

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTomARE, 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

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 38—The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Good afternoon, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources and Northern Development (Mr. Fielding), that Bill 38, The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act, be now read for a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Liquor service licences are for locations such as restaurants and bars where liquor is consumed on site. Currently, the framework for these licences is complicated. Many licences have requirements related to offering entertainment, unique hospitality experiences or food service, none of which relate to the safe and responsible service of liquor. Under the proposed legislative amendments, the number of categories would be reduced to provide for a more flexible framework that would allow for new business models to become licensed.

In addition, Madam Speaker, last year our government passed amendments to allow for the delivery of liquor with takeout and delivery of food orders by dining rooms and lounges. This bill will expand that program to all liquor service licences, not just dining rooms and lounges, providing them the option to sell liquor with takeout and delivery.

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

Bill 41—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice, that Bill 41, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Squires: Bill 41 will amend The Child and Family Services Act as a key step to support the realization of Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services.

These amendments will provide Indigenous governing bodies and their service providers with access to information about children and families receiving child and family services. The amendments will also authorize the transfer of service responsibility, enable the use of the provincial CFS electronic information system and the Child Abuse Registry and protect certain information shared under this act.

Additionally, Bill 41 includes clarifications regarding the information sharing required to best support children receiving CFS services and clarify the use of the Child Abuse Registry by provincially mandated agencies.

These changes will ensure the seamless transition of services from provincial CFS agencies to service providers operating under Indigenous laws, ongoing province-wide service co-ordination and the continued safety of children.

I am pleased to present this bill to the House for consideration.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Madam Speaker: The honourable First Minister—[*interjection*] Oh, and I would just indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable First Minister please proceed with her statement.

Ukrainian Refugees Arrive in Manitoba

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): I rise in the House today to speak about our government's unwavering support for the Ukrainian people.

For over 150 years, Manitoba has welcomed thousands of Ukrainians to build a life right here in our province. As the Ukrainian people fight for their country and their freedom, our province has once

again become a beacon of hope and a home away from home for families in need.

I want to acknowledge Mr. Oleksandr Shevchenko, consul general of Ukraine in Canada, and our good friend Joanne Lewandoski, president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, Manitoba council, who are here with us today in the Speaker's gallery. Thank you for being here today.

Madam Speaker, I was honoured to stand with both of these incredible individuals yesterday, along with many of my colleagues here in Manitoba and across the country, to welcome 328 Ukrainians arriving on the first chartered flight from Ukraine to Canada. It was an incredibly emotional and heart-warming day for everyone.

Yesterday's flight brings the total number of Ukrainian newcomers to Manitoba to nearly 1,000, with more families arriving every day to our James Richardson international airport and to our welcome centre.

I had the honour yesterday of speaking with three generations of Ukrainians just from one family, all seeking refuge from this brutal war of aggression. Leaving behind other family members and loved ones to fight against this unjust war. I can only imagine, Madam Speaker, how difficult this must be for each and every one of them.

They may not know how long they will be here, but they were filled with joy as they walked into our provincial welcome centre yesterday. It was a place where they could feel connected to Manitoba's special bond with Ukraine for the first time, while getting their health cards and welcome packages.

They were greeted by dozens of volunteers from all across this great province of ours who were there to help them through this difficult journey for they and their families.

To those volunteers, we thank you. Without your hard work and perseverance, none of this would have been possible.

Manitobans can learn about these efforts and what they can do to help by visiting manitoba4ukraine.ca.

We can do great things, Madam Speaker, when we work together, and I encourage all Manitobans to get involved in this critical relief effort.

To all Ukrainians who have chosen to come to Manitoba, we support you with open hearts and open arms. Manitoba is ready to be your home away from

home. Our government will be with you every step of the way from now until the end of this unjust war.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Madam Speaker, all our hearts were warmed to hear that the first plane of Ukraine refugees arrived at the Winnipeg Richardson international airport yesterday. This province has a long history of welcoming refugees from Ukraine, and the welcome they received yesterday continues to show Manitobans' support for Ukrainian newcomers.

But we know that their arrival in Manitoba is just beginning. There's still much work ahead to get them settled into this province. Thankfully, people like Emily Halldorson, the Ukraine response co-ordinator for the Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations, are doing just that. We commend her and all those doing resettlement work here in Manitoba.

Sadly, while Emily and others are working day in and day out to help resettle these refugees, this government is failing to do their part. The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) is happy to welcome Ukrainian children in front of cameras at the airport but hasn't bothered to recruit additional full-time settlement—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —co-ordinators to help resettle them. She's more than willing to glad-hand—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —Ukrainians on Vyshyvanka Day, but hasn't increased humanitarian aid to Ukraine during the nation's darkest moment. And while she'll wax eloquent in this Chamber about her government's commitment to Ukrainian refugees, she has yet to ensure that they don't experience any more delays with their medical exams and updated work permits.

Finally, I reiterate our call to set up an all-party committee to guide the government's resettlement efforts. Hopefully, after meeting with newly arrived refugees yesterday, the Premier has realized that it isn't a time for partisanship, but instead a moment that demands an all-hands-deck approach. I will continue to urge her to do more to ensure that Ukrainian refugees are properly supported in our province.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

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

* (13:40)

Ms. Lamoureux: It is an honour to stand in the House today and welcome everyone who was on our first chartered flight to Manitoba. Yesterday, 328 displaced Ukrainians landed here in Winnipeg, and they have been openly welcomed by friends, family members and volunteers who are eager and ready to help them resettle in Canada.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba is home to over 180,000 Manitobans with Ukrainian heritage who have contributed so much to our economy and our diversity. This is in part why we need to do everything we can to support a free, democratic and independent Ukraine and take care of the many individuals who have begun arriving and will be arriving here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, as these displaced Ukrainians settle, we need to ensure that they are all fully supported at the provincial level. What this means is every displaced individual needs access to health care, both mental health and physical health. They need access to education—post-secondary, grade school and resources—here in the province of Manitoba. They need child care, jobs, shelter and food and a sense of security, safety and community.

Madam Speaker, there are many basic necessities that these displaced Ukrainians will need our provincial help with, and I am hopeful that this will be a smooth transition for each and every one of them.

Before wrapping up, I want to mention a few final thoughts: (1) if you are a Ukrainian and you are considering coming to Canada, please explore Manitoba Operation Blue Skies as an option; (2) if you are looking for ways to volunteer and support displaced Ukrainians, please reach out to the Canadian congress, Manitoba provincial council; and (3) lastly, Madam Speaker, I want to say welcome to all of those who have landed in Manitoba thus far. We commend you for your courage and are here to support you in any way we can.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Further ministerial statements—and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2).

Would the honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure please proceed with his statement.

Flooding Update

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, this morning I had the opportunity to join the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) in a helicopter flood tour of the Whiteshell area.

The Minister of Environment, Climate and Parks (Mr. Wharton) and the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) and the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) also joined us on the tour.

We toured locations such as Otter Falls, Seven Sisters Falls, Big Whiteshell Lake, as well as Caddy Lake and West Hawk Lake.

Due to the high—record-high water levels in this region, there was significant damage to private property and provincial property. As well, we saw devastation first-hand due to the high water levels.

In response to this flooding, the Whiteshell Provincial Park has issued a state of local emergency, and some mandatory evacuations have been ordered to local residents, Madam Speaker.

Our government will continue to keep the cottagers of Manitoba informed, and the response—a call centre has been established on a—daily communications are being produced for property owners.

One emergency trailer of 1,000 feet of Tiger tubes was requested by 'nepinak' lake and also filled by MTI on May 21st, Madam Speaker. Additional flood protection resources, including a small sandbagging machine and prefilled sandbags, were also delivered immediately—use within the Whiteshell Provincial Park.

I will continue to thank the tireless efforts of our provincial crews, from both Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure, as well as from the Department of Environment, Climate and Parks; and we can also add Manitoba Hydro, Madam Speaker, because they also looked after the waterways when it comes to hydrologic forecasting. Our floodfighting efforts and dedication do not go unnoticed.

Our 'hydrotic' forecasting team has indicated there is no significant precipitation in the forecast for southern and central Manitoba over the next five days, Madam Speaker, which is quite of a relief.

Water levels across the province will—generally declining; however, flows on the Souris River in Manitoba are increasing due to releases of reservoirs upstream from the United States. As water levels

recede in parts of the province, our government will begin assessing damages to infrastructure and determine next steps in rebuilding and recovery, Madam Speaker.

A reminder to Manitobans: our emergency management organization has begun hosting disaster financial assistance information webinars for municipalities and private citizens. Please check our EMO website for more details.

Madam Speaker, 38 municipal and northern affairs communities remain in states of local emergency, as well as seven First Nation communities.

As I mentioned, the Whiteshell Provincial Park has also declared state of local emergency.

In the town of Minnedosa, water levels and flows on the Little Saskatchewan River continue to recede at most locations, but water levels remain high. Crews continue to monitor the flood mitigation efforts, in collaboration with local officials.

While Indigenous Services Canada remains the leading body in the disaster effort, our government will support federal jurisdictions as needed.

On May 22nd, 15,000 sandbags were provided to MTI to Pauingassi First Nation to protect residents and critical infrastructure in their community, Madam Speaker.

Following the federal government's Indigenous Services Canada lead, our government will work with local First Nations and municipalities to assess future flood mitigation measures.

My deepest thanks to the provincial Infrastructure and Parks staff for working tirelessly throughout the long weekend along with many volunteers, Madam Speaker. Again, your efforts do not go unnoticed, and the cottagers in Manitoba appreciate your dedication to safety in this province.

Thank you.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, this continues to be an incredibly challenging time for Manitobans across the province. As flood water levels have begun to recede in one area, they've come up in another, and we saw levels stabilize in parts of Westman and the Pembina Valley this weekend as they rose rapidly in the Whiteshell.

George Daniel, who lives on West Hawk Lake, said he's never seen anything close to the water level in six decades. The highway has been washed out in several places, and there's a state of local emergency—

remains in effect in Whiteshell Provincial Park. Thankfully, over 100 staff have been deployed on the ground, including 70 firefighters and 30 provincial staff. We thank them for their around-the-clock efforts. They of—are, of course, aided by volunteers and members of the nearby Whiteshell, including members of nearby lodges who are sending workers to help feed volunteers, including at the Pinewood Lodge.

Many Manitobans have now been evacuated, 500 alone from the Whiteshell area, including many permanent residents. Our thoughts are with them and with all those who are still in danger of immediate flooding as water levels continue to rise across the province.

But as we continue to stand with those who are at this immediate risk, we also commend those who are beginning to do the hard work of rebuilding where the flood waters have receded. The crossing at steep river—Steepprock River, between Mafeking and the junction with PTH 77, is repaired, for example, and the bridge at Pine River between Ethelbert and Cowan is now reopened to traffic.

This work is all in thanks to volunteers and the workers in the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, who are working day in and day out to ensure that Manitobans can get to and from their homes and to their work. Highway 6 has also reopened, restoring an important link to the North.

And the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) was recently in Minnedosa where the task of cleanup and dealing with the receding flood waters has begun, but also thoughts of planning for long-term rebuilding and flood mitigation projects.

As always, my thanks to the minister for this update to the House and for including the member for Fort Rouge in flood tours and also updates to this House. This is an ongoing and developing situation, so we hope that over the next few days of sun there will be some relief and some reprieve for those who are fighting the floods. But we thank all those who are on the front lines doing that work now.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for the flood update. Yesterday, I visited Minnedosa and various other sites along the Little Saskatchewan River to get a first-hand view of the flood situation there.

I want to thank Councillor Tom Dowsett for showing us around Minnesota–Minnedosa to see the flood, its impact and the activities conducted to prevent flooding.

It's a wake-up call to go into town and see the potential seriousness of the situation with sandbags lined up on both sides of Main Street. Fortunately, the water did not over top—top the sandbags along the river. In places, there are two lines of sandbags because of fears that the first line might be breached. Fortunately, both lines of sandbags are holding.

* (13:50)

Prompt and effective action by the mayor and council in Minnedosa, together with the Province and with many volunteers, is to be credited with the fact that the damage was limited.

I understand there were a small number of homes which had water in their basements, but overall, there was remarkably effective prevention of water damage in spite of the very large increase in the flow of water in the Little Saskatchewan River.

Myself, my wife Naomi and our caucus staff Richard Davies were able to visit the dam site as part of the tour. We saw several of the wooden beams which have been removed from the outlet. I understand the old beams will be replaced, which is badly needed in view of the conditions the existing beams are in.

I want to compliment the efforts of the members of the Minnedosa council and the members of the Minnedosa community and nearby residents, including residents and members of five Hutterite colonies, who helped with the sandbagging and with the flood prevention.

I thank the minister for his updates on the DFAA program and from various sites in Manitoba, including the Whiteshell and Peguis.

Once again, I reiterate the need to understand why the flood warning to Peguis was given only two days before the major flood and the importance of developing and implementing long-term plans to protect Peguis as other communities in Manitoba have been protected. It must be done, and we need a commitment

now from the federal and provincial governments that it will be done.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Lakeside MLAs

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to stand today before you to acknowledge July 18th as the 100th-year anniversary with only three MLAs in the constituency of Lakeside, and I am proud to be one of those myself, of the three.

Douglas Lloyd Campbell was first elected on July 18th, 1922. He returned in each of the—1927, 1932, re-elected in July of 1936. Campbell was sworn in as the minister of Agriculture in December of that year, serving 11 years, the longest serving Ag minister in Manitoba.

He faced no opposition in the election of 1941, won by acclamation in 1945 and '49, was re-elected and acclaimed between 1949 and 1966. He served as the 13th premier of Manitoba from 1948 to 1958; 47 years of continuous service was one of the longest in British Commonwealth history.

Harry Enns was first elected on June 23rd, 1966; also served as the Ag minister from '67 to '68 and again from 1993 to 1999. He would continue to hold his seat for 34 years.

I was first elected June third, 2003, served as Ag minister in 2016. Went on to be elected in 2007, '11, '16 then also 2019. I continue to hold my seat in Lakeside after 19 years, marking 2022 as 100th year with only three MLAs who have also served as Ag ministers.

Madam Speaker, please join me in paying tribute to the three MLAs who served the Province for 100 years. I invite everyone to come join the celebration July the 18th, 2022, at the South Interlake Rockwood Ag Society in Stonewall from 5 to 8.

Manitoba Museum Indigenous Advisory Circle

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): I rise today to share a few words about the Manitoba Museum—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bushie: —and the museum's Indigenous advisory circle.

Madam Speaker, as a child and even as late as just the other day, I have been a regular guest of the Manitoba Museum. In that time, I have seen various aspects and galleries of the museum evolve and also seen some remain the same.

In recent years, the Manitoba Museum created the museum's Indigenous advisory circle. The advisory circle has been instrumental in ensuring the history and culture of Indigenous peoples is reflected in various galleries in the museum.

This past September 30, during the inaugural National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, the museum welcomed hundreds of Manitobans from all backgrounds to learn, reflect and respond to the history of the residential school system.

One visitor quote stood out to me, Madam Speaker. In it, they said, and I quote: I think we need exhibits like this all year round. Education is power. We are all still here. Every child matters. Chi-miigwech. End quote.

The project Bringing Our Stories Forward and with other ongoing initiatives, exhibits and programs at the museum are making it a priority to ensure that Indigenous-led and underrepresented stories continue to be a part of the future museum experience.

As the museum and the Indigenous advisory circle continue to collaborate, the conversations have begun to focus on exploring and understanding concepts and methods towards indigenization and decolonization of museums. These issues are critical for museums to develop exhibits, programs, school curriculum and even training and hiring of staff.

Madam Speaker, to close, I would like to thank the hard work and dedication of the Manitoba Museum Indigenous Advisory Circle and to once again mention a portion of the quote from earlier, quote: We need exhibits like this all year round. Education is power. End quote.

I ask all members to take time to visit the Manitoba Museum. It truly is a great experience—and very calming, I might add.

Madam Speaker, I also wish to include the members of the museum's Indigenous advisory council for Hansard. Miigwech.

Manitoba Museum Indigenous Advisory Circle members: Fred Ford—Inuit elder; Joe Hyslop—Denesuline, Northlands First Nation; Jaimie Isaac—Anishinaabekwe, Sagkeeng First Nation; Dr. Cary Miller—Anishinaabekwe, Wisconsin; Sophia

Rabliauskas—Anishinaabekwe, Poplar River First Nation; Dr. Darrell Racine—Métis, Turtle Mountain; Kevin Tacan—Dakota, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation; Shawna Wolfe—Métis.

Rainbow Stage Reopening

Mrs. Cathy Cox (Kildonan-River East): Madam Speaker, I'd like to say vitayemo [*welcome*] to Consul General Shevchenko and Joanne Lewandowski [*phonetic*]. Thank you.

On with the show, Madam Speaker. As the MLA representing the vibrant constituency of Kildonan-River East, I am excited and delighted to announce that after a two-year hiatus, the Rainbow Stage is once again opening its doors, ready to welcome the return of thousands of guests to its unique and picturesque open-air venue.

Madam Speaker, nestled in the historic Kildonan Park along the banks of the Red River, Rainbow Stage holds bragging rights as the largest and longest running indoor theatre across all of Canada.

Rainbow Stage has captivated guests of all ages for 68 years, and it's no surprise that on opening night, back on July 7th, 1954, it was the Ukrainian Youth Association who were the very first performers to ever take to the stage on opening night. And today, Madam Speaker, nearly seven decades later, we continue to embrace our Ukrainian community and hold those families fleeing Ukraine deep in our hearts.

Manitobans have many fond memories of those amazing under-the-stars or moonlight performances they enjoyed at Rainbow Stage. I, for one, will never forget the excitement as a child when I first took to that very stage, adorned in my Ukrainian attire, for my very first Ukrainian dance recital.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans love their hockey, and Rainbow Stage is hitting the ice with their season opener, a classic—Canadian classic—The Hockey Sweater, that recalls a small town's passion and love for their hockey hero, Maurice the "Rocket" Richard. Inspired by author Roch Carrier's book, Canada even released a \$5 banknote back in 2002 that included excerpts and scenes from The Hockey Sweater.

And make sure you hold on to your seats, Madam Speaker, or you may be whisked away as we join Dorothy and Toto on their exciting journey down the yellow brick road. Yes, returning for the third time to Rainbow Stage history, the 1939 musical classic The Wizard of Oz will entertain, mystify and enchant

guests of all ages as they take off on their wild and crazy—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the member to complete her statement? *[Agreed]*

Mrs. Cox: And as the resurgence of Rainbow Stage draws closer, I say, bravo, to the amazing Rainbow Stage team and the countless volunteers like my friend, an amazing constituent, Tyler Leighton, who is joining us in the gallery today. Thank you for your dedication, your resiliency and your passion.

Somewhere, over the rainbow, dreams really do come true, Madam Speaker.

Health-Care Support Staff Acknowledgements

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): I rise today to recognize the invaluable work of health-care support staff.

Health-care support staff have been on the front lines of the pandemic, struggling every day with short staffing, low morale and exhaustion, all while doing their best to care for Manitobans. Health-care support staff have not had a new contract since 2017, when the government first tabled unconstitutional wage-freeze legislation.

Health-care support staff have been on the front lines of this pandemic since day one. They are committed to doing what they can and keeping Manitoba's health-care system healthy and running, and this PC government must do the same. For the past five years, health-care support staff across the province have been without a collective bargaining agreement.

* (14:00)

Madam Speaker, health-care workers are at the bedside when our loved ones need care. They deserve respect, fair pay and a fair deal. After years without a contract, health-care support staff want to see real support from the government, and that includes a fair contract for all staff. The PC government needs to prioritize collective bargaining with health-care support staff. Manitoba's health-care support staff workers deserve a fair contract now.

On behalf of my NDP colleagues and I, I would like to thank all the health-care support staff workers

for working tirelessly to care—take care of our communities, and we will continue to advocate to ensure no health-care worker is left behind.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Little Saskatchewan River Wildlife Corridor

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I speak today of the need for formal recognition and a stewardship plan for the Little Saskatchewan River wildlife or ecological corridor which runs from Lake Audy in Riding Mountain National Park to the Assiniboine River.

Last year, after conversations with local residents, Sheva Schwartz, a summer student in my office, produced the first draft of a report which has looked at the potential and need for formal recognition of a wildlife or ecological corridor here. It is a unique and important corridor for wildlife.

The report, which is available on my MLA website, provided the background on such an ecological corridor and provided the basis for Bill 239, The Ecological Reserves Amendment Act (Ecological Corridors), which was presented last week.

The recognition of ecological corridors along rivers is emerging as important for preserving biodiversity and for addressing climate change. The corridor along the Little Saskatchewan River is particularly important for the migration of birds as well as for movements of animals and other species. Our report and Bill 239 is an effort to begin a conversation on ecological corridors in Manitoba.

We need a fundamental shift from preserving islands of habitats to preserving corridors, as corridors are much more sustainable. In order to preserve corridors, which include a lot of privately owned land, we need a new approach which will look at private landowners and Indigenous people as partners with governments in stewardship and in decision making.

Jocelyn Beever, from Rivers, and I have already met with the councils of Riverdale, Yellowhead and Harrison Park to discuss our report and update it. The federal government has also recognized the importance of ecological corridors, and we look forward for further discussions and further steps with others as this idea moves forward.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I would like to introduce to you some guests that we have in the gallery.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us today Mr. Oleksandr Shevchenko, the consul general of Ukraine in Canada, and Joanne Lewandowski [*phonetic*], president of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Manitoba.

We are honoured to host you here today.

I would also like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today family and friends of the honourable Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration (Mr. Reyes): Reynold and Letitia Reyes, Raquel Roque from Vancouver, BC, and Ronaldo and Laura Tiodin from Abbotsford, BC.

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Aerial Tour of Flooded Whiteshell Area Visitors Gallery Acknowledgements

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by adding my welcome to the consul general of the Ukraine and to the head of the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Manitoba Provincial Council. To you, I say: Slava Ukraini; heroyam slava [*Glory to Ukraine; glory to the heroes.*]

I also want to acknowledge the Premier, as well as her colleagues from Education, Climate and Conservation, and Infrastructure, for the invitation to participate in the aerial tour of Eastman and some of the flooding areas hard hit in the Whiteshell region. Certainly, we reiterate our thanks to all the flood fighters, including firefighters who are there, conservation officers and other provincial staff, not to mention the many volunteers who are supporting those efforts.

It is a region with thousands of years of history and it is where the name of our province comes from: Manito Ahbee, therefore Manitoba. So I just want to acknowledge the significance on that front as well.

I do have a question on health care, but wanted to begin with those comments.

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): I—again, I just want to acknowledge the consul general from Ukraine, who's here with us today, and Joanne Lewandowski [*phonetic*] from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and just all of those volunteers that made yesterday happen, and welcome those people from Ukraine to our province.

I also want to acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition mentioning that we had the opportunity, with some of my colleagues, to tour the Whiteshell area where we did, in fact, see the sacred site located that—for the Manito Ahbee, Madam Speaker, in the Whiteshell region, and we were able to kind of tour around that and get some photos and it was indeed a honour—it was an honour to be there. Manito Ahbee means where the Creator sits, and we were able to see that in an aerial view today.

Obviously, many other—you know, there's a lot of water out there, Madam Speaker, and we are—our hearts and thoughts go out to those who have been displaced from their homes.

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

Grace Hospital ER Wait Time for In-Patient Bed

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, on a given day, there could be as many as 20 patients waiting in a hallway at the Grace Hospital, and over the weekend, Manitobans become all the more familiarly acquainted with this issue.

And frankly, it pulls at the heartstrings to hear about patients who are in areas that may not have access to oxygen or may not have access to a call bell. Certainly, we would want better for patients.

We need a clear statement from the Premier today. Will she commit to ending hallway medicine in Manitoba?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, we are making record investments: \$7.2 billion in our health-care system in Manitoba, \$110 million of that is dedicated for surgical and diagnostic backlogs and tackling those challenges that came about as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work with all of the stakeholders, including Shared Health, to ensure that we get the health care for Manitobans when they need it.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, when we hear of perhaps dozens of patients waiting in a hallway at any given time, we should understand what the contributing factors are that leads to that situation. These patients are waiting in the hallway because in the emergency room they're sometimes treating as many as 90 patients. That's 90 patients in an ER that is designed to care for about 31 people.

So, clearly, we have a dire situation; a situation in which nurses and those health-care support staff workers that we're talking about, that were mentioned by my colleague from The Maples, are put into some very difficult positions. They want to care for these folks, but they're simply being overwhelmed by the situation.

We need that clear statement from the Premier. Will she commit to ending hallway medicine in Manitoba?

Mrs. Stefanson: First, I want to thank the dedicated members of our health-care teams who continue to provide excellent service to all Manitobans in our emergency areas, Madam Speaker, especially during these challenging times.

And I want to reassure Manitobans, Madam Speaker, that our emergency departments continue to provide the high-quality health-care services to those in need, and of course, we know that health-system leaders and clinical experts are working diligently, day in and day out, to ensure that we move people through the system—our health-care system—to ensure that our emergency department has the space for those who need the emergency care. We will continue to work with those experts in the field to move through these challenging times.

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

* (14:10)

Health System Backlogs Bed Availability and Staffing

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Well, Madam Speaker, the situation is so dire in the emergency room because the emergency room is overwhelmed on a given day—when you hear about the 90 patients showing up, and there's only 31 beds to care for them. And the reason why it backs up further is because the wards—surgical, medicine wards and others—are also full to capacity.

The situation that we're currently in was created by this PC government. They cut 120 beds from our

health-care system. There are 2,400 nursing positions vacant in our health-care system right now. There's a direct connection between the situation at an emergency room like the Grace, and the cuts that we've seen over the past years that the PCs have been in power.

We need the hallway medicine to stop.

Will the Premier commit to ending hallway medicine today?

Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, we know that these have been challenging times as a result of a pandemic over the course of the past two years.

Madam Speaker, I know that health-system leaders and clinical experts have been working on a number of initiatives that they have shared publicly. Those initiatives include ambulance transport protocols, use of rapid-test screening and triaging patients in those emergency departments, includes appropriate inter-region transfers to ensure that people are moving through the system like they—as they need to.

And there were other measures as well that those clinical experts, as well as those at Shared Health, are taking. We want to thank them for the incredible work that they're doing at this time—these very difficult times.

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

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, the measures of which the Premier speaks are also further signs of a health-care system in crisis.

When you have to send patients hundreds of kilometers away from their homes, that's another sign that the hospitals are full. When you have to rely on loved ones to monitor the status of the people in our health-care system, that's another sign of a crisis unfolding. And the fact that those measures are already in place and still the emergency room at the Grace is overwhelmed, well, that's a situation that—what was already a crisis is on the verge of becoming something so much worse.

We need a clear indication today. We need a commitment from this government to end hallway medicine.

Will the Premier provide that?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I'll remind the member opposite, Madam Speaker, that these challenges didn't come about overnight. We, of course, have gone

through a world-wide pandemic in the last two years. I can recall, back in the days of the previous NDP government, where people were lining the hallways and lining the highways in Manitoba under the previous NDP government, and there wasn't a pandemic as a result of that.

And so what I would say to the member opposite, as I have said to Manitobans, that we will continue to work with our health-system leaders; we will continue to work with the clinical experts as we move people through the health-care system and ensure that they get the health care that they need when they need it.

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

Mr. Kinew: You know, Madam Speaker, just like Brian Pallister, this Premier has sought to increase the amount of highway medicine in Manitoba. Where Mr. Pallister wanted to send teachers to North Dakota for health care, this Premier's now sending surgery candidates to North Dakota.

In addition to that, you have seniors being sent from hospitals—not just like Concordia, but also from Stonewall and other places around the province—being sent hundreds of kilometers away from their homes.

And what do we get for this highway medicine? Does it alleviate the situation in hospitals here in Winnipeg? No. We have the worst of both worlds. Not only do we have highway medicine, we also have the return of hallway medicine—people being cared for in emergency-room hallways, in the lounges where staff are supposed to be able to have their coffee breaks.

Will the Premier acknowledge the situation and commit to ending hallway medicine in Manitoba?

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Madam Speaker, I can recall back in the 1999 campaign, the leader of the opposition—or, at that time, the leader of the NDP party, promised to end hallway medicine in six months with \$15 million.

Madam Speaker, they didn't end hallway medicine. In fact, they created highway medicine back then. And I'll remind the Leader of the Opposition—as he makes further promises that they never kept before, I will remind him that we came through a two-year worldwide pandemic. And, yes, we have challenges right now, but we are looking to those experts within the system to help fix those challenges that we are facing so we can ensure that all Manitobans get the health care that they need, when they need it.

Vital Statistics Manitoba Birth Certificate Wait Times

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Madam Speaker, constituents have reached out to me to raise their very real concerns with delays at Vital Statistics. They communicate months-long waits. This is far too long and has a real impact on families who may need to travel or who want to file for the Canada Child Benefit.

What is the minister doing to address the concern of those waiting months for a birth certificate from Vital Stats?

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services): We've put a great deal of work into the Vital Statistics area, Madam Speaker, and wait times have been reduced by some 90 per cent. So now we're in a two-week to two-and-a-half-week turnaround when the correct information is submitted to Vital Statistics.

If there is missing information, they work with the applicants to get that information.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, new parents are communicating with me months-long waits for documents through Vital Statistics, including birth certificates. Many parents are forced to pay a fee to avoid waiting months just to get their documents, and this should not be the case. Families should not have to pay to get timely access to important documents that they need for travel, and for benefits.

What is the minister doing to address the concern of those waiting for many months for a birth certificate from Vital Stats?

Mr. Helwer: So, in 2020 the branch issued 48,171 certificates, compared to 71,960 in 2021: an increase of 23,789 certificates issued, Madam Speaker.

They are doing the work, and approximately 70 per cent of all birth events that occurred in 2021 have been issued. We have some issues with people that don't fill out the form completely, and we're working with them to get the correct information so we can issue the birth certificates.

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

MLA Asagwara: Madam Speaker, the minister fails to identify in this House and be transparent that,

actually, one of the biggest sources of delay here is the months-long delay in registering birth certificates and deaths. Months are passing before Vital Stats are even registering these events in their system.

Families are waiting far too long, and some are being forced to pay extra fees. That should not be the case. Basic identification should be available on a timely basis to Manitoba families.

What is the minister doing to address the concerns of those many, many Manitoba families who are waiting months for basic identification documents from Vital Statistics?

Mr. Helwer: So, Vital Statistics collaborated with the Manitoba Government Inquiry to answer inbound telephone calls, and this 'ensures' that client calls are answered in a timelier manner and they're not dropped.

We are working with the individuals who have some issues with their applications, and we'll work with them to get those certificates issued.

Drug-Related Death Bereavement Day Request for Support for Bill 234

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, 1,200 Manitobans have lost their lives to drug overdoses or a lack of services here in Manitoba in the last four years alone.

More action needs to be taken to reduce the stigma surrounding drug addiction. This is why I've introduced Bill 234, which would make the Sunday before Mother's Day a day to reflect on the impacts of drug use and to grieve those who have lost their lives.

The PCs have said they have supported this bill, but haven't sent it to committee, and now we hear that they're doing consultation around whether that's the right date. I can assure member's opposite that I've talked to hundreds, if not thousands of Manitobans. My father died as well. He's a father—and I can assure members opposite that the Sunday before—

Will the minister call bill three-234 to committee and ensure that it receives royal assent by June 1st?

* (14:20)

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I think that all members in this House have been touched in some way from addiction. My father, as well, died from his addiction, so I certainly have a heart, as all members do, for this issue. The government has already indicated we support a bereavement day.

Madam Speaker, when it comes to scheduling of bills, whether it's committee or in this House, there are many challenges that House leaders have. One of the challenges is when a bill takes six days to get passed, because it not only passes—or, challenges that bill, but it challenges all bills behind it.

There was a filibuster last week. We look forward to seeing bills and other matters of the House get back onto track, Madam Speaker.

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

Mrs. Smith: We have over 40 people in our gallery today that have lost loved ones, that are trying to keep their loved ones alive. I want to apologize to you for having to come back into this House again, that this government has misled you in believing that they were going to pass this bill.

They do have the capacity and the power to get royal assent for June 1st, so don't let them mislead you again.

Will the minister—or whoever's going to stand up—the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) maybe—support Bill 234, send it to committee and have it receive royal assent by June 1st and not play politics with this?

This is about families. This is about making sure that they have a day to grieve and that we as leaders here in Manitoba set the example and show our—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, absolutely, members of this House should set the example and not play politics with this issue, because all members have been impacted.

The government has already indicated that it does support a bereavement day, Madam Speaker. There are scheduling matters that happen before this House. When a bill gets filibustered for seven days, it does push back a number of things in the Assembly.

We've indicated that we will support a bereavement day. This House sits, I think, until November, Madam Speaker. There's many things that are going to happen between now and November. This has already been committed to. The member opposite, when she was filibustering a bill, said that we should take time to consider bills and not rush them. Now she wants to have the opposite.

Madam Speaker, we support the bereavement day, and it'll pass.

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

Mrs. Smith: We know that this government has 'til November, but they can pass this bill today. They can send it to committee today. They can get royal assent by June 1st. What is the holdup?

These families are waiting for this government to support them in their grief. It's not costing them money. It's making them actually see and reduce the stigma that surrounds drug use in this province. People aren't talking about it. Manitobans aren't educated. People are using drugs in isolation. This is one way that you can reduce that stigma.

You can help support these families, and you have the power to do it today. Will you do it today?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): I'm not going to participate in making this into a partisan issue, as the member opposite is doing.

We had a heartfelt conversation last week where the member indicated to me that her own House leader had never brought it up in discussion about bringing it to committee. She asked me to help her make it important for her own caucus to bring this forward.

Our government is committed and—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —*[inaudible]* indicated support. What you tell the people who come here today, that is not our responsibility. We support the bill. We are committed to sitting in committees. And I invite the member to—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —to let go of the partisanship—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: —because this is about grieving families—grieving families—and there are many.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Delivery Drivers Access to Washroom Facilities Request for Support for Bill 238

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how important access to washrooms is for truckers and delivery drivers. We heard many stories of drivers being denied access to the washroom at the places they were delivering to or picking up from. This is wrong.

I have introduced Bill 238, which would make sure commercial spaces can't unreasonably deny drivers that need to use the washroom.

Will the government commit to supporting Bill 238?

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for the question.

When it comes to truck drivers, we've been working with the Manitoba Trucking Association for many—for a number of—since I became minister and talking about—discussions about having accessibilities to washrooms for truck drivers. And we're working with the—we would have to work with the private sector on—when we're working on this situation here.

So, we'll—stay tuned and we'll keep on talking.

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

Mr. Sandhu: Truckers and delivery drivers are often on the road for hours at a time. It is important to ensure they are not denied access to the washroom when they need it.

This happened too often, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bill 238 ensures that commercial spaces can't unreasonably deny drivers from using their washroom.

Will the government commit to supporting Bill 238 today?

Mr. Piwniuk: I want to thank the member for the question, Madam Speaker.

When it comes to the Manitoba Trucking Association, the truckers of our province, we know how vital it is to make sure that the flow of goods and services to—both from within the province and inter-provincial, Madam Speaker, and we will continue working with the industry to make sure that bathrooms, when it comes to truck drivers, are available when they need them.

And thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Sandhu: Manitoba is home to many truckers and delivery drivers. These industries contribute significant amounts to our economy. As the economy changes, we need to update our labour laws to ensure drivers are respected and they have access to

washrooms when they need it. Bill 238 ensures that they will have access.

Will the minister commit to supporting Bill 238 today?

Mr. Piwniuk: Madam Speaker, I just want to know—let the member know that, when it comes to the trucking industry, we are going to be talking with them all the time, when it comes to working with the private sector and making sure that there's accessibility to washrooms.

And we have to work with the private sector when it comes to these situations, Madam Speaker. And we'll work with the Manitoba Trucking Association and do the best we can to make sure that these truckers have accessibility to washrooms.

Powerview-Pine Falls ER Timeline for Reopening

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Without warning or consultation, the emergency room in Powerview-Pine Falls has closed because of a nursing shortage right before the long weekend. It's the second busiest hospital in Eastman region after Selkirk, Madam Speaker.

It's unacceptable for 10,000-plus First Nation citizens who need access to health care. We know that thousands of First Nation citizens from communities like my home community of Sagkeeng First Nation, Hollow Water First Nation, Black River and others need the same access to health care as others.

Will the minister tell Manitobans when the Powerview-Pine Falls ER will reopen?

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): I thank the member for St. Johns for bringing this matter to the Chamber.

I had the opportunity to talk with our federal counterparts, in terms of services for First Nations communities and remote and northern communities. What I was told is that the federal government has actually closed all the nursing stations and they're only open for emergency situations.

So, we continue to work with our federal counterparts. My department is in—actively discussing the needs of northern communities and First Nation communities, and will continue to work on behalf of all Manitobans to ensure they receive the health services they need.

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

Ms. Fontaine: I think the minister's confused. We're talking about Powerview/Pine Falls, which is a Manitoba responsibility—her responsibility, to be exact.

* (14:30)

Residents of the town of Powerview and Pine Falls, towns like St. George, all deserve to know when their ER will open. There was no date given by the Interlake regional health authority when services will be restored. Over 10,000 Manitobans have been left in the dark.

We have already heard stories from families in the Eastman waiting hours in ambulances trying to find an ER that is open. Now another option for health care has been closed.

Will the minister tell us when the Powerview-Pine Falls ER will reopen?

Ms. Gordon: Manitobans are still waiting for the NDP party to tell them why they closed 18 emergency departments during their time in office; they still have no response, Madam Speaker.

I'd like to table for the House today a report, an executive summary of the 2009 Canadian Nurses Association report titled: Tested Solutions for Eliminating Canada's Registered Nurse Shortage. Madam Speaker, 13 years ago the NDP were warned by the Canadian Nurses Association of a projected deficit of 60,000 registered nurses nationwide by 2022.

What did they do to address the situation, Madam Speaker? Nothing. What is our government doing? A lot.

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

Ms. Fontaine: That is an absolutely shameful response from this Minister of Health.

This happened this weekend. Powerview-Pine Falls ER was closed this weekend, and she's talking about something from 2009. She needs to focus on today and—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —how she's going to fix the mess that she's made, that the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) made, that the former Health minister has made. They've made a mess of health care in Manitoba.

When are Manitobans going to be able to see—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: –the Powerview and Pine Falls ER reopen?

Ms. Gordon: I recognize that the member for St. Johns needs to steer Manitoba's attention away from the mess they made of the health system.

What did the former NDP government do when they were told it—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: –was time to steer the ship away from the staffing crisis in the early 2000s? Nothing, Madam Speaker.

What they did do was they closed 18 emergency departments. Southern Health–Santé Sud: Emerson, 2002; Pembina-Manitou, 2004; MacGregor, 2004; St. Claude, 2005; Gladstone, 2008; Vita, 2012. Prairie Mountain Health: Erickson, 2003; Rossburn, 2003; Wawanessa–

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Medical Exams for Ukrainian Refugees Employment Requirements

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I know that every member of this House is glad to welcome Ukrainian refugees arriving in Winnipeg and that more are on the way.

We need to be sure that everyone arriving is seen by a doctor for a medical exam both—which is critical for personal safety; as well, a clean bill of health is required within a couple of months for people to be able to work in all industries, including agriculture and health.

We have labour shortages; we have qualified people coming from Ukraine, Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world.

Can the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) assure that these refugees will be able to get a medical in time, especially when so many Manitobans are struggling to find a doctor, who are waiting for appointments themselves?

Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Premier for her leadership and dedication in communicating with the Prime Minister earlier this month, resulting in the first federally arranged charter flights of approximately 300-plus displaced Ukrainians landing in Winnipeg yesterday.

Madam Speaker, now they are here, our government will continue working with our partners, including the federal government, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress Manitoba Provincial Council, our newcomer settlement organizations and our provincial task force and welcome centre to settle them in our province safely.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Lamont: Health care is, of course, a provincial responsibility, and there are several issues here.

People arriving from other countries may require a variety of treatments, vaccinations, antibiotics for infections and infectious diseases, prenatal care for people who are pregnant—the list goes on. These needs are essential from the view of refugees' health, as well as public health and their ability to make a living in Manitoba.

There are areas of work where people who are qualified—health care, agriculture—where we—but they have to have a medical to be able to work there.

Can the Premier assure us that Ukrainian and all refugees will be able to get the medical evaluation they need on time to be healthy and ready for work in Manitoba?

Mr. Reyes: Madam Speaker, I truly want to thank the Ukraine refugee task force, all the volunteers.

I went to the reception centre last week. But to see the action yesterday of all the volunteers, the reception centre where we were providing all the supports—all the questions, in both languages—in English and in Ukrainian—about getting health care, about getting their education, about child care, about employment services—everything is there, Madam Speaker. And you know why? Because we were ready.

And I want to thank the Premier for her leadership in negotiating that with the Prime Minister, because we were the first city to get Ukrainian refugees to our province, the home of hope, here in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Mental Health Services Need for Funding Increase

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, Manitobans like Raven Deering in Brandon

now wait eight months to see a psychiatrist, even with an urgent referral.

For years, Manitoba has underspent on mental health. Even this year, it will only reach 5.6 per cent of the provincial health-care budget when it needs to be up around 12 per cent.

Psychological therapies, including family therapy, are still not covered under medicare in spite of Manitoba Liberals calling for this for the last seven years.

When will the minister act to improve provincial mental health funding so that Manitobans like Raven Deering and new arrivals from Ukraine or Afghanistan will not have to wait eight months to see a psychiatrist when it's needed urgently?

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): I appreciate the member opposite asking these questions, and he's right, in that the mental health system has been underfunded for many years—decades, in fact. And our government is changing that trajectory by investing more than \$58.1 million into the mental health system since 2019, and an additional 17.1 this year alone as part of our five-year road map.

Madam Speaker, there is a shortage of psychiatrists and psychologists nationwide, all through North America, and we are looking at creative ways to expand those services. It's not a question of whether or not we can afford to hire; it's a question of whether we can hire—or, find the people to hire.

So we are working diligently—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Housing for Unsheltered Veterans Homes for Heroes Initiative

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): As you're aware, and everybody in this House is aware, our government is committed to ensuring the safety of vulnerable Manitobans, including the homeless population.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Families if she could explain what is being done to help support some of the challenges facing many of our military families and veterans across our province.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I'd like to thank my colleague for that wonderful question.

And, of course, the Manitoba government recognizes that securing housing is a very complex issue

that requires collaboration. Our government is pleased to partner with Homes for Heroes towards the construction of the veterans' village with a funding commitment of a—up to \$500,000.

Homes for Heroes works to successfully transition unsheltered veterans back into civilian life through a support system that includes resources and services and training to help them live independently. This will honour the men and women who have served us and ensure that they have the resources and the services they need to achieve the goal of living independently as they transition back into civilian life.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank David Howard from Homes for Heroes Foundation for all the work and his commitment to this project.

Consolidation of Laboratory Services Changes to Access Services

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): Madam Speaker, Winnipeggers are having a miserable time getting timely access to the lab tests that they need. The Pallister government closed half of the labs in the city and plan for Dynacare to move locations that are difficult for those with mobility and transportation challenges to access.

My question for the minister: Has this PC government done any work to consider the impact of this decision on so many people, and will they reconsider allowing the consolidation of labs across the city?

* (14:40)

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): Once again, the member opposite is continuing the tone that has been set by the Leader of the Opposition, by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara), in terms of deflecting responsibility to this side of the House. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Gordon: It was their contract, Madam Speaker. They implemented it. They need to take responsibility and be accountable to Manitobans.

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

Mr. Altomare: This weekend, many labs were closed after Saturday morning for the whole long weekend. Manitobans are going to emergency rooms to access basic diagnostic testing. That's just not the right approach, especially given how overloaded ERs are right now.

Diagnostic services need to be accessible and available and not just there to 'maximize' a company's profits.

What is the minister doing to ensure Manitobans get timely access to diagnostic testing in the city?

Ms. Gordon: We are investing in our provincial lab, the Cadham lab. We're ensuring that Manitobans have access, close to home and in many different facilities, to the tests—diagnostic lab tests that they need.

What we are doing, Madam Speaker, is we're fixing what they broke.

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

Mr. Altomare: The consolidation of Dynacare labs means decreased access and longer line-ups. This company has been allowed to monopolize public services without proper accountability to the public. This is a real disservice to many, especially seniors and those with mobility or health challenges. This change adds more stress to clients and could even deter them from accessing the services that they need.

Will the minister reconsider this ill-considered consolidation and will she ensure Manitobans have timely access to the tests they need?

Ms. Gordon: We continue as a government to consult with Manitobans and, yes, our seniors that are—have mobility issues, as the member mentioned, and need to gain access close to home to the lab tests and diagnostics that they need. I'm having conversations with the Minister for Seniors and Long-Term Care to ensure seniors have access to care efficiently and, again, close to home.

We are fixing what the members opposite broke. It was their contract. They did not consider the consequences of their actions. We are fixing, Madam Speaker, what they—they—broke, not us. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Acts of Racist Violence Strategy to Combat

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): On May 14th, 10 Black people were murdered among—and others injured by a white supremacist in Buffalo, New York. This is not the first time that a terrorist has targeted people based on their race. In Canada, we're not immune to acts of 'racist' violence either.

Let me be clear that what happened in Buffalo was a premeditated act of racist violence.

And we've seen this in other parts of Canada, like the Quebec mosque shooting and the hit and run in Ontario, among others. Action needs to be taken to prevent these acts of racist violence and protect people in our communities, especially Black Canadians, Indigenous people, people of colour and all other people who might face prejudice or racism.

Will the minister commit to taking action, today?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I'd like to thank my friend for raising this issue.

It's an issue, I think, that all of us feel very deeply about. When we hear about the reports that have happened in the United States or when we hear them in Canada, Madam Speaker, we're all not only saddened, but all of us want to redouble our efforts to try to ensure that, where we can, we prevent these horrible acts of violence.

I know that in the Department of Justice, myself and previous ministers of Justice have instituted a number of different programs and policies, ensured that there are people within the department to look at ways to reduce systemic racism, to look at ways to help where there are a—racism against Indigenous people, Madam Speaker, and to look for ways where we can do better.

And that is a continuous effort that we commit to continually do, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Drug Overdose Reporting

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): 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) Across the province, many Manitobans continue to struggle with addictions, and the pandemic has led to even more death and worsened the ongoing public health crisis of opioid overdoses.

(2) Three hundred and seventy-two Manitobans died from an overdose in 2020; and that's over one a day, and 87 per cent higher than in 2019.

(3) Manitoba is expected to exceed over 400 overdose deaths in 2021, but the data is not

publicly available since the last public reporting of opioid deaths was published in 2019.

(4) The data for drug overdose deaths from 2020 and 2021 was compiled through media inquiries, and this needs to change.

(5) Access to timely data on the harms of drugs helps to inform both government and stakeholders on where to take action and target resources needed in various communities.

(6) Manitoba is the only province not providing regular, timely data to the federal government opioid information portal.

(7) Manitobans deserve a government that takes the growing drug crisis seriously and will report the data publicly in a timely matter to target actions and allow for accountability.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to enact Bill 217, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act (Overdose Death Reporting), to require the Province to publish the number of drug overdose deaths, as well as the type of drug, on a government website in a timely fashion.

This has been signed by Denny Lathlin, Robert Chartrand, Gabriel Ibrerra [*phonetic*], Susan Spring, Lacey Roulette, Lyndsay Mettison and many Manitobans.

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

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 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 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 1st, 2022.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

* (14:50)

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, 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 health-care service provider, and the need for foot care extends beyond just those served in the capital city of the 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 in-to the city of Thompson effective April 1, 2022.

This petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Post-Secondary Funding Model

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

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, these are the reasons for this petition.

(1) The provincial government is implementing so-called performance-based funding and intends to charge students different tuition depending on their course of study.

(2) There is no compelling evidence that such fine-funding models lead to better outcomes. Performance-based funding models are likely to further marginalize underrepresented groups and their access to post-secondary education systems.

(3) Students and faculty are strongly opposed to the provincial government's approach to funding education. Charging different rates of tuition will have negative and potentially unintended consequences on students and their courses of study.

(4) Manitoba students should be encouraged rather than discouraged to take courses that they will—that will inform their professional careers and enrich society.

(5) Many degrees are at risk of being defunded under the provincial government's funding approach, even though these programs are—at risk provide strong reading, writing and communication skills to students that are increasingly concert with-concerned valuable-considered valuable by employers.

(6) Provincial government has reduced operating funding to universities and colleges by millions of dollars while quickly increasing tuition and student fees.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to abandon its plan to implement a so-called performance-based funding model for post-secondary institutions as well as its plan to charge students more depending on their course of study.

This petition has been signed by Robert Leland, Sean Buchanan, Curt Hull and many more Manitobans.

Drug Overdose Reporting

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

Across the province many Manitobans continue to struggle with addictions, and the pandemic has led to even more deaths and worsened the ongoing public health crisis of opioid overdoses.

(2) Three hundred and seventy-two Manitobans died from an overdose in 2020. That's over one a day and 80 per cent higher than in 2019.

(3) Manitoba is expected to exceed over 400 overdose deaths in 2021, but the data is not publicly available since the last public reporting of opioid deaths was published in 2019.

(4) The data for drug overdose deaths from 2020 to 2021 was compiled through media inquiries, and this needs to change.

(5) Access to timely data on the harms of drugs helps to inform both government and stakeholders on where to take action and target resources needed in various communities.

(6) Manitoba is the only province not providing regular, timely data to the federal government opioid information portal.

(7) Manitobans deserve a government that takes the growing drug crisis seriously and will report the data publicly in a timely manner to target actions and allow for accountability.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to enact Bill 217, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act (Overdose Death Reporting), to require the Province to publish a number of drug overdose-publish the

number of drug overdose deaths, as well as the type of drug, on a government website in a timely fashion.

This has been signed by Caroline Bruyere, Beverley Courchene, Mervin Garrick and many other Manitobans.

Speed Reduction on PR 392

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

(1) On October 26th, 2020, a 51-year-old driver was killed when a cement truck overturned on provincial road PR 392, just outside of the town of Snow Lake, Manitoba.

(2) The HudBay company will be trucking gold ore in 40-ton B-trains from its Lalor deposit into the town of Snow Lake for processing, starting next year.

(3) This large truck traffic will be competing with local vehicle traffic between the turnoff to the Lalor mine on PR 395 and the town of Snow Lake on PR 392.

(4) Similar vehicular traffic already competes with these 40-ton trucks between the turnoff to the Lalor—to Lalor at PR 395 and the turnoff to Stall Lake mill at PR 393.

(5) Residents of Snow Lake have suggested that the speed limit on PR 392 between Snow Lake and the intersection of provincial road, PR, 393 be lowered from 90 kilometres an hour to 70 kilometres an hour.

(6) Residents also propose that on PR 392, from the Berry Bay-Taylor Bay entrance to the Wekusko Falls north entrance, speeds be reduced to 70 kilometres an hour; Wekusko Falls park north entrance to the helitac base entrance, speeds be reduced to 50 kilometres per hour; and from the helitac base entrance to the entrance of the fish dump, speeds be reduced to 70 kilometres per hour.

(7) Reducing speed limits on dangerous stretches of highways is a simple and effective measure to protect the safety of all drivers.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure to adopt the proposed speed reductions on Provincial Road 392 set forth above.

And this petition has been signed by Greg Foord, Martin Rolles, Doug Johnson and many other Manitobans.

Catalytic Converter Engraving Credit

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

The background to the—this petition is as follows:

(1) Spike in catalytic converter thefts occurring across North America has hit Winnipeg. The price of precious metals in catalytic converters like rhodium, palladium and platinum are worth thousands of dollars an ounce. Scrap metal recyclers have catalytic converters priced to the vehicle, with some catalytic converters worth \$800.

(2) Organized groups of criminals are climbing under vehicles and cutting catalytic converters, selling them to scrap metal recyclers for cash without any record of these transactions.

* (15:00)

(3) Catalytic converter thefts cost consumers about \$2,000 for each replacement. Manitoba Public Insurance charges a betterment fee for new replacements, so insurance doesn't cover the full cost.

(4) Catalytic converters do not have any part number or vehicle identification number, VIN number, and the inability to tie a catalytic converter to a specific vehicle is a major enforcement issue.

(5) Engraving of a vehicle's VIN on its catalytic converter would be a major deterrent to theft by tying the vehicle to the part and making enforcement possible.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to bring in consumer protection legislation, directing Manitoba Public Insurance to initiate credits to Manitobans for engraving vehicle identification numbers on their catalytic converters.

And this petition is signed by many, many Manitobans.

Bibliothèque Régionale Jolys Regional Library

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): 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, G-B-R-G, a été avisée par la division scolaire vallée de la rivière Rouge, DSVRR, de libérer les locaux actuellement situés dans l'auditorium de l'École Héritage school, ÉHS, d'ici le 31 mars 2023.

(2) L'auditorium a été construit dans les années 1960 par le célèbre architecte manitobain Étienne Gaboury et B-R-G 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 MR 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.

(4) B-R-G 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 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 du consommateur et des Services gouvernementaux d'envisager de concéder l'auditorium à la B-R-G d'ici le 1er mars 2023.

(2) Demander au ministre de l'Éducation de reconnaître la valeur que la B-R-G apporte à la population d'étudiants de l'ÉHS ainsi qu'aux communautés du village de Saint-Pierre-Jolys et de la MR de 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 est signée par Isabelle Grégoire, Todd Grégoire et Joëlle Catellier.

Translation

Madam Speaker, I'd 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, JRL, was notified by the Red River Valley School Division, RRVSD, to vacate premises currently located in the auditorium of the École Héritage school, ÉHS, 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 "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 the JRL provides to the student population of ÉHS, as well as the communities of Village de St. Pierre Jolys and 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 RRVSD and 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 Isabelle Grégoire, Todd Grégoire and Joëlle Catellier.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): 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:

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

The auditorium was originally built in the 1960s by renowned Manitoban architect Brienne [phonetic] Gaboury, and it has been home to JRL for 48 years.

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

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 Ninnerville [phonetic], 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 the 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 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 the architectural integrity of the building.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

South Perimeter Highway Noise Barrier

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

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Residents of the River Park South community in Winnipeg are disturbed by the increasing noise levels caused by traffic on the South Perimeter Highway.

(2) The South Perimeter Highway functions as a transport route for semi-trucks travelling across Canada, making this stretch of the Perimeter especially loud.

(3) According to the South Perimeter Noise Study conducted in 2019, the traffic levels are expected to increase significantly over the next 20 years and backyard noise levels have already surpassed 65 decibels.

(4) Seniuk Road, which runs alongside the South Perimeter, contributes additional truck traffic causing increased noise and air pollution.

(5) Residents face a decade of construction on the South Perimeter, making this an appropriate time to add noise mitigation for the South Perimeter to these projects.

(6) The current barriers between the South Perimeter Highway and the homes of the River Park

South residents are a berm and a wooden fence, neither of which are effective at reducing traffic noise.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to consult with noise specialists and other experts to help determine the most effective way to reduce traffic noise and to commit to meaningful action to address resident concern; and

(2) To urge the Minister of Transportation to help address this issue with a noise barrier wall along residential portions of the South Perimeter from St. Anne's Road to St. Mary's Road and for River Park South residents.

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

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): On House business, pursuant to rule 33(7), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma). The title of the resolution is Improving Protections for Vulnerable Women and Children.

* (15:10)

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Radisson. The title of the resolution is Improving Protections for Vulnerable Women and Children.

* * *

Mr. Goertzen: For business this afternoon, could you please call second reading of Bill 37 and then concurrence and third reading of Bills 35 and 31.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider this afternoon second reading of Bill 37 and concurrence and third reading of Bills 35 and 31.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 37—The International Child Support and Family Maintenance (Hague Convention) Act

Madam Speaker: I will therefore call second reading of Bill 37, The International Child Support and Family Maintenance (Hague Convention) Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Johnson) that Bill 37, The International Child Support and Family Maintenance (Hague Convention) Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Justice, seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, that Bill 37, The International Child Support and Family Maintenance (Hague Convention) Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and the message has been tabled.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you again, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*—and my colleagues for that.

Modernizing and improving the justice system in Manitoba continues to be a priority for our government. We believe that this bill is another important step forward in our government's commitment to modernize family law in Manitoba.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

The bill will improve access to justice by providing Manitoba families with additional avenues for establishing varying and enforcing child and spousal support where one party lives outside Canada by enabling Manitoba to implement the 2007 Hague Convention on the international recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance.

The convention is an international multilateral treaty respecting child and spousal support obligations when family members live in different countries. The subject matter of the convention engages both federal and provincial jurisdiction. Therefore an implementing act is required for the convention to apply in Manitoba.

Manitoba is the second province to introduce the implementing legislation, followed by British Columbia, in March of this year, though I understand

that other jurisdictions are looking now to follow the lead of British Columbia and Manitoba.

If implemented in Manitoba, the convention will expand the number of foreign jurisdictions with which Manitoba has child and spousal support reciprocity. Certain countries cannot enter into bilateral reciprocity agreements with the Province under interjurisdictional support order laws. Therefore the convention will provide an avenue for recovery of support for Manitobans with family members in those countries in which they cannot have a direct relationship—a direct contractual relationship with Manitoba.

For example, Manitoba families with children who have a parent in another country, such as France, Italy, Brazil, amongst others, will be able to obtain the assistance of the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program to collect child support from that parent when the convention is in force in Manitoba. The Philippines has also recently signed this convention.

The bill provides that convention applications will proceed in the same way as applications under The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Act, and that the same authority within Manitoba Justice will be responsible for processing the applications. This ensures consistency. This will include the ability to refer child support applications to the child support service as an alternative to a court proceeding.

The convention does not change Manitoba law that governs child and spousal support obligations, but it provides an important means for Manitoba families to receive support from family members in convention countries.

I look forward to all members of the House supporting this bill following the question period and, hopefully, getting it to committee soon.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Questions

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

The floor is open for questions.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Can the minister provide Manitobans with more information about the importance of this legislation?

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

The importance of the legislation is that, currently, there are certain jurisdictions that Manitoba cannot have a direct 'reprocity'—reciprocity agreement with. Some of those countries don't allow their jurisdictions to enter into an agreement with a subnational government; it has to be with a national government. So this convention would then allow them to be covered.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): My question is this: because we have First Nations taking over control of child welfare, are there particular issues here with regard to First Nations? Will they be considered just like any other Manitoban? Will they have to go through the federal government for such maintenance report? How will it work?

Mr. Goertzen: While I'm not an expert when it comes to the changes that are happening at the federal level with the Department of Families—some of those could be directed to the Minister responsible for Families—I would say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this bill is not directly related to those happenings in Ottawa. This is specifically about those who might need an order because they have an agreement from another country.

Ms. Fontaine: Could the minister tell us how many out-of-province orders are there presently?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, it's an excellent question from the member for St. Johns.

So, currently, it's my understanding that there would be 107 active files involving foreign reciprocating jurisdictions. The vast majority of those, 90, would be from the United States. So, it's not our expectation that this will add significantly to those numbers.

But if there's one individual family that can't get their order enforced because they're here from a country that doesn't have an agreement with Manitoba but could be covered under this convention, it's important to them.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, just for clarity's sake, can the minister provide information on precisely what or who is essential authority? Is it the minister, is it a

group in his department—who or what is the central authority?

Mr. Goertzen: So, it requires the federal government to first sign on to the 2007 Hague Convention, which they've done. And then they can't actually implement it until one of the provinces has passed legislation to have it implemented in their jurisdiction because of our federal system. So British Columbia has done that, Manitoba will be—hopefully be the second one. The federal government then has some work to do in terms of the overall implementation.

Then if somebody comes from a country that is under this particular convention, and they have a supporter in their home country, it would be the Department of Justice through the Maintenance Enforcement Program that could do the enforcement of that order.

Ms. Fontaine: Earlier, the minister had said in his comments that, if there's an agreement with a direct reciprocal country that has an agreement, we'd be able to—once this bill passes—be able to get that child support.

Can the minister advise, like, how many countries this will—if Bill 37 goes through, how many countries are we now talking about?

Mr. Goertzen: I can get the exact number of countries for the member opposite, but, you know, as an example, Manitoba has agreements with six of the 27 countries that are currently in the European Union. But we are not able to have an agreement with the other ones because, under the EU, it doesn't allow for those agreements to happen at a subnational level; it has to be country-to-country level. I know some of them were grandfathered in, the original six. But this, then, allows us to have those agreements with the other countries who weren't otherwise covered under the EU because there'll now be national agreement through the Hague Convention with the federal government.

* (15:20)

Mr. Gerrard: I'm presuming that this is agreement in which the conditions would be reciprocal; that is, that if there was a parent in another country who was wanting child maintenance support from a Manitoban, that this agreement would apply and cover that.

What would happen if there are slight differences in the laws regarding child support in Manitoba versus other jurisdictions?

Mr. Goertzen: So, where there are reciprocity agreements, I believe that there is an agreement to enforce the orders as described in that particular country. But it's done through the Maintenance Enforcement Program. So, if there's a certain amount of child support that was obligated to be paid, that a court had ordered in a foreign country, that is now under a reciprocity agreement with Manitoba, that could be enforced here. But when the reciprocity agreements are arranged, some of those variations are worked out at that time.

Ms. Fontaine: Can the minister tell us what the anticipated costs will be for this program?

Mr. Goertzen: It's a good question. We don't expect that there'll be significant more in terms of costs because the number of cases are likely to be small. Again, there's 107 active cases as of the last reporting that I received; most are from the United States. We would expect this will add a handful of cases, although I was aware of one application a couple of weeks ago that couldn't be fulfilled because—but could've been, had this legislation been in place.

So, shouldn't add additional costs, but I appreciate the member asking the question.

Mr. Gerrard: In section 14 of this bill, it deals with the fact that application can only made through the Central Authority. And is that the Central Authority for Canada or the Central Authority for Manitoba?

Mr. Goertzen: I don't know that I caught all of the member's question. I think he was asking whether or not the authority—the application comes to Manitoba. The application, after this is ratified, it would come to Manitoba.

Ms. Fontaine: And could the minister tell us when Bill 37 would come into force?

Mr. Goertzen: It's a good question that I don't have, perhaps, a perfectly satisfactory answer.

So, now that British Columbia has put in their legislation, once our legislation comes into place, it allows the federal government to enact the federal convention, but it then goes over to their administrative side to ensure that they're doing the ratification side.

So, it will require ratification of the convention on the federal government side. I don't have a precise timeline, but I do know, in some discussions with the federal Minister of Justice, Minister Lametti, this seems to be a priority for them, so I'm hopeful that it won't be too long.

Mr. Gerrard: In section 20/1, there are comments there which seem to suggest that this may have an impact on intraprovincial, from one province to another.

Does this have an impact on child support for somebody who's got a former spouse, or what have you, in Ontario, or BC or other provinces, or does the current arrangement that we already have apply and will continue to apply from one province to another?

Mr. Goertzen: The current arrangement continues to apply. This just brings in new countries where we now would have a reciprocity agreement when it comes to the enforcement of orders.

Ms. Fontaine: The—I just want to kind of revisit the 107 active files again.

So, are those files currently being processed and the child maintenance—the child support payments being actually, like, processed and families are actually getting those dollars right now, or they're not, and that's why we need this bill?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, I thank the member for the question. Those 107 cases are with Maintenance Enforcement right now.

So, I don't know the status of every one of them. I'm hopeful that they're all getting the money that they are entitled to. But they're already invested with Maintenance Enforcement, so any additional cases would be in addition to the 107 that are currently—are there now, or who—that might be added in the future.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, just—my question to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen), based on the experience that there has been with getting money for child support orders under the existing programs. Does the minister anticipate any particular problems with this new arrangement with other jurisdictions?

Mr. Goertzen: Thank the member for the question. Not so much in establishing the actual agreements because the department has lots of experience in those arrangements.

But in terms of getting the payments? Well, sure, I think we all know of cases where individuals are supposed to be making child support payments, as an example, and they do everything they can not to make those payments. Hopefully those are rare and grow exceedingly rare, but we all know that there's somebody who is determined not to make a payment.

In jurisdiction, that's difficult. I imagine that those difficulties are made even more difficult when they're somewhere across the globe.

Ms. Fontaine: So, other countries and blocs of countries ratified that—the agreement earlier, including the 'European' union in 2014, the United States in 2017 and the United Kingdom in 2022.

Does the minister have an understanding of why Canada has taken so much longer to get this done?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, it's a fair question and one I actually asked of my officials, as well.

So I think it's partially just the uniqueness of our federated system. And so, once the national government signs on to a convention like the Hague Convention—and there's others that have already been signed on to—then it falls to the provinces to do their own analysis and, you know, there's differences between Quebec with the civil law system and the other common-law provinces, and that analysis and that interplay with the federal government, it just takes a long time—probably longer, I think, than all of us would like.

But it does seem like, now, that all provinces are landing kind of in a similar place and are looking to move forward—but it's an understandable question, and one I certainly asked, myself.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, I'm just seeking a little bit of clarity on how this will work if there is a family in the Philippines and they seek child support from a man or woman who's in Manitoba, in Manitoba the wages can be garnished in order to pay the person who needs the child support.

Does that apply, then, if the person is in the Philippines and the wages in Manitoba can be garnished to send the child support to the Philippines?

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, I believe that that would be a part of that reciprocity agreement, but it sounds like, you know, the member might be looking for some specific details in terms of—I mean, certainly garnishment is something that Maintenance Enforcement can do when it comes to wages, and I think they do it on the regular—a regular basis.

But because I'd prefer to give the member precision in this, in case he's transmitting this information to a constituent, as an example, I will seek to provide him that information in another form.

* (15:30)

Ms. Fontaine: In cases where maintenance is pursued, does the minister intend for Manitoba to issue or authenticate documents itself, or is this something that would be issued through the Government of Canada? If that makes sense.

Mr. Goertzen: The authentication of documents is actually, you know, an interesting issue. And so, when it comes to some matters of courts, we've made some changes to allow for documents to come interjurisdictionally without all of the different authentication that was previously required. It can be now done electronically.

Sometimes there are corporations, as an example, that need documents to be authenticated. Some of that's done in Manitoba now. Some of that's done federally. So it is a bit of a hybrid, but my expectation is that I'll have more information for the member in the days ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for questions has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm pleased to put some very brief remarks on the record today in respect of Bill 37, The International Child Support and Family Maintenance (Hague Convention) Act.

Bill 37 implements the convention on the international recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance in Manitoba to facilitate the international recovery of child support and other forms of family maintenance.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

This bill also applies procedures under the inter-jurisdictional support orders to applications made under the convention. Consequential amendments are made to The Court of Queen's Bench Act and The Family Maintenance Act.

So, you know, I will actually thank the minister for bringing forward Bill 37. I think that it is—as we established in the questions long overdue, we know that the convention—the Hague Convention was signed in 2007 and that some countries, like the European Union, only signed it—or, ratified the agreement in 2014, the United States in 2017, the United Kingdom in 2021. And we know that in Canada, Manitoba will become the second jurisdiction to have legislation that will support the 2007 Hague Convention.

So, I think that it is an important bill. I think it's obviously long overdue. And certainly on this side of the House, we support any legislative measures that will enhance and support child support payments to children. At the end of the day, this bill—for you know, a lot of the complexities of this bill, at the end of the day, the gist of this bill is making sure that children get the money that they are entitled to, that a court has ordered that parent A must pay parent B in the upbringing and support and health and well-being of their children.

And we know that there is a lot of ways in which child maintenance can be enhanced and can be supported to do the job that it's intended to do. I know that I've spoken in this House a couple of times about my own personal experiences trying to get child support for my youngest son. And also, I've raised concerns in the House of Manitobans, predominantly women, mothers who have come to me trying to get the child support that they are entitled to.

And I know that I don't have to tell the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen), because I'm sure that he's heard it as well. There are some pretty egregious stories out there of individuals who do not want to pay child support even though the court has ordered them to pay so much a month to the care and raising of their children. You have individuals that will go at quite—lengths not to pay those dollars that go to the care of their children, which I can never wrap my head around.

And as I said, going through the system—in fact, the beginning system, which I—we had a case conference, was great. It was wonderful. There was no hassles, there was nothing. It's been the last 20 years trying to get the dollars that are owed to my son.

And so I, even though I sit in this House as a legislator, I am a mom and like many Manitoba moms have had to deal with, you know, not being able to get the dollars that were supposed to be allocated towards my son for his care and upbringing—which I will put on the record was very, very little dollars that was in a court order for the care and upbringing of my son. And even that was incredibly difficult to get.

And so, you know, we know that this bill will bring Manitoba in line with other jurisdictions in Canada and around the world. I know that the minister said that only BC is the only other jurisdiction, I believe, in Canada that has legislation pertaining to the 2007 Hague Convention; and then, certainly, other jurisdictions around the world so that parents are

better able to navigate these complex jurisdictional issues.

Again, and I think that that's really important. We understand that even locally here, provincially, you know, those are very difficult systems to navigate, particularly, you know, if you're, you know, a new mom or you're a mom with, you know, one or two or three children and you're trying to go to school; and whatever it may be. And yet, you're still having to kind of navigate the court system to get dollars to support your children. And so, hopefully, Bill 37 will help Manitobans that find themselves in that predicament of having a parent who has moved internationally or to one of these reciprocal agreement countries to be able to get the dollars that they are owed for their children.

In 2017, Canada signed the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance but it has not yet ratified itself to the Convention. We know that the minister was talking a little bit about some of the process in order for Canada to ratify it. So, hopefully, we're getting to a place where that will occur. The Convention allows better recovery of family maintenance when one parent lives in another country and, as I said earlier, it's been ratified by the EU, the UK and the US, among other countries.

Canada cannot ratify and become a party to the Convention until necessary federal legislation comes into force and at least one province or territory also makes the necessary legislative changes. So, again, why it's important for Manitoba to take a lead alongside BC in having legislation that will support the Convention.

Being a party to the Convention would make it easier to resolve some of the family law issues when one or more parties live in other countries. Recent changes were made to Canada's federal family laws related to divorce, parenting and enforcement of family obligations. These changes modernize Canada's approach and it also moved Canada to alignment with its obligations as signatory to the Hague Convention. We've already debated many of those bills. There's a couple of bills that came during this session that have modernized and brought us in line with some of the federal changes that we've seen.

And, again, like, that's a good thing. That's a good thing when we can put laws in place that will protect children, that put the rights of children first. The 2000 Hague Convention actually, in its statement, actually talks about the rights of the child as one of its core

principles. And so legislation that goes to support that infrastructure and uplifting and upholding and centring the rights of children I think are a good thing, deputy—Acting Deputy Speaker.

So, you know, I do want to just take—I wasn't planning on talking long about Bill 37 because, again, it is a good bill and we are in support of it. But it does open the opportunity to talk about, again, some of the issues that we have in respect of child maintenance, and, again, the lengths of what some individuals will go to to not have to pay their child maintenance, even despite it being court-ordered.

* (15:40)

I do want to read into the record, as part of this debate or this discussion, an email that was both sent to myself—I was cc'd in it—and to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen). And I just want to read it into the record because I think it's important that it illustrates the frustration and the navigating that some parents have to go through within the current system. And I know that I've tried to talk with this mom a couple of times, but I think it's important to put it on the record because this is what we're talking about when we're saying that there's issues in respect of getting court orders and child maintenance from individuals that don't pay their—what they're supposed to.

And so, the letter is addressed to the minister: I am contacting you today regarding my current and active file with the Maintenance Enforcement Program. I am seeking answers and results on my file, and I have been—and, actually, Deputy—or, Acting Deputy Speaker, let me just say that, of course, I will not say any names or any file numbers, just to protect the individual who sent this letter. But the minister has this in his files as well. But, again, to honour this mom, I want to use my opportunity in the House this afternoon to read into the record her—what she's trying to convey here.

I'm seeking answers and results on my file, and I have been communicating and providing the program with sufficient information pertaining to my file since 2017. I have spoken with MEP and have sent countless emails with information and pictures on the whereabouts of the debtor, including family address and phone numbers of where he is residing. I have not received child support for my children since 2017, and now the debtor owes a total of \$51,065. That's a significant amount of money that we're talking about, and it's a significant amount of money that should be going to her two children.

I understand the program, and I also understand during COVID, courts were closed for a period of time, as I was advised he was served a court order to appear, and then courts closed. Courts are now back and open, and I'm wondering why this debtor is allowed to run free.

This program is supposed to help parents/caregivers obtain child support; however, five years and still no action is taken place. This is very sad and inexcusable. What is the program meant for? How does the program and our Justice Department protect the parent and the child? Please explain how a parent can get away with not paying for his children for that long and owe that much, and not even see a day in court or jail. This is uncalled for, and at the end of the day, the parent—the children suffer because our Justice Department does not support or help those that need this and suffer financial hardship.

I am requesting action, and I am requesting resolution. This program clearly needs new rules, new policies and procedures because the way that it is being managed is clearly not working for those who endure the hardship. Debtors know MEP or the Department of Justice will not do things as to why they continue to walk on the streets and not comply with the program. There is no consequences for their action, period. It is completely understood you cannot make a person pay if they do not work. Well, five years—no payments or jail time is on order. If actions are not taken, this program, this department is showing that it's okay not to support their children.

I have heard over and over again, and I quote, what is the point of MEP? Nothing ever gets done. So many single parents suffer because it is not being handled in an appropriate and timely way. Again, I want answers, I want justice for my babies whom I know—whom I have been raising with no support and a lack of assistance from the program that does not implement their own policies. This has gone on long enough. I am standing up for my children and others out there enduring the same sad situation and who are going through the same thing. I want my story to be seen and heard in all ways. We need justice, our children need justice and debtors need to adhere and pay for the consequences. I appreciate a response on how this will be handled and what will be done. Signed, the mother.

Again, I—first let me just say, like, I know that many of the folks that work in the Manitoba enforcement program are phenomenal, hard-working individuals, and I know that the Minister for Justice would

agree with me; they do a really good job with, in some respects, limited capacity on what they can do.

And so, why I read that letter is because I really do believe that, you know, while we're looking at, again, Bill 37, that, you know, will allow us to collect those dollars from individuals that are living in another country, we also have to do an audit of the Manitoba enforcement program here, today, and what's working and what's not working.

And, you know, that's a lot of money, Deputy Speaker, almost \$52,000. And, again, this letter was from—that was from March 11th. So, March 11th, the father—the debtor owed almost \$52,000. And so, I don't know what it would be now, but—you know, more than that or around—you know, around maybe 53, I don't know what it would be.

At any rate, the point is, is that's a lot of money. That's a lot of money that this mother, who is raising her children on her own, paying all of the bills, paying all for the extracurricular activities, in a time when prices and inflation is making food go up, rent go up, gas go up. You know, having children is expensive. It's expensive and, you know, having children takes two people. And, you know, we should hold those individuals who have these court orders accountable to ensure that they pay what they are supposed to be paying for Manitoba's next generation.

And so, I would encourage, you know, the minister to—and maybe the department's already doing it, I don't know. I would imagine, I would hope, that the department's already doing an environmental scan or an audit on how they can strengthen the program so that, again, predominantly women don't have to go through, you know, jumping through so many hoops just to get their court order adhered to.

And, again, I speak from experience and I can say to the House that, you know, over the years I would get letters and they would say, well, you know, parent whatever, you know, hasn't paid and so we have said that we are going to take his licence away, or we're going to take his passport away, and none of that ever happened. And it, you know—what ends up happening is you have the staff trying to find where they're working, trying to beg them to pay, threatening them to pay, making payment plans with them—and that's a testament to the work—the good work that they do. Right?

They do do that work to try and get that money. But it really shouldn't be that difficult to get money that is court ordered, and that you are, you know, not

only financially responsible for, but morally responsible to take care of your children that you brought into this world. I have, like, absolutely no patience for parents who do not, you know, want to take care of their kids, and will fight at every interval not to pay the money that they are supposed to pay for their children.

So, my hope is, you know, again, as I said earlier, we know that some pieces of legislation have already gone through second reading and possibly third reading, I'm not sure, that have strengthened and modernized family law. Certainly, Bill 37 is one component to that, but I would really encourage the minister to look at how we can strengthen the Manitoba enforcement program, because it's just not right—it's just not right, Acting Deputy Speaker, that we have children that are not getting the dollars that they are owed.

* (15:50)

They did nothing. They did nothing wrong and they deserve to have the best opportunities that they should have. And if those dollars help contribute to the opportunities that they are given—and, you know, be it education or sports or simply, you know, allowing to have food—that it's important that as a society we prioritize the well-being of our children. And, you know, this is one aspect of that, and so I would hope that there's some work being done on there.

And, you know, my message to Manitobans who, you know, are in the—find themselves in the same spot as the mother that I just read into the record, like, I personally understand. I hear you. I see you and, you know, on this side of the House we are certainly committed to ensuring that we have a system that is fair and equitable and that is accountable and that works for Manitoba families—all Manitoba families, but including those Manitoba families that, for whatever reason—I mean, stuff happens in life. People are together, they have children and then they break up; like, that's just life.

But, you know, including those families that, you know, once they break up and they go to court and they've got these court orders; you know, we, on this side of the House want to ensure that you know that we understand and that we see you and that we will do our best to represent you and put those measures and that infrastructure in place to ensure that your children get the supports that they are entitled to, and that we create a system that holds individuals to account, and holds these individuals to account and made to pay the money that they owe their own children.

I mean, it shouldn't be that difficult to get individuals to pay the dollars that they owe their own children. And I get it that some folks are—struggle, but there are other ways that you can support your children. And a lot of people struggle and a lot of people work two or three jobs to make ends meet to raise their children and ensure that their children have everything that they need. And we need to ensure that we have a system that encourages that and that has the infrastructure to be able to do that.

So, again, Deputy Speaker, I wasn't planning on speaking too long on Bill 37, and I think that's it for today.

Miigwech.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): I appreciate the opportunity to make a few comments on the record about the international recovery of child support and family maintenance, Bill 37.

As my colleague, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), noted, this is largely a women's issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And my—I want to start by thanking the staff who work day in and day out at Manitoba's family maintenance, trying to deal with individuals who are actively not trying to live up to their responsibilities and their commitments towards their children.

We've all—we all have read stories and we all, I suspect, all know of individuals who put in an inordinate amount of time—probably equal to or greater than them—those very maintenance workers—just to avoid that very maintenance, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And there is nothing, obviously, more disappointing than any parent that ignores their financial—and more than just their financial—responsibility of that child. Obviously, we want every parent to be involved in the mental, emotional and social development of their children. But in this case, we are specifically talking about, obviously, the financial maintenance of children.

We are all aware, as the—as been read into the record—of individuals, as noted, who do not wish to make those payments. Sometimes, as noted, it may be a situation of personal finances, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but in a lot of instances, there are persons of means who—and we've seen it—persons of means who actively—they require their wages to be garnished in order to facilitate those payments. But for every success that the maintenance department has, there are those individuals that attempt to avoid this responsibility.

And this bill, Bill 37, speaks to a larger issue and the larger reality of the world that we live in, and the emphasis is on that world, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are in a global environment where parents often come from all over now and, unfortunately, as—after the dissolution of a relationship, parents may find themselves not only just at opposite ends of a town or opposite ends of a country, but opposite ends of the world. But that should not be an excuse in any way, shape or form to deny your child their right to be—to receive that financial maintenance so that they can ensure that their potential is met.

The other interesting component about Bill 37, as noted, that the actual—the Hague Convention was actually signed in 2007, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So the bill itself is actually interesting lesson on Canadian-provincial political dynamics, with the federal government obviously being responsible for the federal Divorce Act but Manitoba, like most other provinces, having jurisdiction over child and spousal support.

So, obviously, with the province of British Columbia—I believe they ratified and passed similar legislation approximately five weeks ago with unanimous support of the House. It's my hope that Manitoba will be No. 2 and that, in a matter of weeks, it would be great if we would see all jurisdictions follow British Columbia and Manitoba's lead on this file.

As noted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when the—I listened carefully in the question and answer. I know the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) made note that, I believe, there was 107 active interjurisdictional files that—and that's not to suggest that that may be the number that may or may not be affected by this legislation, but that's not really the point of this legislation. Obviously, there will be individuals, probably a very small number of individuals, that will be impacted by—in a—hopefully in a positive way, by the passage of Bill 37. I'm not really particularly concerned about the individuals who are trying to deny payment and their situation; I don't have a lot of sympathy for those individuals, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

But, regardless whether this legislation only impacts a small number of people today, it is clear 'gliven'—given the globalization of the world we live in, that this will become an increasing issue. So, it's important that we as legislatures—legislators look at this legislation, realize that its impact is as important today as it will be tomorrow, especially when we're dealing with international treaties, especially when

we're dealing with parents of—who live internationally and may use that living abroad as a means to avoid their financial responsibility as a parent, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And as noted, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by the member, this is—again, women, unfortunately, largely bear the brunt of raising children and being, unfortunately, at the receiving end of non-maintenance; it is a—it is truly a disappointment, to say the least. But we as legislators can, through Bill 37, send that small signal that this isn't appropriate; that your—that any individual that attempts to circumnavigate, again, their financial responsibilities and their parental responsibilities to their children should not be allowed to simply move to another jurisdiction to avoid those payments.

For every individual that the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) highlights, of the \$50,000 back wages—or, sorry, back maintenance due over a five-year period of the individual that she noted, there are countless others, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are also owed inordinate amounts of money. These are funds that they have not been able to—that these women, in large part, have not been able to put towards the raising of their children and which, you know, they've had to make, obviously, sacrifices.

And their frustration is well known, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I remember when I worked in probation services and I would often deal with individuals who were going through family maintenance and expressed concern about individuals who try to use legal loopholes in any way, shape or form to, again, avoid their legal responsibility to that child. And now, we have situations where individuals will travel overseas.

* (16:00)

And sometimes—and as noted that, unfortunately, sometimes relationships do break down. Many of us here in this House and throughout Manitoba, we have had our relationships dissolve and we've had new relationships to start, but there are instances where, in the dissolution of a relationship, that there is, for lack of a better term, bad blood, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And again, individuals—and, again, mostly men—will use the children as a weapon against their former partner. They will use the non-payment of family maintenance and of child support as a—literally as a financial weapon against their former partner as a form of, I guess, continuing punishment, as a way to lord over them and as a way to control them, as if they are directly punishing their former partner, without

any consideration to the fact that we are dealing with their own children and that, by denying their former partner the child support and the family maintenance, they are, by extension, denying their own child of many, many opportunities.

And they go beyond the opportunities of, you know, of the cost of participating in, you know, say, sports like hockey, which can be a costly sport. But in many instances, these funds can make the difference between, you know, whether or not that child has—has three nutritious meals a day or not; whether or not this child is able to afford to go on, you know, a particular field trip through school that may require some funding; you know what—or whether or not this child is simply able, you know, to afford a bicycle, you know, to hang out with their friends, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

As so I think, as legislators, we should send a strong signal through our unanimous passage of Bill 37, to say to any debtors that owe that debt to their child, that here in Manitoba, we are prepared to bring into law this—the international recovery of child support and family maintenance, the Hague Convention act, to ensure that there is no jurisdiction of which you can hide from your financial responsibility, from your parental responsibility to your partner, to your former partner, put—to your children; and while that partner, as I noted earlier, may be the one that you think you are punishing, and that may be your former partner, those children that you created will always be your children, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And on too many instances, I think that is a forgotten notion when dealing with these individuals that attempt to hide and to avoid this responsibility.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, I don't want—I believe there is goodwill on all sides of this House in terms of Bill 37. I believe that this is a step in the right direction. I think it is an important action, again, not just because and not regardless of the fact that it may impact a small number of people, but, again, what it says to the larger issue of, again, mainly women facing partners who refuse to do their part, their legally required part, of financially supporting the raising of their children; that there should be no corner of this world that you can hide, legally, from that responsibility.

And through the passage of this legislation and through the passage that we saw in British Columbia just five weeks ago and, hopefully, passage we will see in all other provinces here in Canada in short order, we, in conjunction with the government of

Canada, can send that message, can work with those other jurisdictions in the European Union and, as well, in the Philippines, to mention a couple of the jurisdictions that have been noted in debate this afternoon, and say to those individuals and to say to the mothers out there that we are prepared to work on your behalf.

We are prepared to work with the—with staff, with bureaucratic staff and family maintenance staff in other jurisdictions to make sure that you are receipt of what you are owed, whether it is a \$50,000 amount, whether that's a \$5,000 amount, whether it's a \$500,000 amount. The amount in and of itself should be largely irrelevant, Mr. Deputy Speaker; it is really the issue, and the issue being of supporting your child.

It is amazing that, in this day and age, that we continue to have, again, individuals that use the court system, that use family maintenance and child support as a continuing weapon in violence against women, of which children become unfortunate collateral.

And we worry about and we talk about that circle, the circle of which children, unfortunately, get crushed under and become victims in so many other ways of being denied that parental involvement in their lives. And, again, relationships do break down, but one's obligations, one's legal, financial, emotional and social responsibilities and obligations to one's child should never end, whether that child is five months old or 45 years old, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So with those brief comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to speedy passage and 'unanimous' passage of Bill 37. I think it is an important step forward. I look forward to seeing this passed in this House and indeed, in all jurisdictions here in the country of Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just a few comments on this bill.

This bill will hopefully improve the situation in terms of child support where the person who owes child support to somebody in Manitoba is in another international jurisdiction. It should be a very positive thing, and I expect it will be.

However, big bills like this, a lot can be in the details. And I asked a number of questions. Still waiting for clarification on at least one of those. And just trying to make sure that there are not some hidden details which will trip up or cause problems for this legislation as it's actually implemented.

Clearly, the ability for this to work will depend on the jurisdiction's ability to ensure that those who owe child support are paying that child support, whether it be in Europe or the Philippines or wherever it is in the world. At least initially, it will be those jurisdictions which currently have, or will shortly have agreements—international agreements—in place. We hope this spreads widely and that this can be implemented effectively across many international jurisdictions.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to this bill moving forward to committee stage and third reading and becoming law.

And with those few comments, let's move on, pass this bill and get it into committee.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Are there any further speakers to this bill?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Seeing no further speakers, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The question before the House is second reading of Bill 37, The International Child Support and Family Maintenance (Hague Convention) Act.

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

House Business

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): On House business, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

I'd like to announce that in addition to the previous bills previously referred, that Bill 37, The International Child Support and Family Maintenance (Hague Convention) Act, will also be considered at the Tuesday, May 24th, 2022, meeting of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): It has been announced by the honourable Government House Leader that in addition to bills previously referred, that Bill 37, The International Child Support and Family Maintenance (Hague Convention) Act, will also be considered at the Tuesday, May 24th, 2022,

meeting of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

* (16:10)

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 35—The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months and Related Repeals and Amendments Act

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): We will now move on to concurrence and third reading of Bill 35, The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months and Related Repeals and Amendments Act.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), that Bill 35, The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months and Related Repeals and Amendments Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: I won't be long on this bill—spoke to it, of course, at first, second reading and then at committee.

So just, again, to summarize the bill, it's really, I think, a good government housekeeping—and when I say government, I mean, sort of small-G government, not Progressive Conservative government—just generally, you know, good operation of the Legislative Assembly and for Manitobans by collecting all of the different commemoration days, weeks, months, and having them under one umbrella bill so that the public, when they're looking to see which days are commemorated, they could then fall—they would look under this one bill and they would see them all neatly organized.

It, again, is a good time to thank all the different members of this particular Assembly and of previous ones for the work that they've done; all of their constituents who brought forward ideas to them on these bills. I know there are other ones that are before the Legislature now that we would expect to receive passage sometime before the end of November, I guess, when this session of the Legislature is to conclude.

There would have to be some amendments, I suppose, then made in the next session to bring those under the umbrella. Then, going forward, members who want to add days, weeks or months of commemoration would simply amend this bill and add them in

in that way, and then they'll all be collected in one nice place for members to be able to see.

So with those few comments, I look forward to seeing this bill completed at third reading.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm pleased to get up and put a couple of words on the record, in respect of Bill 35.

So, Bill 35, The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months and Related Repeals and Amendments Act—I have previously spoken to this bill significantly. I think I was—I spoke about 30 minutes to this bill, so I'll keep my comments very brief.

You know, I want to talk about—and, again, I said this and I think, you know, we talked about this in committee when this bill came to committee, about the importance of these provincial recognition days or these commemoration days or months or whatever it may be—how important those are and what they mean to Manitobans. And I think that it's something that we all agree in this House about the importance of these days.

And, certainly, folks on that side of the House and folks on this side of the House have bills that they've brought forward that come from committee or from community. I think that's really important that a lot of the bills that are going to be, kind of, consolidated under Bill 35 and brought, you know, to one place, are all bills and ideas that come from community.

And so, you know, we can talk about The Spirit Bear Day Act, which I've spoken about before and I spoke about how that comes from, you know, from Jordan, from a little boy who spent his years—his only years—in hospital and how there's been a movement led by his family and Cindy Blackstock to create an official day. And, you know, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), I'm really proud that she brought forward that day.

I look at some bills that we have that are coming up. My sister colleague from Wolseley has a bill that's coming up for third reading and concurrence on Thursday. And that bill comes from community and wanting to recognize, you know, the good work that goes on in the community all the time.

And my colleague from Burrows has a bill that's coming forward in respect of Turban Day Act. Again, that comes from the community—the community that we all represent, and the variety and myriad of different communities that we have in Manitoba.

And so, the member for Wolseley's (Ms. Naylor) bill, The Eating Disorders Awareness Week Act, is coming up on Thursday and should receive royal assent. And then what that means to Manitobans, that that issue is important to them, to lift them up, to recognize, to recognize the work that goes on in respect of that.

I'm so happy for my colleague, the member for Burrows (Mr. Brar), to have his first bill that will hopefully receive royal assent on June 1st. I'm so, so happy for him and for the community that his bill represents.

And as I've said it before, like, that's one of the beautiful things that we can do in this building, in this Chamber that often is so filled with animosity or toxicity. There are those moments when we all come together and we support really good bills that come from community. Often, of course, it will be attributed to the member, but, you know, the—we don't do anything without the community's support or the ideas or the need that derives itself from community. And so that's why that's really important.

And so, I wanted to take a couple of moments just to talk about Bill 234, the member for Point Douglas's bereavement day act, and the importance of that day—which that Bill 234 would fall under this bill, and it would be consolidated with all the other bills.

I know that the member for Point Douglas has done a lot of work working with community in respect of showing love and compassion and understanding and just listening to families who have lost loved ones due to drug overdose. And there are hundreds of families—hundreds of families each year that lose their loved one to drug overdose.

And, you know, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) noted in his QP question that he also had a family that lost his life to addictions. I've repeatedly said it in—or, not repeatedly, but I've shared it in this House that I lost my mom to a heroin overdose. The member for Point Douglas has had several family members that have lost their lives to overdoses. I know that we have—probably all of us, I suspect, you know, had friends or family or acquaintances or members in the community that have lost their lives to overdose. And it is an opportunity for this House to acknowledge and have a day that recognizes that pain of that loss.

I know the member for Point Douglas and myself, and I believe the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) as well, we will often come to the

Leg., to the stairs of the Leg., during Black Balloon Day—and the member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino), I think—we were there, very cold one day as well, one cold evening—and just standing with moms.

And I remember just, I guess, probably one of the last ones that I had gone to, there was a mom, and I just saw her; she was just standing there and she was just crying. And I kind of just went over to just say hello, and she was saying, it's my son's birthday today. And I just remember feeling just so—as a mother of two sons—again, 26 and 20—I just was so heartbroken for her. Just so heartbroken. And what that must be like, you know, to lose your child to overdose at such a young age.

* (16:20)

And some of us will remember, prior to the 2019 election our former colleague, James Allum, had brought mothers to the gallery. Well, if you remember that, we had mothers there. And they—I don't know if it was a resolution or if it was another bill, but he had mothers in there, because at the time there was, like, a cluster of overdose deaths in his area, and he had brought together all of the mothers. And I remember going up to meet them, just to say hello, and they were just crying, listening to the debate—it must have been a resolution or a bill, because it was in the morning—and, again, just feeling so utterly sad for these moms just sitting there listening to us here debate, you know, the realities of overdose and addictions.

And, you know, when you're in opposition, you know, our job is to hold the government to account. But right now we don't have the power or the capacity or the ability to put in the programs or the infrastructures or the policies that will help Manitobans. And so right now, the—you know, the thing that we can do is we can listen. We can try to hear what families are telling us. We can offer our condolences. We can offer strength, our love, our time by going to these events—because there's many events throughout the year in respect of addictions and in respect of Manitobans who have lost their lives to addictions.

But I actually really do look forward to the day where we can put forward legislation and policies that will really deal with the addictions crisis that has been ongoing for many, many years now, but has only grown exponentially, and certainly has only grown exponentially during COVID. COVID has hit people very hard in a variety of different ways and for some, it's been, you know, mental health and depression; for

some, it's been mental health and addictions; and we've seen that just grow exponentially.

We're not the only jurisdiction—I know that. Most folks would know, you know, the critical levels of overdose that have been taking place in BC, predominantly in Vancouver since the start of COVID. I think some of their numbers were, like, 700 citizens lost their lives to addictions. Each one of those individual was a loved one to a family, who, you know, contrary to popular belief, I think that there's this—or, I know that there's kind of this discourse out there, a very kind of blaming discourse. Well, you know, why couldn't they just stop and what did you do to help them, and did you get them into treatment and did you do this and did you do that—there's so much blame in respect of loved ones with addictions.

But I know the families that I speak to, and I know the families that the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) speaks to, and Union Station and Wolseley and everybody on this side of the Chamber—I know that every single family will tell you, like, we did everything and in many respects there was obstacles—obstacles to getting treatment, obstacles to getting the support, obstacles to getting, you know, the care that they needed when they needed it.

Even CBC this morning, when—if you're listening to CBC, and they were talking about the amount of dollars that we need to invest in mental health issues. And right now, currently, the PC government is not making those investments into mental health, and then what are the long-term effects of that.

And so, you know, why am I saying all of this? I'm saying all of this because, you know, Bill 234 is a good bill. It's one of those bills that we can all agree on, we can all support, we can all come together as a collective of legislators in this House and say, you know, we want to—because it is in our capacity, it is in our ability as legislators—we want to come together, as all the other bills that will fall under Bill 35 here, the commemoration of days, weeks, months and related repeals, like, all of the other bills—Spirit Bear Day Act, The Emancipation Day Act, The Somali Heritage Week Act, the Sikh heritage week act, the Filipino—the, you know, protecting animals, like the animal shelter, MMIWG—all of the bills that come under this, again, come from community, lift up community, acknowledge community and give Manitobans a sense of ownership of what goes on in this Chamber.

You know, this Chamber is so divorced from the vast majority of Manitobans' lives. They will not get an opportunity to sit in here. Maybe—they may not

want an opportunity to sit in here or, you know, they may not know necessarily what's going on. But these bills—that's why these bills, these recognition days, these commemoration days, are actually so important, because they are actually something that connects all of us. It doesn't matter what side of the House you're on; it can connect all of us.

A really good example of that is look at Orange Shirt Day. And, you know, when you see across the province, across the country, how people on September 30th come together to honour, and to lift up and to acknowledge residential school survivors, it's quite something to behold. And it really does give you a sense of pride and give you a sense of—you know, there is some sense of collectivity among all of us.

And so, I really do encourage the members opposite to—you know, there's always time, we can always make things work—to pass bill 34, the bereavement awareness day act—or, bereavement day act. And let's show—and actually, Deputy Speaker, it's actually the bare minimum. It's actually the bare minimum of what we can do, to have a day to acknowledge these families' pain but also to acknowledge these Manitobans' lives, these Manitobans who have left us; but, you know, we can acknowledge their lives on this day.

It's literally the bare minimum that we can do, and it's something that the families want. It's something that the communities want. It's something that they've been advocating for, again, back from many, many years when our former colleague brought forward the resolution here one morning. We can all get behind it, we can all support it together and we can all stand with Manitoba families who are grieving.

So, I really do hope that somebody is listening on the other side. I hope that the minister's listening on the other side. I hope that the Premier's (Mrs. Stefanson) listening on the other side and I hope that the House Leader is—am I allowed to say that? Okay. I hope that that House Leader is listening on the other side; that, you know, bill 34 is the bare minimum, but it's something that we can all do and we can do it together. And we can do it relatively quickly.

Miigwech, Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): This bill brings together a number of acts, quite a number of acts, into one bill. It's a good consolidation of a variety of acts referring to specific days or weeks and perhaps, in some instances, months.

It is interesting that one of the early ones was the Holocaust Memorial Day, which was passed in 2000; and then, we had the Ukraine famine and genocide—Holodomor—memorial day act in 2008; and The Grandparents' Day Act in 2009.

* (16:30)

I remember The Grandparents' Day Act because it was an idea that came from Kevin Lamoureux when he was the MLA for Inkster, I believe, at that time. And he had suggested the idea to—I think it was, the government, and I think it was a government bill that passed or it was a private member's bill from one of the government members. In any event, Kevin Lamoureux had the idea and he suggested it, and that was certainly a positive development that it passed along with many, many others acts referring to specific days or weeks.

And these are important days. They are days when we can remember, in some cases, our heritage, in other cases being aware of specific events, being aware of childhood cancer, being aware of our heritage for those in the Somali community, the day for nurse practitioners. All these days are important.

And one of the most recent ones is The Emancipation Day Act, and that's an important act. The Emancipation Day was first recognized federally and, indeed, last year we celebrated that, and then it was passed provincially at the end of last year.

So, these are good initiatives, and it's a good process to bring these acts together as part of one bill.

So, with those few comments, I will let this bill move forward, let others speak to this so that it can pass on and move on and become law—one consolidated law. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Are there any further speakers to Bill 35?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 35, The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months and Related Repeals and Amendments Act.

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

Bill 31—The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2022

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): We will now move on to Bill 31, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2022.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 31, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2022, reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you very much to my one colleague and thank the—*[interjection]*—thank the Minister of Education for his support.

So this is, again—and I won't go long on the bill. We've discussed it a few times. The minor corrections act is a regular act, a routine and annual act that comes forward.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Just in terms of how the process works over the course of a year, the departments—individual departments will find, sometimes at their leisure and sometimes by actively looking, things that need to be corrected. Sometimes, just translation when it comes to bills; sometimes, it's things that have fallen into disuse and really should be repealed, but they don't have a significant impact in their repeal; or sometimes just a cleanup.

So I'll give a couple of examples. In this particular bill, the coat of arms and emblems and the Manitoba tartan act, the act is retitled the Manitoba emblems act, and that it contains all the different emblems of Manitoba and the provincial flag is added to the schedule. So the provincial flag—and now it will be under the Manitoba emblems act, which makes sense because it is an emblem of Manitoba. We see it everywhere. We see it beside you, Madam Speaker, and—but for clarity, then, of course, that then requires the repeal of The Provincial Flag Act, which, the only thing that's in the act is the provincial flag, and it doesn't mean that we're doing away with the provincial flag; we're just putting it in another place in legislation which seems to be—to make more sense.

There are other changes; for example, the Red River College has recently changed its name. They're now the Red River College Polytechnic. So the act changes, the name changes in consequential places

where Red River College is referred to, so that's an example of one of the changes.

The bill also repeals four inactive acts, one being The Loan Act of 1982 and The Loan Act of 1989, which were recently discovered to be still on the books for some reason. The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) might have more information about why those bills were still there after all these years. but we couldn't figure it out, and so now they'll be repealed. So it's a sort of housekeeping issue.

A private act, The Deer Lodge Curling Club Limited Incorporation Act, is being repealed not because we're eliminating the—their work, but the club itself requested that it be repealed. But it will function under The Corporations Act and in The Sanatorium Board of Manitoba is—Act—is repealed, but it continues as the Lung Association under The Corporations Act. And so, again, it's a—it's really a way to clean up things that should be cleaned up and look forward to it passing this afternoon.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Well, I'm excited to get up and speak about this riveting bill, Bill 31, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2022. Oh, boy.

The bill makes minor amendments to several statutes. Our concerns with previous amendments to these bills are just as relevant today as they have been for the last six years. The bill also repeals some leftover provisions that relate to emergency powers during the pandemic. This is an opportunity to reflect on the government's performance as it relates to these statutory powers.

Let me just say this, Madam Speaker, in respect to reflecting on the government's performance, or lack thereof during the pandemic, I know there's 30 minutes to discuss Bill 31. I'm not going to take 31 minutes—or 30 minutes to discuss Bill 31 because that topic alone, the performance of the PC government under both the Pallister government and the Stefanson government could actually take months to stand in the House and talk about everything that they've done wrong and everything that they should've done and they could've done. So I won't do that today.

But let me just put this on the record in respect of, again, you know, what they didn't do in respect of their emergency powers which were under extraordinary circumstances, right? I think all of us know this was a once-in-a-100-year event, and, you know, members opposite could've rose to the challenge. They could've rose to the moment in history and take care

of Manitobans, but they chose not to. And as I've said many, many times, members opposite wanted to do the pandemic on the cheap. They wanted to make sure that they spent not a penny more than they had to in respect of responding to this global crisis. And that was really the main motivating factor for all of the decisions that they've made and, you know, decisions that we are still paying for today.

You know, our team got up today in question period to talk about the Grace Hospital and what's happening at the Grace Hospital, which is—it is absolutely mind-blowing, the, you know, first off, what Manitobans who work on the front lines, the conditions that they have to work under right now, as we speak, debating this bill.

* (16:40)

So, there's the Grace Hospital, but then also there's the closure with no warning, no consultation, to the Powerview-Pine Falls emergency room, which—I really do shudder to think that the—I don't think the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) even knew that she was responsible for that health, because when I asked—or, that hospital, because when I asked her the question, she started talking about First Nation jurisdiction, which, you know, trying to kind of, you know, as always, give responsibility to the federal government. I don't think she realized that the hospital is her responsibility. It's under her administration. And that's really scary.

It's a sad commentary that she didn't know that hospital fell under her jurisdiction, and I honestly don't even know if she knew that it was closed, that the ER closed this week. And I highly suspect that she didn't know it closed, and that the question completely threw her off, because not once in her responses to me did she even utter the word Powerview/Pine Falls.

And so, you know, those emergency measures that were put in place, that we all agreed to because we understood that we were in extraordinary times, they could've been used in a good way to ensure that our—first off, Manitobans were taken care of, that we didn't see what we saw in our PCHs, that we didn't have people—we didn't have nurses that were, you know, overworked, underpaid, without a contract, and that our whole health-care system doesn't collapse. And yet here we are.

Here we are, and again, I—you know, every day I think we get up—those of us on this side of the House, we get up in the House and—I mean, I can't speak on behalf of all of my colleagues, but I know most of us

can't wrap our heads around the things that we have to get up in QP and ask about. Like, who would have ever thought that we'd be asking about the near, almost collapse of the Grace Hospital; 20 people in hallways; people—Manitobans needing, you know, emergency care, you know, in the coffee room.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please.

I would just ask the member that the comments that are made should be relevant to the minor amendments and corrections act, and I would ask the member—I believe that she's wandering away from the content of this bill, the subject matter.

So, I would ask her to bring it back to what the actual bill is that we should be debating.

Ms. Fontaine: Well, Madam Speaker, Bill 31, to be more specific, repeals references to section 12.3 in The Emergency Measures Act, which were new emergency powers during the pandemic. That's what I'm talking about. And so, it is—these powers have been rescinded—section 12.3 of the act have been repealed. And though—again, these are now kind of left over. So, it is relevant to the discussion.

I'm not going to spend a lot of time, Madam Speaker. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on what the government failed to do, because, as I said, we literally could be here for months, 24-7, talking about how the government failed Manitobans. So I'm going to spend a lot of time on that. But those comments are relevant to Bill 31 because they are—they're rescinding those emergency measures—or, emergency powers, Madam Speaker.

And again, some of the stuff that's happening in this bill. So, among those leftover provisions repealed is section 20(5), which allowed courts to set higher than-maximum fines for offences that contravene emergency orders, which have since been repealed, as well.

This was an opportunity for the government to consider the approach to penalties during the pandemic, again, as well as their overall pandemic—*[interjection]*—and so we know, Madam Speaker, that the PC's first approach to penalties, like everything else that they did during the pandemic, was an absolute failure.

And so, according to provincial data, only 13 per cent of fines handed out during the state of emergency have actually been paid; 87 per cent remain outstanding for offenses that go back as far as

April 2020 with, I imagine, Madam Speaker, no intention on the government to actually claim those dollars or get those dollars from Manitobans who broke the pandemic rules and emergency measures.

So, Madam Speaker, I'm not going to go on long in respect of Bill 31 because, as I've already established, we could be here for a long time. I guess my only other thing that I want to quickly just discuss is that Bill 31 proposes minor amendments to The Early Learning and Child Care Act.

And then the PC government missed some opportunities to undo the harmful changes that they made to child care last year which, as we know, since they took administration in 2016, child care—the state of child care in Manitoba has only grown worse exponentially, as well, Manitoban. And that's because, again, you know, similar to the response to the government—the government to the pandemic, not wanting to spend a penny more than they have to. That's kind of been—that's their *raison d'être*, as well, here in respect of child care.

They don't want to put in that infrastructure and spend those dollars that would ensure that we have a child-care infrastructure that can be accessed by all Manitobans, which then contributes to the overall economy as more people are working or getting educated or training, and their children are taken care of. They don't want to put that money into child care as well.

And so—and we also know, Madam Speaker, that the PC government would prefer if everything was private, as we are seeing the slow erosion of our health-care system as a means and a guise to privatize everything.

So, let me just—those are my quick words on the record for Bill 31. The gist of it, Madam Speaker, the gist of it is that forever the PC government will be known, that the Pallister government and the Stefanson government will forever be known in Manitoba history as utterly failing during the pandemic. At a time when leadership has shown to lean in, to step up, to be courageous, to be compassionate, members opposite all failed miserably.

Miigwech.

Madam Speaker: Any further speakers? Are there any further speakers in debate?

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I'll just make some very brief comments, if I may, Madam Speaker.

Yes, I mean, we've seen many of these bills. The fact is is that it's usually an opportunity for the government to slip in a few unnecessary trims to so-called red tape.

A while ago, there used to be a commitment that every time that this government added a line of regulation, they were going to take away two. But, clearly, that's gone by the wayside, not that it ever made any sense in the first place. But the reality is that there are areas of red tape where people I know have struggled, whether if it's with DFAs, as we mentioned, applying for EIA, applying for other things, but the entire focus of red tape seems to be on simplifying things for people who already own and people who don't need the help, while not actually providing the help for those who need it.

So, with that being said, we are not particularly enthusiastic about this bill because there are other things we should be talking about.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 31, The Minor Amendments and Corrections Act, 2022.

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

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

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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 24, 2022

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