \$115-million additional need to fund this tax cut. That \$115-million additional tax cut—again, a huge proportion of which is going to the wealthiest Manitobans, then, is going out of province and is going to commercial landlords—is more than the \$110 million that they committed to solving the backlog in our surgeries. It's more money.

I think that's very telling, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It's very telling that they're giving more money away, this disproportionate tax cut—again, to commercial, to the wealthiest among us, sending dollars out of province—and they're spending less on helping us solve our—the crisis in our surgeries, tests and so forth.

Manitobans are being forced to wait longer. That is wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is absolutely the wrong direction to be headed.

I don't know what this government thinks people care more about in this province, but I can tell you, if you talk to Manitobans, if they got out there, if the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) actually listened to Manitobans, I guarantee you what she would hear loud and clear is that they want to see this government investing adequately in our health-care system. They want to see this government invest in a way that ensures that Manitobans can get access to the health care they need when they need it, where they need it.

You know, I want to speak more about the impacts of this on our education system. I'm running out of time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unfortunately. I'd love to have much more time to discuss about why this is taking us in the wrong direction. But I am glad to have

had an opportunity to put some important words on the record about why this is the wrong direction to be headed in, why this benefits those who don't necessarily need to be benefited right now.

We should be working to ensure that the lowest income Manitobans, that middle-income families, that regular Manitobans are taken care of. This is taking us in the wrong direction.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Before I recognize the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, I am obliged to advise the House that the official Leader of the Opposition has designated his unlimited speaking time on Bill 39 to the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine).

So the regular 30-minute allotment will apply to the official—Leader of the Official Opposition, and the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I want to begin by congratulating—*[interjection]* Oh, yes, there we go.

I want to begin by congratulating the Dauphin Kings on becoming the MJHL champions. It was a hard-fought series. Steinbach Pistons put forward a great effort, but in game 7, it was the Kings who emerged victorious.

And it meant a little something to our family and friends because Nakodan Greyeyes is one of the great forwards for that Dauphin Kings team, and he is a hockey player that I've known basically since he was put here on Earth. And to watch him be able to grow into the amazing athlete and young man that he is was really something, so all the best to Nakodan and to his family and to all his teammates. I know that tonight they're having that march, they're having that rally, they're having that parade in Dauphin to celebrate their championship of the MJ, you know, crown, we could call it. And so I wish them all the best.

I hope the folks in Dauphin have a great time celebrating and, of course, wishing the Dauphin Kings all the best at the Centennial Cup in the next round. So want to acknowledge that.

Also want to acknowledge my colleague from Dauphin, who I know is cheering from his seat for these sorts of things, and I guess to also just gently remind my colleague from Steinbach that I travelled to Steinbach twice during that series to watch a couple of hockey games, and, again, my colleague from Springfield-Ritchot, I think, is rightfully worried

about Steinbach being on that target list of seats in the next election.

So strategic voting being what it is and strategic—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** *[inaudible]* being what they are, this is definitely something that I know he'll want to keep an eye on as we approach 2023.

Now, Mr. Acting—or Mr. Deputy Speaker, rather, you're probably wondering, what does all this hockey talk have to do with the supplemental appropriations? And it is a bit of a leap from one subject to the other, but maybe I'll make the connection by this. You know, Credit Union Place—obviously, it's a venue, building, that might fall under consideration for some of the measures we're debating here. And, of course, the arena in Steinbach similarly might fall under consideration there.

So a tenuous transition—as it was—made, I will now endeavour to speak on the subject matter at hand. Though I probably should, in terms of acknowledging the building there in the great constituency of Steinbach, I probably should put on the record that the folks that I met there were, you know, super kind and courteous and welcoming.

And, you know, the talk of the town, if you will, in addition to that championship series, was that apparently there's a new building coming for the Pistons in the next few years. So, certainly, I know there's a lot of good memory and nostalgia for the current arena, but looking ahead, maybe there'll be a new facility before too long, and then certainly some of the deliberations here today might factor into that.

\* (15:50)

So there it is. There's my opening gambit with respect to the MJHL, the building that—what the teams play in and how it pertains to the supplementary appropriations that we're talking about here today.

So, you've heard my call—my colleagues speak eloquently, I would say, about some of the priorities that I don't think are reflected of Manitobans when it comes to this supplementary appropriation. The supplementary appropriation itself, we should note, is a sign of how the PCs have moved away from fiscal responsibility.

You know, there was a time where that blue banner, that blue election sign, the blue flag, if you will, connoted or conveyed some measure of fiscal

responsibility. But the very fact that we're here debating this additional appropriation reflects the fact that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen) and the Treasury Board, and the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) by extension, didn't actually see fit to identify this money earlier in their budgetary process.

So where is the fiscal responsibility for a government that announces, you know, a huge, huge initiative? They essentially seem to be pinning their electoral hopes on this and then they neglect to earmark the money to pay for that signature accomplishment. Again, we voted on the budget already. We voted on a previous interim appropriation bill and neither of those measures actually saw fit to set this money aside to pay for such a hallmark big-picture announcement that this government made.

I hear the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) speaking out, and I would say that, you know, in his constituency, there are many families who are wondering why it is that an out-of-province corporation worth some \$20 billion is getting a cheque for \$1 million.

And, again, I think the question that my colleague from Radisson should be asking, not just of the Finance Minister but of the members of Treasury Board and the other members of the Cabinet, is—he should be asking, well, if the owners of Polo Park got \$1 million by way of a cheque for education property taxes last year, how much are they going to get this year, right? And I think this is an important consideration for us to be deliberating on here today.

Again, the commercial percentage is different from that, you know, earmarked for the homeowner. However, with the assessments increasing year over year, we know that a commercial landlord, a commercial property owner, will see a bigger cheque this year than they did last year.

So, again, one of the questions that I think we want to be considering here today as we reflect on the fact that this, you know, multi-, multi-billion-dollar company received a \$1-million cheque in the previous fiscal year, we should be asking ourselves, how much are they going to get in the way of corporate welfare this year? Again, is it going to be \$1.1 million? Is it going to be \$1.2 million? Is it going to be more than that? Are we talking 1.3 to 1.5 million here?

And again, when we talk about the priorities that Manitobans identify, you know, typically, we hear them say health care, far and away, No. 1 issue that I want to see addressed. Of course, the surgical backlog

is a major issue that we know requires attention and many solutions are being proposed there: lifting the cap on certain types of surgeries, but of course, lifting the cap is only a useful measure if there is the additional financial resources to pay for that increased volume of surgeries.

And let's not forget, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in order to facilitate an increased volume of surgeries that you actually have to have the human resources in place. You have to have the nurses who can staff the operating room. You have to have the nurses who can staff the recovery room. And really, if you're going to be, I guess, as progressive and smart as possible with managing the health-care system, you would probably want to put in resources in the form of aftercare, like physiotherapy, to ensure complete recovery for the patient.

That would be the smart thing to do, not only because it would ensure an adequate recovery for the patient, when it comes to things like a joint surgery, but it would also be smart, in terms of upstream investment for the health-care system because it would prevent re-injury. You know, we certainly don't want to see somebody who has a hip or knee surgery injure themselves and have to go through the painful process and wait again. But certainly, our health-care system should not endeavour to try and treat somebody one—once, only to fail them and then have that surgery forced to be a repeat procedure again in the future.

Of course, that's not the manner in which the PC government chose to manage our health-care system. They actually cut out patient physiotherapy, and, as a result, we do see downstream the impacts of those sorts of decisions. So, again, that's one issue in health care among many; that's a priority for Manitobans.

If we ask Manitobans again, we're doing a supplementary appropriation bill; basically, the government forgot to set aside enough money to pay for their programs this year, so they've come back and asked the Chamber for more money—what do you think these additional dollars should be spent on? You know, you say it in a very common sense, conversational way like that. If we ask, the government—say, listen, the government ran out of money, they need to come back and get some more dollars from the House, what do you think that money should be spent on? They'll say health care, not only because of surgeries, but also because of the waits in the emergency rooms, right?

We know that waits in the emergency rooms are the result of many factors, right? There's



long-standing, you know, issues around the health of Manitobans that we know need to get addressed. We can do some smart, upstream interventions in those fields as well, when we're talking about not only preventing illnesses like diabetes and hypertension and, you know, certain other conditions that people are living with in the community, but even what's called secondary or tertiary prevention, meaning, when somebody does become sick, what can we do to prevent them from becoming sicker? I think these would be smart interventions that could help us across the entirety of our health-care system.

Again, these are the sorts of programs that we have seen the PC government tend to cut: whether it's the special drugs program; whether it is that outpatient physio; you know, whether it is other community-based interventions such as the Healthy Child initiatives. But again, these are, I guess, the progressive and smart initiatives that you could undertake to help reduce strain on the health-care system writ large.

Also, we know that there are additional measures that could be taken in the emergency rooms to help alleviate the burden. However, the one thing you would not want to do is to actually close beds in the emergency rooms. You wouldn't want to close beds in the intensive-care units and, probably worst of all, you wouldn't want to alienate the staff and push them out of the health-care system such—to such an extent that if there was ever to be a medical emergency that was going to last something like a couple years in our province, that you'd have a difficult time hiring staff back into the health-care system.

You wouldn't want to do that; but in fact, that's exactly what this Progressive Conservative government did in announcing their health-care plan in 2017 towards seeing through the closures of the emergency rooms right through 2019. And then, of course, that fateful last summer before the pandemic when we saw the St. Boniface emergency room go on diversion repeatedly, basically throwing up the sign that they were so full they couldn't accept any additional patients.

So, again, those are some of the things you wouldn't want to do; the PC government did. How do you fix them? That's the question. Again, you need to look at a multi-pronged approach. Certainly, you need to address the human resources situation; you need to staff up the health-care system; you need to ensure that there are the ready resources there; certainly, human resources like nurses, but also the additional health-care professionals: respiratory therapists, lab techs and many others. And all these need to be

deployed in a way that is co-ordinated with the needs of the patients.

Let's not forget the needs around transportation; let's not forget the paramedics who would be transporting patients. Again, throughout the past year and a half, we've seen—whether it's, you know, medical aviation or we've seen long wait times for ambulances in rural settings—we have seen a ton of impacts when it comes to patient transportation.

So, again, that has to be part of the solution. You need to be training more paramedics, you need to ensure that the right resources are there to deliver health care to Manitobans when they need it; and you also need to be able to facilitate those visits of somebody arriving in an ambulance and delivering a patient to the emergency room.

These are the kinds of things that Manitobans want us to address. And if you were to say, you know, the government's going to come back and ask for more money because they didn't have the financial acumen to properly budget and, you know, manage the cash flow for the year, then Manitobans would say, okay, great, if they're coming back and asking for more money, let's please have some more money for health care. Unfortunately, that's not what we see here with this appropriation.

\* (16:00)

Well then, a Manitoban would probably say, why not—let's have some more resources for education, in that instance? And particularly at a time where we go to the Brandon School Division and there's eight fewer teachers working in the classroom this year. We go to Seven Oaks and there are not only fewer teachers; there's also fewer educational assistants working in the classroom.

And we know for a school division like Mystery Lake, which is where, you know—a school division located around Thompson. There, they've not only lost teachers this year; they have been losing teachers for years and years and years. They have been really, really harshly impacted by that, you know, practice of this PC government of reducing funding by 2 per cent when there is declining enrollment in an area. And so, going back some five, six years, you already saw Mystery Lake losing teacher-librarians, right?

And so that has an impact on students. Again, you have a young person who's an aspiring reader, aspiring writer, maybe they're passionate like I was in grade school about reading the latest books on Bigfoot and UFOs or whatever it is that they have in the library,

and the teacher-librarian works with them. They find a way to harness that maybe unfocused enthusiasm and direct it maybe—well, maybe we could talk a little bit about the pyramids, and then we could learn some history, and then maybe we could bring those historic lessons into the current context and talk about some social issues. You know, that's the sort of great work that teacher-librarians do, and I see that sort of work when I have the great privilege of visiting schools on occasion.

See, these sorts of folks going above and beyond to seek out materials that are going to engage the young mind and try and pull them in so that they can have them start taking steps on that ladder of engagement towards what we all hope is a path of lifelong learning.

And, again, I think that these sorts of resources—first of all, to kind of repair the damage of what the PC government has done to our education system, but also to help support these passionate and committed educators to help meet the challenges both today and tomorrow in our education system. I think that's what Manitobans want.

Again, I think Manitobans put a lot of trust into educators generally. We certainly saw ample opportunities during the pandemic to celebrate these initiatives that educators have gone on, everything from that teacher who's using a song of the day on the Zoom classroom to help make sure that the young people are in a good mood and have a good vibe and that they actually will stay engaged with the material even while they are learning remotely, right on to the educational assistant who is going above and beyond, packing lunches and delivering them to students that they know are in need, and they're worried about being able to get a nutritious meal during those periods of remote learning.

And so, I think Manitobans follow that trust that they have in educators up with the recognition that when you walk into a classroom today and you see that the physical layout of the classroom has changed—it's no longer all those rows of desks facing the front of the room. Instead what you have are chairs and tables where the young people are facing each other, thereby connoting a collaborative environment—a milieu, if you will—in which young people are invited to engage with one another directly and to talk constructively and have a free and open exchange of ideas.

I think the average person walking into a setting like that says, hey, things have changed here a little

bit, and I think it makes sense with what I'm hearing in the workplace because the experience of most Manitobans as they step into a professional environment is that the average HR professional, the average person doing headhunting, the average person doing recruiting is saying, you know what? The skills? We could probably teach a person skills, but what we really look for in the individual are those approaches around collaboration, the aptitude to be able to engage in a meaningful and constructive and collaborative discussion with their peers, and an ability to have the sort of interpersonal relationships facilitated by strong people skills that we know are the hallmarks of a successful individual today.

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

And so, certainly, I think that trust and recognition that the parent and grandparents feel in seeing that sort of work undertaken to date in the classroom, even in an environment of limited resources under this PC government, I think does lead that average parent or grandparent or family member to say, I wonder what else we could be doing. What else could we be doing if we properly resourced the education sector? Could we be engaging with young people in such a way that they would be able to have that can-do attitude to tackle the great issues of our time, whether they're social issues, environmental issues or economic issues?

And so, I think those are the sorts of issues that folks in the province would really like to see addressed when a government runs out of money and they send their Finance Minister running into the Chamber to ask for more, because they simply didn't have the financial aptitude to properly cash flow—game out the cash flow situation for the year.

But is that what the government is doing? Is the government coming here and saying, you know what, we ran out of money, so give us a few more dollars for health care and for education? No. That's not what they're doing.

Well then, certainly, given the existential threat that climate change presents, and given the tremendous amount of water that we see at the southern gates of the floodway, in the Interlake, in communities all throughout the Red River Valley again, in the Parkland now. Certainly, those additional resources would be for the climate crisis, you would say, you would venture a guess.

No, would be the answer. These additional resources are not being called upon to help us martial a

response to the flooding situation in Manitoba today. It's not being used to try and help us transition towards a more climate-friendly economy for tomorrow. In fact, what you actually see in this government's budgetary process is the further delegitimization and undermining of the importance of Manitoba Hydro to our long-term climate goals.

What I mean by that is this: Manitobans have a very unique situation here, where, unlike many other jurisdictions, we actually have the infrastructure and the electricity-generating capacity to be able to have a clean economy that also is an advanced economy and that continues to grow and power the creation of good jobs for generations to come here in our province.

Now, there are important challenges that we have to continue to address along that path, namely, reconciling the past and ongoing impacts of Manitoba Hydro on Indigenous communities, while also ensuring that Manitoba Hydro carries out a responsible economic development strategy province-wide, which is to say that they ensure that they treat their employees respectfully and ensure that fair wages are being paid to these Hydro employees who, again, do heroic work when it comes to repairing downed power lines or restoring power and other services to communities in times of emergency.

Certainly, all those functions must be carried out. But once they do, we really have something powerful that we can unlock here by way of Manitoba Hydro, to really prove to the world that you can have an economy that is growing, that is strong, that is healthy, while also doing your part to solve the climate crisis. And again, to me, I think that's something that a lot on our team are really passionate and energized by, and I think a lot of Manitobans would really get behind that idea, too.

But instead, what we see in the budgetary process of this government is that they continue to throw shade at Manitoba Hydro. They continue to pick fights with the workers at Manitoba Hydro, doing things like unnecessarily forcing them to take paid—take unpaid days off; again, trying to demand concessions at the bargaining table for wages; even trying to force some workers' jobs to be eliminated. You know, we're trying to have an economic recovery here; government's trying to get rid of jobs at one of the most important engines of economic growth in our province. Doesn't make a lot of sense.

But again, their budgetary plan also sees them increase rates on Manitobans time and time again. They've done it on the hydroelectric side through

legislation that they rushed through this House. They do it again through other means that, I think, are unprecedented in the history of Manitoba, effectively trying to work around the Public Utilities Board to negate the Public Utilities Board's oversight ability. And then, we also see it on the gas side.

And you add it all up: the average person is seeing their Hydro bill increase something like three times over the past six to eight months, right. During a time of cost-of-living increases, during the time of the price of living going through the roof in every venue that you can name. That's what going on and that's what the people of Manitoba see.

And so what does that do to the mindset of a Manitoban, right? Well, it undermines that public trust in Manitoba Hydro, and it delegitimizes the sphere of influence that Manitoba Hydro has to now go back to that same Manitoban and say, we want your help in powering that climate-friendly future that we all believe in.

And so, that's the real long-term danger. The short-term danger is that the PC government is going to make it more expensive for the average person to get by—more difficult for the average person to get by. But the long-term danger is that they're going to erode the public trust that we have in our most important Crown corporation, to the extent that it could actually destabilize the public confidence that we need to marshal some of these investments in the future of our economy.

\* (16:10)

We want a clean economy. We want it to grow. And part of that means we need a public in Manitoba that feels good about Manitoba Hydro.

And so, again, that's not what the PCs are doing. It probably would have been better if they would have pursued down—proceeded down that track, rather. But instead, that's not what they're bringing forward this supplementary appropriation for.

So, again, if you ask the average person out there, listen, the government ran out of money, didn't manage their cash flow well on the year, didn't prioritize this when it came time to voting through previous appropriation bills, didn't prioritize this when it came through to their budget. Basically, the government ran out of money; they're coming back to the House to ask for more money. The average person would say, okay, so we'd want it for health care, we'd want it for education, we'd want it for climate, we'd want it for affordability.

And we'd have to respond today, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, and say, well, unfortunately, no; that additional money is not for the health-care system. The additional money is not for the education system. The additional money is not to help solve the climate crisis; and no, the additional money is not to help you with the pain that you're feeling in the way of affordability when it comes time to paying your utility bills each and every month.

The enterprising Manitoban, I'm sure, would then ask, well, what exactly is it for? What is the government asking for this additional money for? And we're forced to say, well, they want to give another million dollars to the people who own the Polo Park mall.

I mean, I think we've all canvassed. We've all knocked on doors. I think we'd all think that's a tough sell on the doorstep, right? And then we'd have to say, well, actually, you know what, that's not entirely accurate. The government wanted to give the owners of Polo Park mall \$1 million last year. This year, they want to give them more. Right? At the time of increased needs in the health-care system, the education system, needs around affordability when it comes to your Manitoba Hydro bill and Autopac payments, et cetera.

So, again, the government, I think, has an uphill battle here in trying to convey to Manitobans why it is such a priority for them to give tens of millions of dollars to companies that are, you know, valued—that have valuations in the tens of billions.

You know, again, if we want to talk about the economic situation in Manitoba, not only is this government asking for more resources to send to these companies—you know, again, one prominent example has a market valuation north of \$20 billion—but they're also doing that at the same time that they refuse to increase the minimum wage to a living wage, right? So the average person on minimum wage—again, Stats Canada says that on average, over the past six or so years, there was about 31,000 people in the province working on minimum wage. So those folks can put in full-time hours—whether you define that as 37.5 or 40 hours per week—they can put in full-time hours and still live below the poverty line, right?

So you have the people, some of whom will be working in the Polo Park mall, who are not able to earn enough money to pay their rent and feed themselves, while the owners of the mall who are not based here in Manitoba are getting an extra million dollars.

Again, we sometimes say things across the aisle here in the Chamber, and you could say whatever you like to me across the aisle, but if I had \$1 million, I would probably give it to the worker who lives here in Manitoba. If I had an extra million dollars, I'd probably give it to the health-care system. If I had an extra million dollars, I'd probably give it to the school child who's going hungry right now. How far would we have to go to find a child who's going without a meal, right? Like, just a matter of a few city blocks. And not only would it be a few steps away, we could also go to the schools that are the furthest from the Legislature in Manitoba and find children in need. What about our responsibility to those young people?

Again, say what you will about me; say what you will about others on our team. If we had that extra million dollars, I think we'd like to see it go towards solving the climate crisis. You know, there was a time when there was a person used to sit across from me here in the Chamber; his name was Brian Pallister. It's a name that you won't hear any PC member saying aloud these days, even though they all owe their seats to him. And he used to make a point that when you borrow money—in, you know, Brian Pallister's telling—when you borrow money, you're borrowing it from the next generation. So what does it tell you about a government that is borrowing money right now to give a million-dollar cheque to a company that is headquartered not in Manitoba, right?

And why are they doing this move? Well, again, I guess there's some sort of political strategic calculation that million-dollar cheques for folks on Bay Street in Toronto is going to somehow help the PCs get elected in Manitoba the next time around, but I would invite them to consider what, you know, Brian Pallister's saying would reflect upon their actions here today.

Why is it that they want to borrow a million dollars from a future generation of Manitobans and send it out of province, not to benefit our health-care system, not to benefit our education system, not to help us solve the climate crisis, not to help anybody in this province with affordability but instead to bolster the bottom line of a company in another jurisdiction?

So, again, prairie populism, pragmatism, blue-collar work ethic or just common sense, you can define it however you like, but I think, in this instance, it's very, very clear. And that is that the resources that are deployed by the provincial government should prioritize the needs of the people of this province.

So, we return to those top priorities. Again, we could elucidate many more, but for now, I'll focus on health care, education, climate and affordability. And so 'those' are some of the needs that we've identified for the people of Manitoba.

So, I guess what I'm trying to say is go, Dauphin Kings, and I hope you do tremendously well at the Centennial Cup in the next round, and I look forward to further deliberation on this bill.

Thank you very much for your consideration, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I'm grateful for the opportunity to put some words on the record pertaining to this appropriation bill.

I know the member from Morden, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), is especially frustrated that members of the opposition are each taking our allotted time to speak, but I hope he appreciates that I stand today speaking on behalf of my constituents in Wolseley and certainly on behalf of other residents of Manitoba who expect me and each of us on this side of the House to do our job and to ask the questions that they may not be able to ask or that they may not be getting straight answers for.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government's spin on this act is that it's about somehow helping low-income Manitobans while the cost of living is rising. And it's wild to me that the government doesn't realize how easy it is for Manitobans to see through them and the spin. I mean, if helping Manitobans was actually part of the government's agenda, we wouldn't be debating this bill well past the bill deadline date.

As other colleagues have pointed out, the—this government is in chaos with an obvious lack of leadership or there wouldn't be such a last-minute scramble to approve the funds required to send out their tax rebate cheques. They would've included this in the budget, as they should've done.

And none of this is a surprise. This government has made so many mistakes. Every day, there's a new headline about financial mismanagement, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) forgetting to report a \$31-million real estate sale; the Premier spending on her campaign before she was legally allowed to; the government cancelling hundreds of positions in the health-care system just before a pandemic; even the government giving half a million dollars to the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) to grow his business while overlooking multiple 'spall' business owners—several women who own small businesses in my constituency

and Union Station, one in particular who actually had the same business model but was overlooked because there was no opportunity to even apply for these dollars.

So, we have all these examples of financial mismanagement. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitobans know that borrowing huge sums of money to give a rebate to Manitobans, millions of dollars to Manitobans who may not even need financial help, is not in the best interest of Manitoba. The largest single tax rebate last time around went to a homeowner in Tuxedo—so, a neighbour and constituent of the Premier.

\* (16:20)

We know that these tax rebates disproportionately reward the wealthy, including many PC Party donors, and these rebate cheques have never been about education and, in fact, will contribute to defunding education in Manitoba. Manitobans understand that this is not going to improve their schools. This is not going to hire a teacher or more educational assistants. This is not going to reduce class sizes. This is not going to bring back English as an additional language teachers. And it isn't going to do anything to help kids recover from the pandemic.

This isn't going to make our tax system fairer. In fact, it does the exact opposite. The government has called this an affordability measure, and this is absolutely not that. There is millions and millions of tax dollars leaving Manitoba as a result of absentee landlords and out-of-province landlords. This doesn't help Manitobans' economy. If that money isn't here, it's not being used for goods and services, it's not circulating throughout the economy and it's not creating new jobs. And this money certainly is not going into the education system.

You know who else is not being helped? All of the Manitobans who are renters. Many constituents in my community are renters, but I know there are likely renters in every constituency across the province. But over and over again, this government's policies show they just don't care about renters. If you don't own property, you don't count, as far as this government is concerned.

So, renters used to get a \$700 rebate on the education property tax. That amount has been reduced by \$175. While renters exist across the economic continuum, many are in a lower income bracket. Many are making minimum wage and struggling to get by. But last year and this year, the government has

literally taken \$175 out of the pockets of these renters and made life harder.

If the government was serious about affordability, they would make sure that low-income Manitobans saw a much higher percentage of that \$350 million. If the government was serious about affordability, they would stop the practice of approving all above-guideline rent increases. If they were serious about affordability, they would raise the minimum wage to a living wage. If they were serious about affordability, they would not be raising the hydro rates at the Cabinet table.

I recognize that property taxes may not be ideal or most equitable way to pay for education, yet this government's cuts to education year after year really leave school divisions with no choice. The education property tax has been used to pay for everything from mental health supports at school, reading recovery programs, reconciliation practices, such as an elder in the school system and millions of dollars towards school nutrition programs.

Last year, due to this government limiting school boards' ability to raise money through property taxes, the Winnipeg School Division was forced to cut a \$210,000 milk subsidy. This subsidizes milk to make it more affordable to students at Winnipeg School Division so that they can have something nutritious, something maybe with a little bit of protein in it at lunch time.

Honestly, Mr. Speaker, this is so shameful. I don't know how some members of this House sleep at night; \$210,000 to subsidize milk for kids all across the largest school division in this province, and the school division was forced to cut that subsidy, a subsidy that has been in place since the '80s.

And you know what, at one point, the subsidy had to be reduced so there wasn't as great of a subsidy because of cuts made by this government. I was a chair of the Finance committee when we made that very difficult decision. But now it's been cut completely, directly related to the actions of this government.

Another example of local decision making funded by property taxes is the nursery program at Winnipeg School Division. This program started in one school in 1965, more than 55 years ago. At that time, Winnipeg School Division introduced nursery in the poorest neighbourhood with the least resources, and bit by bit, nursery schools were added through the division until they were in all division schools by 1999.

Residents who live where I live and in the area that I represent, and other residents who live in this division, who pay taxes in the division and who send their children to these schools, have reinforced their decision year after year for 55 years, because they believed that nursery school was valuable for the children and the communities that this division serves.

Nursery school is not a luxury item, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Preschool research data shows that the early years of development to age six set the base for competent-competence and coping skills that affect learning behaviour and health throughout one's life, and preschool education can produce substantial gains in children's learning and development.

Additional research shows that the investments in nursery school actually save governments money. Imagine that—imagine this government making a decision to invest in people in a way that would save money—instead of borrowing money—down the line. It saves governments money because when they invest less in special education or in future criminal justice dollars, \$1 invested now in nursery schools saves \$17 in the future, according to at least one large-scale study.

Yet, nursery school is at risk in the Winnipeg School Division. It's been something that's been up for consideration to be cut over the last few years because of what this government has done around property taxes and around limiting school divisions' ability to raise money through property taxes and not replacing the amount they've cut and, in fact, increasing the amount that goes to school divisions. So nursery schools are at risk of being cut, and full-day kindergarten has been cut from Winnipeg School Division for next year due to this government's underfunding of education and cutting of property taxes as a funding source.

Of course, we know—and you've already heard this in the House—I know that my colleague, my former trustee colleague, Mark Wasyliv, has also talked very much about the—where the bulk of school board budgets go—80 per cent of school board budgets is in salaries. We know that, when there's a fair and free bargaining process, salaries go up year after year, maybe as much as 2 per cent a year, and that's an expense that we need—that government, the Manitoba government—has to stay on top of. They have to increase their funding to schools in order to meet the needs of salaries, which is the most important investment in the school system.

But we also know that the cost of lots of other things goes up as well: school supplies, paper, the cost of heat for schools, you know, potentially the, you know, costs for snow clearing and other things that need to happen. We know that there's—you know, we needed to see investments in terms of cleaner air in schools. These are all ongoing expenses that are only going to go up year after year.

And instead, this government just continues to cut funding for schools and have invested nothing new. They've also invested nothing new to help students recover from the pandemic and this is critical and shameful, because we can't just keep doing education exactly the way we did it, you know, six years ago or 10 years ago—with less money, of course, because new government, less money—but we can't just keep doing education that way. A lot of families, a lot of students have been through some pretty significant challenges over the last two years—or, the last two and a half years, and this needs to be recognized.

We know that right now, many school boards are actually being forced to cut teaching positions because of the bad decisions and underfunding of this government. When I was a school trustee, we—one of the biggest, greatest fears was to actually cut teaching positions. We did everything else we could and juggled in every possible way to avoid cutting a teacher. We didn't want to cut education assistance either—these are critical roles in schools—but now, school boards are being forced to cut teaching positions only because, and completely because, of the bad decisions and underfunding by this government. Even as this government signs the cheques to send rebates to their rich friends and corporations, schools are suffering, students are suffering and teachers are losing jobs because of this.

\* (16:30)

You know, it seems like this government just can't learn a lesson no matter how big their mistakes are. Last year, Brian Pallister sent out signed cheques that cost Manitobans an additional \$1.3 million. Madam Speaker, \$1.3 million could fund the entire nutrition program to all Winnipeg area schools. That was an incredibly irresponsible decision and a very expensive attempt to buy popularity, and we know how well that worked because the man whose name is on that cheque, you didn't even want to keep him around, let alone Manitobans wanted to keep him around.

So that was an absolutely terrible financially political error, but also just completely irresponsible to Manitobans and to schools. It's irresponsible to try

to buy popularity and the support of Manitobans and investing \$1.3 million in postage stamps when children are starving. But that's what our government did and that's what our government is going to continue to do.

This bill does nothing for renters long-term, and it reduces the rebate they did have. This tax change benefits the wealthy more and shifts the burden to lower income Manitobans. This is really a tax cut for the rich that will hurt regular Manitobans and their families as it fundamentally shifts the future tax burden onto middle-class and low-income Manitobans. You know, Manitobans who are renting are the same people who've been the hardest hit by the pandemic: seniors, women, specially single parents, Black, Indigenous, racialized Manitobans, young people, people with disabilities and other low-income Manitobans.

I've mentioned before that I was a renter until I was in my mid-30s, and I remember—I talked about this last year—how much the property tax helped me—the rebate, sorry—when we were, you know, struggling in jobs that didn't pay well, especially when we were just starting a family. So I understand what this loss will be like for people. And I don't want you to get me wrong because, unlike members on the other side of the House, I actually love paying taxes. I love supporting health care, education and social equity programs.

I should say I love paying taxes when the government is responsible and does the right things with my money that I've earned. I do consider paying taxes a privilege because I live in a society that asks everyone to pay their share, to take care of the greater good. But fair taxation strategies are important and they should take ability to pay into account. These tax rebates simply make the rich richer and create a greater burden to those with the lowest income.

This Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), just like her predecessor, Brian Pallister, think that Manitobans can be bought. But I think that voters are smarter than that. Manitobans know this government is failing, and we see the government scrambling to find support in order to hold on to their positions a year from now. But the majority of Manitobans are not the ones being bought by this rebate, and the majority will indeed make their thoughts known in 2023, an election day that can't come fast enough; at least, that's what I hear literally every time I'm out speaking with constituents in the community.

So I still have some more time. I've kind of covered a lot of the problems that exist with this bill. Yes, I know my colleagues on this side of the House absolutely want to hear my voice for another 11 minutes and 49 seconds and I will not let them down, so I'm just going to—thank you, friends. Thank you.

I've covered some of the issues where—how education is being hurt, although I could go on about that for a long time. But I want to also speak a little bit about how this government, if there—if they were serious about the financial crisis happening for Manitobans, there's some other things that we would've seen different in Budget 2022. So, I just want to come back to that a little bit.

We know that in Budget 2022, they reduced training supports for industry and manufacturing. They reduced funding below pre-pandemic levels. And the pandemic made it clear that public health and the health of our economy are bound together. At many stages of the pandemic, business leaders were openly critical of the lack of appropriate business supports from the PC government. Many business owners took on debt, and others were forced to close for good.

And that's why it's so disappointing to see that training supports for industry and manufacturing were cut by millions of dollars. This funding is now less than what it was before the pandemic. Manitoba's GDP is running behind the Canadian average, and we want a clear plan to invest in workers and the economy.

One important way the PC government can do that is by increasing the minimum wage. This year's budget does nothing to address the minimum wage, which is very soon—excuse me. I'm just going to have a sip of water but I'm still talking. This year's about to be the worst in the country. That's so shameful, and it's got to be embarrassing for members of this House to know that Manitoba will, you know, surely have the most difficult time filling jobs.

You know, some of the minimum wage jobs that I see coming across my plate—because I'm looking—I have a daughter who's trying to find work, and it's incredible to me some of the minimum wage jobs that I see out there, or jobs maybe paying 15 or 20 cents more than the minimum wage because they're trying to attract someone, but with an impossible list of criteria that even a young person who's had a lot of experience in other jobs already and been out of high school for a few years can't even hope to fulfil that job because they don't have the training yet. And even

those jobs are paying minimum wage, or just barely above minimum wage. I have no idea how this government thinks that young people can pay rent, put gas in their cars if they happen to even own a vehicle, even buy bus passes or put food on the table with such a ridiculous, low minimum wage.

And we also know that the most people living on minimum wage are single parents with children, a lot of women; sometimes, you know, two-parent families where both people are making minimum wage but their family continues to live in poverty because of decisions made by this government.

The other thing that was missing from Budget 2022 are plans to address the threat to jobs in northern Manitoba. You know, getting a little rebate cheque, you know, getting a slight—having to pay slightly less property taxes as a renter or getting, you know, a rebate cheque on your home if you live in the North is not useful if your job is at risk, if you aren't going to be employed soon. So unlike the—under—sorry, under the PC government, Manitoba went from ranking second best for mining investments to 37th, according to a study done by the Fraser Institute.

And northern Manitoba has faced thousands of job losses. I know that my colleague from—the MLA for Flin Flon does such a good job of representing some of these concerns, but I'm happy to echo his concerns today because I know that his constituents getting a little property tax rebate cheque that's decimating education isn't useful if they don't have work, right?

So, in Flin Flon, HudBay's 90-year-old mining operation in Flin Flon closure affects hundreds of people. And in Thompson, hundreds more have been laid off due to the closures of the nickel processing plant and the Birchtree Mine being placed on care and maintenance.

\* (16:40)

The PC government is playing games with these mining communities. They stopped providing funds through the Manitoba Mineral Development Fund for communities impacted by shutdowns and instead blamed communities like Thompson for their circumstances. The PC government continued to make excuses for why they couldn't help the city of Thompson, and then there was an \$11 million in the Mining Community Reserve Fund that the government refused to spend any of it to help the citizens in Thompson or in Flin Flon.



Then the PC government announced an end to the fund altogether and replaced it with the Manitoba Mineral Development Fund, operated by the Chambers of Commerce. In two and a half years, they have approved funding of just \$3.5 million for mining exploration and development. So if the government is serious about wanting to help people with affordability, they need to look at rural and northern Manitoba as well and make sure that they are, in fact, making investments in jobs and taking care of people in these communities.

I'm going to just find my additional notes. I think since I still have a few minutes left, I don't think this government has heard enough from us about our concerns about health care. So this is an opportunity to point out that—how the millions and millions of dollars that this government is planning to send out in rebate cheques, planning to send to corporations, planning to send to out-of-province landlords actually could have been invested in health care.

In fact, I think that even though it should have been involved—it should have been part of the budget. If this government had come to us with this appropriation bill after the budget was passed and told us, you know what, we want to invest an extra \$350 million in health care, huh, I bet that bill would have passed that day because that's the kind of investments that we want to see.

We know that, you know, this PC government has rushed closures that have resulted in a health-care system on the brink, and their cuts to intensive-care unit were a terrible, terrible mistake. The IC—the 18 ICU beds that were cut, that were consolidated and that are desperately needed now. The 56 in-patient surgical beds that were cut right before COVID came to Manitoba. And they closed 124 hospital beds in Winnipeg in the last four years. We know it will take years and years and years to repair this damage.

A friend of mine who works in the health-care system, after experiencing some of what was happening at Grace Hospital a couple of weeks ago, to me said, I think it's going to take a generation to repair the damage that's been done to the system. And, you know, it's devastating to think about that. And, you know, this is a man who was working very hard around the clock trying to help with the—what was going on at Grace Hospital. He has young children, and he just can't even imagine, you know, that they'll be adults before the repairs can be corrected.

We know that our hospitals are starved for capacity and that we continue to have patients who have

been transported many, many kilometres from home. Our hospitals simply don't have what they need, and this government is refusing to give it to them. They're starving education and they're starving health care.

They closed Misericordia urgent care in my constituency and that—particularly during the pandemic, so often people just had no idea where they were supposed to go when they were sick or injured. And that happens even now, you know. The choices are—you know, people get on their laptop and they—or their computer or their phone, and they look up and see, okay, it's a six-hour wait here; it's a four-hour wait there. Oh, maybe if I drive all the way across the city, you know, to Victoria, maybe it's only a, you know, a three and a half hour wait there. And then they get there and, of course, now the wait is six or eight hours. And that's really just a—that's not a real number because that's just a number for—to get to triage. That doesn't tell you anything about how long you're going to wait until you actually receive care.

And, of course, I'm—you know, I'm being very, like, Winnipeg-centric right now. If I look at my colleague down the way, I know that if you're in one of our northern communities, you know, you might—I don't know how long the wait's going to be, but I know you might not even have hot water at the end of the day, when you do finally get seen.

So, we know that this hospital—the wait times task force had warned that closing ERs would cause surges elsewhere, and that's exactly what has happened: a wait-time surge to their highest in a decade, with wait times at HSC at 10 hours, the highest waits for that facility on record.

And, you know, the task—a task force member even said in the media that it was a profound failure of leadership. And that's—I mean, that's an easy quote to remember, because I think when we look back and think on the pandemic, what we will remember, what Manitobans will remember, is the profound failure of leadership in this province. When we look at our health-care system, that's what will stand out.

And I'm getting really nervous that when we look back at our education system, the profound failure of leadership will be to blame for 'crises' we can't even, you know, see yet. Some of us can predict where it's going, but it maybe isn't showing just yet because the severe cuts have just started to happen.

They're—you are—this government is doing to the education system exactly what they did to the health-care system, and I'm afraid for—you know, for the next

generation. If it takes a generation to heal the education system in the same way that it will for the health-care system, then many of us, our grandchildren are going to be who suffer; and for some of the younger members of this House, your children will suffer.

So, on that note, I will wrap up and make space for my next colleague to speak.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I appreciate the opportunity to follow my colleague, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor), the—you know, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) here today, as well as others. And I really do think that—I'm very proud of the level of debate that's being put on the record here today and the seriousness with which our caucus is taking this issue and ensuring that, you know, hopefully, through debate, through continued conversations with the government, we can better help understand why exactly they're taking this route when it comes to this particular budgetary measure.

Because, you know, I can tell you, I was out this weekend, a great Manitoba weekend, spent lots of time talking to friends and neighbours and folks who—quite frankly, from all over the city. And, over and over again, this issue came up, unprompted.

And really, what folks were asking me about was the link between, you know, how is it that we are, at the same time, seeing so many cuts and freezes and reductions in education, that we are now contemplating going down this road, which was really set in motion by the previous premier, by Premier Pallister.

And, you know, I had to explain to them: this is a policy that was brought forward by Pallister in a time when, you know, he was desperate to rescue his legacy. He saw the writing on the wall. I guess maybe there was, you know, behind-the-scenes pressures from his caucus to get—you know, get on a plane and head off to Costa Rica, and he was desperate to come up with something that would paint him in a positive light.

And so, he cooked up this idea here about offering these cheques with his name signed on it, you know, a nice little write-up about him, about how generous he was being about giving this tax rebate back. And it was given at a time when—you know, this was before the global pandemic. So, you know, while we at the time cautioned that government that you can't give away provincial money, you know, provincial revenues, without a way to fund education over the long

term. You know, it was at a time when the government, you know, they felt, oh, we're going to be able to meet all our other targets and we're still going to be able to rebate this money.

Well, the world's changed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The world's changed in so many ways, we know, since then and, you know, not least of which was the change in premiers.

And you had a new Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) who came in and said, I'm going to do things completely different, I'm going to be somebody totally different and I'm going to be somebody who sets their own course here in the province but, in fact, is following some of the worst policies set in motion by the Pallister government and continuing on down that road.

\* (16:50)

And this is a perfect example of one of those particular policies. It's one that, as I said, was foolhardy at the time, but since then has become completely irresponsible and reckless when it comes to our economic future here in this province, and I'll go into more reasons why that is.

But what I would suggest is that, overall, you know, big picture—a 10,000-foot view of this government—it's a government that has completely lost the plot when it comes to who they are and what they represent for Manitobans.

As I said, you now, Premier Pallister, for all the reasons why Manitobans weren't happy with his performance as premier, at least—at the very least—they understood his motivating factor, and that was to balance the budget at all costs—to cut education, to cut health care, to cut services, to cut transfers to municipalities, to cut our infrastructure budget—it didn't matter what department of government it was—he was willing to cut, cut, cut with the sole goal of reaching that balanced budget dream that he had.

Well, I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he never made it. He never accomplished it, and members opposite, you know, like to point to one year where they said, well, we're going to balance the budget, but then COVID happened. Well, COVID happened before the budget was tabled, so, you know, to imagine that you're going to pay off your mortgage at the same time that your roof is falling in, you know, really, I think is obviously disingenuous.

But that was his main goal. And again, he was willing to not only cut in those departments and cut

the services that Manitobans counted on; he was, in fact, willing to raise taxes to get—to accomplish his goal.

One of the first acts of this government—you know, I know it was a long time ago and maybe even some members weren't in the Chamber at that time, but they certainly remember that one of the first acts that this government, in 2016 when they came into power, was to remove the property tax rebate that seniors were receiving, right? And, you know, members opposite said, you know, we're going to make every senior in this province pay more money right now. We—you know, regardless of where you live, regardless of your needs, we're going to make you pay more money.

The folks will—in the Chamber, will remember that in 2016, again, one of the first acts of this government was to remove the education rebate program for our students and to allow tuition to go up by cutting funding and transfers to universities.

We know that this government was proud to—you know, last year, bill 71—they were proud to jack up the rates for Manitobans who are renters, right? Take away their tax rebate, and effectively increase their tax loads.

And, again, every Manitoban has seen their municipal taxes rise because the transfers of the operating funding to municipalities has been reduced year over year—or frozen year over year, effectively a cut, year over year by this government.

So, again, the premier—and there were lots of people who were critical, including us, of each one of these tax increases and these cuts to departments, but at least the premier had a vision. And that was his vision, to—you know, people—profit before people—it didn't matter; he was willing to put money ahead of everything else, any other considerations, and move forward on that.

So, again, here comes the new Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), says I'm going to do things completely different. You know, tries to sound different, tries to carry herself differently in terms of how she operates, you know, meeting with folks or being more available to the media. That was short-lived, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But there was a time when she was trying to convince Manitobans that she would be different.

And has she been different? Has she actually acted differently than the previous government? No. In fact, she keeps the cuts that we've seen. She keeps

these increases to taxes, but now she says, well, the budget, well, you know, the budget will balance itself, is what she's saying now, you know. No clear timeline, no clear plan on how to manage our provincial finances and just sort of sets it out into the near-distant future, as maybe some members opposite would say, that we're going to deal with the budget tomorrow; we'll deal with our deficit tomorrow; we'll deal with our debt tomorrow; and completely forgets that that was their entire modus operandi on the other side.

That was the one selling feature, that they could go to Manitobans, they could knock on the doors and they could say, trust us, we're going to be good with your money. That was all they had. That was all they had. They said, we're going to cut health care, but at least we're going to balance the budget; we're going to cut your education, but at least we'll balance the budget. That is—that was their entire platform in 2019. That's all they had at the doorstep, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But this new Premier comes in and she says, well the budget doesn't matter—

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** Order.

It's getting a little loud in here. Could the members please listen to the speaker.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Well, you know, I appreciate, actually, the feedback because I hope that the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) and others go to the doorstep now and they say, you know, that billion-dollar deficit that we imagined the NDP was going to create, well, we're doing it now, we're doing it. For the second year in a row, billion-dollar deficits, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And, you know what, and I implore them to go to the doorstep—to go to the doorstep—and defend those billion-dollar budgets.

And how are we getting—how are we accomplishing these billion-dollar deficits from this government? How are we accomplishing that? Well, by tax measures like what we're seeing today: two—sorry, \$360 million added to our provincial deficit because of this government. Two—\$360 million added to our deficit because this government has decided to cut cheques once again.

Now, they're going to say that this is about affordability. Now, we've got a lot to say about affordability. In fact, I think it's mentioned, I think it's brought up in question period almost every single day. And we've got some concrete measures that could be taken today by this government. In fact, you know, measures that's not going to cost \$360 million, but

targeted measures that could actually make a difference for the average Manitoban and certainly the hard-working people that live in Transcona, that live in St. Johns, that live in Concordia. Those folks are looking for relief and they could get that from lower hydro rates, they could get that from a higher minimum wage, they could get that from, you know, increases to supports. There are a number of ways that those folks could be helped in terms of affordability.

But does the government do that? No. No. What do they do? They take that \$360 million of Manitobans' money and they write cheques, and they don't just write cheques to the residents of Manitoba. In fact, they write it also to the big corporations in the province, corporations whose head offices are in Toronto or Calgary, not here; maybe international, maybe they're somewhere else.

They write those cheques disproportionately to those folks, to the folks who don't need it. To homeowners who aren't asking for a tax break from this government. They're asking for better education. They're asking for fully funded health care and fully funded municipalities, that's what they're asking for. But this government goes ahead and writes this cheque, puts us further behind in terms of our deficit, and doesn't actually help the people who deserve it, the people that need relief here today.

So, the top 10 per cent of the—of that are receiving this rebate are getting four times as much as the average homeowner in terms of a rebate. That's not fair and that's not what Manitobans are asking for.

They've completely lost the plot on the other side. They continue to cut like they're Brian Pallister's government, and at the same time, they're going into bigger and bigger deficits, trying to cut cheques, trying to build some kind of, you know, support for the government, but that's not happening.

And, I just note that it's—we're on day three, I think, of this debate and, you know, the best the government can do—I mean, they're losing in the media. The best they can do is, I think, the Finance Minister tweets once a day and, you know, he gets a couple likes from some backbenchers and that's about the extent of the media rollout. Meanwhile, I'm out at community events, I'm out in the neighbourhoods and people are coming to me, unprompted, saying, why are we cutting in education at the same time that we're running higher deficits to cut cheques to companies like Cadillac Fairview?

It's beyond the pale, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it makes no sense and I think they're going to feel it at the polls.

If they would ever want to go to an election, I think we're ready to go. Let's talk to Manitobans.

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) will have 17 minutes.

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

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