

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

| Member | Constituency | Political Affiliation |
|------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| AL TOMARE, Nello | Transcona | NDP |
| ASAGWARA, Uzoma | Union Station | NDP |
| BRAR, Diljeet | Burrows | NDP |
| BUSHIE, Ian | Keewatinook | NDP |
| CLARKE, Eileen, Hon. | Agassiz | PC |
| COX, Cathy | Kildonan-River East | PC |
| CULLEN, Cliff, Hon. | Spruce Woods | PC |
| DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon. | Roblin | PC |
| EICHLER, Ralph | Lakeside | PC |
| EWASKO, Wayne, Hon. | Lac du Bonnet | PC |
| FONTAINE, Nahanni | St. Johns | NDP |
| GERRARD, Jon, Hon. | River Heights | Lib. |
| GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon. | Steinbach | PC |
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| GUENTER, Josh | Borderland | PC |
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| JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon. | Assiniboia | PC |
| KHAN, Obby, Hon. | Fort Whyte | PC |
| KINEW, Wab | Fort Rouge | NDP |
| KLEIN, Kevin E., Hon. | Kirkfield Park | PC |
| LAGASSÉ, Bob | Dawson Trail | PC |
| LAGIMODIERE, Alan | Selkirk | PC |
| LAMONT, Dougald | St. Boniface | Lib. |
| LAMOUREUX, Cindy | Tyndall Park | Lib. |
| LATHLIN, Amanda | The Pas-Kameesak | NDP |
| LINDSEY, Tom | Flin Flon | NDP |
| MALOWAY, Jim | Elmwood | NDP |
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| MICHALESKI, Brad | Dauphin | PC |
| MICKLEFIELD, Andrew | Rossmere | PC |
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| MOSES, Jamie | St. Vital | NDP |
| NAYLOR, Lisa | Wolseley | NDP |
| NESBITT, Greg, Hon. | Riding Mountain | PC |
| PEDERSEN, Blaine | Midland | PC |
| PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon. | Turtle Mountain | PC |
| REDHEAD, Eric | Thompson | NDP |
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| SANDHU, Mintu | The Maples | NDP |
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| TEITSMA, James, Hon. | Radisson | PC |
| WASYLIW, Mark | Fort Garry | NDP |
| WHARTON, Jeff, Hon. | Red River North | PC |
| WIEBE, Matt | Concordia | NDP |
| WISHART, Ian | Portage la Prairie | PC |
| WOWCHUK, Rick | Swan River | PC |
| <i>Vacant</i> | Morden-Winkler | |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 245—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Campaign Financing)

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): I move that—seconded by the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux), that Bill 245, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Campaign Financing); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (financement des campagnes électorales), be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamont: Today, I rise to introduce Bill 245, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Campaign Financing).

School trustees are one of the foundationally elected officials and trusted with the planning and delivery of education in school divisions. It is concerning when, during the previous municipal election, stories emerged of numerous candidates receiving honorariums and funding from special interest groups, some of whom reside outside the province.

Manitoba has some of the weakest campaign finance rules in this regard in the country, and the absence of rules in Manitoba has opened the door for people who aren't even Manitobans to influence our democratic process.

Bill 245 will help strengthen trustee campaign finance rules in the interest of transparency, prevent outside influence from special interest groups and put rules governing financial disclosure on a par with elected officials at the municipal, provincial and federal levels.

I hope for unanimous support from all members of this House.

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

Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I'm pleased to table a response to matters taken under advisement from the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) during Families Committee of Supply on April 20th.

Madam Speaker: Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Heritage Park Apartment Fire—Donations to Residents

Hon. Kevin E. Klein (Minister of Environment and Climate): What makes a community and province great? It requires several contributing factors: affordability, quality of life, infrastructure, economy, jobs, social vibrancy, education, arts, innovation, location, inclusion, environment and the people.

This weekend, I was reminded just how important people are in making a community great. A fire this weekend at the Heritage Park apartments left 180 residents displaced.

The massive fire in west Winnipeg changed lives immediately, and it showed us how people make this a great place to live. As residents watched on in horror and wondered, what will happen to us now, where will we go, what will we do—at the same time, another resident was starting to engage with the community

and jumped into action to help those who were displaced.

I want to recognize Diana Hildebrand, who lives in the neighbouring apartment complex on Quail Ridge Road, and who organized a donation drive for those displaced by the fire almost immediately. She told the media, we've had donations from people all the way from Portage la Prairie and beyond. People continue to drop off stuff, and they just keep coming.

The owner of Dreamland, Remy, my new—a new favourite on Portage Avenue, also said they started collecting items to help people who lost so much in a long-weekend fire. I spoke to Remy [*phonetic*]; he called because donations were coming in at such a pace they ran out of room, and they're continuing to collect donations.

And only in Manitoba would you have such a wonderful problem of not enough room. Every little bit makes a huge difference for someone and their family in our community.

Madam Speaker, witnessing the generosity of our community and province is why I am so very proud to be a Manitoban and a member of the Legislature, and I'm honoured to represent the people of Kirkfield Park.

I thank people like Remy and, of course, Diana, who have done so much in our community, and I would ask my colleagues to join me in not only making a donation to any charity of their choice that serves their community as a token of appreciation for the honour we have to serve this great province but also to thank people like Diana, Remy and others who have donated.

Thank you.

Miles Macdonell Collegiate IB Program

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Education under the PC government keeps getting worse. Miles Mac Collegiate has offered the International Baccalaureate for over 40 years. But recently, they were forced to cut the renowned high school program, leaving many families devastated that this is no longer an option for their high school students.

And make no mistake, we know exactly why the program was cut. It was all thanks to the PC government's continual cutting to education funding, which has left school divisions with no choice but to make cuts that hurt students.

The IB program at Miles Mac has been one of these casualties. The internationally recognized diploma program was designed for gifted students aged 16 to 19 and gives our community best students access to the top universities worldwide, something the Advanced Placement, AP, program doesn't do. Our students shouldn't be denied reasonable access to the best universities in the world.

In their final year, students in the IB program often take university-level material, giving them a solid preparation for post-secondary studies. We know these programs just don't benefit the students taking them. More educational opportunities benefit the whole province and, likewise, cutting them will only hurt.

Manitobans know the importance of having quality education in our province. Alumni and students of the IB program at Miles Mac have been asking school trustees to reconsider the decision, but without proper funding from this provincial government, that won't be possible.

* (13:40)

On behalf of all current and future high school students in Manitoba, let's fully restore this program. The PC government formula of cutting education budgets for eight years, followed by an election year increase, hasn't been enough to save this program.

Second Chance Car Museum

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations): With summer months fast approaching, many Manitobans will be out exploring and touring across our province.

It gives me great pleasure to share with you a relatively new hidden gem in rural Manitoba. I recently toured the Second Chance Car Museum in Treherne. I was absolutely awestruck when I walked through the doors of that large warehouse. The vintage gas bar in the centre and a wonderful welcome to the vast collection of automotive history.

Residents Ken and Linda Van Deynze originally built the structure to house their classic vehicle collection. As their personal collection grew, so did the attention from the community and other visitors to the area, as well as many car enthusiasts from across Manitoba. The space accommodates and displays both new and vintage vehicles for owners who may not have had year-round storage options. The museum also collects pint-sized vintage items, all of which are uniquely displayed and incorporated with the vintage

theme. The area also offers a drive-in movie, where patrons can sit in a convertible and watch the flick on a big screen.

I would like to recognize and thank Ken and Linda for their investment in their community and for sharing their love and passion for cars and collectibles. This museum brings new life to vintage cars and memorabilia and an opportunity for visitors to explore, enjoy and reminisce of days gone by. Special thanks to Craig Soldier for taking on the role of museum manager and to the many volunteers who continue to help and build the showcase—this vast space.

You do not have to be a gearhead to appreciate this massive garage. There is so much history in one space, and I guarantee it will bring back memories for everyone and create new memories for the younger ones. I would recommend, if you and your family are exploring rural Manitoba, head to Treherne and take in this new rural tourist attraction. It's well worth the drive; better than Steinbach. You won't be disappointed.

I wish the very best for Second Chance Car Museum to grow and to prosper and for all to enjoy.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I'd also ask that my colleagues to join me to welcome museum manager Craig Soldier and volunteer and supporter, Norfolk [*phonetic*] Treherne mayor, Gilles Guertin.

Allied Health Professionals Bargaining Contract

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): For more than five years, Manitoba allied health-care professionals have gone without a contract; 6,500 health-care professionals across the province have had their wages frozen by this government since 2017, while the cost of living has risen by over 20 per cent.

That includes midwives who—working at the Ode'imin Birth Centre in St. Vital, who I had the opportunity to join at their info picket just a couple of weeks ago. I heard how increasingly difficult it has become to make ends meet as their frozen wages can't compete with inflation and the rising costs of living.

I got to hear how difficult it has become for professionals to justify staying in a province where the PC government has caused prolonged contract disputes, escalating vacancy rates and a dangerous understaffing in critical areas.

That's five years, four Health ministers, two premiers and still no deal. No deal for health-care

workers who we rightly called heroes during the pandemic and whose work we value on this side of the House.

Instead, this government takes an embarrassing prize of being the worst in the nation. The length of time between contracts for M-H-A-C-P is unprecedented and the longest in Canada. That's no way to treat respiratory therapists, paramedics and other allied health-care workers who put their lives on the line to keep our communities healthy.

But how can we expect any different from this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson)? She's one of the failed Health ministers. Today's PC government is nothing more than a continuation of Brian Pallister's mismanagement of health care. Their mistreatment of workers has led to a critical state in our health care in this province. It's the same members and ministers who continue to fail us today.

But, Madam Speaker, soon Manitobans will have the opportunity to elect a new government, one that will fix the PC's mess in health care, stop the cuts and respect our front-line workers.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. [*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I'm going to ask members in the gallery that they are not to participate in the proceedings on the floor, and so we ask for no applause, please, by our guests.

Provincial Park Investments

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): The weather is starting to warm up, and, with the seasons changing, there are many signs around us. This weekend, I had the chance to witness the trees are starting to bud and baby rabbits have emerged from the security of their mother and groups of outdoor enthusiasts are meeting early in the morning before heading out on their adventures. Oh, and I also want to mention the morels are out.

I'm proud that our government has made an investment this week to protect and help all three of these groups. These trees, baby animals and all Manitobans will benefit from our historic investment in our provincial parks. I hope that these canoe-toting constituents of mine were going to access a provincial park, and I can't wait to see these massive investments in these parks as they create more access for Manitobans that is climate resilient and environmentally sound. We want more people to access our parks, but we need to balance protecting the needs of

our natural friends. These investments 'prioritize' both.

This \$220-million investment in our protected spaces will benefit all Manitobans. It'll also help to address one of the calls that I most often receive: Can we have more yurts in Manitoba parks? Well, Madam Speaker, the answer is yes. We are building more now. These—those persistent calls from campers every spring has been heard, and hopefully next year there will be more.

Madam Speaker, Manitobans are accessing these great protected spaces that we all take stewardship of.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: I have some guests in the Speaker's Gallery that I would like to introduce to you today.

Seated in the Speaker's Gallery is my husband, Hal Driedger, and also a long-time family friend, Drummond Brown.

And we'd like to welcome you both to the Manitoba Legislature.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And also, as is our tradition when our pages are leaving us, we always get to hear a little bit about what they thought about their time here in the Legislature. So, the person today that we are going to recognize is Elena Verrelli.

Being selected—and this is her words in writing—being selected as a provincial page for this past year has been an absolute gift. The main thing I have grown appreciation for is the dynamic of life here among the Legislative Assembly. While there are several structural and ceremonial components that are followed, the humour and individual characters of the MLAs, the Speaker, clerks, staff and fellow pages is all around. So, I thank you all.

In the following year, I will continue on to my final year at St. Boniface Diocesan High School, maintaining involvement with academics, athletics and piano.

Paging entails a lot of observing, and while this year has been only a glimpse into the colossal thing that is the legislative process, I feel very fortunate to have witnessed it first-hand. I wish all of you the best in your future endeavours, and there's a chance we'll meet again at Folklorama this summer.

And I would just like to mention that Elena is joined by her father in the gallery today, Mawro, and he is seated in the gallery. So, welcome here.

And Elena, congratulations and all the best in your future studies.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Manitoba Public Insurance—Project Nova McKinsey Consultants—Cost for Services

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, new documents show the extent of the crisis at Manitoba Public Insurance under this PC government, and it's costing everybody who drives in this province more money.

These documents that I'll table come from a board meeting in November of 2022, where an extension of a contract to McKinsey consulting was approved. Now, that document hides the amount of money that was paid to Justin Trudeau's favourite consulting firm, McKinsey.

We now know that the government approves, at the Cabinet table, contracts that MPI signs off on. Manitobans deserve to know just how much McKinsey was paid because it is impacting your Autopac rates.

So, will the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) tell the House today: How much money has she paid to McKinsey consulting?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): Yes, I appreciate the question from Justin Trudeau's favourite opposition leader in the country, Madam Speaker.

* (13:50)

I can tell that particular member that, at MPI, there is strong, new leadership when it comes to the interim CEO, strong new leadership when it comes to the board chair.

When we look at rates, historically, the rates have been much lower under this government than they ever were under the former NDP government where they not only had cost problems, but they had issues because they were demanding free Jets tickets for every one of the caucus members in the NDP at that time.

We took strong action. They demanded free hockey tickets, Madam Speaker.

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

**Former Manitoba Public Insurance CEO
Inquiry into Out-of-Scope Payment**

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Madam Speaker, Project Nova at Manitoba Public Insurance has gone over budget by \$200 million.

That's a failure of this minister, of his predecessor and of this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson). It's the reason why Manitobans had to start paying more for their car insurance on April 1 of this year.

Now, another document that I'll share from a board meeting on February 9th—I'll table it—shows that one of the board members asked to approve a payment that was out of scope.

We know that there's been so much chaos in additional payments made to the former CEO, Eric Herbelin, Manitobans would be right to question whether this out-of-scope payment was being approved to pay to the former CEO.

Again, this is costing you money every time you pay for your car insurance.

So, will the Premier please tell the House whether this out-of-scope payment went to Eric Herbelin?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): Of course, not only have rates been historically low under our time of government, there have been historic rebates that have come from Manitoba Public Insurance back to the ratepayers of Manitoba, benefitting really almost every Manitoban who owns a vehicle or licenses a vehicle in the province.

But the question that Manitobans should be asking, as addressed by the Leader of the Opposition, is why is it that the former NDP government never addressed the technological issues at MPI in the more than 15 years that they were in government?

They did nothing, Madam Speaker. They let the system deteriorate year after year. Their only concern, their biggest concern when they were in government was, how do we get free Jets tickets from MPI?

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

**Manitoba Public Insurance—Project Nova
Cost Overruns and Autopac Rates**

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): Here's the reality of the situation: everyone in the province saw their car insurance rates go up on April 1

of this year. And if you haven't seen your rates go up yet, just wait until you renew your Autopac payments.

The reason why is because this minister—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —this Premier saw cost overruns when it comes to Project Nova to the tune of \$200 million.

Now, what drove those cost increases? Well, it's not only the very poor management skills of the members opposite, it's the fact that they signed off on a \$12-million untendered contract to McKinsey consultants and, of course, they approved not one, but many, many additional payments to the former CEO of Manitoba Public Insurance.

Many folks are paying more on their car insurance in Manitoba today because of these additional payments. That's the truth as of April 1 of this year.

How does the Premier justify these overpayments to out-of-province consultants?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): The truth is that there were dozens and dozens of untendered contracts at MPI under the former NDP government. This government took action.

The truth is there is historic rebates from MPI under this government to Manitobans who have been licensing their vehicles. The truth is there's historic low rates at MPI compared to the former NDP government.

The truth is that that former government never did anything on the technology. They let it languish for 15 years, knowing that it would deteriorate.

This government took action. This government ensured there were rebates. This government ensured there are low rates, and will continue to do so.

That's the truth, Madam Speaker.

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

**Rural Paramedic Services
Staff Reduction Concerns**

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): The truth is, this government admitted in this House that they've known about that \$200 million over budget for more than two years, and the situation continued without any intervention from this government.

It's just like the situation in health care, where we see them continue to make cuts and cuts and cuts, even though everyone can see that our provincial health-care system is in crisis.

I'll table our documents that we've just received from Shared Health, which show that since the Stefanson government took office two years ago, the number of rural paramedics working in Manitoba has been cut by 87 people.

Now, when we hear from folks in rural Manitoba who are waiting longer than ever, this is the reason why.

How does the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) justify cutting 87 rural paramedic positions since she took office?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Premier): Certainly welcome the paramedics that are with us today, and we appreciate the good work that they do across our province.

Madam Speaker, I also want to advise the House that the government of Manitoba and the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service has just completed negotiations on a new service purchase agreement that will ensure the reliable and consistent delivery of emergency medical response, transport and community paramedicine services within the city of Winnipeg.

And I want to compliment the leadership of the mayor and especially the Premier for making this deal work.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order.

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

Mr. Kinew: For seven years, city ambulance wait times have increased under this government because of their cuts. Now, in an election year, they want to put out a press release and act like it's all good.

Manitobans know the truth. Just like the truth in those documents that I tabled for the Deputy Premier, which show that in communities like his, the number of paramedics working has been cut.

When the Stefanson government took office, there were 704 paramedics working in rural Manitoba. Today, 617. That means that this government has cut 87 rural paramedic positions. That means that there are fewer people working in communities like Carberry to

be able to respond when there are medical emergencies. *[interjection]*

I hear the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) saying that they're cleaning something up. Nobody in Manitoba wants to see fewer paramedics working in rural Manitoba.

How does the Premier justify cutting rural paramedic positions while Manitobans are waiting longer for ambulances?

Mr. Cullen: Well, Madam Speaker, our government recognizes the labour challenges that we have here in Manitoba. And, quite frankly, we've got the same health-care challenges right across the country.

That's why this year, in our budget for health care, we've increased the funding for health care 9.2 per cent. That's a \$668 million additional money for health care in Manitoba.

And, Madam Speaker, over and above that, we've committed \$200 million to attract health-care workers. Our goal is to attract 2,000 health-care workers. That will include adding paramedics to our workforce—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: —right across the province of Manitoba—\$200 million committed to attracting 200 health-care professionals in Manitoba.

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

Mr. Kinew: Deputy Premier wants to talk about other provinces. Well, we'll tell him this: other provinces are here in Manitoba recruiting paramedics. They're taking people away from the bedside in communities like Riverton and Eriksdale and Carberry.

Other provinces are in the game. This government is not only asleep at the wheel, they're actively cutting positions. Madam Speaker, 87 fewer paramedics working in rural Manitoba since the Stefanson government took office. It's undeniable that this government is cutting health care, and it's people in rural Manitoba who are bearing the brunt because they have to wait longer and longer and longer for their ambulance calls to be answered.

How does the Premier justify cutting health care in the form of 87 rural paramedic positions cut while the rest of the province is trying to hire away these same people?

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, the member opposite clearly points out the challenges in labour. In fact, we are competing with other provinces for health-care professionals.

That's the fact of the matter. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: That is why we put 9.2 per cent more money into health care to address that. That is \$668 million more money for health care.

We've also put in \$200 million to attract 2,000 health-care workers. We've got over 700 new health-care workers already. We recognize the challenges; we've added more positions for paramedics

* (14:00)

Madam Speaker, we're ready to hire paramedics. Manitoban is—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: —open. We're ready to hire paramedics because they do provide a valuable resource for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Before we proceed, couple of things.

I'm going to give a warning to everybody and I'm going to start recognizing those that are incessantly heckling and making it difficult for all of us to hear.

So, I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: And at this time, I would like to introduce a group to you, seated in the public gallery from Horndean Christian Day School, 41 grade 6 to 10 students under the direction of Ben Friesen. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter).

And on behalf of all of us here, we welcome you to the Manitoba Legislature.

MAHCP Collective Bargaining Negotiations Impact on Rural Paramedics and Services

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): New FIPPA documents show that under the PCs, there are 87 fewer rural paramedics working in Shared Health since 2020. Paramedics are fed up with the PCs and their continued disrespect and their refusal to bargain fairly.

MAHCP members, including rural paramedics, have been working without a contract for the past five

years, because the PCs refuse to come to the table and bargain fairly.

Rural paramedics are exhausted, Madam Speaker.

Can the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) explain why she has continued to fail to support front-line workers?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Minister of Health): We have great respect for all the paramedics, both rural and urban, who are working in very, very important jobs on the front lines of health-care provision. In fact, that's recognized by the announcement just today when it comes to the Winnipeg rural paramedics.

But generally for paramedics, I would say when it comes to respecting their profession, self-regulation was brought in by this government when it came to paramedics in Manitoba generally. And it was stopped by the former government because they traded it away on the leadership—floor of the NDP leadership, when they said, well, we won't do that if we can get support for Greg Selinger.

That's what kind of respect they showed for paramedics, rural and urban. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

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

MLA Fontaine: Madam Speaker, everybody knows that the PCs have made a mess of health care in Manitoba since the day they took office, and nothing makes this more clear than the fact that M-H-A-C-P is still waiting for their fair deal from this government after five years without a contract.

Now we've learned that, since 2020, there are 87 fewer rural paramedics in Shared Health. The PCs have treated paramedics horribly and they're exhausted.

Can the Premier explain why she's failed to support rural paramedics?

Mr. Goertzen: Great respect for all of our paramedics in the province of Manitoba. Of course, we cut our ambulance fees in half because we knew it was important that that support be provided.

But we do remember, now, the member for St. Johns said she wasn't at that convention when they traded away the opportunity for paramedics to have self-regulation for their profession. I wonder if the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) was there; maybe he can explain to us why, on the floor of a leadership convention, they decided not to provide professional

recognition to paramedics in exchange to try to get a leadership candidate elected. That's how they valued paramedics.

Has it changed today? I don't think so. But maybe the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) can tell us.

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

MLA Fontaine: Paramedics play a crucial role in Manitoba's health-care system. We know that on this side of the House, and we want to honour and acknowledge and lift them up for the work that they continue to do.

They are the first people to respond to emergencies and they save lives every single day. Yet, this PC government has repeatedly disrespected them and refused to bargain fairly.

They are exhausted. They are dealing with mental health issues because there are 87 fewer rural paramedics now that are on the front lines since 2020. This is a real, dangerous impact on the lives of Manitobans.

Can the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) explain why she has failed MAHCP workers, including paramedics, including the ones that are in the Chamber with us today?

Mr. Goertzen: Appreciate all paramedics and the work that they do, including the ones in the city of Winnipeg today. That was demonstrated by a \$51-million funding for them that the opposition voted against yesterday.

We appreciate them and demonstrated that by cutting the ambulance fees. We appreciated that by giving them self-regulation, to bring them in line with almost every other professional health profession in this province. They begged your former government to do it for years. I was in opposition when they begged them to do it.

They came to this government in—when we were in government, asked us to do it, and we did it, and they told us the reason why it didn't happen under the former NDP government is because they traded it away on the leadership convention floor.

Will they apologize today for disrespecting those paramedics for more than 15 years, Madam Speaker?

Allied Health Professionals Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Madam Speaker, allied health-care workers are a key part of our front-line

health-care system, but after five years, they are still waiting for a fair deal.

They've rallied outside the Legislature and asked this government to treat them fairly, but the PC government just doesn't listen.

The minister likes to deflect, say that they're not the employer, but we all know that this government sets the mandate for Shared Health.

So, will this government finally listen and step up and ensure that allied health-care workers get a fair deal?

Hon. James Teitsma (Minister of Consumer Protection and Government Services): Certainly, I do intend to get to the question that the member has offered up here, but before I do that, I do want to also add my thanks and appreciation to the paramedics who are here today, to all the paramedics who serve in our province.

We very, very much value the work that you do. We respect the work—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —that you do. We never want to have to have you come to our house, but we are so grateful that you are available to come to everyone else's, where there is need. We think—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —you are the heroes in this province. We incredibly do value the work that you do, and I can assure you, despite what the members opposite want to say, that they have our respect, our appreciation and they will continue to be a priority for us.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

And I am going to have to call the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) to order, please. The incessant heckling is making it very difficult for business to be conducted on the floor of this House.

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

Mr. Moses: The PC government's wage freeze is making life harder during this cost-of-living crisis. Rural paramedics, pharmacists, MRI techs, radiation therapists and 190 other allied health-care professionals have been waiting for over five years for a fair deal.

I've spoken with the midwives who work in my community, and they've said that they've been waiting

under this PC government for six years, and they've had their wages frozen during that time.

We know that this PC government has cut 87 rural paramedics in just the last three years. So, enough is enough.

Will the PC government take accountability, and will they give allied health-care workers a fair deal today?

Mr. Teitsma: Madam Speaker, as the member even noted himself in the first question, government's not the employer. Shared Health is.

And certainly, Shared Health and the unions have been in active negotiations. Those negotiations are now being aided by a mediator, and I'm optimistic that progress will continue to be made there.

And I'm optimistic that a deal—a fair deal—will be arrived, and I will note that every deal that has been concluded by this government within health care, which includes a significant majority of all health-care workers, includes retroactive, compounding pay increases.

There's no reason to expect anything else in this deal.

* (14:10)

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

Mr. Moses: Madam Speaker, allied health-care workers have had enough of the disrespect from this PC government, the broken promises as well. And they've provided an unprecedented voting action, in 99 per cent in favour of strike action.

This government promised to complete all wage and contract negotiations by the end of fiscal year 2022-23, but that has come and gone with no deal and allied care—health workers are still waiting. It's unacceptable, Madam Speaker.

So, will the minister stand up today, stop the disrespect, stop the deflecting and take responsibility, and will he give allied health-care workers a fair deal today?

Mr. Teitsma: Well, Madam Speaker, I hope what we're not seeing is a repeat of what happened on the floor of the leadership convention with the NDP, where they subjugated the interests of paramedics to their own narrow political interests.

Could it be that the NDP are disrupting the bargaining process deliberately because they think it will serve their own political agenda? *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: They don't care about paramedics. They made that very loud and clear by what happened on the floor—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Teitsma: —of the leadership convention of the NDP.

The only reason that they're speaking up for them now is because they think it'll give them a political advantage. Shame on them.

Allied Health Professionals Collective Bargaining Negotiations

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): Madam Speaker, this afternoon we've heard this government continues to refuse to take accountability for the mess they've made in health care. Manitobans know that this government's agenda, since day one, has been to cut health care and disrespect workers.

Freezing the wages of allied health-care workers for over five years is just one more example of this government's failures. These are our front-line workers who give us the care we need. It's high time this government cared about them and challenges they are facing.

Will the minister do the right thing and give allied health-care workers a fair deal today?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Minister of Health): The member is as wrong in the House as he is at the doorstep when he's giving false information to individuals.

This is actually a government that's provided record funding when it comes to health care. This is a government that's provided \$300 million to ensure that we can recruit, retain and train individuals into the health-care field. We know that coming out of a global pandemic, this has been a challenge. It's been a challenge right across the country.

But that challenge isn't aided when false information is provided by the member opposite or when they vote against those resources, like they did yesterday when they voted against \$300 million to support the health-care system in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wasyliv: You know, Madam Speaker, actions speak louder than words, and after five years without a fair deal—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —that shows the disrespect this government is showing to allied health-care workers.

They are burnt out and struggling with serious mental health concerns, but this PC government continues to ignore them. Instead, they cut 87 paramedics over the past three years. Allied health-care workers and Manitobans deserve better.

Will the PC government give them a fair deal today?

Mr. Goertzen: The right action for that member yesterday would have been to stand in support of the appropriation bill that helped to provide hundreds of millions of dollars to recruit and retain professionals in our health-care system. But that member decided to do something different. He decided to vote against that support.

Many members of the NDP decided to do something different when it came to treating our paramedics when they were in government. They ignored their request for self-regulation. They decided to trade off Greg Selinger for paramedics.

You know, Greg Selinger might have been a good professor. I prefer paramedics over Greg Selinger, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Wasyliv: You know, Madam Speaker, we're going to have an election this fall and the choice between Manitobans is very clear: you can have the party of millionaires for millionaires that give billionnaires tax breaks, or you can have a party that supports allied health-care workers and the health-care front-line workers—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wasyliv: —in Manitoba.

So, allied health-care workers are burnt out, and they're dealing with a serious mental health concern, but this government is prolonging their suffering by refusing to give them a fair deal.

Will the PC government finally take accountability for the consequences of their inaction and give allied health-care workers a fair deal?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, there are choices, and I guess when the member was leaving his million-dollar home this morning, he would've had a choice: Did he want to drive to the Legislature and fulfill his role as an MLA, or should he drive to his law firm and fulfill the other full-time job that he has as a defence lawyer?

He has a choice too. Does he actually want to be a full-time MLA or does he want to be a full-time defence lawyer?

The other choices are, of course, do Manitobans want to support a party that'll go and support them when it comes to affordability or do they want to support a party that'll increase their PST? They do—want to support a party that is looking to heal our health-care system, or support the party that destroyed it?

Those are the choices. When he's over at his law firm this afternoon, he can think about those choices, Madam Speaker.

Cataract Surgery Services in Brandon New Ophthalmologist Needed

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): For seven straight years, the PCs have cut health care in rural Manitoba and they disrespected rural health-care workers, causing many of them to seek work elsewhere or to leave the system altogether.

And now we've learned that the only ophthalmologist in Brandon has decided to leave. And I'll table that letter, Madam Speaker. That means that no one in western Manitoba is available to provide cataract surgery to the Manitobans who need it.

Can the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) explain what she is doing to ensure an ophthalmologist is hired as soon as possible?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Minister of Health): Well, there's no question, Madam Speaker, I'm sure that the Health Minister will be seized with this issue and looking at it very closely. But we also know that the opposition member voted against \$300 million to recruit and retain individuals in professions like the one she's describing.

I do want to say I did receive sad news this morning: dozens of emergency room doctors have written an open letter warning about unsafe conditions at hospitals, and I wanted to acknowledge that.

Of course, that happened this morning in British Columbia—NDP-run British Columbia, Madam Speaker.

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

MLA Asagwara: I'd advise the minister to use the correct pronouns when addressing me.

And I'd like to go back to this question because it's really important. You know, we've learned that the only doctor providing that kind of care, cataract surgeries in Brandon, is leaving, Madam Speaker. That means that Manitobans in Brandon and the Westman will have to continue to wait for the surgeries they need with no actual end date in sight as to when they'll get care. That means the wait-list is only going to continue to grow.

The Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) needs to take urgent action and ensure this service remains available for those living in the Westman.

Can the Premier explain what action she's taking to immediately address this concern?

Mr. Goertzen: First of all, I want to apologize to the member, Madam Speaker.

And I also want to say that this particular challenge is true—the challenge in Manitoba. I know that the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) will be looking at the challenge that's been addressed or been raised by the member when it comes to Westman.

But when I look at NDP British Columbia, I see that 60 per cent of British Columbians [*phonetic*] can't find a doctor. In fact, a recent news article said that almost 1 million residents have no family doctor in British Columbia, a province that's been run by the NDP for many years.

It just goes to the point that there are many, many challenges, not just in Manitoba, when it comes to health care, but across Canada. But it won't be solved by voting against support, \$300 million of support, as every member opposite did yesterday, Madam Speaker.

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

MLA Asagwara: The PCs have a serious issue and a pattern with cutting health care in rural Manitoba, and they have a pattern of failing to support the health-care workers who work in rural Manitoba.

* (14:20)

For years they've cut the services that Manitobans depend on. They've closed ERs led by that minister, and they refuse to fill vacancies.

And now we've learned that Brandon's only doctor that does cataract surgeries is leaving. That's a huge blow to not only Brandon, but Westman as a whole. And it's a blow to the Manitobans who continue to wait for the cataract surgeries that they need.

Can the Premier explain what actions she's taking to ensure a cataract surgeon is hired in Brandon as soon as possible?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, one of the actions is investing \$300 million in ensuring that we're getting health-care professionals in the province of Manitoba, and that's an action that every member of the NDP voted against yesterday.

I know the member might not remember, but there was a time when the NDP were in government, and they drove around Manitoba deciding which hospitals to close. Of course they said, well, it's just temporary for maybe one year, two years, turned into five years, then 10 years, 15 years.

They temporarily—well, they really closed dozens of hospitals, more than 20 hospitals around rural Manitoba. That's the respect that they showed to Manitobans when they were in government.

Maybe that's why when they were in government—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —the media reported—maybe, Madam Speaker—[*interjection*]
—I know they don't want to hear the truth. But that's why the media reported when they were in government, there was a full-system failure when it came to health care, when they were in government.

Rural Paramedics Retention Initiatives

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): In 2017, the PC government—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —announced closures—in 2017, the PC government announced the closures of 18 ambulance stations across rural Manitoba, based on a 2013 NDP plan they pulled off the shelf.

At the time I attended a town hall at Rosburn, one of the targeted communities, and folks from this government assured residents there'd be no problem because advanced-care paramedics would take over. That never happened, because the government never funded the positions.

Paramedics in rural Manitoba spend more time with patients in their ambulances, deliver a wider range of medications, all while they're short staffed and are paid \$10 less an hour than in Winnipeg. And they haven't had a contract in—for five years.

Other provinces are happy to pay more. This is all sending a clear message to rural paramedics: leave Manitoba.

What is this government going to do to address these issues immediately and make it clear we value them and want them to stay?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Minister of Health): Well, we start by indicating, of course, that we do value paramedics, all paramedics: those in Winnipeg, those in rural Manitoba.

We value the work that they do and the service they provide by cutting the fees, of course, that those who are using those services had to pay, that were double under the former NDP government. We show them value by recognizing their profession as the professionals that they truly are.

We know that there are challenges across the health-care systems of Canada, right across this country. But we're investing in ensuring that we're getting health-care professionals.

We'll continue to do that hard work, and we'll do it in partnerships with the paramedics that we value greatly, Madam Speaker.

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

Psychological Injuries in the Workplace Support Services Needed

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): We heard from paramedics in Winnipeg as well who've been facing their own stresses because workplace shortages are so bad.

As Winnipeg has grown, and as its population ages, there have been no new ambulances put on the road in the city of Winnipeg for years.

We heard directly from paramedics who were in life-threatening situations where they could get no back-up or were severely assaulted—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamont: —at work, all while dealing with traumatic and sometimes tragic situations.

These cause mental injuries. We need more ambulances, paramedics and especially more support for people who've experienced a mental injury at work, because workers comp does nothing.

Is this government going to make sure that people who suffer mental injuries at work get the help and care they need?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Minister of Health): Well, this was a timely question, Madam Speaker, because just in the last hour or hour and a half, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) of our province, together with the mayor of the City of Winnipeg, were announcing a more-than-\$50-million agreement for ambulance service in the city of Winnipeg.

That agreement also includes an additional two ambulances, which will be available, along with a number of other important services, Madam Speaker. Ironically, the funds for that agreement, which were announced today, were voted against by the Liberal caucus yesterday.

Grace Hospital Overnight Physician Shortage Request to Call an Investigation

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, Margaret Ward died at grate—Grace Hospital in the early morning hours, Monday, January 30th of this year.

At the time, I understand there was only a first-year resident physician covering more than 100 patients at the hospital for the whole weekend. The minister had been aware of the shortage of night coverage two months earlier.

Margaret's 'harsband', Charles, who's in the gallery today, was told he could not stay overnight with Margaret, as she was not at risk of dying. When he and his daughter arrived at 6 a.m. the next morning, they found her dead. The physician did not arrive until 9 a.m.

Will the minister call a full investigation into the impact of the shortage of overnight physicians at Grace Hospital earlier this year, to better understand the problems that this shortage created?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Minister of Health): I appreciate the member asking the question, and I want to send our condolences to Margaret's husband, who is here today in the gallery.

I also want to indicate, while we're appreciating, of course, the support—the additional financial support—that's gone into the Grace Hospital, every

situation like this is taken seriously. It needs to be taken seriously.

I know that the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) will be seized with this issue; I know that she'll follow up on the question that the member opposite has asked.

And, again, I want to express our condolences, because these losses are not only tragic, but they impact many in a family and in a community.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Budget 2023 Investments in Manitoba

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Yesterday, we passed Budget 2023, Historic Help for Manitobans.

Our government is supporting hard-working Manitobans, Manitoban businesses and the services that we all rely on. This budget provides so much assistance to Manitoba that the NDP couldn't even agree if they were in favour or opposed to it. A full quarter of their caucus couldn't bring themselves to vote against it, including their leader and the MLA for St. Johns.

I welcome them to team Manitoba.

Can the Minister of Finance please share the vision of this historic budget, and the help that it'll offer Manitobans today and for years to come?

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, Budget '23–2023 provides the largest tax reduction in our province's history.

As a result of our historic reductions to personal income tax, Manitobans will be saving another \$1,250 each year. Madam Speaker, we believe Manitobans should keep more of their hard-earned money.

In addition, Madam Speaker, Budget 2023–*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: –fortifies services for Manitobans by providing record investments in health care, education, public safety and social services. Once again, the NDP voted against these historic investments.

We're also making investments in economic opportunities and infrastructure, to prepare our great province for an even brighter future.

Madam Speaker, historic investments in Manitoba for Manitobans.

Northern Health Care Access to Services

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): This PC government has clearly shown that northern health care is not their priority. They forced the Northern Health Region to cut millions of dollars, forcing paramedics to use ambulances that aren't safe to be on the highway, causing shortages of paramedics.

The system is suffering. People are not getting the care they need.

Will the minister commit to stopping the cuts, properly funding northern health care, so that northern Manitobans can get the health care they need?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Acting Minister of Health): Well, the member opposite, of course, knows that there's historic and record investments in health care, and that would include new investments in the North, Madam Speaker.

I know even many years ago, he didn't want to acknowledge a new emergency room at Flin Flon, I believe, in his own home community. He didn't want to talk about that because it didn't seem important to him at the time.

But there have been many other investments in the North, Madam Speaker. We recognize that, like all places in Canada, it is a challenge to recruit and retain individuals in health care. But we are providing more than \$300 million in support to do exactly that, something the member opposite—I'm not sure if he was here or not yesterday—but I think he actually voted against it, like the other two thirds of his caucus.

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

MLA Lindsey: Northern Manitobans deserve to be able to access the same level of care that everybody else in Manitoba gets, but this PC government's cuts and mismanagement are making that impossible.

Northern Manitobans struggle to find affordable transportation to their appointments in the city and can't access the same services as the rest of Manitobans, simply because they don't have the means to pay for it. That's not right.

* (14:30)

Will this minister, will this government, will this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) stand up for northern Manitobans and restore the services that they need to access health care in this province?

Madam Speaker: Just a caution to the member that when making reference to people's absence or presence in the Chamber, that is not one of the opportunities we provide. And so, I would caution members—I would caution—*[interjection]*

Order. I would caution the member not to make reference to whether people were here or not.

Mr. Goertzen: Another 20 years and I'll know the rules, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, when it comes to northern transport, when it comes to patients coming into Winnipeg, I remember very clearly the shambles that that program was in when we came into government in 2016.

And I recall asking the then-deputy minister of Health, can we see the policy when it comes to northern patient transfer and they said, well, there wasn't a—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Goertzen: —policy.

Well, I can hear the member's here today, because he's heckling from his seat all the time, Madam Speaker.

But if he was actually going to—*[interjection]*—I know, I know—if he was actually going to listen, he would know there wasn't even a policy for that particular program. When I asked the officials in Health, why wasn't there a policy, they weren't sure.

Well, I think I know the answer: it wasn't a priority for the NDP government. They talk a good game, but they don't actually make northern Manitoba or health a priority, Madam Speaker.

An Honourable Member: Lookit, she's giggling.

Madam Speaker: The—order, please.

And if the member was saying I was giggling, that is absolutely incorrect. And I think that is coming pretty close to crossing a line when referring to anything the Speaker is doing in this House. So, a caution to the member on that regard.

And to the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen), another caution, again, that referring to whether a person is in the House or not in the House is one of the rules that is not allowed. So, a caution to the member.

And time for oral questions has expired.

PETITIONS

Punjabi Bilingual Programs in Public Schools

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) According to census 2021, Punjabi is the fourth most spoken language in Canada—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Altomare: —and there are 33,315 people in Manitoba whose native language is Punjabi.

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

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

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

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

We therefore petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

Louise Bridge

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

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Over 25,000 vehicles per day cross the Louise Bridge, which has served as a vital link for vehicular traffic between northeast Winnipeg and the downtown for the last 112 years.

(2) The current structure will undoubtedly be declared unsafe in a few years as it has deteriorated extensively and is now functionally obsolete, therefore more subject to more frequent unplanned repairs and cannot be widened to accommodate future traffic capacity.

(3) As far back as 2008, the City of Winnipeg, City, has studied where the new replacement bridge should be situated.

(4) After including the bridge replacement in the City's five-year capital budget forecast in 2009, the new bridge became a short-term construction priority in the City's transportation master plan of 2011.

(5) City capital and budget plans identified replacement of the Louise Bridge on a site just east of the bridge and expropriated homes there on the south side of Nairn Avenue in anticipation of a 2015 start.

(6) In 2014, the new City administration did not make use of available federal infrastructure funds.

(7) The new Louise Bridge Committee began its campaign to demand a new bridge and its surveys confirmed that residents wanted a new bridge beside the current bridge, with the old bridge kept open for local traffic.

(8) The NDP provincial government signalled its firm commitment to partner with the City on replacing the Louise Bridge in its 2015 Throne Speech. Unfortunately, provincial infrastructure initiatives, such as the new Louise bridge, came to a halt with the election of the Progressive Conservative government in 2016.

(9) More recently, city—the City tethered the Louise Bridge replacement issue to its new transportation master plan and east corridor project. Its recommendations have now identified the location of the new bridge to be placed just to the west of the current bridge, not to the east as originally proposed.

(10) The City expropriation process has begun. The \$6.35-million street upgrade of Nairn Avenue from Watt Street to the 112-year-old bridge is complete.

(11) The new City administration has delayed the decision on the Louise Bridge for at least a year, possibly up to 10 years, unless the Province steps in on behalf of northeast Winnipeg residents and completes this overdue link.

(12) The Premier has a duty to direct the provincial government to provide financial assistance to the City so it can complete this long overdue vital link to northeast Winnipeg and Transcona.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier to financially assist the City of Winnipeg to build this three-lane bridge in each direction to maintain this vital link between northeast Winnipeg, Transcona [*phonetic*]-Transcona and the downtown.

(2) To urge the provincial government to recommend that the City of Winnipeg keep the old bridge fully open to traffic while the new bridge is under construction; and

(3) To urge the provincial government to consider the feasibility of keeping the old bridge open for active transportation in the future.

Petition's signed by many, many Manitobans.

South Perimeter Highway Noise Barrier

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

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background 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.

* (14:40)

(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 the 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 the traffic noise and to commit to meaningful action to address resident concern.

(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.

This petition has been signed by Saedee Hosein, Omar Jabar, William Schrader and many other Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I—we'll have a couple of leave requests, as well, but for this afternoon's business.

Could you please call second reading on Bill 43 and Bill 40, and then resume second reading debate on bills 22 and two-two-222 and 227, and then call for second reading, bills 241, 233 and 244.

If those previous private members' bills pass, could you then move to Committee of the Whole to consider bills 231, 235, 239, 229, 240, 242, 227, 241, 233 and 244.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider the following business this afternoon: second reading of bills 43 and 40, to be followed by resuming debate on bills 222 and 227; second reading of bills 241, 233 and 244; and if all of that passes, to go to Committee of the Whole to consider the following bills: 231, 235, 239, 229, 240, 242, 227, 241, 233 and 244.

I will now call second—oh, pardon me.

The honourable Government House Leader, on a leave request.

Mr. Goertzen: Could you canvass the House for leave to not see the clock today until all the business which I've just listed and you've repeated has concluded.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to not see the clock today until the—all the business in which the Government House Leader has just identified has been concluded? Agreed? [*Agreed*]

House Business

Mr. Goertzen: Last leave request, I believe, Madam Speaker.

Is there leave to waive rule 92(7) so that Bill 222, if it passes second reading today, and Bill 238, can be sent to the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development meeting scheduled for tomorrow evening, despite there being presenters registered to speak to these bills.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to waive rule 92(7) so that Bill 222, if it passes second reading today, and Bill 238, can be sent to the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development meeting scheduled for tomorrow evening? Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

SECOND READINGS

Bill 43—The Provincial Offences Amendment Act (2)

Madam Speaker: I will therefore call second reading of Bill 43, The Provincial Offences Amendment Act (2).

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister responsible for Seniors, that Bill 43, The Provincial Offences Amendment Act (2), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: The proposed amendments to The Provincial Offences Act would enable First Nations to have contraventions of First Nations laws dealt with under the act.

In particular, the proposed amendments allow law enforcement to issue a ticket which can be dealt with administratively, and will provide additional enforcement options for First Nations to collect unpaid fines.

These proposed amendments have been requested by MKO, and Indigenous organization that advocates on behalf of 26 northern First Nations communities.

Currently, charges under First Nations law can only be laid using a long-form information which, in comparison with a ticketing regime, includes more steps for laying the charge and enforcement. With the ticketing regime, law enforcement are not required to appear before a Justice in order to issue a ticket. Instead, law enforcement can issue a ticket on the spot.

There's also a more efficient administrative process to enforce and resolve tickets, which does not require an appearance before a Justice.

These amendments will make the enforcement of First Nations laws more efficient, which also effectively enhances and supports compliance of public safety in First Nations communities. Additionally, the use of tickets to enforce First Nations laws can reduce the burden on the court system, which includes minimizing delays.

The amendments provide individual First Nations a choice. They do not require First Nations to use the ticketing regime set out in The Provincial Offences Act. Instead, it allows individual First Nations to adopt the regime by incorporating into their laws, if they determine it is best for their communities.

The amendments do not affect who enforces or prosecutes offences under First Nations bylaws. First Nations safety officers appointed under The provincial services—oh, sorry—Police Services Act would be deemed enforcement officers and will have a role that are enforcing First Nations laws through the ticketing regime.

Similarly, the Attorney General of Canada would be deemed a prosecutor under the act, and will continue to have the ability to prosecute the offences under First Nations bylaws.

First Nations will be responsible for collecting unpaid fines.

We have heard from MKO that the ability to use The Provincial Offences Act ticketing regime to enforce First Nations laws will streamline the enforcement of First Nations laws, assist with their enforcement and prosecution and ultimately help communities become safer and healthier.

Additionally, I would add, this was recently adopted in a similar form in the province of Saskatchewan.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any opposition or independent 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.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Madam Speaker, the minister spoke about some of the consultation that was done, of course, MKO.

Could he flesh that out? What other Indigenous organizations, First Nations, did he consult with in preparing this bill?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The member is correct that the lead advocate for this has been MKO. There have been other grand chiefs who have indicated that this might be a helpful option for them, but, of course, it's only an option.

They don't need to go under this particular regime if they choose to stay under the current ticketing regime that they are under, but certainly, for MKO and for others, they believe it's an important advancement in providing safety on their communities.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the minister for bringing forward this legislation.

I was hoping that the minister could speak a little bit to the process, just how a First Nation would go about choosing to opt into the new provisions under this act?

Mr. Goertzen: First Nations would have to make a conscious and documented decision to come under this particular act.

Currently, right now, I think the member will know that it's a long-form ticketing process, which is very administratively difficult. And for certain First Nations communities, they've been indicating that it's difficult to enforce certain bylaws on their—in their communities that would provide safety and deal with

some important issues where they're finding that certain substances and others are coming onto their communities and causing issues.

So, it would be an administratively easier process coming under the provincial ticketing scheme.

Mr. Eric Redhead (Thompson): Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak identified these issues publicly in November of last year.

* (14:50)

Why has this government not made an effort to act on their requests sooner? This bill could have been guaranteed to pass if it was introduced earlier.

Mr. Goertzen: I appreciate the fact the member's raising concerns that it has taken five months, I think, since he indicated that it was raised publicly. I would note—not politically, but it's worth noting—that the former NDP government never acted on these concerns in 16 years, so five months might not be as quick as the member might like; 16 years is a little bit longer. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

I'm going to have to call the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) and the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) to order. The—and I can add more to that if we get to that point.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): There's always an issue when we come—time to First Nations politics with on-reserve versus off-reserve, federal responsibility, provincial responsibility.

So, I'm wondering if the minister's met with the federal government on this issue and if there's any kind of perspective issues that may be arising from the jurisdictional issues between on-reserve versus off-reserve.

Mr. Goertzen: Well, it's a good question.

And actually, you know, I think maybe an equally efficient process would have been had the federal government—and there was talk about the federal government stepping in with their own regime that would have been simpler and more efficient for those on First Nations.

In fact, that would have been my hope, that the federal government would have done that, but I wasn't prepared to wait for them to act, because there was no indication if they would actually act on that in months or years, and so we responded to MKO's request by

doing this provincially as opposed to waiting for the federal government to act.

Mr. Redhead: It seems as though the government has listened to First Nations' concerns with Bill 43.

Can the minister explain why he's failed to do so with other issues like Orange Shirt Day and the channels project?

Mr. Goertzen: I think if the member opposite looked a little bit deeper—and I respect he's got close connections, of course, within his community—but on many different issues when it comes to the Indigenous community in Manitoba, this government has worked in partnership with them.

Whether that's treaty land entitlement, which has been very significant under this government, or this particular issue, when it comes to the Department of Justice generally, I would say there's been many, many initiatives, including healing lodges that are being built in provincial institutions that never happened under the former government.

That's not a criticism; it's just a reality that this government is acting where others didn't in the past.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions?

Debate

Madam Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Eric Redhead (Thompson): I'm honoured to put a few words on the record for this—the provincial offences amendment act. You know, as a former First Nation leader, I know the importance of self-determination, self-governance. Being able to keep our streets safe has been a challenge in the past.

Not being able to enforce certain laws or bylaws has been very difficult, especially during the pandemic. I know, during my time as chief, the pandemic was one of the hardest things we faced, especially in an isolated community. And being able to force—enforce our own bylaws was a challenge.

And so I—you know, I—first of all, I want to thank MKO for putting the pressure on this government and being able to amend this act so First Nations have control over their own self-governance and determination. You know, one of the challenges during the pandemic was not having the resources to enforce certain bylaws.

And so, this amendment, I think does do that when it comes to provincial offences, which was key in the pandemic. We weren't able to ticket, to enforce

certain provincial bylaws that would have come in handy during the pandemic, and might have actually saved lives.

So, and I thank the grand chief of MKO for bringing this forward and putting pressure on the government for these changes in the provincial offences amendment act. I think the grand chief has, you know, his heart in the right place in making sure that First Nations are able to take care of themselves, govern themselves accordingly.

And so, bringing this forward is really going to help First Nations bring peace and order to their communities.

We know that a lot of our communities are struggling right now with mental health issues brought forward by the pandemic, addictions issues. So, being able to enforce certain bylaws are definitely going to help address that—those issues.

You know, I do want to say that one of the issues my community faced, and continues to face, is the fact that we're not able to search luggage coming through the airlines. And so, in the past, this is something we were able to do, and we were able to stop a lot of drugs coming into the community—drugs, paraphernalia—things that weren't allowed in the community. Unfortunately, this government put a stop to that, and once that happened, we've seen a huge influx in narcotics and all kinds of other bad stuff.

And so, this is something that I'd like to see the provincial government reverse their stance on so that First Nations are able to search luggage coming through our airports. A lot of our communities are isolated communities, so there's only one way in or out of these communities, and that's through the provincial-run airport.

And so, I was very disheartened when I got the letter, as chief, saying: Hey, you know what? You're no longer allowed to search luggage coming through. And, you know, that really made situations worse.

So, when it comes to the provincial offences amendment act, I think this is going to be able to give us a little more authority. But again, when it comes to searching luggage, I think that this is something I'm requesting the government to reverse their stance on.

With those few words, I will leave open my time.

Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Madam Speaker, I'm glad to have the opportunity to rise this

afternoon and to speak briefly here to Bill 43, the provincial offences amendment act.

We're very happy to see the support that has been shown and demonstrated in the creation of this legislation. We've heard about and we see the big role that MKO has played in the legislation, and they have worked with the Province to develop amendments to The Provincial Offences Act to allow for a more efficient enforcement of First Nations' laws.

Madam Speaker, it's important that we mention, and my colleague from Thompson actually mentioned this, as well, how, in last November, MKO held a chiefs' assembly on justice and policing, where part of the issue revolves around local police enforcement of First Nations bylaws. And while this legislation is important to allow to—for First Nations jurisdictions of law enforcement, we need to take this a step further and adjust this chronic underfunding of their First Nations safety officers program.

With respect to Bill 43, it is a positive step, a good piece of legislation, and people within their communities know them the best and its healthy approach to extend resources to those who are able to make decisions; in this case, ticketing officers. I'm very encouraged to see that the money from the tickets stay within the communities. But, again, it's just starting to scratch the surface of how underfunded many of these communities have been.

Madam Speaker, it's important to just clarify the rules of where we physically are at all times and the laws that we have to abide by. And I know I often think about the texting and driving, and I like using that as an example because everyone knows that texting and driving is illegal, but I'm not confident that everyone in Manitoba knows the steps that a person needs to take in a situation such as this, Madam Speaker.

So, I believe in our legal system and that it's here to protect us, and I believe that Manitobans need to be better aware of protocol.

And, Madam Speaker, I just want to wrap up my remarks by thanking those who work in our justice system. Whether it be the departmental staff, who helped brief us earlier today; whether you be a police officer on the street; whether you be part of an organization, such as Bear Clan, or working in a correctional facility, I just want to thank you for your work.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): Thanks, Madam Speaker, for a chance to share a few words for the provincial offences amendment act.

In regards to First Nations policing, First Nations law enforcement, in the Q & A part of this bill, I talked about jurisdiction and I asked a question about jurisdiction because it's always kind of been a bounce back, back and forth between issues that arise in First Nation communities, whether it be provincial responsibility versus federal responsibility. And it seems like both levels of government, if the issue was kind of contentious and it was just a little bit more controversial or if it's about enforcement, it's something they kind of bounce back and forth.

* (15:00)

So, that being said, understanding that MKO was a significant contributor to the content of this bill, to drafting kind of the narrative of this bill, and I applaud them for those efforts.

Another part of the questions were asked exactly who else was maybe consulted on this bill, because this—while this affects MKO communities, it also affects communities in the south, communities in the central part of Manitoba. So I think that was a legitimate and fair question to ask exactly who was all consulted, because this law, in fact, would affect all communities here in Manitoba, all First Nation communities in Manitoba.

And it's a positive step, but like many other things that are brought forward, it's a step. It's not necessarily a solution, but it is a step in the right direction.

So, when I refer to the jurisdictional aspect of the questions, there's a lot of communities that are unsure. Even within the communities that are unsure exactly what happens when there's enforcement, whether it be from RCMP, from bylaw officers from their local communities and their First Nation police safety officer program. So there's some confusion as to what takes effect, what takes precedent, who has authority versus who doesn't have authority.

So, I'm hoping that a lot of those would have had the opportunity to be discussed more wholesome in the Legislature. But, again, as the—my colleague member from Thompson had asked, this is very quick, very rushed to come. And it's a welcome step, mind you, but at the same time it also is due a more wholesome discussion.

So, those kind of discussions we're hoping can continue on and this step and this piece of legislation

I brought forward shouldn't be the be-all, end-all, because there's a lot more to this. There's a lot more questions in terms of revenue enforcement, things like that.

And also, when the provincial government does things that affect First Nation communities, time and time again there's also not dollars that are associated with that when it comes time for First Nation communities, instead trying to defer that responsibility to the federal government. So one of the questions that arises out of this: Is there, in fact, dollars, then, to train First Nation safety officers more so than what's there, because there is issues with the program. There is underfunding issues with the program.

So now, if you're going to potentially lean on and count on those individuals and those communities to play a more enhanced role, I think there also should be enhanced dollars contributed to that as well. And, if not, then there needs to be clarification as to exactly why that is and what everybody's role may be. And my understanding is also it's up to First Nation communities to opt in if they choose to opt in, or they can opt out.

So, again, what is the mechanism to do that? What is the mechanism to opt in versus—potentially if it's something that's not working—the option to opt out, and exactly what kind of steps does that entail to be able to do that? Because that is something that's also very important.

So, another thing that's very significant, is part of this, too, is, in fact, First Nations having their own bylaws in place, and whether or not they're enforceable bylaws, whether or not they're—they've done through all the steps, because every community is different. Every community has different enacting bylaws and different ways to enact their own bylaws and to enforce their own bylaws.

So, again, is there going to be a—kind of a standard practice to be able to bring those forward, or what does the First Nation community have to do to actually become recognized in this as a community to, quote, unquote, opt into the program? Then do they have to have a certain standard of bylaw certification to be able to do that, or do they have to go through, again, the federal government to be able to do that because this is a potentially an on-reserve issue with federal responsibility?

So, simple questions like that are, hopefully, something that can be worked out in the details, and I know there was a real push to have this in place.

And I know, and I think the member from Thompson was kind of alluding to the fact that a lot of this, too, is the result of work of MKO because there is a lot of issues with fly-in communities and isolated communities and winter-road-accessible communities that are very limited to what they can do to enforce kind of transportation to and from of illegal goods and illegal activities.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

So, know a lot of this is kind of the basis of those discussions and why this is such an important piece of legislation to bring forward. But, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a step in the right direction, but it is something that needs to be more wholesomely thought out as well.

So, I'm hoping when we—when this comes into place that, you know, whatever government of the day now comes forward and strengthens this with consultations and discussions with southern communities, with other northern communities, as well, with AMC, with MKO, with SCO and all the other political territorial organization that are in place here.

So, there is a way to actually strengthen this so there is no gaps, because time and time again when I've gotten up in this Chamber and spoken about Indigenous communities and the issues they have with governments, we always talk about the gaps, the gaps that are there between federal and provincial responsibility.

So, I'm hoping this legislation can be strengthened a little bit at some point in time to actually close some of those gaps off, because this is, again, as I mentioned, something that I feel is a little bit rushed—is needed, though—but is a little bit rushed.

So, there is some details that I think could be brought in here to strengthen the—this piece of legislation so that it encompasses all, so there is no, kind of, grey area and there is no uncertainty from all communities to be able to say, well, where do I go here, what's the responsibility here, where do we go—those kind of questions. Because if you're asking any questions about legislation that are brought forward, then it just means that it's not wholesomely thought out.

So, that being said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is something that really needs to be strengthened, to close those gaps, to close that uncertainty, so when a question arises—whether it be from the Province or federal governments or the First Nation government or First Nation individuals on—in the community—that they have a clear answer and they know exactly what

this means and what this means for them, what this means for enforcement in a community, what this means for fines in a community and what this means for revenue in the community.

Because that's another question when it arises—when enforcement on First Nation communities is any kind of fines, any kind of penalties that are in place, if there is a revenue attached to that, if there is a dollar value attached to that, where does that go and where does that clarification come from in this legislation.

So, that—all that being said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe this is a step in the right direction. It is something that is called for by First Nation communities, and I do applaud the government for listening to those voices. But, again, there are a lot more voices out there to be heard on this kind of issue, so I'm hoping this government is open to hearing those conversations, hearing those concerns and strengthening this legislation at some point in time so it encompasses all, so all those gaps are closed, all those questions are answered and there is no grey area.

Thank you, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Is there any further debate on this motion?

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 43, The Provincial Offences Amendment Act (2).

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 40—The Combative Sports Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): We will now move on to Bill 40, the 'combative' sports amendment act.

Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I move, seconded by the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Smith), that Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

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

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Sports, Culture and Heritage (Mr. Khan), seconded by the Minister of Municipal Relations (Mr. Smith), that Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment 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—and the message has been tabled.

Mr. Khan: I am pleased to speak in the House today about Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act.

We know how important it is for Manitobans to remain physically active, to get out and play and to play in organized sports and, above all else, for this to happen in a safe, regulated environment. There is no exception for our growing sport of combative sports here in this province and our combative sports community.

* (15:10)

This act will ensure uniform safety standards for professionals and amateurs competing in combative sports. The amendments proposed will expand the mandate of the Manitoba Combative Sports Commission to include the regulation and oversight of designated amateur combative sport in addition to the regulation and oversight of professional combative sports.

This amendment will ensure uniform safety standards for professionals and amateurs. Under the Criminal Code of Canada, section 83, amateur combative sport competitions are considered prize fights and therefore prohibited.

This activity could be exempted with an order-in-council; however, in the absence of regulation and oversight by a sanctioning body, amateur combative participants are at a higher risk of injury than those engaged in professional combative sports, which is regulated through The Combative Sports Act.

Currently, there is an order-in-council to exempt a number of amateur combative sports prohibited under section 83 of the Criminal Code in Canada—allows only a contest in boxing, tae kwon do, karate and sikaran arnis.

Without these amendments to The Combative Sports Act, illegal amateur combative sports activity may occur in Manitoba. And actually, we know they are occurring in Manitoba without proper regulation and monitoring. These include well-organized sports,

like jiu-jitsu, kung fu and MMA and others, which follow generally accepted rules and regulations, but because there is no provincial sports organization, or PSO, it's considered illegal under section 83 of the Criminal Code. This also includes sports with sparring sessions between clubs that may occur in unsafe conditions.

There is an added urgency, as jiu-jitsu has been identified as likely requiring exemption under the Criminal Code in order to take place legally under the World Police and Fire Games taking place this summer in Manitoba.

Members from the mixed martial arts community have called for amateur combative sports to be exempted under the code and regulated by the Manitoba Combative Sports Commission. In recent years, a petition was signed with over 1,700 signatures from the MMA, kick-boxing and Muay Thai community, calling for amateur combative sports to be exempted under the Criminal Code and regulated by Manitoba's Combative Sports Commission.

I'm happy to table this document today of over 1,700 signatures, and I want to recognize a pioneer and a leader in the combative sports community, and he's joined us here today, along with a lot of his friends, Giuseppe DeNatale, the owner and founder of CFC Canadian kickboxing centre, Canadian Fighting Center. He is a K-1 world champion. Giuseppe and I used to spar back in the day, or he used to train myself and Doug Brown when we played with the Bombers.

And, sidebar, 320 pounds, and Doug Brown is six foot nine and 300 pounds, and Giuseppe would clean the mat with us, as they say. So, yes—so, I want to thank Giuseppe DeNatale for his work and being a champion and a leader on this. Along with—there's a lot of other colleagues up there as well, and I didn't get a chance to introduce them very quickly before my time is up.

But I do also want to say, you know, we have another gym here with Malcolm Edwards from Bae's Martial Arts. And this past April, an event was hosted by the Manitoba Sport Martial Arts Association—had 302 participants here in Manitoba, but they were not allowed to spar. On May 13th, they had another 294 participants competing without sparring in martial arts. You can imagine how hard that is and how frustrating it is for these young amateur athletes to compete without sparring. These young athletes were denied the opportunity to showcase their combative skills.

However, this past weekend, competitors drove to Ottawa to compete in the national karate championship, and I'm happy to announce that they won three bronzes, four silver and eight gold medals. It is sad to say that they had to go all the way to Ottawa to win these medals when that—it was not possible for them here in Manitoba, but with—hopefully, with the passing of this bill today, they will be able to compete in Manitoba and they will be able to win the gold medals and keep those here in Manitoba.

So, I want to thank Malcolm Edwards—I believe he's up there with some of his students, as well, so thank you very much. There you go—oh, we won a lot of them.

Also, I want to acknowledge that the sport—support we've had and ongoing dialogues probably wouldn't be possible today without John McDonald who is the—with Manitoba Combative Sports Commission. So, John McDonald, thank you for your work. We also have Keenan Rempel up there from the Manitoba Combative Sports Commission; Alan Murray from the Berlin—Brazilian jiu-jitsu. Randal Boiteau. We have Johny Tuzi from CFC, as well.

We have a lot of members from the sikaran arnis community. I apologize if I get the names wrong: Cklyde Anievas, Mary and Emelyn Pagado [*phonetic*] and many others today, along with the 1,700 signatures supporting this.

So, I can go on and on about how important this bill is, but at the end of the day, Bill 40 is the result of consultation and collaboration with Manitoba Combative Sports Commission, Sport Manitoba and the combative community.

This bill is vital for the safety of amateur athletes. It all comes down to the safety and well-being of the amateur athletes. As I just explained, right now there is nothing for them. This bill puts in protections for the safety of our youth, of our amateur athletes as we go forward as combative sports is growing. We all know the benefit of sports, we all know what it can do for these youth, for these kids as they grow into adults, to go on, on to great things in their life.

So, really, this bill, at the end of the day, is all about the safety. Our government is committed to enhancing athlete safety in all sports and expanding the range of sport activities in the province of Manitoba, including combative sports.

Not proceeding with this proposed amendments may result in illegal and unregulated combative sports competitions that put athletes and other participants at

risk of injury. And actually, we already know those are happening.

My department will prioritize the development of regulations in collaboration with Manitoba's combative sport community to align with amendments made to this legislation. Ultimately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill furthers our government's commitment to safe and equitable access to sports.

With this, I ask that my 'colleagues'—my colleagues on all sides of the House to support these amendments to ensure a safe and equitable access to sport and support our Manitoba combative community.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any opposition or independent 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 now open for questions.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): How will regulating and licensing amateur combative sports improve safety?

Hon. Obby Khan (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I want to thank the member opposite for the question.

I believe I answered that in my second reading—or, in my preamble before this, but as of right now, there are no regulations for amateur combative sports right now. So, this bill would add all that. It would give the Manitoba Combative Sports Commission authority, oversight to create regulations and rules and standards for which the amateur combative sport community can compete.

So, I believe the whole entire bill is all about safety for amateur athletes.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I want to thank the member for bringing forward this legislation, and I'm hoping he'll elaborate a little bit on how this specific piece of legislation will actually create healthy competition here in Manitoba with respect to

sports and how this legislation will actually contribute to our economy in other ways outside of sport, as well.

Mr. Khan: I want to thank the member for Tyndall Park for the question, and I also want to thank the member for coming to my office and have a chat about this. And actually, she was the only one that showed up to talk to me about this and discuss the importance of this and the importance of this for the safety for our amateur athletes and for our youth.

I—you know, the ability of the Manitoba sports commission now to oversee and regulate a wide variety of sports will give kids an opportunity to have a safe place to train. They can have goals now. They can have—you know, they can set their target on, let me see, before I jump in the ring as a professional, let me see if I actually enjoy this. Let me see if I'm good at this.

And we all know the great stories that come out of athletes just picking up a pair of cleats or a basketball or getting—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The honourable minister's time has expired.

Ms. Lathlin: Does the government believe that the changes in this bill will make a substantial change to the landscape of professional combative sports in the province?

Mr. Khan: So, I believe the member was asking if this bill will make a substantial change in the professional landscape of this province for combative sports.

* (15:20)

This bill is targeted at the amateur athletes. It is really designed to—the organizations that don't have a PSO, a provincial sports organization, or an order-in-council, can now be able to have an amateur combative sports competition. So it's more designed around amateurs.

I think combining amateurs and professionals together will increase tourism to—like the member from Tyndall Park asked, and it's a win-win for everyone in this province.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Are there any further questions?

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The floor is now open for debate.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): It's always an honour to stand here as the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak and also as the critic for the minister.

I'll just put a few words on record.

Unregulated sport poses a risk to participants and organizers, one which has largely been ignored by regulators and governments until now. Combative sports can be dangerous, and unregulated amateur competitions lack the oversight or licensing required for certain forms of insurance, although injuries are just as possible.

Without standards imposed on competitions through the commission, there is a fear of inconsistent safety in these competitions, and as a result, more injuries and consequences for organizers are possible. This is especially true for youth. There are significant challenges to regulating full-contact martial arts and combative sport; however, the alternative is to allow the unlicensed and unregulated activity to continue, or ban it outright.

In offering legal amateur combative sports competitions, the hope is that illegal and unregulated sport activity will decrease. In addition to potentially driving economic activity, the goals of this regulation are generally beneficial to the province. Generally, the medical community has accepted that regulation is a necessity for combative sports in order to provide medical care.

There has been comparable jurisdictions which have been—made this move to regulate the previously unregulated combat sports and in large, the response has been positive, such as Wisconsin, Alberta and Ontario.

Ekosi.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to arise this afternoon—[interjection]—and for the friendly round of applause. I don't typically get applause in these Chambers, so thank you for that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm just rising to put a few words on record about this piece of legislation, which I think is a very positive step for our province, and it's quite straightforward. This legislation is about athletes' safety. It's about having MCSC, the Manitoba combative sports community, regulate, sanction and oversee amateur combat sports right here in Manitoba.

And I think this is important for a multitude of reasons, and one of them being it's good for ambition. It allows for people who are getting involved in sports

to have something to work towards at a higher level, right here in Manitoba, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It allows for more training. It brings people to Manitoba. And most importantly, regulation is safety; it protects all parties involved, whether you are the athlete, whether you own a business and there are sports taking place at your facility.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, regulation is—the intent behind regulation is to provide safety for all parties involved. And I just want to elaborate a little bit on how I actually think this piece of legislation brings a lot of different opportunities for Manitoba with respect to contributing towards our economy in different ways. I think that by regulating these sports, we're going to have more competitions here in Manitoba. Which means we're going to have people touring to Manitoba to compete in these sports, which is going to help in our hotel industry. It's going to help small businesses and restaurants. It's going to help our gyms and our stadiums.

And I think, overall, it is a very positive step forward, and I'm happy to support this legislation.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Is there any further debate on this motion?

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 40, the 'combative' sports amendment act.

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

House Business

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): On House business, Mr. Acting Speaker. I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Thursday, May 25th, 2023 at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 40, The Combative Sports Amendment Act; and Bill 43, The Provincial Offences Amendment Act (2).

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Thursday, May 25th, 2023 at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 40, the 'combative' sports amendment act; Bill 43, the provincial offences amendment act.

Is that the will of the House—no, no, that's just an announcement. Okay.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 222—The Public Schools Amendment Act (Nutrition Programs)

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): We will now move on to debate on second reading of Bill 222, standing in the name of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart), with nine minutes remaining. *[interjection]*

Okay, is there any further debate on this bill?

An Honourable Member: No.

Question.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): 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 222, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Nutrition Programs).

Is it the will of the House to pass this motion—adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 227—The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Access to Washrooms for Delivery Persons)

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): We will now move on to second reading on Bill 227, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act, access to washrooms for delivery personnel, standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson).

The member for Brandon East does not wish to speak.

Is there any further debate on this motion?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The question before the House is second reading on Bill 227, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act, access to washrooms for delivery personnel.

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

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS**Bill 241—The Mandatory Training
for Provincial Employees
(Systemic Racism and Human Rights) Act**

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): We will now move on to Bill 241, The Mandatory Training for Provincial Employees (Systemic Racism and Human Rights) Act.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I move, seconded by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara), that Bill 41, The Mandatory Training for Provincial Employees (Systemic Racism and Human Rights) Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): It has been—who seconded that motion?

Motion presented.

* (15:30)

Mr. Moses: Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker, I'm really, really pleased to be standing up here debating the steps we can take to fight against racism in our communities.

You know, this is a process that I began back when I first was elected. I began the consultation work and talking to community members about how they have dealt with racism in their lives. Obviously, it's affected me personally, both outward, you know, racism has been—I've been a victim of that, as well as the, you know, more subtle forms of racism and of course systemic racism that persists in our systems in the—our communities.

And so, it was important that we take steps now, that I had been in this position to fight and combat racism. And so, I began consulting with community members, began consulting with experts in this area, people who had worked in equity, diversity and inclusion. People who had worked in anti-racism. Talked with community leaders around what they had experienced themselves and what they had heard from community members when it came to dealing with racism in our society.

I spoke with people who had done the work to actually implement anti-racism programs in other jurisdictions, and particularly in the city of Toronto. And then it came to a head in the—late May of 2020, when we witnessed, and people around America, Canada and around the world witnessed the murder of George Floyd. And I think that really set the ball in

motion with a new discussion around how we ought to tackle racism—and systemic racism—in our community. So that we don't have to witness another tragedy like that, that we can take proactive steps to avoid those situations and build better communities here.

And so I said, why not take this step forward and work on how we can create a bill to at least take some small steps to combat racism in our society. And so at that time we decided, well, why don't we hear from Manitobans directly? So we put out a survey throughout the summer of 2020, where we asked Manitobans to share their feelings around racism and our community, about what we can do as legislators, as leaders in our community to combat racism.

And there's some things that people said. People said that they want government and they want leaders to acknowledge systemic racism, as an important first step. They said that we need to do a better job of being representative of our community; hire, elect and create positions for people to represent our communities better, and make sure that those people call out racism when it happens and make policies that would eliminate racism in our—all facets of our society.

People who answered this survey—and Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to say that over 600 community members answered this survey that we put out with no advertising or anything, this was just word of mouth, community-driven people volunteering their thoughts on how we as leaders should be taking action. People also told us that they want us to prioritize and improve funding for grassroots initiatives that would curb inequities that we see in our society by investing in things like housing, investing in things like health care, like mental health, investing in things like poverty and addiction, and Child and Family Services, and ensuring that we have a system where we are looking at how we can create more, and build more equity into the future of Manitoba.

We heard from people how our education system plays a key role in the fight against racism, that we need to have a curriculum that combats racism, that teaches about the history of racism and what we can do to fight for justice. What we can do to fight for equality. And we need to also do this on an individual level, ensuring that Manitobans, the folks who serve us here in our public service—whether that's the people who work to fill out our paperwork, our forms, as we might apply through a government system for support, whether this is in our health-care system, whether this is in our education system, our justice system, that

they all need to have training and be educated on how to effectively live through their work, anti-racism. And it's important that we do that, that we acknowledge the efforts that the community members make, that we continue to voice their concerns and that as—all of us, as leaders, take them seriously.

And that's what we hope to do here today with Bill 241, to actually put forward a policy so that anti-racism training doesn't just become a one-off thing, but a regular, every year thing, so that all of us in our civil service and all Manitobans can know that, when they come to get a government service, they will be treated with respect, they will be treated fairly and that—they know that those folks are going to be building up and combatting racism in our community.

And that's—is just a part of the things that we can do to 'compat' racism. It's a step that we're excited to be taking today to moving forward on this bill, and we're—exciting that it really goes to show the power of community voices—those voices who raised up, those voices who spoke out, the voices and the people who came to march on the steps of the Legislature here back in June of 2020—the 20,000-strong people—those voices carried through and they're here with us in this room today as we pass Bill 241.

Thank you, Mr. Assistant Deputy Speaker.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I want to start out just by thanking my colleague from St. Vital for bringing forward this incredibly important piece of legislation.

We know, of course, all Manitobans deserve to live in a world free of racism, deserve to live in a world free of unequal treatment. And, of course, we are in a world where we're seeing some steps backwards, where we're starting to see increasing signs of boldness by those who do want to advance those types of ideas, and it is important that we bring forward this type of legislation, especially right now. So, thank you to my colleague.

I would like to ask him, because I know he did a lot of consultation work around this bill, could he dig

in a bit and help inform the House about some of that important consultation work he did in advance of putting forward this bill?

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I thank my colleague for the question and those comments as well.

You know, it's important that we spend the time to listen to community voices, and that's exactly what we did throughout this process. We not only listened to community leaders, we not only listened to experts who've done the work to flesh out anti-racism policy in the past and actually implement it, but we actually listened to grassroots community members.

We surveyed over 600 Manitobans—636—and they resoundingly said—over 80 per cent said—that we need anti-racism training for government employees not just to be done on a one time, but annually, each and every year.

And that's why we're taking this step, because we listened to community voices and we're now putting those voices into action today.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, I thank the member for bringing forward this bill, and I'd like to ask if the member has provided or given some thought to what would be in the training program.

For example, I mean, is this a one-hour online training program? Is this one day? Is this a week? Is this a month? Is it a year? I mean, what—and what sort of material would be in it that would be needed to help people understand the situation and, you know, what needs to happen in the future?

Mr. Moses: I thank the member for River Heights for the question. Now, the reason that it's not specified in the bill is because all—not all training are equal and not all training will fit each type of environment where government employees are working. So, we wanted to ensure that that training happens, is the first step.

Now, we want to listen to the experts when it comes to the development of that training so that really good quality training can be done to infect change within our civil service. That's the goal of this bill.

And I think, if we listen to the right experts who have experience implementing anti-racism policy and anti-racism training, we'll be able to make a difference when it comes to developing a civil service that is more equal and works to welcome more Manitobans to be involved in—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The honourable member's time has expired.

Are there any further questions?

* (15:40)

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The floor is now open for debate.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to compliment the member for bringing this forward. I would have had a lot more questions if—had it been possible with a private member's bill, but I think you've at least started to answer or provide a little bit of scope in terms of the nature of the training.

Clearly, racism exists. A lot of it, I believe, is not intentional, but it is the kind of thing that people have learned as they've been growing up. And we need, in today's world, to be paying attention and giving everybody opportunities. And that opportunity should not depend on the colour of a person's skin, it should not depend on their—individuals' gender or orientation.

And in The Human Rights Code, there is clearly issues around not only physical disabilities but mental disabilities. Mental illness is included in The Human Rights Code and eventually got a bill which we've—there at first reading, which would make sure that individuals with various forms of neurodiversity would be included when we're talking about mental illness.

I mean, this is not really to say that they have a mental illness, but it is to make sure that individuals with conditions like autism and ADHD and learning disabilities are actually included so that we are giving them the opportunities and the accommodation that they should have in order to be full participants in the society that we're building and the government that we want in the future.

It's well known that, with organizations which are more diverse, that diversity helps, that the organization can be more productive. And I believe that is really what is the bottom line here, is that we want to make sure that everybody has opportunities.

And that doesn't mean that everybody is treated equally all the time, it means that, if people need accommodations, that that is part of what we provided. We provided—when Steven Fletcher was here, we made changes to the seats here so that there would be the possibility that he could join us and be a participant. And we need to be able to do that, for

example, with individuals with learning disabilities as well.

So, I say to the member, thank you for bringing this forward. It is important that there be a broader awareness of the diversity of our society, and that's particularly true given the number of people who are coming to Manitoba and excited to come here from all parts of the world and from all kinds of different backgrounds.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Is there any further debate on this motion?

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 241, The Mandatory Training for Provincial Employees (Systemic Racism and Human Rights) Act.

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

Bill 233—The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Act

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): We will now move on to Bill 233, The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Act.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): I move, seconded by the MLA for Selkirk, that Bill 233, The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martin: The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources represents approximately 1,700 human resources practitioners from all industries and geographic areas of Manitoba.

As members of CPHR Canada, CPHR Manitoba is the exclusive certifying body in Manitoba for the chartered professionals in human resources designation, the standard for HR practices and professionals here in Canada.

CPHR Manitoba is a sound and effective organization with a governance structure and the certification system in place, which will support the profession through this evolution. They have the experience,

knowledge and systems support from CPHR Canada and they have the support of members to proceed.

Self-regulation is something that this industry has been asking for as part of a strong, stable environment to thrive.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

Saskatchewan has passed bill 19, making CPHR Saskatchewan the self-regulating body for the HR profession there. Ontario and Quebec have self-regulation in the HR profession as well. In Alberta, they've made their submission and continue to work with that government.

Every other province in Canada is seeking self-regulation now. Self-regulations help strengthen our business and employment environment, and as more employers adopt stronger HR practices, the system that protects organizations and employees from unnecessary financial and physical risks will be constantly improved.

I thank my colleagues for their time and their support for this legislation.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Are there any questions?

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Would the member please indicate who he has consulted with in the preparation for this bill?

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): I thank my colleague for those comments.

And I want to assure the member I have been in touch with CPHR Manitoba, spoken with a number of their executives, including a meeting just last week to discuss this bill.

It's my understanding they've also reached out to members of the opposition and as well as the independent Liberals to express their support and to request their support for this legislation.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I wonder if the member would provide a little bit more of the long-run vision for the professionals in human resources, why this bill is so critical at this time and what will evolve over the next several years if this bill is implemented.

Mr. Martin: I want to thank my friend, the MLA for River Heights, for that question. The necessity of this bill, I think, was apparent in my earlier comments. We've seen a number of jurisdictions here in Canada either having already passed self-regulation for the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources or actively working on it.

So, we want to make sure that, obviously, Manitoba remains in place and in competition with other jurisdictions, and provide those resources being asked for by the industry.

Specifically though, I can share a comment in support of the legislation from Steve Chipman, from the Birchwood group, quote: We rely on CPHRs to create the systems that protect us all while we work together to achieve our individual and organizational goals.

As well—

* (15:50)

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Any further questions?

Debate

Madam Speaker: If not, the floor is open for debate.

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): You know, this bill has just come to our attention very, very recently, and at this point I have only spoken to Dr. Lana Adeleye-Olusae, as well as Grant Christensen, who's the treasurer of the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of Manitoba. We will be—our caucus will be having another meeting on Friday with the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources of Manitoba to get some more information from them regarding just a few concerns that we have with this process.

I do understand from those brief meetings that I had with Dr. Lana Adeleye-Olusae and Grant Christensen about the evolution of the HR profession to date, that our workplaces have, you know—considerably be more complicated, especially currently in this

environment that we have where recruitment and retention is such an issue with a lot of our labour force in different workspaces and different industries across Manitoba, across Canada.

We know that HR professionals can assist in ensuring that Manitoba workplaces are held to higher standards, that HR practices in the country deal with issues such as employment labour standards, important occupational health and safety standards, human rights legislation. Workplaces and employers and employees deal with sexual harassment and bullying in the workplace, wellness and mental health and, as such, a professional body with regular expectations for updated—with training, is a good move.

I do have some concerns that at this point haven't been addressed, but I'm hoping to have some of those issues addressed in our meeting on Friday—coming meeting on Friday, regarding any kinds of practices or steps that might be put in place for folks that are internationally educated professionals and how they're going to be able to maneuver into the system with this new accreditation step that's going to be taken once this bill goes through.

At that point, Mr. Grant Christensen wasn't able to answer those concerns, but he promised to get back to me on that in our next meeting. He did indicate that he was involved several years ago when the chartered professional accountants went through a very similar process, and at that time—and since that time, we know that internationally educated professionals have had a very, very difficult time with receiving their accreditation in the accounting professions and have had to pay a lot more in order to even get registered.

So, those are just my few concerns at this point that I hope will be addressed in our meeting on Friday, and more to come at third reading.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker I want to put on the record some comments—regard to the importance of human resources and of individuals who are professionals in the area of human resources.

This—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: This is clearly a critical need today. We have a workforce which is increasingly diverse. We have, within the human resources portfolio, a need to address more and more issues related to equity,

racism, sexual harassment, et cetera, et cetera. And these need to be addressed well, and—in order to have a professional complement of workers in any area.

And so, I think that those who work in the area of human resources have an increasingly challenging and difficult job, and it becomes important to have the self-regulation, as this is planned, so that the future development of programs, of training, of registration of members to be chartered professionals in human resources; this is, I think, increasingly critical, that we have good decisions if we're going to have organizations—whether non-profits or government or business—which are working well.

And, of course, that's what we would like in this province. We've seen many examples of poor human resources management; I don't need to go into those. It's time to make sure that we have a much more professional approach.

And so, I'm certainly in support of this bill.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Any further debate?

If not, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 233, The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Act.

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

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): On House business.

I'm seeking a leave of the House to allow for—once we're done with Committee of the Whole—to allow the bills that are being reported out of committee to hold—to be reported back to the House prior to the House rising.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the bills that are being discussed in Committee of the Whole to then be reported to the House before we rise today? Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

**Bill 244—The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks
and Months Act Amended)**

Madam Speaker: Now calling second reading of bill—we will now call second reading of Bill 244, The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I move, seconded by the honourable member from Portage la Prairie, that Bill 244, the Ducks Unlimited 'canaday' act, commemoration of days, weeks and months act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of the House.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Swan River, seconded by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart), that Bill 244, The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Wowchuk: It's my pleasure to have my bill, The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act, read for the second time today.

I had the pleasure of working with Ducks Unlimited in the past, and recently stumbled upon the book, a marsh keeper's journey. I volunteered with Ducks in the past for in excess of 35 years as a committee member, visited many of their projects and spoken to many of their staff.

The impact they have had on Canada and the USA is astounding. The work they have done to conserve waterfall is incredible. But it's not until a read through the book, a marsh keeper's journey, did I ever understand how strong of a connection Ducks has with Manitoba.

The organization came into existence on March 17, 1937, when it was granted a charter of incorporation in Manitoba, and two of the founding members were Manitoban.

* (16:00)

The first project undertaken by Ducks Unlimited Canada was in the Manitoba—was in Manitoba, Big Grass Marsh duck factory. The headquarters for this historic organization is here in Manitoba still to this day. Oak Hammock Marsh hosts this amazing facility.

In introducing this bill, I spoke to Ducks Unlimited Canada to ensure that this was accurate information, and again I learned what we see from the

public side of the organization is simply the tip of the iceberg.

Like many Manitobans, I've assumed Ducks was focused on ducks. I was wrong. Their organization has grown over the last 85 years to more than just wetlands. They are now working on conservation of many wildlife species and preserving arboreal forests. And they also are working to ensure agriculture remains sustainable by working collaboratively with communities, land owners, volunteers and Manitobans to support sustainable farming and ranching.

These groups have also organized the harm that colonization has done and are working in partnership with—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wowchuk: —with Indigenous peoples to support Indigenous stewardship and incorporate Indigenous knowledge and practices into conservation projects.

I don't think we have time here today to discuss all the work, what they do, but it's broad and it's important. This is why I wanted to introduce this bill and formally recognize a Manitoba success story that is the work that Ducks Unlimited Canada has done for their home cradle here in Manitoba.

And I look forward to this bill becoming a law in Manitoba and recognizing legislation, the great work, what is possible through the partnerships that Ducks has built with this government, stakeholders, volunteers, farmers and Indigenous people.

Thank you.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I may have missed the comment in the member's opening statement, but I just wanted to ask him about the significance of March 17th as the date that was chosen to commemorate this day.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Yes, okay.

March 17th was a particular date in 1937 when it was granted a charter of incorporation into Manitoba.

So, we thought it was only fitting on this kind of anniversary date to be able to acknowledge and recognize Ducks Unlimited.

Mr. Wiebe: I appreciate the answer.

The member did talk a lot about the importance of Ducks Unlimited Canada and the important role that they play in conservation.

I'm wondering if the member could just expand a little bit on his experience with the organization. Has he been a member? Has he participated in any official role with Ducks Unlimited? Maybe a personal experience working with Ducks Unlimited?

Mr. Wowchuk: Yes. Thank you very much for that question.

As a kind of a member on Ducks Unlimited for—as a member in fundraising for the 35 years that I was there, we generated a lot of funds towards wetland habitat projects.

And also as an educator for 35 years in the environmental management program at the regional school in Swan River, we did a number of Ducks Unlimited projects in partnership with Ducks Unlimited in setting out nesting tunnels and flax bales for Canada geese to nest on, and, you know, just a variety of projects within the area.

And there was a large focus that wherever these committees existed that projects were initiated within those—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just—my question, basically, is, what would the member expect on March 17th in the way of a celebration of this particular day? It may be a day when there are not very many ducks back March 17th, depending on the year—some years, particularly—if there's a lot of frozen water still.

So, I'm just curious as to what kind of celebrations and what kind of events do you think need to be planned for this day?

Mr. Wowchuk: I thank the member, and I know he's a real advocate of conservation and all the stuff and well known for his work in a lot of things that—in preserving various types of wetlands and water quality and all those things.

The date was to—is basically aligned with the incorporation of Duck Unlimited, and I know it's early, but I would say that you would want to look at the educational components in schools and things like

that and have the young people, the next generation, be able to become educated on the fine work that Ducks Unlimited does for wetland conservation and the whole idea of partnerships that occur.

So, this could be a time of reminiscing on the—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Are there any further questions?

Debate

Madam Speaker: If not, the floor is open for debate.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record with regards to Bill 244. I wanted to thank the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) for bringing this forward.

I do think it is an important bill, and maybe, if I could, just off the top, build a little bit off of the words of the member for River Heights. I do believe that this—you know, as we choose a day that, you know, is for recognition, that hopefully it doesn't just sort of get lost in the shuffle of many days that we commemorate around this place.

And I did hope that there would be members of Ducks Unlimited Canada here today to, you know, see this bill move through second reading and move forward. And I do hope that, at third reading and at royal assent, perhaps, that maybe members of Ducks Unlimited Canada would be joining us.

Because I think it's important that we put words on the record about the incredible work that Duck Unlimited does here in this province and across the country. Ducks Unlimited, of course, being founded—Ducks Unlimited Canada being founded here in Manitoba is certainly a point of pride, and it certainly speaks to the importance that Manitobans place not only on conservation, protecting our wild spaces, enhancing our wetlands, but also on the importance of a way of life for many Manitobans, and that is living off of the land and respecting the land in order to live sustainably.

It's something that we've had a chance to talk about quite a bit lately, of course, with regulations and laws being brought forward at the federal level with regards to firearms restrictions for hunters in Manitoba. We know that the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), myself, we were able to go out and talk about how we're teaching our family to be hunters and to be sustainable harvesters within the province and how important that is to, again, a way of life that

extends far beyond ourselves, but goes back generations and, again, through time immemorial here in this province.

It's important for us to respect and appreciate that way of life, and I believe that Ducks Unlimited has done a very good job of striking that balance between understanding the importance of that right and that important part of our history while also working towards conservation efforts that are applauded of—across the political spectrum, maybe I can say, Madam Speaker, and across society. Everyone appreciates the importance of wetlands to our environmental health, and they understand that it's important that we respect and protect them.

Even just today, the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) was talking about how, you know, she has experience—direct experience literally going out and saving ducks. And, you know—and this isn't for some kind of wide recognition or, you know, to—for her to get applause. She does it because it's the right thing to do.

An Honourable Member: I save ducks.

Mr. Wiebe: And she saves ducks in the same way that Ducks Unlimited sees the importance of saving not just ducks, but many wild creatures and wildlife throughout our province.

This is just a small example of how we all work together to common goals and common aims, to protect our environment and to respect this beautiful natural habitat that we have in this province. So, it's a great opportunity for us to talk about this.

Again, I will just encourage the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), you know, this probably is his last bill that he'll get a chance to introduce in the House, maybe we can have some of the Ducks Unlimited Canada folks to come down, to fill the gallery, to talk about the important work that they do. We would be very happy to stand with them as our caucus and support this bill, because we do want to see this recognition day go forward as quickly as possible.

* (16:10)

So, for those few words, I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to Bill 244.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): The work of Ducks Unlimited Canada, the fact that it is—the headquarters here at Oak Hammock Marsh for Canada, is significant, and it's important that we have a day to

recognize Ducks Unlimited Canada. They have done some marvellous work.

At the same time, there is still a lot of work to do, in terms of ducks and figuring out—as example, Delta Marsh, which used to be incredible for ducks, has deteriorated and is not nearly as good as it once was. We need to figure out how to bring it back.

I recently was at a session where Steve Strang, who's the former manager of Red River Basin Commission, was talking about the Netley-Libau Marsh. It's a marsh where, historically, it was an incredible breeding ground for ducks. And yet at the moment, with the changes that have happened in the marsh, it is not what it once was.

And at the same time, the Netley-Libau Marsh was tremendous as a filter for water going into Lake Winnipeg. That the cattails in the marsh took out a lot of phosphorus from the water, provided water which was cleaner for Lake Winnipeg. And because the marsh is not working as well as it once was, we need to have a look and we need to figure out a way to bring it back.

And one of the suggestions that Steve Strang had was to consider the possibility of changing the way that we break up the ice in the spring, because he feels that that's one of the contributors to the deterioration in the marsh. You know, that's a broader discussion than we've got today. But it is one of those things that we need to pay attention to, what's happening to the prime duck-breeding marshes in the past.

The same is true of marshes around the causeway to Hecla Island. They used to be incredible breeding areas for ducks, and they're not at the moment. And, you know, in the work that has been done in the last several decades, even though Ducks Unlimited has been involved, we haven't figured out how to bring that marsh area back.

So, there is lots of work to do. There's lots of work to do to provide the duck habitat.

And one of the things that I've been working on in recent years is the possibility of having designated ecological corridors. And one of the reasons for that is, again, to make sure that we're creating and enhancing habitat for breeding of ducks and other birds.

So, lots to do, and lots to talk about when we have this special day on March the 17th. And I look forward to having many years into the future where we can have a special day for Ducks Unlimited.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions or debate?

Is the House ready for the Question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 244, The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

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

House Business

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):

As previously agreed, I'd like to announce, in addition to the bill previously referred, the following bills will also be considered at the May 25th, 2023, meeting of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development: Bill 222, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Nutrition Programs); and Bill 238, The Personal Care Home Accountability Act (Various Acts Amended).

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that in addition to the bills previously referred, the following bills will also be considered at the May 25th, 2023 meeting of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development: Bill 222, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Nutrition Programs), and Bill 238, The Personal Care Home Accountability Act (Various Acts Amended).

* * *

Mr. Goertzen: Could you please resolve the House into the Committee of the Whole to consider bills 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 239, 240, 241, 242 and 244.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will now resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider bills 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 239, 240, 241, 242 and 244.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Mr. Deputy Chairperson (Dennis Smook): Will the Committee of the Whole please come to order.

As previously announced, this committee will now consider the following bills: Bill 227, Bill 229, Bill 231, Bill 233, Bill 235, Bill 239, Bill 240, Bill 241, Bill 242, Bill 244.

In what order does the committee wish to consider these bills?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Numerically, starting with the lowest number first.

* (16:20)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: It has been suggested we consider these bills numerically, starting at the lower number, moving on to the higher number. Is that agreed? [*interjection*]

It has been suggested that we do the bills in the following order: Bill 231, Bill 235, Bill 239, Bill 229, Bill 240, Bill 242, Bill 227, Bill 241, Bill 233, Bill 244. Is that agreed? [*interjection*]

We will do the bills in the order that was presented, except we will do Bill 244 first, the Ducks Unlimited bill.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

During the consideration of each of the announced bills, the enacting clause, the title and any preambles will be posted until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order.

Bill 244—The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now proceed with Bill 244.

Does the bill sponsor, the honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), have an opening statement?

No, he doesn't. We thank the member.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 244?

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I appreciate the opportunity to put a few more words on the record at committee stage.

As I said in my speech at-way back in second reading, I do think that this is an important recognition of the work that Ducks Unlimited Canada does.

I think that it's important for us to recognize the work that they do in conservation. And I think that it's an important reminder to us, for us as legislators, to consider them partners at the table.

I know that that's work that has occurred in the past to bring them into the fold, so to speak, bring

them to the table to allow them an opportunity to show ways that we can work with them to ensure that conservation of wetlands and beyond is a priority.

And I look forward to working with them in the future and looking to ways that this provincial government can continue to enhance wetlands and protected areas in our province going forward.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 231—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Does the bill sponsor, the honourable member for Dauphin, have an opening statement, Bill 231, clause by clause?

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Bill 231 makes it easier for someone who's assaulted to leave their tenancy agreement and move to somewhere that is safer.

Currently, you need to be a victim of domestic violence, stalking or sexual violence to have a legal tool to exit your lease. These limitations leave people who are assaulted by a neighbour, for instance, a stranger, first date or a friend or others, without any protection.

Bill 231 adds a new category and definition of abuse and provides broader supports to victims of abuse in applying to exit their tenant lease. Bill 231 also places more liability on landlords to protect victims from incidents of abuse.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the honourable member for those comments.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 231?

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): This bill amends the residential tenants act, household violence, which is the violence that adversely affect tenants' quiet enjoyment, security, safety or physical well-being is added as a reason for the tenant to end their tenancy agreement early. A landlord cannot be ordered to pay a tenants' reasonable moving expense if the landlord is responsible for a tenant experience household violence.

Mr. Chair, housing is a right, and all Manitobans should have access to affordable, safe, quality housing

where their rights are protected and respected. Unfortunately, affordable housing is becoming less and less available in our province, in part thanks to the action of this government.

The PCs sold off hundreds of social housing units despite long wait-lists for the housing. The PC government has failed to build a single unit of social or affordable housing and has instead cut the maintenance budget while allowing massive above-guide-line rent increases to go through.

Manitoba needs a government that will support renters and ensure there are affordable housing available for all.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: If there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clauses 1 through 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clauses 5 through 8—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 235—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to Bill 235, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act.

Does the sponsor of the—does the bill sponsor, the honourable member for Rossmere, have an opening statement?

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Bill 235 amends The Employment Standards Code to recognize the very real loss of a pregnancy and offer five days' leave. This recognizes the very real pain that is involved when a pregnancy is lost.

* (16:30)

And I've spoken with many people. And, in fact, my wife and I went through this personally.

Manitoba has 14 kinds of leave. This would add to that list. There was some debate around if this should be a paid leave, and certainly I considered this and consulted quite seriously on this. All of the—13 of the 14 current provisions in the act are unpaid leave. The only paid leave is to get the COVID shot.

So, if this was to become a paid leave, that would mean that somebody could literally lose their spouse and not have a paid leave, but to lose a pregnancy would be a paid leave. You could lose a child from a tragedy and that wouldn't be paid. And we can read the 14 leaves. There's quite a few different kinds of scenarios contemplated in the act.

It also was brought to my attention that if it was a paid leave, that could put a burden on the bereaved, who may be asked to prove that, indeed, the pregnancy was lost. That can be complicated.

Some very small business owners said to me, hold on a second, you know, we need some definition here in terms of how long somebody would be employed. And there are three provinces that have some measure of paid leave, and they all define it fairly carefully.

I think I'll leave my comments there. I'm grateful to see this bill go forward.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 235?

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I think that it's important to put on the record that, on this side of the House, we do support this legislation. It's important legislation that allows folks who have unfortunately experienced and journeyed through a miscarriage to have that leave.

But I think that we've made it perfectly clear, on this side of the House, that it should be paid leave, so that Manitobans that experience the tragic and unfortunate loss of a miscarriage have the option to be able to stay home without being further penalized in respect of their loss.

And there are certainly other jurisdictions across the globe, most notably New Zealand, that have brought forward and entrenched legislation that allows for paid leave for their citizens who experience a miscarriage. And that is certainly progressive, but it certainly offers a measure of care and support to their citizens that are experiencing and journeying through a miscarriage.

I think, as was shared here in the House during some of the debate, that not everybody has the opportunity or the privilege to take that time off.

And for those Manitobans who have experienced a miscarriage, it is—it can be quite traumatizing, and it can also have major consequences for one's own body,

as someone is going through a miscarriage. It also, in some cases, requires folks to go to the hospital and have medical procedures to help in respect of the miscarriage and what the miscarriage is doing to that individual's body.

So, I think that the government had an opportunity to go a little bit further to help support Manitobans.

It had an opportunity to legislate care in the form of also financial support because, again, it's important to recognize that not everybody has that privilege to stay home. So, you will have Manitobans that, even with this legislation, who are experiencing a miscarriage and will either be at work and stay at work or have experienced it and go to work the next day.

I would suggest, and I would submit to the House, that we could do better, and we must and should do better.

Miigwech.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

We will now move on to clause by clause.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 239—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Application Fees and Deposits)

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to Bill 239, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act.

Does the bill's sponsor, the member for Rossmere, have an opening statement?

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): So, it was brought to my attention that it is current practice with some landlords in the province of Manitoba to require prospective tenants to put down a deposit when they show interest in a property, to get their name on a wait-list.

These deposits can be 50 per cent of a month's rent or sometimes a lump sum which has often been something like \$500. This isn't pocket change, and I don't think this is right. I don't think anyone in this House thinks that that is right, and so we want to change that.

Nobody's disagreeing that a deposit is a smart thing for a landlord to consider, but not when it's time—when you put your name on a wait-list. Obviously, for some people who put their name on wait-lists in multiple apartments, perhaps they don't know when

that unit will come available; perhaps they're one—they're wanting to get into a place as soon as possible, so they want their name on three or four wait-lists in three or four buildings. Well, unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it could be the case that those people have to lay out a deposit for each of the applications that they make.

I don't think that's fair. I don't think that's right. I don't think it's necessary, either. When you sign a lease, sure, that makes sense to most Manitobans, I believe, but not when you're just simply showing interest in the property to get your name put on a wait-list.

We're going to change that this afternoon. I think it's a step forward for all Manitobans, and I certainly hope it helps people who are trying to find a place in whatever part of the province.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 239?

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): We know that access to safe and affordable rental housing continues to become more and more important. It's incredibly important right now, and we know we need to continue to protect the interests of renters in all manners, and that may include protecting renters from unscrupulous landlords who seek to charge tenants just to apply for a unit. And the member across did outline some examples where this could be an issue.

And, of course, this bill that we're here to discuss does seek to respond to that particular problem. It is, of course, a good thing to be advancing the rights of renters, and this bill may help to prevent a few bad actors from exploiting prospective renters.

But as far as issues facing renters go, this issue barely registers, Mr. Chair. And I would love for the opportunity to learn more about what the member who brought this bill forward heard and who he heard from in bringing this bill forward. Because it certainly is not an issue that I have ever heard of in engaging renters on a number of other issues, nor have my colleagues identified this as a concern.

If the government was listening to renters, they would know that, by far, the biggest issue impacting renters is the skyrocketing costs of rent driven by above-guideline increases. We've raised this in this

House for years now. We've brought forward a solution and, unfortunately, the government hasn't been willing to look at that solution or to move it forward.

Everyone here in this Legislature knows that the costs of living are going up, and everyone in this Legislature knows that one of the biggest drivers of those cost increases is the cost of housing and shelter, and AGIs are the core driver of that issue. That's the real issue facing renters in Manitoba right now. It's an issue faced by folks in every single one of the members in this House. Every single constituency, there are folks struggling with these huge rent increases.

And we could've solved this problem. This is a problem we could have solved. Unfortunately, the government chose not to do that.

* (16:40)

So, it does need to be said again, here today, that the government's unwillingness to look at that very real issue, that substantial issue impacting renters, their unwillingness to take action, is shameful and will continue to have long-term impacts on Manitobans and their ability to meet their day-to-day costs of living.

And, you know, I would just go a little further to say that that failure is even more shameful, given that this government has made life even harder for renters by raising taxes on them by \$175.

So, it is good to advance legislation that will help to protect the interests of renters from predatory landlords, as this bill does. But passing this bill is not a substitute for real action to help renters in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

We will now move on to clause by clause of Bill 239.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; clause 6—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 229—The Farmers' Markets Week Act
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks
and Months Act Amended)**

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to Bill 229, The Farmers' Market Week Act.

The honourable member for—does the—sorry, does the bill sponsor, the honourable member for Portage la Prairie, have an opening statement?

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Just a few comments.

I think everyone in the House here is supportive of the whole principle of farmers' markets, not only for the nutritious and economical food that they provide the opportunities to for many people that partake in these events, but also because of the education opportunities it provides, not only to the consumer who now, hopefully, understands a little bit more about where their food comes from, but also the producer who must understand their customers to make sure that they get the right product in the right amounts at the right times.

So, it's an educational process that works both ways, and I think that everyone in this House should support that.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 229?

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): This bill, Bill 229, proposes that last week of July should be recognized as Farmers' Markets Week. It's important and we support this move.

I have been involved with the farmers who grow locally at small scale when I was working with Manitoba Agriculture and I have that experience and I have seen this farmer markets very closely, and I like them.

Basically, this is a platform where the producer and the consumer get together, not just exchange business and produce and money, but they talk to each other to understand the process of food production. And this gives them an opportunity to talk about land, to talk about plants, to talk about food and network mutually. So, it's also a community-building exercise.

I have some other experiences when I talk to the producers or I talk to my constituents. Last week, I went to a constituent who grows nursery seedlings for vegetables and flowers at their home, and I was like, do you sell them? He was like, no; I have 15 to 20 cousins and family friends around in the city and I want them to produce food in their backyards. So, he

is raising those seedlings and distributing it free of cost.

And, interestingly, he was growing some foods that are, like, that are so much liked by my ethnic community, the Punjabi community. And my constituent was from a Filipino background, and he said, I know that your community likes these vegetables. And he offered me those.

So, I mean, we need to promote local food production, we need to talk more about farmer's markets and we need to encourage new Canadians and, especially, we need to encourage and help young producers to produce food at small scale, and we should encourage the consumers to buy food from farmer's markets, because they get access to locally produced fresh produce at the farmer's markets.

So, we support this, but, at the same time, this gives me an opportunity to remind all Manitobans that this PC government has failed to support the young farmers with their changes to Crown lands. I talked to so many ranchers that are very upset and angry because of those changes, because it discourages young farmers to be the ranchers because of their capacity not to buy or compete the people with deeper pockets.

So, the land is being consolidated day by day. We need policies and vision to support our next generation to produce food, may it be at small scale or a bigger scale, but they do need help that they're not getting from this PC government.

With these comments, I would say that we support this bill, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

We will now move on to clause by clause of Bill 229.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Bill 240—The Remembrance Day Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to Bill 240, The Remembrance Day Amendment Act.

Does the bill sponsor, the honourable member for Brandon East, have an opening statement?

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Again, it's an important bill.

Again, as I mentioned in second reading, the intent of the bill is not a reactive bill, but instead, one that's proactive to put measures in place to prevent employees in our province from not being able to wear a poppy during Remembrance Day week, again, unless it's—it has something to do with the health or safety aspect of the workplace.

Other than that, it certainly is an opportunity for all Manitobans to stand strong and proud and really recognize the sacrifice that those in the Canadian Armed Forces make on behalf of our country for us so that we can live the type of life that we have.

And, again, I think we all stand together in solidarity in saying we thank every member of the Canadian Armed Forces for what they do. We really appreciate their support of our country and the sacrifices that they made.

And, again, this bill will allow every Manitoban the ability to wear a poppy during Remembrance Day week in honour of those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I appreciate the opportunity to put just a few words on the record with regards to Bill 240.

First and foremost, I do want to thank, of course, our veterans and those who serve in our Armed Forces. Recognize the important contributions that they have made and continue to make in keeping our country free and ensuring that peace is first and foremost what we strive for here in this country and abroad.

* (16:50)

I also want to take this opportunity to thank our legions and thank the incredible work that they do. I'm lucky to have Legion No. 9, Elmwood Legion, in my constituency, and I very much appreciate the work that they do, of course, around Remembrance Day and in distributing poppies and ensuring that community has a place to gather for that day in recognition of Remembrance Day.

But, if I could, just to say more broadly, the community gathering space that they provide for the whole community is an important part of the fabric of who we are in, of course, in that neighbourhood, across the city and across the province. So, it's important that we recognize their work not just on Remembrance Day, not just around that, of course, important time, but, you know, 365 days out of the year.

So, I think it is important that we use the poppy as an important symbol of remembrance. I think there were some important questions that were asked at second reading with regard to how this will be implemented, and I appreciate that the member had some answers at that point, and others, I think, are to be determined.

But I think the general idea behind this bill is an important one that we allow for as much time, in a safe way, for people to use—to wear the poppy, to use it as a symbol of recognition of their appreciation of our veterans and of the important work of legions.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to clause by clause of Bill 240.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 242—The Police and Peace Officers'
Memorial Day Act
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks
and Months Act Amended)**

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to Bill 242, The Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Day Act.

Does the bill sponsor, the honourable member for Brandon East, have an opening statement?

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Again, bill—this bill amends The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act and establishes November 30th of every year to be proclaimed as police and peace officers' memorial day.

We need to remember those, again, who's—who made the ultimate sacrifice domestically here in Manitoba so that we can raise families in our communities.

Again, as I mentioned earlier, the sad statistics of 49 Manitoba police and peace officers who are currently—were recognized last year, that's 49 too many. But we need to take the opportunity to join our friends with the police association. Again, this is their request to set aside November 30th as a day of recognition. I know I read the statistics, more on a breakdown of peace officers and police officers, during second reading. But, again, as I just mentioned, that is still too many.

I know we just recently had our 10th death of a police officer in Canada in recent days, in the last

couple of months, which, again, is very unfortunate. And I was reminded that this morning when I took a suit out of my closet, and I had mentioned I had a blue memory ribbon that I wore last week on Thursday for an officer's funeral. It was still on that jacket, on that blazer. And, again, it's—it hits home when you look at the sacrifices that these folks are making.

So, I want to thank the—everyone for supporting this far. I look forward to the passing of this bill so we can join those who work so hard on our behalf to make life safe for us and respectfully recognize November 30th.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I, too, wanted to offer my condolences to the family of the officer that was slain most recently, and it does feel like that's a common occurrence in recent times, for us to offer condolences in that way to peace officers and to police across this country. And it's an incredibly difficult and dangerous line of work, and it is important to recognize the work that they do. So, just for the official record, I will say, for the family of Sergeant Eric Mueller, that we offer our condolences from this House, and look forward to passing this bill, recognizing the important work that peace officers do.

I have shared in this House a few times now that we—that my own experience, I have a family member who's a Winnipeg police officer, and so I know firsthand the important work that he does and that it's incredibly challenging. And I know that they're desperate for additional resources to ensure that they can perform their duties as they need to, that they are asking for support from this provincial government to, you know, continue to support them beyond just, you know, their own individual needs, but dealing with some of the larger societal issues that we have around poverty, about mental health, about addictions.

And this is important work that—

An Honourable Member: What did he say? He's heckling.

Mr. Wiebe: And I understand there's some heckling. I don't think this is the kind of bill that would warrant any kind of heckling; I think it's very clear and we've made very clear in this House many times that all of us support the work that our police do.

But I think there is a healthy criticism that when issues around poverty, homelessness, addictions and

mental health are left to run rampant, that these are additional pressures on our police officers that should be addressed by the provincial government. So, once again, we'll call them out on that, and we'll continue to support our police officers and the work that they do.

And while this is just a recognition day, I think, hopefully, it's one step that continues to keep it in the forefront of many of our minds and pushes and urges future provincial governments to act to support them in real, concrete ways.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

We will now move on to clause by clause of Bill 242.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 227—The Workplace Safety
and Health Amendment Act
(Access to Washrooms for Delivery Persons)**

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to Bill 227, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Access to Washrooms for Delivery Persons).

Does the bill's sponsor, the honourable member for The Maples, have an opening statement?

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): This bill amends The Workplace Safety and Health Act.

In most circumstances, the owner of a workplace must provide access to a washroom on request to a delivery person attending the workplace.

As, Mr. Chair, I have mentioned during the second reading that this is a non-partisan bill; this bill came straight from our heroes. Some people just realized that they were our heroes, so I'm talking about the truck drivers. Before the pandemic they were our heroes, and during the pandemic they went extra miles, and in the future they will stay our heroes as well, Mr. Chair.

As you probably see, around 95 per cent of the stuff you see at your household is delivered by a delivery person here in Manitoba. They had told me stories during the pandemic how hard it was for them to have access to the washroom. Most places were—they wouldn't allow a delivery person to do a—use a washroom; they said staff only or employees only.

* (17:00)

So, I'm very happy to see that this House has—recognizes our heroes and this bill we'll be passing today, and I do like to thank each and every member of this House for supporting this bill and also. By supporting this bill, we are also recognizing our heroes.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 227?

Seeing as no other speakers, we will now move on to clause by clause of Bill 227.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 241—The Mandatory Training
for Provincial Employees
(Systemic Racism and Human Rights) Act**

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to Bill 241, the mandatory training for provincial employees.

Does the bill sponsor, the honourable member for St. Vital, have an opening statement?

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Thank—I thank the Chair for the opportunity to speak to—with respect to Bill 241, The Mandatory Training for Provincial Employees (Systemic Racism and Human Rights) Act.

I just want to add to the record a few comments. I spoke at length with regards to this bill during our second reading and when we had previous opportunities to debate the same piece of legislation, even though it was under a previous bill number, Bill 212 at the time.

And this bill is going to be a significant improvement as a way for the provincial government to advance our efforts to combat racism. And I'm happy to be part of a legislature that is moving forward in recognizing this.

And I think the point that I want to emphasize today during this opportunity to speak is that these bills happen because we have representation in this Chamber, because we have voices that represent a—diverse communities, is—that represent the diversity of our province. We have people in this Chamber that represent the greatness of that diversity in our province, and we have members now who listen, who

respect, who now can voice those concerns, put them forward in a piece of legislation that would not only get recognized in this House, but will be supported in this House. And I think that's a significant step and a significant milestone that we have, that we should be proud of.

And I think that via the passage and moving forward of this bill, not only will the impacts of the bill be significant on ensuring that we have a public service that can actively fight against racism, but it also shows Manitobans that, you know, this side of the House that are—respects the diversity of our province, that listens to Manitobans of diverse communities and, when they have concerns, we will be able to voice them and act on them with sincerity to move—make sure our province is a better place into the future.

And so I look forward to this being a milestone for other future pieces of legislation that will respect the diversity of our communities and be a stepping stone for making sure our province can move and become more welcoming into the future.

And I also hope that any folks who are unsure about the—how this bill will positively affect their lives or whether they aren't sure whether—they think, perhaps, this is not necessary, that, you know, that they have some serious conversations with myself or with other folks who can really explain to them and communicate to them how important fighting against racism is for every Manitoban—every single Manitoban—whether you've faced racism or whether you haven't.

And I think, Mr. Chair, I'll leave my comments right there. I'm excited to pass this bill into law.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 241?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Certainly, our caucus supports this particular piece of legislation, and I commend the member for St. Vital for bringing it forward.

While I think that there is significant training when it comes to racism within the civil service, having it in legislation is an important—both recognition and a step and I appreciate that he has brought this forward.

And I think that all members of the House, including our caucus, are pleased to support it.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member for those comments.

We will now move on to clause by clause of Bill 241.

Clause 1–pass; clause 2–pass; clause 3–pass; clause 4–pass; clause 5–pass; enacting clause–pass; title–pass. Bill be reported.

**Bill 233–The Chartered Professionals
in Human Resources Act**

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: We will now move on to Bill 233, The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Act.

Does the bill's sponsor, the honourable member for McPhillips, have an opening statement?

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): I do not.

Mr. Deputy Chairperson: Does any other member wish to make an opening statement on Bill 233?

Hearing no other speakers, we will now move on to clause by clause on Bill 233.

Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose.

Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Clause 1–pass; clause 2–pass; clause 3–pass; clause 4–pass; clause 5–pass, clause 6–pass; clause 7–pass; clauses 8 and 9–pass; clause 10–pass; clauses 11 through 13–pass; clause 14–pass; clauses 15 through 17–pass; clauses 18 and 19–pass; clause 20–pass; clauses 21 and 22–pass; clauses 23 and 24–pass; clause 25–pass; clauses 26 through 29–pass; clause 30–pass; clauses 31 and 32–pass; clauses 33 and 34–pass; clauses 35 and 36–pass; clause 37–pass; clauses 38 and 39–pass; clause 40–pass; clause 41–pass; clauses 42 and 43–pass; clauses 44 through 46–pass; clauses 47 and 48–pass; clause 49–pass; clause 50–pass; clauses 51 and 52–pass; clauses 53 and 54–pass; clauses 55 and 56–pass; clauses 57 and 58–pass; enacting clause–pass; title–pass. Bill be reported.

* (17:10)

This concludes the business before the committee.

Committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Mr. Dennis Smook (Deputy Chairperson): The Committee of the Whole has considered the following: Bill 227, The Workplace Safety and Health Amendment Act (Access to Washrooms for Delivery Persons); Bill 229, The Farmers' Markets Week Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); Bill 231, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (2); Bill 233, The Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Act; Bill 235, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Bill 239, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Application Fees and Deposits); Bill 240, The Remembrance Day Amendment Act; Bill 241, The Mandatory Training for Provincial Employees (Systemic Racism and Human Rights) Act; Bill 242, The Police and Peace Officers' Memorial Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); Bill 244, The Ducks Unlimited Canada Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); and reports the same without amendment.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler), that—[*interjection*]—oh, sorry, McPhillips—the honourable member for McPhillips, that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 24, 2023

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