

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

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AL TOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Thompson	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 30, 2022

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

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

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, 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 43—The Disclosure to Protect  
Against Intimate Partner Violence Act**

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 43, The Disclosure to Protect Against Intimate Partner Violence Act; Loi sur la communication de renseignements pour la protection contre la violence de la part d'un partenaire intime, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Ms. Squires:** Madam Speaker, this bill will support a person concerned for their own safety or the safety of their children from intimate partner violence, family violence or sexual violence in accessing information about their intimate partner's documented history of violence.

In addition, the bill will facilitate access to public and community-based supports to promote safety and end the violence of—end the cycle of violence while

ensuring information disclosed is treated appropriately and confidentially.

Violence primarily affects women and girls, disproportionately affecting Manitobans living in rural, remote and northern communities, Indigenous people, people of colour and 2SLGBTQIA people.

Addressing gender-based violence continues to be a priority of this government, and this bill is another step forward in that direction.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

Further introduction of bills?

**Bill 44—The Employment Standards Code  
Amendment Act  
(Minimum Wage)**

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen), that Bill 44, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Minimum Wage), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Helwer:** We are, indeed, in difficult times right now, and exceptional times. Bill 44, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Minimum Wage), will allow for increases to the minimum wage to be added by regulation on top of the automatic annual increases that are tied to inflation under the Employment Standards Code.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

**Bill 240—The Jewish Heritage Month Act**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), that Bill 240, The Jewish Heritage Month Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Schuler:** Madam Speaker, Bill 240, The Jewish Heritage Month Act, will recognize the contributions

that the Jewish community has made to the province of Manitoba. That is why this is being championed as a bill. By enshrining a Jewish heritage month, we can continue to celebrate that contribution to Manitoba going forward.

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

Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

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

Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

#### Brain Injury Awareness Month

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** I was pleased to proclaim June as brain injury awareness month. The focus is to increase awareness about the prevalence of brain injury, the obstacles that exist for those with brain injury and the need for more services and support at all stages of recovery.

Madam Speaker, the theme is Shine a Light on Brain Injury—in other words, shining a light on this often invisible disability.

An acquired brain injury refers to any damage to the brain that occurs after birth and is not related to a congenital or a degenerative disease. There are two types of acquired brain injury: non-traumatic and traumatic. This includes concussions, strokes, brain illness and any other kind of brain injury acquired after birth.

Brain injuries can occur at any age and are caused by trauma from falls, car accidents, sports, assaults or other health issues. Brain injuries can affect individuals in many complex and unique ways. From emotional to physical changes, this type of injury can have profound effects on a person's life.

The Manitoba Brain Injury Association offers support and hope to individuals and families living with the effects of brain injury through support group meetings, peer interaction, education and advocacy, and social and recreational programs.

Madam Speaker, on June 23rd, MBIA will be hosting an event from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Piatz *[phonetic]* De Nardi in support. There will be a silent auction, food and wine tasting and much more.

\* (13:40)

Another event that will be taking place is the Brandon brain injury awareness walk, hosted by the Brandon area support group, on Saturday, June 4th at the army, navy and air force in Brandon. The goal of the support group is to raise awareness, provide educational programming related to brain injuries and provide hope and emotional support for survivors and their families living with a brain injury. There will be displays, bucket raffles, speakers, new friends, free take-homes and much more fun.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Jeff Fisher, the fundraising chair of the Manitoba Brain Injury Association, for requesting that I proclaim June as brain injury awareness month. I wish all the best to the events planned to recognize brain injury awareness month.

And I would ask my colleagues in the Chamber to please join me in recognizing June as brain injury awareness month in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Madam Speaker, as we approach June, brain injury awareness month, we remember all of those who live with brain injuries in this province and raise awareness about a condition that impacts thousands of Manitobans.

Acquired brain injuries, ABIs, are injuries caused to the brain after birth and are not related to a congenital or degenerative disease; traumatic brain injuries, or TBIs, are injuries caused by trauma to the head; and non-traumatic brain injuries are often referred to as ABIs. Causes include internal factors such as lack of oxygen and exposure to toxins.

Today, most if not all of us will think of and remember Taylor Pryor. Taylor was from Portage la Prairie. She had a bubbly personality and was well known and loved both in her hometown and on campus at the Canadian Mennonite University, where she attended.

During a soccer game in 2018, Taylor sustained a concussion by colliding with another player while jumping for the ball. Severe concussion symptoms followed, and four months later she made her first of many subsequent suicide attempts. Sadly, Taylor died by suicide on October 17th, 2019.

Taylor's story isn't just a reminder of how serious brain injuries are or how easy they are to sustain. Hers is a story about a health-care system that is not set up to adequately support brain injury victims. Taylor's

father Doug has been vocal that more can and should be done to help those suffering from brain injuries.

Today, Taylor's family remains concerned about a lack of progress in addressing these very issues. While a review was made into her death, Doug says that a review—the review's recommendations can't be implemented quickly enough because there's not enough funding to do so.

When asked what his message to the Legislature is today—brain injury awareness month coming in June—Doug said that Manitoba needs to invest more in our health-care system so that brain injury victims are given the right forms of care they so desperately need.

Madam Speaker, I started my career as a nurse working in an acquired brain injury program. I know first-hand the amazing staff and providers who work passionately to improve health-care outcomes for those who suffer from acquired brain injuries.

We thank all of the advocates and health-care workers for their ongoing efforts, and today, the Manitoba NDP says loudly that we stand with all of those affected by brain injury and their loved ones and will continue to fight and advocate on your behalf.

Thank you.

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

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, brain injury awareness month in June, which we support, is important because it brings attention to the critical need to pay more attention to individuals with a brain injury in Manitoba and to the major need to improve the support for individuals who have a brain injury.

I will mention briefly two individuals.

First, Marcel Blanchette had a brain injury which resulted from his home being invaded by an aggressive criminal who assaulted him. He woke up after some time in a coma to find that the Public Guardian and Trustee, acting on behalf of the government of Manitoba, had been such a poor steward of his interests that all his belongings were taken away—I mean all his belongings—including all his photos, all his documents, everything. He managed to recover a few scraps from a thrift store, but in essence his life was taken away from him by the combined actions of the criminal who attacked him and the Public Guardian

and Trustee who failed miserably in the duty to be a guardian of people who have a disability. And he never even got an apology.

The second story is of Taylor Pryor, a promising young student and athlete who had a concussion. The concussion led to suicidal ideation, and when she did not get the help she needed in time, she committed suicide.

The tragedies of both these stories is that of Manitobans of great promise who had brain injuries. In both cases, the system of support in Manitoba failed them badly. We need to do much better moving forward.

And I urge all to support brain injury awareness month, and those who can to go to Brandon for Saturday, where the walk for brain injury month will occur, or to participate in the event on June 23rd.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

**Madam Speaker:** Further ministerial statements?

The honourable Minister for Transportation and Infrastructure—and I would indicate that the required 90 minutes notice prior to retune—routine proceedings was provided in accordance with rule 26(2).

Would the honourable minister please proceed with his statement.

### Heavy Rain and Flooding Update

**Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** Madam Speaker, in addition to the rain events over the weekend, our Hydrologic Forecast Centre is monitoring a 'precipitation' system that could bring significant rain up to 75 millimetres, localized areas, over the next three days with potential of heavy thunderstorms.

The forecast precipitation is expected to affect the Whiteshell lakes area and the Winnipeg River basin, and has the potential to expand the areas along the western portion of the Red River Valley, Madam Speaker.

Along—an overland flood warning is issued for the southeast corner of the province, and that—as water levels on lakes, streams and drains are high and soils are saturated. Intense and heavy rains could result in overland flooding and potential for flash flooding, Madam Speaker.

A severe wind effects alert for Tuesday, May 31st is in place for the southern basin of the—Lake Winnipeg, south basin and southern shorelines of

Lake Manitoba and southern shores on Lake Winnipegosis and Dauphin Lake, Madam Speaker.

The system will bring extreme, strong winds—north winds with gusts up to 100 kilometres an hour. The winds will cause water levels to rise by more than five feet along shorelines and cause powerful wave action that will add to the already high water levels, Madam Speaker.

In the Whiteshell areas, water levels remain very high. Mandatory evacuation notices have been to—issued in various lakes and subdivisions, Madam Speaker. The flood protection resources have been deployed to critical infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, 35 local authorities and northern affairs communities, eight First Nation communities and one provincial park remain in states of local emergency.

Transportation and Infrastructure crews are working to raise PR 307 to—in order to maintain emergency access to the area. Construction expected to begin today, Madam Speaker.

Our provincial staff reopened highway—P-H 75 south of Morris this past weekend. P-H 75 north of Morris will remain closed until water levels recede further. Our staff will continue to assess impact on provincial roadways and to assist in mitigation efforts where applicable, Madam Speaker.

As Manitoba is set to experience yet another precipitation system, I want to encourage Manitobans to remain hopeful, as the summer months are on the horizon.

Thanks to the outstanding efforts of provincial and municipal officials, Manitobans across the province have been largely spared from the devastation effects of this truly historical flood, Madam Speaker.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** As more rain and high winds are about to arrive in Manitoba, this Legislature reiterates our support for all floodfighting efforts by public servants, volunteers and homeowners as they fight to protect their properties and their communities.

In addition, we know with concern that those in southern Manitoba are also having to watch the sky for potential tornadoes. We urge all those in surrounding areas to take the necessary precautions and check the advisories given by their municipalities or by First Nation communities.

In the western part of our province, property owners on Dauphin Lake, Lake Winnipegosis and Lake Manitoba are bracing for gusts of wind up to 100 kilometres per hour that may impact the shorelines so much that it will affect lakeside properties.

\* (13:50)

This flooding season has dragged on longer than anyone hoped or expected. We appreciate that much has been done over the past few weeks to immediately support folks in the face of limited resources and seemingly unlimited precipitation.

But as the flooding drags on, we know that Manitobans are becoming increasingly concerned about the financial impact that it will have on them and on our economic recovery. In the Whiteshell, the inability to spend this summer by the lake won't just hurt cottagers, but it will also hurt local businesses in Eastman that rely on tourism to make ends meet.

That's why, as we continue to recognize and thank all those who are fighting the floods across the province, we reiterate our appeal to government that they continue to look at ways to offer comprehensive compensation programs, Madam Speaker, specifically for businesses, for residents and for secondary residences throughout the province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

**Mr. Lamont:** I thank the minister for his update.

We extend our thanks to everyone who's been dealing with the fallout of this spring's flooding and low after Colorado low. It should not be a surprise, but this year's spring is the second wettest on record with an astonishing 241 millimetres up to this last weekend, and with the precipitation the minister has predicted, we could be within a few centimetres of the all-time record.

There's still very widespread flooding across the southern third of Manitoba: the Assiniboine, Little Saskatchewan, White Mud, Winnipeg River and West Hawk Lake as well as others. And the overland flood warning covers a significant chunk of all of southeastern Manitoba, taking in Morden-Winkler, Steinbach, Selkirk and Winnipeg, as well as many First Nations.

And we express our concern that farmers are able to get their crops in the ground as soon as possible, and we certainly hope there will be a respite from the wet weather soon. There are concerns about disruptions to global agriculture and food production due to the war in Ukraine, which, of course, is affecting the cost of inputs. We are all concerned about the knock-on effects of these disruptions as Ukraine grows grain for Africa and the Middle East, and both areas could be facing hunger and refugee crises.

We all hope that Manitoba and Canadian farmers can get their crops safely in the ground both for our own prosperity but so that we can contribute to feeding the world.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Dawson Trail Art and Heritage Tour

**Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Madam Speaker, it is my honour today to present the Dawson Trail Art and Heritage Tour.

The old Dawson Trail was the first all-Canadian route that linked the Great Lakes with the Canadian Prairies. It was a water-and-land route that began at Port Arthur, Ontario and ended at St. Boniface, Manitoba. The land portion of this trail now referred to as Dawson Road.

This trail was brought back to life thanks to a small, outgoing group of individuals looking to take something great from our history and revamp it.

This trail is much more than just connecting paths. It's a beautiful part of our history and of our present.

From 2019 to today's date, this dedicated committee has truly transformed the trail. They have made points of interest for visitors to explore, including landmarks that highlight the history of Dawson Trail. They also host an annual art tour featuring local visual artists and heritage programming.

The trail functions as a new exhibit that will honour the early pioneers of the town of Ste. Anne and surrounding area. This exhibit is one of several supported by the Dawson Trail Commemorative Project, an initiative that was started to recognize the early history of Dawson Trail.

Please join me in recognizing and acknowledging the Dawson Trail art and heritage tour as a remarkable piece of our history and future, as well as thanking the amazing group of individuals responsible for making

this vision possible. Two of them are joining us in the gallery today.

I would like to invite my colleagues to honour our pioneer families and 'attend' the unveiling of the Pioneer Park on June 5th at 2 p.m. in Ste. Anne.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

#### Public Reporting of Drug Overdose Deaths

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** If you go to the federal government's opioid information portal, you can't—you can see statistics from every single province and territory except for Manitoba.

The members opposite claim to take overdose—opioid overdoses seriously, but it's difficult to take their word for it seriously when they don't bother to report the information they have, especially when every single other government in this country is doing just that.

I urge the government members opposite—and, in particular, the minister for addictions—to support Bill 217 and release opioid deaths on a monthly—month-by-month basis, along with the drug suspected of causing the overdose, so that we can address the crisis with accurate, up-to-date information.

The lack of information we have on overdose deaths from this government is particularly jarring when contrasted with how seriously community groups take data collection when it comes to other social issues.

This past week, End Homelessness Winnipeg conducted its annual Street Census so that we have up-to-date information on the homelessness crisis in Winnipeg. We've all seen the increasing number of homelessness encampments around the city and, thanks to End Homelessness Winnipeg and all census volunteers, we'll soon have precise data on which to address the crisis.

I applaud them all and ask that the names of End Homelessness Winnipeg's staff team and board of directors be recorded in Hansard.

I also want to thank the many folks, including Diane Redsky, who is in the gallery today, for their advocacy in the Village Project tiny homes complex, which will help support homeless folks in our community: 22 tiny homes are being constructed near Thunderbird House in the Point Douglas constituency. This will help support our homeless folks.

The NDP uplifts and honours all of those who are on the front lines supporting those struggling with addictions, mental health issues, homelessness issues. And, certainly, you know, we want to make sure that all of them have the supports that they need in this province.

Miigwech.

*End Homelessness Winnipeg operations team: Kris Clemens, Yvonne Dubois, Linda English, Lauren Lange, Elijah Osei-Yeboah, Nick Procyshyn, Lissie Rappaport, Jason Whitford*

*End Homelessness Winnipeg housing supports team: Pero Banjo, Megan Bresch, Rustam Dow, Betty Edel, Marissa Ford, Isabel Jerez, Amy Reinink, Ian Sunabacka, Vlessy Villanueva-Sanchez, Tammy Westaway*

*End Homelessness Winnipeg reaching home community entity team: Ariane Bruyere, Natalie Carreiro, Janet Clark, Thomas Edwards, Maria Fajardo, Lindsay Hourie, André Man, Heidi Rara, Jasmine Smith, David Theule, Susan Thiebaut, Tanis Wheeler*

### **Donna Desjarlais**

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Municipal Relations):** Good afternoon.

It's an honour to recognize a long-time friend of mine from Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation. She is a respected First Nation woman and is proud of her culture and her traditions.

Last year, Donna Desjarlais was hurt and felt discriminated against when she went to get a new photo for her firearms licence. She was asked rather abruptly to put her pigtails behind her shoulders instead of in front of her for the photo.

This was a bad choice of terminology and clearly shows the need for cultural sensitivity training for businesses as well as the rest of the public. Today, I want to share my respect for Donna and educate my colleagues as well as those watching today the meaning of braids for First Nations people.

One of many things important to Indigenous cultural identity is their hair. Hair is considered sacred and significant to those—to who they are as an individual, family and community. It is believed long hair represents a strong cultural identity. This strong cultural identity promotes self-esteem, self-respect, a sense of belonging and a healthy sense of pride.

As part of the practice of self-respect, they are taught to take great care of hair through proper grooming. In preparations for ceremonies, there is special care taken for grooming, styling and ornamentation of the hair. I've seen this at many powwows where moms, grandmas, sisters and friends are brushing and braiding each other's hair in preparation to dance in the grand entry or to compete.

So, today, I show my respect for Donna and assure her that we support her cultural choice to proudly wear her braids every day as a dedicated and loving mother, grandmother, wife, sister, friend and community member of Sandy Bay First Nation.

I also invite all colleagues and Manitobans to join me at the Sandy Bay powwow this coming August to watch Donna and the many others proudly dance to the drums as they honour their cultural and relatives of the past and present.

I would like to wish Donna the very best and to continue to walk her life journey with pride and honour.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### **Kiana Mercredi**

**MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** Madam Speaker, I would like to take this time to highlight the achievements of a great student at Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute here in Winnipeg that go well beyond a curricular outcome or a course textbook.

An honour roll student, Kiana Mercredi, reached out to me last year with an interest in doing a comprehensive soils assessment of the West End for her AP Capstone project. She also met with a local historian and partnered with a soils scientist at the University of Manitoba.

\* (14:00)

She did her research independently, which included mapping our neighbourhood, gathering the soil samples with a Dutch auger and then doing the necessary lab work on the campus at U of M, shoulder to shoulder with graduate students. Kiana finished by authoring a full 5,000-word academic paper and delivered a presentation with oral defence that will greatly contribute to our provincial data on lead contamination sources here in Winnipeg.

Now, apart from academics, Kiana helped to build a multi-faith prayer room at her school in response to the horrific London attacks and led a



moccasin-making workshop for educators at MTS PD Day.

Last month, it was announced that Kiana has won the U of M Indigenous Leader of Tomorrow Scholarship valued at \$16,000, and just last week it was revealed that she has also won the prestigious Ingenium STEAM Horizon Award, valued at \$25,000, for excellence in STEM-based research. The award was presented to Kiana by the Canadian Minister of Heritage during a virtual ceremony—and only five students across Canada win this award annually, and Kiana is the first Manitoban to do so in five years.

Madam Speaker, as graduation season is quickly approaching, I would like to encourage my colleagues to join me in honouring our very own Kiana Mercredi on her contributions not only to Daniel McIntyre Collegiate Institute but also to our province, and wish her continued success as she pursues her dream of going into medicine at post-secondary.

**Dr. Albert E. Chudley**

**Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness):** Madam Speaker, today I rise to honour a Fort Richmond constituent who is recognized globally for his contributions in the medical field.

Dr. Albert E. Chudley was born in Winnipeg and raised in Transcona. He lost both of his parents to rare autoimmune diseases by the time he was 18 years old, and in the midst of this trauma he decided to dedicate his life to helping others through medicine.

Dr. Chudley was trained in pediatrics at the University of Manitoba, then accepted into residency for neonatal intensive care in Toronto and Pittsburgh. He began his medical career with a position in Saskatoon, where his interest grew in the field of genetics after treating babies born with rare congenital conditions.

In 1983, Dr. Chudley was recruited to Winnipeg to grow and build a genetics program to serve Manitobans. The unit that began with two part-time positions within the section of pediatrics now has six full-time physician geneticists as well as seven genetic counsellors. It is currently a full-standing program in genetics and metabolism in the WRHA.

Madam Speaker, in addition to expanding the genetics programs that assist families as they navigate complex diagnoses before and after birth, Dr. Chudley has taught the next generation of medical experts as a

professor at the U of M in the department of pediatrics in child health and department of biochemistry and medical genetics.

Dr. Chudley is a leading expert in fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, and he co-chaired a committee that developed the national guidelines for FASD diagnosis. These guidelines have been established as the model approach to diagnosis by the World Health Organization.

His newest medical textbook, entitled *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Advances in Research and Practice*, will be published and available this fall.

Two minutes is not enough time to list all of Dr. Chudley's achievements, clearly, and I will ask for leave to finish my statement, if the House will allow.

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

**Mrs. Guillemard:** So, it's not enough time to mention all of Dr. Chudley's achievements, but if you were asked him to identify the one that he is most proud of, he will answer that he is most proud of his family.

We are all proud of you too, Dad.

In the gallery today is Dr. Chudley, along with his wife and my mother, Jenny Chudley, and I ask my colleagues in the House to join me in congratulating him on an extraordinary career in medicine.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Introduction of Guests**

**Madam Speaker:** I now have an opportunity to introduce some further guests to you.

Seated in the public gallery, from Sister MacNamara School, we have 40 grades 5 to 6 students under the direction of Steven *[phonetic]* Benevides, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara).

Also, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have with us today Vanya and Robert Reimer, who are my guests.

Also, in the public gallery, we have former page visiting in the gallery today, Annlise Guillemard, also happens to be the guest of the honourable member for Fort Richmond (Mrs. Guillemard).

And those are our guests, and on behalf of all of us here, we welcome all of you to the Manitoba Legislature.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** And it is time to say farewell to another page that is leaving us.

One of our pages today, Lien Huynh, is serving their last day in the Chamber today, and I wanted to share some comments with the House.

Lien Huynh would like to thank all the pages and Legislature staff they've gotten to know over the past few months for making this experience so memorable. They've always had a strong interest in politics and was excited to take this step into a world they hope to join.

They were not disappointed. The lively debate they witnessed in the Chamber often translated to research outside the Chamber to get a better understanding of the topics being discussed. In the past year, they've learned more about policy making and how it affects our province than they ever thought they would as a teenager.

Lien learned a lot and will continue to apply what they learned in their future endeavours. They will be graduating from Collège Churchill next spring and is pursuing a position as a page at the House of Commons in Ottawa where they plan to continue their post-secondary education.

And, Lien, on behalf of all of us, thank you for your service, and all the best.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Minimum Wage Increase Request for Living Wage

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** So, how much is the minimum wage going to go up by this year? That's what Manitobans who've read the government's new bill are no doubt wondering. And, in addition, I think specifically they're wondering whether this new bill is going to maintain the status quo that just isn't working, where a Manitoban can work full-time and still live in poverty.

Hard work should be a key to success, and yet we haven't seen that yet from this government. That's why we've called for a \$15-an-hour minimum wage in Manitoba.

Will the Premier listen? Will she bring about a \$15-an-hour minimum wage in Manitoba?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Well, Madam Speaker, with every bill that goes through the Manitoba Legislature, it has the opportunity for citizens from Manitoba to come forward and present at committee and we look forward to that taking place.

We will continue to listen to Manitobans, Madam Speaker, and we do understand and we know that other—we always wanted to maintain a competitive rate here in Manitoba; that has changed over some time. We have already indexed the minimum wage to inflation, which was the right thing to do at the time.

But we recognize that we need to move forward, Madam Speaker, to make sure that our minimum wage is competitive across the country.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** So, how much will the minimum wage increase by in Manitoba this year? Manitobans are still wondering, because right now you can work full-time in this province and still live in poverty. That's because our minimum wage is on track to being the lowest in the country.

Certainly, we know that Manitobans deserve a raise. Those hard-working folks on the front lines throughout the pandemic that we called heroes for the past two years, they deserve a raise.

And so that's why we're asking, on behalf of some 31,000 Manitobans who make a minimum wage in this province: Will this government increase it to \$15 an hour so that we can have a living wage in our province?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** We have been listening to Manitobans. We'll continue to engage with Manitobans throughout the process.

What we're looking forward to is moving forward, so I hope members opposite will allow this bill to move through this Chamber as quickly as possible to ensure that we can move forward with those changes that are necessary to keep us competitive with respect to minimum wages across the country.

\* (14:10)

So I hope the members opposite will support us in our endeavour to ensure that we continue to have a competitive minimum wage across the country.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, I can only hope that the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) doesn't filibuster this increase to the minimum wage. We heard his views on the topic over the weekend. They're offside with the people of Manitoba.

We're still left to wonder, how much is the minimum wage going to increase by in Manitoba this year? Manitobans deserve to see a pay raise here.

It's a question of values. We're taught growing up that if you work hard, you'll get ahead. We're taught that work is the key to success. And yet, because of the decisions made by this Cabinet, you can work full time in Manitoba and still have to live in poverty. That just isn't right.

Increasing the minimum wage to \$15 an hour would make it a living wage in Manitoba for the time being.

Can the Cabinet justify passing a bill that will see people working full time in Manitoba still live in poverty?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Madam Speaker, we chose to index the minimum wage—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** —to inflation, Madam Speaker, unlike members opposite. When they were in government, they didn't choose to do that.

And, of course, we want to make life more affordable for Manitobans. That's why we continuously have increased the basic personal amounts, Madam Speaker, taking more than 16,000 Manitobans—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** —off the—off of paying taxes—income taxes.

And so, Madam Speaker, we will continue to do what it takes to make life more affordable for Manitobans. We just hope that members opposite will get on board so we can move this bill through the Manitoba Legislature as quickly as possible so that we can ensure that Manitobans have a competitive minimum wage that they need, want and deserve.

### Surgical Backlogs Timeline to Clear

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

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, I just want to take this opportunity to thank all of our guests who are here today from Sister Mac, and everyone else who is visiting from other parts around the province and the country, and also take this opportunity to say to our page, Lien, who is hard at work at this very moment, that we wish her the best. Hopefully, she makes Manitoba proud as she sets her sights on Parliament Hill.

We know that Manitobans from all walks of life have been increasingly concerned with the wait to get a surgery in Manitoba. More people are waiting than ever before, and those folks are waiting longer than ever before.

Can the Premier provide a date to the House by which the surgery backlog will be cleared?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Premier):** Last week, I had the opportunity to meet with other western premiers at a Western Premiers' Conference, where we discussed a wide array of issues. And one of the most important ones that we discussed was obviously health care, Madam Speaker. It's on everyone's minds across our country.

And, certainly, when it comes to the Canada Health Transfer, we want to ensure that the federal government makes its fair share and pays its fair share when it comes to our health-care system. And it's something that we're united in as premiers across the provinces and as provinces, Madam Speaker.

This is absolutely critical that we look to the federal government. Right now they contribute about 22 per cent of health-care expenditures. It needs to be increased to around 35 per cent, Madam Speaker. We are united across the country as premiers when it comes to that. I hope members opposite will get on board and support us in that initiative.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, even as the western premiers met, there was 170,000 people right here in Manitoba waiting for a surgery or an important diagnostic test.

These are people that we know. These are people in our communities, in our families, who are living with pain right now, who are suffering because they

can't get the health care that they need right here in the province where they live, where they pay taxes, where they have contributed to our society, Madam Speaker.

This is an urgent issue that needs to get addressed. But all we've seen from the PCs so far is hallway medicine inside the Perimeter and highway medicine for everyone else across the province. We know that a key, crucial step is just providing clarity to all those people who are waiting for a surgery.

With that in mind, will the Premier simply provide a date today, tell us which date by which all those folks can expect to have their procedures done?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Also at the Western Premiers' Conference, we did have these very discussions, as well, that this is nothing—these surgical and diagnostic backlogs is nothing that is unique to one individual province across our country. We are all facing challenges as a result of a worldwide pandemic, Madam Speaker.

So, each individual province is working on how we deal with this. Certainly, in Manitoba, we have invested—and we did in this budget—\$110 million towards tackling those surgical and diagnostic backlogs. We want to work in that direction to ensure that each and every Manitoban gets the health care, surgery or diagnostic that they need, when they need it, Madam Speaker.

I will remind the member opposite: \$110 million towards achieving those goals, Madam Speaker. And members opposite, what did they do? They voted against it. Shame on them.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the Premier can say shame, she can play the blame game with the federal government and do whatever she likes, but Manitobans know the truth.

No matter what the PC government announces when it comes to health care, what's the situation in Manitoba right now? The situation is painfully clear: 170,000 people are waiting for a surgery or a test. That means that there are tens of thousands of people in Manitoba waiting right now to get the health care that they need.

Have any announcements that this government made made a difference on that front? No. In fact, just the opposite. Even as they make announcement after announcement, that wait-list continues to get longer and longer and longer, Madam Speaker.

A key step towards addressing it is just to provide some clarity; just let these folks know how much longer they will be waiting.

Can the Premier provide a date today by which the surgery backlog will be cleared?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition likes to talk about the blame game, and the only person playing that blame game in Manitoba is the Leader of the Opposition and members opposite.

They like to blame those who are working diligently in our health-care system day in, day out—those nurses, those doctors that are working diligently to ensure that we get the surgeries and the diagnostic procedures that Manitobans need, Madam Speaker.

Again, this is nothing that's unique to Manitoba. What—we are taking steps. We have announced \$110 million, which is being invested as we speak, to ensure that we bring down those surgical and diagnostic backlogs. We want to ensure that all Manitobans get the health care that they need, when they need it.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** I have been told that we have some more guests in the gallery.

We have staff and students from Riverside School in Elma, Manitoba, with Mr. Nathan Penner, and they are here from the constituency of Lac du Bonnet. Just wanted to welcome them to the Legislature, as well.

#### Patients at Grace Hospital ER Placement Wait Times

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** Madam Speaker, patients at the Grace Hospital are experiencing long waits and hallway medicine, and it hasn't been this bad in many years.

It's reported that as many as 20 patients are often waiting in hallways with no call bells. The emergency room has as many as 90 patients at a time in an ER with 31 beds, Madam Speaker. The situation is unacceptable. Residents of St. James and west Winnipeg and, of course, all Manitobans deserve better than this.

Will the minister commit to ending hallway medicine at the Grace Hospital?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** I thank the new Health critic for the question.

Madam Speaker, I just want to thank all the health professionals, the clinicians, the nurses and the health leadership at Grace Hospital that has been meeting

with Shared Health leadership as well as WRHA leadership to look at the pressures.

The innovations and the solutions are coming right from the hospital floor, such as expedited placement of ALC patients—which are alternate level of care—from hospital to long-term care. More innovations: repatriation of stable patients who live outside of Winnipeg to continue their care, when clinically appropriate, to sites in their—

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

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

**Mr. Sala:** Madam Speaker, in recent weeks, the Grace ER had just two to four nurses scheduled to work a shift, far less than what's required. Health staff just can't keep up, as there's a vacancy rate of 28 per cent.

\* (14:20)

Clearly, the situation is dire and one in which front-line health professionals are being put into very difficult positions. They want to care for these folks, but they're simply being overwhelmed by the situation. The minister should account for her government's actions here.

Will she commit today to ending hallway medicine at the Grace Hospital, yes or no?

**Ms. Gordon:** I—yes, I can account for what our government is doing to end the wait times and the situation at the Grace Hospital in terms of staffing.

Madam Speaker, \$19.5 million to add 259 nursing seats, and moving forward to expand to 400; working closely with the College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba to ensure individuals who are educated in other countries and working in other provinces can gain licensure under the Internationally Educated Nursing program; our government has invested \$23,000 for each of those individuals.

Yes, I can account for the incredible work our government is doing.

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

**Mr. Sala:** Madam Speaker, the PCs cut 124 beds from Winnipeg hospitals and they shut down three emergency rooms in Winnipeg, and that's why we're in this predicament. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Sala:** There are more than 2,400 nursing positions vacant across Manitoba. Cuts and consolidation—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Sala:** —left our hospitals vulnerable.

Now it's patients who are paying the price. Currently, there's an eight-hour wait to see a doctor at the Grace emergency department. Beds regularly line the hallways—as many as 20 patients at a time. There's a direct connection between the current situation at the Grace and the cuts that the PCs made. We need hallway medicine to stop.

Will the minister commit to ending hallway medicine today?

**Ms. Gordon:** I want to remind the member opposite that we are cleaning up the mess that the NDPs left in health care.

I know that the member is new—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —to the Chamber, a new MLA—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —and is not aware of the mess that his former colleagues in the—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —government made, but we are the process of cleaning that up, Madam Speaker, looking forward to implementing new initiatives. Preliminary data suggests the implementation of these and other initiatives have started to positively affect patient flow at Winnipeg sites.

We will continue to support ideas that are coming from the hospital floor, Madam Speaker.

#### **First Nations Health Services State of Emergency Declared**

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** Northern First Nations leadership have unanimously declared a state of emergency on northern health services. A critical nursing shortage has led northern nursing stations to implement, and I quote, an open-to-emergencies-only policy. Community leaders say this stretches the minimum standard of care to a breaking point.

The Province should step up and fix the 'nurshing' 'sortage' rather than deferring responsibility to the federal government.

Will the minister do that today?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** I thank the member opposite for the question.

This is a very concerning situation for our government, Madam Speaker. And we know that Manitoba's at its best when First Nations leadership and health professionals are at the table. I've talked several times in this Chamber about the table of solutions, helping make the decisions for their people and communities.

And that's why, two weeks ago, I hosted a northern health-care sustainability meeting in Thompson with over 30 northern stakeholders coming to the table with solutions to the issues we see in the North. And I'm also advised by First Nations and Inuit Health that an incident command structure has been set up to address this issue with our federal counterparts, Madam Speaker.

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

**Mr. Bushie:** So, if you've heard their concerns, then fix it.

Twenty-three First Nations in Manitoban—in the North have declared a state of emergency due to government inaction on health services that has left them to the breaking point. This is also an issue that is having a significant impact on health services in Thompson, The Pas and others which also service the First Nation communities.

First Nations leadership don't want the Province and federal government to fight over who will fix the issue; they want action today.

Will the minister quit deferring this issue to federal responsibility, take her leadership role and fix this situation today?

**Ms. Gordon:** I recognize that the member opposite is reading from a prepared QP question, but I want to reiterate again: our government is working very, very closely with First Nations and Inuit Health. I was the minister in the Chamber that talked about the closure of the nursing stations, have been in conversation with the federal government.

We're not passing the buck at all. We want to ensure that Manitobans in the North and in rural and remote communities receive the care that they need. And that's why we're making the investments that we are as a government, and that's why the meeting was held two weeks ago, Madam Speaker.

The member needs to get up to date on what our government is doing to assist in the North.

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

**Mr. Bushie:** Unfortunately, the state of emergency is a surprise to no one. Health-care staffing issues have been an issue across the North. Half of the positions at Thompson ER are empty. Gillam, Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake, Snow Lake all have fragile staffing situations. More people are being forced to travel to Winnipeg for care.

The Province should work with First Nations leadership on a solution rather than, again, deferring responsibility to the federal government.

Will the minister take a leadership role and fix this situation today?

**Ms. Gordon:** Our government has taken a leadership role. Two weeks ago, we sat down around a table of solutions with 30 stakeholders from the North, Madam Speaker.

Our government has taken a leadership role. We have committed \$812 million to the clinical preventative services plan—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —that will lead to the development of 38 new initiatives to support care in rural and northern Manitoba.

Our government has taken a leadership role. In 2016, for Grand Rapids and Moose Lake, new nursing stations; 2016, in Thompson, northern crisis centre for youth; 2019, new and expanded emergency department; 2019, Snow Lake—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Gordon:** —Lynn Lake—new ambulance stations in each communities; and so much more, Madam Speaker.

I know—

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

#### **Newcomers to Manitoba Access to Health Cards**

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Madam Speaker, in 2019, the PC government made it harder for newcomers and refugees to get health cards. Refugees in particular were now required to get signed employment agreements or notarized letters.

This made it much more difficult for these newcomers to get the health supports that they needed in a timely fashion when they arrive in Manitoba. Delays can mean worse health outcomes for these Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

Will the minister revisit these changes and ensure all newcomers get prompt access to a Manitoba Health card?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for Union Station for the question.

Ensuring that newcomers, refugees, immigrants that settle in our province have access to health care and the process of getting that access to health care is very important to our government. We want to ensure that Manitoba's a welcoming place to live, work and play for everyone that enters our province, and I will be looking into that issue to ensure that there are no challenges to that happening, Madam Speaker.

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Madam Speaker, this situation can be changed very quickly if this government wants to do so.

Those coming from the Ukraine are rightly being provided health care without a wait. The same should be available for all those fleeing devastation, no matter where they're coming from. That is the right thing to do.

Will the minister reverse this government's decisions and allow timely access to health care for all newcomers and all refugees in Manitoba?

**Ms. Gordon:** Ensuring equitable access to health care is a priority for our government.

We will work with stakeholders that bring forward issues of barriers or challenges, to ensure that we smooth out those barriers and challenges, to ensure that they're able to settle very quickly in our welcoming province of Manitoba.

\* (14:30)

And I will be taking that back to my department, and we will look further into that issue.

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Madam Speaker, those fleeing devastation often stay in transitional housing when they arrive to Manitoba. They may not get the kinds

of documents required for many weeks or many months.

We're hearing from newcomer and refugee advocates that it's a situation leaving far too many without any health coverage at all. When newcomers experience a delay in getting health care, it can have a ripple effect. They may not get the needed vaccinations they need for their children or deal with an issue that requires medical attention, because they're afraid of the costs. This can be addressed immediately if this government wants to do so.

Will the minister commit to reversing this government's decision and allow timely access for health cards for all newcomers and all refugees to Manitoba?

**Ms. Gordon:** Madam Speaker, I do want to reiterate, because I know that some of those—the individuals that the member is referring to may be watching question period today, that our government is committed to ensuring that Manitoba is a welcoming place for them to settle and to make their homes and to raise their families.

And we want to ensure that any challenges or barriers to settlement in this province is removed. We will take that issue back to the department and provide an update to the member.

Thank you.

#### **Member for Fort Whyte Small Business Grant**

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** Madam Speaker, in 2020, a business owned by the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) received \$500,000 from the Province. Shortly after, he endorsed the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) for her leadership race. Then he himself was elected as a member from her party.

Now his business, GoodLocal, has announced that they are restructuring and that—has asked all the local vendors, who they're supposed to support, to come back and pick up their products. Something is just not right there.

Can the Premier explain how this \$500,000 was good value for money?

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Economic Development, Investment and Trade):** I'll try to set the record straight today for the members opposite.

Clearly, our government recognized the challenges the business community faced during the pandemic. That's why we invested over \$650 million to support businesses. That was part of our over

\$3 billion in investing in supporting Manitobans through the pandemic.

We continue to support the business community during the pandemic and as we recover from the pandemic. We understand the challenges the business community find themselves in and we're going to continue to invest in Manitoba businesses.

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

**Mr. Moses:** While GoodLocal received half a million dollars in provincial funding, other local businesses were forced to close down.

Business owners said the funding was not distributed fairly. Five hundred thousand dollars spread out to many different businesses would have gone a lot further to—than one—than to one business that didn't even generate much in sales. Now, as GoodLocal is restructuring, it raises the question of whether this was a good investment.

Can the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) explain what was done with the \$500,000?

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Madam Speaker, this smear campaign is rather unfortunate.

This program was administered by the Manitoba Chambers of—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:**—Commerce. The Manitoba Chambers of Commerce oversaw—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** The members want to talk about results. In the first six months after this investment was made, 388 vendors had over \$850,000 in sales, an additional 147 sales in gift cards—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** Madam Speaker, this created 27 new jobs, nine of which became full time. We invested in supporting Manitobans—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:** We're going to continue to invest in Manitoba businesses that support Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation, please. I'm having difficulty hearing,

and there is some ongoing heckling, and I would ask for everybody's co-operation, please, so I can hear what's happening.

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

**Mr. Moses:** Now, business owners are calling foul play regarding GoodLocal's recent announcement. They're questioning how GoodLocal received \$500,000 over other businesses in need.

The member for Fort Whyte called this money a reimbursement grant, yet GoodLocal didn't even generate three times as much in sales.

Manitobans are worried that GoodLocal will close down and walk away with \$500,000 in provincial funding.

Will the member for Fort Whyte tell us why GoodLocal deserved \$500,000 over other local businesses?

**Mr. Cullen:** Well, Madam Speaker, members opposite know this was administered by the Chambers of Commerce. The CEO, Chuck Davidson, said: Looking back at the results, in terms of what we were able to achieve with that, I would do it again in a heartbeat because I think it did exactly what it needed to do. Madam Speaker: supported 388 businesses; it generated over \$1 million of income just in the first six—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Cullen:**—months alone. The business is not shut down. The business continues to grow.

Manitobans take advantage from this particular program. Manitoba businesses still take advantage of this program. And Manitobans and Manitoba businesses are benefitting from this investment and continue to benefit from this investment.

### MS and Epilepsy Care Clinic Closure Concerns

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** We've been receiving letters of concern from Manitobans who are worried about the imminent collapse of the multiple sclerosis clinic.

I table a letter, virtually, from Dr. Dan Roberts, who said that, quote: Over the past two-and-a-half-years, the province has lost two physicians who were providing much of the volume of care in the MS clinic, with another departure impending. End quote.



Dr. Roberts said this fiasco was entirely predicted and was easily avoidable.

What is this government doing to undo this fiasco to ensure that MS and epilepsy patients will get the care that they need when they need it?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for St. Boniface for the question.

We recognize that there are staffing challenges in the neurology and MS area, the clinic. And this is not unique to Manitoba. It's—these staffing challenges are being seen across the country and around the world, Madam Speaker.

But I want to ensure—assure Manitobans that Shared Health is in the midst of further bolstering staffing for the clinic with recruitment for an additional MS neurologist—it's in its final stages—and recent approval to create an additional nurse practitioner position. Six neurologists have been recruited over the past 18 months, including an MS neurologist, two 'eptologists', two stroke neurologists and—

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

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

**Mr. Lamont:** We're talking about 23,000 patients—3,000 with MS, who rely on one clinic, and nearly 20,000 people with epilepsy who are going to face ever longer waits.

And I'll quote Dr. Roberts again. Quote: Despite endless briefing notes, letters and solicitations up to and including the Deputy Minister of Health, there has been little meaningful response. In the last 18 months, because of further reductions in manpower, we've been forced to abandon most services at St. Boniface Hospital and consolidate acute stroke services to one site. End quote.

For about half that time in those 18 months, the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) was Health minister.

Why did the Premier ignore the warnings on MS and epilepsy care?

**Ms. Gordon:** I want to advise everyone in the Chamber and all Manitobans that no scheduled appointments have been affected at the MS clinic. There's also been an increase in the clinical stipend for MS physicians, which will aid in both recruitment and retention efforts for specialists.

No one ignored the staffing challenges. That is why I'm pleased to report that six neurologists have been recruited over the past 18 months.

Again, six new neurologists, and we will continue to do more work to ensure Manitobans struggling with MS have the supports that they need.

\* (14:40)

### **Intimate Partner Violence Disclosure Government Consultations re Bill 43**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Currently, Saskatchewan and Alberta have enacted Clare's Law. It is a way for an individual that is in an intimate relationship with someone to find out through law enforcement if their partner has a history of violence.

I recently met with the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police, the Provincial Association of Transition Houses and Services of Saskatchewan and with Manitoba association of police chiefs regarding how Clare's Law is practised and could work in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, the government campaigned on Clare's Law in 2019, and this has given them ample time for consultation.

Can the minister please share with us who she has consulted with in the creation of Bill 43 and why it's taken three years to introduce?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families):** I was very proud today to support—to introduce Bill 43 for the House's consideration. And I certainly do hope and look forward to further debate and support from all parties in this House, because we do know that this is an effective tool that will help combat not just intimate partner but also sexual violence and family violence in the province of Manitoba.

We broadened the scope of Clare's Law. We worked with other jurisdictions who were—who had adopted it earlier and needed—to see that there were things that needed to be addressed. So we broadened the scope of Clare's Law. We consulted very significantly—this legislation is a result of much community consultation and support of community.

I look forward to telling the member all about that in later opportunities.

### **Employment Standards Act Minimum Wage Legislation**

**Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte):** Madam Speaker, we are all keenly aware of the current consumer price

index's sharp upward trend and the impact this has on affordability for Manitobans. Our government has previously removed politics from the setting of minimum wage by using a consistent and stable formula.

However, it is now clear that—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —an option must exist for the government to have more flexibility to address the cost of living for working—for Manitobans when inflation is as high as it is today.

Can the Minister of Labour explain how Bill 44—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —will address this concern?

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services):** I want to thank the member for Fort Whyte for his question.

As a small-business owner, I know he knows, as many others on this side of the House that have been small-business owners, that they are familiar with the current formula, the annual increase of the minimum wage in Manitoba and how it uses last year's data to give employees and employers advance notice of any increase and confidence in that increase, Madam Speaker.

Bill 44 preserves that advance notice but recognizes that, in times of high inflation, Manitobans need more immediate aid. And we'll hope that the members opposite pass the bill today, Madam Speaker.

### **COVID-19 Pandemic Distribution of Rapid Tests**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** Madam Speaker, Omicron struck during the winter holidays and thousands of Manitobans were left scrambling for rapid tests. Many people were driving around the city desperately looking for tests and—just weren't available. Some people paid hundreds of dollars to get their hands on one.

Turns out, 40 per cent of the tests, this government were sitting on and weren't distributed: 1.5 million tests were sitting in this government's hands, rather than the hands of Manitobans who needed them.

Why did this government not provide timely access to rapid tests?

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services):** Well, we know the NDP is stuck in the past and the member obviously is as well, Madam Speaker, dusting off old questions from December and January.

It was a very different time—everybody knows that rapid tests were very scarce throughout the world. The federal government was challenged to find those tests—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Helwer:** —that allowed us to have some of those tests in large packages that we distributed to schools: to the children in the schools, to the teachers, to the parents.

Perhaps the member opposite didn't want those tests to go to schools, Madam Speaker. We even broke them down to distribute to the general public while we were awaiting delivery of more rapid tests from the federal government.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for—*[interjection]*

Order.

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

**Mr. Wasyliv:** Madam Speaker, thousands of Manitobans have died because of COVID, thousands of Manitoban families are mourning their loss and people continue to die of COVID almost every day in this province, and that's the answer this minister gives.

I'll table a FIPPA we received. Between October and the beginning of January, the PC government received 1.5 million tests, which 'ihd' not distributed to Manitobans—40 per cent of the tests received in its warehouse were not being put to use. Manitobans were desperately looking for these tests to keep themselves and their families safe.

Why was the minister and the government holding back 1.5 million rapid tests when they were desperately needed?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, again, the member opposite attempts to politicize an issue when we're trying to protect Manitobans, Madam Speaker. *[interjection]* And obviously, they don't want to hear the answer to the question. Again, they're stuck in the past, politicizing an issue.

Those tests came in large containers, 20 to 50—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Helwer:** –tests per package. We had individuals breaking them down to smaller packaging–  
[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Helwer:** –but the member opposite obviously doesn't want to listen to the answer, Madam Speaker.

We had to depend on the federal government. We went to the private sector, as well, to try to buy more tests. But when they were delivered to Manitoba, we did distribute them to Manitobans as we received them, Madam Speaker. [interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

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

**Mr. Wasyliw:** You know, Madam Speaker, I invite this minister to meet with the families mourning of– for the loss of their relatives dying from COVID, and tell them to their face that this has been politicized, this issue. Just like Brian Pallister, the PCs quickly turn the blaming to others for their mistakes: they're blaming the federal government for missing supplies. But this FIPPA shows in black and white, in early January 40 per cent of rapid tests this government had received were sitting in warehouses–1.5 million tests were not distributed.

Why was the minister and this government holding back rapid tests that were in such short supply?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, I've seen very low questions, Madam Speaker, but that has to take the cake of the politicization that the NDP continues to go.

I, like many Manitobans, Canadians, have lost good friends to COVID, Madam Speaker. It is a sad, sad reality that we have all worked with.

We worked with Public Health throughout the pandemic to try to keep Manitobans safe. Rapid tests were one of those tools that we received from the federal government and distributed them when we could, Madam Speaker. The–many of them went to the schools to keep children safe, to keep parents safe, to keep teachers safe.

Apparently the member opposite doesn't want to keep children safe, Madam Speaker.

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

### Speaker's Ruling

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

\* (14:50)

Prior to the commencement of routine proceedings on May 17th, 2022, the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) raised a point of order regarding disrespectful language used by the honourable Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (Mr. Piwniuk) during oral questions on May 16th, 2022, when the minister stated that the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) was, and I quote, "being cowardly and gaslighting," end quote.

The honourable member for River Heights contended that this language was unparliamentary and that the minister owed the honourable member for St. Boniface an apology.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) and the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) both spoke to the point of order before I took it under advisement.

I will first note that, at the time of this incident, I did intervene and caution the member on his language, which resolved the matter to my satisfaction in the moment. However, since the member for River Heights raised this again, I was willing to revisit the incident for closer consideration as I felt it would allow me to both address this particular matter in more detail, as well as to address a larger matter of how members treat each other in this place.

First, I would like to indicate that while the honourable member for River Heights indicated that he was raising this at his earliest opportunity, I must note that points of order should be raised at the moment an alleged infraction occurs. As noted on pages 636 and 637 of the third edition of House of Commons practice and procedure: A point of order is an intervention by a member who believes that the rules of customary procedures of the House have been incorrectly applied or overlooked during the proceedings. Members may rise on points of order to bring to the attention of the Chair any breach of the relevance or repetition rules, unparliamentary remarks or a lack of quorum. They are able to do so at virtually any time in the proceedings, provided that the point of order is raised and concisely argued as soon as the irregularity occurs.

The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) referenced the need to review Hansard in this case, and while there may be some validity to that claim, in my opinion, this matter could have been raised immediately following oral questions on May 16th, 2022, and I am bearing that in mind in the consideration of this point of order.

In this point of order, the honourable member for River Heights suggested that in using the words, and I quote, "cowardly" end quote, and, quote, "gaslighting," end quote, the honourable Minister for Transportation and Infrastructure was violating our rule 54(2), which says that no member shall speak disrespectfully or use offensive words against any member of this House. He further stated that calling someone a coward has been ruled unparliamentary in the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

I have several thoughts regarding these assertions.

First, while we may be guided by the rules and practices of other Canadian and Commonwealth Assemblies, we are not bound by them, and, accordingly, language ruled a certain way in another Assembly is not automatically ruled the same way in this House.

Second, based on standard interpretations of the English language and past practices of this House, there is a distinction between calling someone cowardly and calling them a coward. I will note for the House that previous Manitoba Speakers have consistently ruled the word coward as unparliamentary, but in instances where members have referred to other members as being cowardly, a caution has been given by the Speaker. I will note that in the incident in question the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (Mr. Piwniuk) accused the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont) of, and I quote, "being cowardly," end quote. Personally, I would prefer that members refrained from using any version of this word towards each other, as I think we should all be striving for a much higher standard of decorum, but I am referencing this distinction here for clarity and for the record.

Third, I believe that all members of the House would benefit from some instruction in how language should be considered and ruled on in Canadian Assemblies.

On page 624 of the third edition of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Bosc and Gagnon explained the relevant parameters as follows: In dealing with unparliamentary language, the Speaker takes

into account the tone, manner and intention of the speaker—of the member speaking, the person to whom the words at issue were directed, the degree of provocation and, most important, whether or not the remarks created disorder in the Chamber. Thus, language deemed unparliamentary one day may not necessarily be deemed unparliamentary on another day. The codification of unparliamentary language has proven impractical, as it is in the context in which words or phrases are used that the Chair must consider when deciding whether or not they should be withdrawn. Although an expression may be found to be acceptable, the Speaker has cautioned that any language which leads to disorder in the House should not be used. Expressions which are considered unparliamentary when applied to an individual member have not always been considered so when applied in a generic sense or to a party.

In consideration of all of these factors, I rule that the honourable member for River Heights does not have a valid point of order in this case.

However, I would urge all members to sincerely and carefully consider their choice of words in this House, especially when debates become more heated. We have all been granted an incredible opportunity to serve the citizens of Manitoba, as well as the solemn responsibility to serve them well and with honour. Please remember all of this the next time you are about to address another member in this House. Make your points and seek to prevail in the debate, but do so in a dignified and honourable manner, a manner in which your constituents and your families would admire and respect.

## PETITIONS

### Afghan Refugees in Manitoba

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Since the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban in August of 2021, Afghan citizens and their families have been subjected to persecution and human rights atrocities because of their faith, gender and former associations with organizations thought to be friendly with the previous government and its allies. This abuse has taken the form of public assaults, kidnappings and killings.

Many Afghans have left or are attempting to leave Afghanistan to find safe refuge in neighbouring

countries. This undertaking is difficult due to the Taliban's activities and their presence in countries like Pakistan.

Many Afghans who are looking to leave Afghanistan and come to Canada are educated and experienced and, as such, would prove to be valuable assets to Manitoba considering its current labour shortages and challenges to its economy.

Educated Afghans have usually studied for four to six years in a specified field of study and spent a significant amount of time and money for that education. However, these people still face barriers to obtaining employment in their field of expertise, as Canada has very strict rules regarding the use of their education and experience.

Many Afghans are refugees in other countries and currently jobless, which is an added barrier for them under the current criteria of the Provincial Nominee Program.

Some Afghan newcomers who face literacy issues because they came from a non-developed country would benefit from an in-depth informational course to assist them with acclimatization into Canadian lifestyles.

The Interim Federal Health Program provides limited temporary coverage of health-care benefits to refugees who aren't eligible for provincial or territorial health insurance. However, the refugee must apply for discretionary coverage and provide a list of compelling personal circumstances in order to qualify for urgent medical circumstances, such as urgent root canals, unanticipated life-threatening and emergency medical conditions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to work with the federal government to prioritize the evacuation of the immediate and extended family of Afghans who now call Canada home and to facilitate their coming to Manitoba, including helping Afghan refugees in other countries such as Pakistan.

To urge the provincial government to expand the Provincial Nominee Program and re-evaluate the accreditation of education and jobs to ensure all immigrants and refugees can utilize their skills more easily and readily in Manitoba for work.

To urge the provincial government to have fewer rigid criteria for Afghans under the Provincial Nominee Program, and having a connection to

Manitoba, family members or friends, should be a key criteria.

To urge the provincial government to enhance adequate acclimation services for newcomers through community-based support programs and increase their health coverage to meet their urgent health-care necessities.

Signed by Geeti Frough, Arifa Azizi, Arzoo Frough and many others.

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

### Hearing Aids

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) A hearing aid is a battery-powered electronic device designed to improve an individual's ability to perceive sound. Worn in and on behind a person's ear—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** —they make sounds louder, helping people hear better when it's quiet and when it's noisy.

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

\* (15:00)

(3) Hearing loss can also impact the safety of an individual with hearing loss, as it affects the ability to hear cars coming, safety alarms, calls 911, et cetera.

(4) A global commission on the state of the research for dementia care and prevention released an updated consensus report in July 2020, identifying 12 key risk factors for dementia and cognitive decline. The strongest risk factor that was indicated was hearing loss. It was calculated that up to 8 per cent of the total number of dementia cases could potentially be avoided with management of hearing loss.

(5) Hearing aids are therefore essential to the mental health and well-being of Manitobans, especially to those at significant risk of dementia, Alzheimer's,

a disorder of the brain affecting cognition in the ever-growing senior population.

(6) Audiologists who are health-care professionals who help patients decide which kind of hearing aid will work best for them, based on the type of hearing loss, patient's age and ability to manage small devices, lifestyle and ability to afford.

(7) The cost of hearing aids can be prohibitive to many Manitobans, depending on their income and circumstances. Hearing aids cost on average \$995 to \$4,000 per ear, and many professionals say the hearing aids only work at their best for five years.

(8) Manitoba residents under the age of 18 who require a hearing aid, as prescribed by an 'audiologist' or audiologist, will receive either an 80 per cent reimbursement from Manitoba Health or a fixed amount for an analog device, up to a maximum of \$500 per ear, or 80 per cent of a fixed amount for a digital or analog programmable device, up to a maximum of \$1,800. However, this reimbursement is not available to Manitobans who need the device who are over the age of 18, which will result in financial hardship for many young people entering the workforce, students and families. In addition, seniors representing 14.3 per cent of Manitoba's population are not eligible for reimbursement, despite being the group most likely in need of hearing aid.

(9) Most insurance companies only provide a minimal partial cost of hearing aids, and many Manitobans, especially retired persons, old-age pensioners and other low-income earners do not have access to health insurance plans.

(10) The Province of Quebec's hearing devices program covers all costs related to hearing aids and assistive listening devices, including the purchase, repair and replacement.

(11) Alberta offers subsidies to all seniors 65 and older and low-income adults 18 to 64 once every five years.

(12) New Brunswick provides coverage for the purchase and maintenance not covered by other agencies or private health insurance plans, as well as assistance for those whom purchase would cause financial hardship.

(13) Manitobans over age 18 are only eligible for support for hearing aids if they are receiving Employment and Income Assistance, and the reimbursement only provides a maximum of \$500 an ear.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to consider hearing loss as a medical treatment under Manitoba Health.

And (2) to urge the provincial government to provide income-based coverage for hearing aids to all who need them, as hearing has been proven to—essential to Manitobans' cognitive, mental and social health and well-being.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further petitions? If not, grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

### House Business

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** I have a series of announcements and leave requests.

I'd like to announce that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Tuesday, August 9th, 2022 at 2 p.m. to consider the report and recommendations of the judicial compensation, JCC—Judicial Compensation Committee, JCC, dated April 19th, 2022, which was recently tabled on May 16th, 2022.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs will meet on Tuesday, August 9th, 2022 at 2 p.m. to consider the Report and Recommendations of the Judicial Compensation Committee, JCC, dated April 19th, 2022, which was recently tabled on May 16th, 2022.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Can you please canvass the House to see if there's leave to allow the Standing Committee on Rules of the House to sit concurrently with the House on Tuesday, May 31st, 2022.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to allow the Standing Committee on Rules of the House to sit concurrently with the House on Tuesday, May 31st, 2022? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Goertzen:** I thank members of the House.

I'd like to therefore announce that the Standing Committee on Rules of the House will meet on Tuesday, May 31st, 2022 at 4 p.m. to consider the

following: Amendments to the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Rules of the House will meet on Tuesday, May 31st, 2022 at 4 p.m. to consider the following: Amendments to the Rules, Orders and Forms of Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Also on leave requests related to House business this afternoon, could you please canvass the House for leave: (1) to allow second reading of Bill 44 this afternoon; and (2) despite rule 2(15), to allow the sponsor of each specified bill report stage amendment to speak to each of their amendments for up to five minutes, and for the bill sponsor to be able to speak for up to two minutes to each report stage amendment on one of their bills.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave: (1) to allow second reading of Bill 44 this afternoon; (2) despite rule 2(15), to allow the sponsor of each specified bill reported—

I'll start (2) again: (2) despite rule 2(15), to allow the sponsor of each specified bill report stage recommendation to speak to each of their amendments for up to five minutes, and for the bill sponsor to be able to speak for up to two minutes to each report stage amendment on one of their bills.

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Goertzen:** Could you please call for second reading of Bill 44.

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill 44—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Minimum Wage)

**Madam Speaker:** I will therefore call, as it has been announced and accepted by leave, second reading, Bill 44, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Minimum Wage).

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services):** I moved, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 44, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Minimum Wage), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Helwer:** I am very pleased to rise in the House to provide comments on Bill 44 in second reading.

Manitobans, like their fellow Canadians, are dealing with a period of extraordinary inflation, which is affecting their ability to put food on their tables and gas in their vehicle tanks. High inflation affects low-income earners disproportionately, as they have less room to deal with the rising prices and are forced to make difficult choices.

In response to the challenging and quickly changing global economic conditions, government feels it is critical to give any extraordinary consideration to the appropriate and necessary minimum wage rate in Manitoba.

Manitoba, like other Canadian jurisdictions, has tied increases to minimum wage to inflation so that increases are automatic and occur in a predictable manner. However, the other Canadian jurisdictions have moved to increase minimum wage above inflation in recent months due to the unusual economic circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Bill 44 would allow Manitoba to increase the minimum wage by regulation where exceptionally high inflation is recorded in the first quarter of the calendar year. The increase is on top of the indexed increases under the Employment Standards Code, which occur every October 1st and does not replace the indexed increases. This will allow Manitoba to better align our minimum wage with the other Canadian jurisdictions while continuing with the legislative framework, which otherwise offers predictability and transparency to increases for both employees and employers.

\* (15:10)

Any increases made under the new provision will need to occur in the fourth quarter of the same year in which exceptionally high inflation was recorded in the first quarter. And notification will be given as soon as possible, as soon as practicable, with at least 30 days before the regulatory change can come into force. We realize that this is very time-sensitive, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba's Labour Management Review Committee will be engaged to provide their input on any additional increases to the minimum wage to be added under the new provisions.

Thank you, 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 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.

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** So, we have a bill before us that doesn't have a number in it that tells us how much the minimum wage is going up.

So perhaps the minister would care to enlighten us and tell us: How much is the minimum wage in Manitoba going up?

**Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services):** Well, the bill before this House sets forth a formula, it sets forth a consultative process, Madam Speaker. We do, indeed, need to listen to employers and to employees, labour and management before we consider increases to the minimum wage.

I'm sure the member opposite may reflect on his leader asking for a living minimum wage of \$15, Madam Speaker. Well, I see they're off-side with the Manitoba Federation of Labour, who's asking for a \$16 minimum wage.

So, obviously, there's a conflict. There's lots of different opinions, and we're going to listen to those opinions, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, my question to the minister is this: the minister is taking criteria which can only—this can only be changed, can only occur, when the inflation rate in Manitoba exceeds 5 per cent. I presume that applies this year.

Can the minister confirm that? And, why is the minister taking such a narrow interpretation here that would be just selective for this year?

**Mr. Helwer:** It would be—the estimate would be selected in any year that CPI index goes above 5 per cent, so not just for this year, Madam Speaker. It can occur in different years. We don't know what's going to happen to inflation over the next year. There are many forecasts there.

And it's important that we listen to labour and to business, Madam Speaker, and the things that they

have told us that are critical is predictability. And we want to maintain that predictability for Manitoba employers and for Manitoba employees.

**MLA Lindsey:** So, the minister talks about predictability. He won't tell us how much he's planning to put the minimum wage up, so that people can't predict whether they'll be able to feed themselves any time soon.

So I know that, so far, the minister hasn't consulted with anybody in labour. Is it his intention to do that, or is it his intention to allow the minimum wage to go up immediately, while the consultation is going on?

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

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, had I consulted with labour or business prior to introducing the bill, I'm sure the member opposite or one of his colleagues would have called me in contempt of the House.

So, obviously, once we have introduced the legislation, as we have done so today, we can begin those consultations. I trust that the member opposite will enable us and assist us in moving this legislation quickly through the House so that it is something that, if it needs to, can occur this year, depending on the recommendations we hear from those very consultations, both labour and from management.

I'm sure there are many people that will have opinions on this legislation and have opinions on what should happen to minimum wage in Manitoba. And we're going to listen to those opinions, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The honourable member for fort—sorry, for Flin Flon.

**MLA Lindsey:** So there is no intention at this point in time of raising the minimum wage until at least the last quarter of this year? Is that correct?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, the member has a great question there, and we—as I said, we do need to consult with various individuals about how this will work in Manitoba. The legislation here talks about increases under this new provision to occur—will need to occur in the fourth quarter of the same year in which that exceptionally high inflation was recorded, and we do have to give at least a month's notice to business and labour. So that's in there as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And, obviously, consultation is going to be key. We will look to do this very quickly so that we can hear from many people in Manitoba on what they think that minimum wage should be in Manitoba,



what it should be tied to. I'm sure we'll hear many opinions, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Just, if the minister could explain—I mean, I guess last week there was a very—I mean, until last week there's a very strong emphasis on indexing. The only question is, like, it's fine to index, but the question is, really, what the appropriate minimum wage is. But, clearly, that's completely up for debate.

Why aren't there more specifics in this bill about what's going to be done? Why aren't we seeing a more—a specific minimum wage?

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, the specifics, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will come through consultation. That's a critical part of this type of legislation in Manitoba that we need to consult with business and labour. They are critical components of how Manitoba works. So we do need to consult. We do need to listen to them and determine what is the best approach for any increases that might be expected in minimum wage outside of the formula that existed in the previous legislation.

**MLA Lindsey:** So I don't know whether the minister realizes that, presently, that people are struggling because they can't wait months and months and months for this minister to finally do some consultation. He's had months to do that already, and he hasn't done it. So, other jurisdictions have immediately raised their minimum wage. So there's nothing that would stop this minister from introducing legislation that would immediately allow him to raise the minimum wage or, at the very least, to have started this consultation a long time ago.

So can the minister explain why he chose this route that leaves people struggling for many more months before—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, Manitoba is different from other provinces. All provinces are unique, Mr. Deputy Speaker. *[interjection]* Apparently, the member opposite doesn't want to listen to the answer to his question. So, well, we'll proceed anyway.

You know, we have learned from StatsCan that minimum wage earners in Canada as a whole make up 10 per cent of the working population. In Manitoba, it was over 5 per cent, but now we learn that it is in the range of 3.8 per cent of Manitobans earn minimum wage, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So while it is a critical 'component'—component of Manitoba's affordability,

the tax measures that this government has put into place—

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

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Suppose the consumer price index is reported after the first three months at 5.2 per cent, then several months later, Stats Canada makes an adjustment to 4.8 per cent. What would happen? Because this isn't unheard of.

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, the legislation speaks to the first quarter, which, as the member just read out, was over 5 per cent.

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

Seeing no questions, the time for questions has ended.

\* (15:20)

### Debate

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

**MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't think anybody—certainly nobody on this side, there may be some questions on that side—nobody on this side would suggest for one second that minimum wage doesn't need to go up.

In fact, I'm sure if the minister had been listening all along, he would have known that it wasn't just us on this side of the House that were saying minimum wage needed to go up immediately to \$15, and then proceed up to become a meaningful living wage. So, the minister clearly wasn't listening to any of that.

I'm sure if he's ever had the conversation at Labour Management Review Committee, I'm sure they would have told him that the minimum wage needs to go up dramatically because workers in Manitoba are continually—continuing to fall behind.

This minister and his government like to think they're good stewards of the economy, and yet, once again, they show us their incompetence when it comes to managing the economy; because, actually, raising the minimum wage is actually good for the economy. There's been any number of studies that have shown that. The government has access to all of that information.

And yet, they refuse to nickel-and-dime workers in this province in some misguided ideological belief that, well, if we give tax breaks to the rich people and give peanuts to the poor people, somehow everybody's going to be further ahead. And we all know that

that theory has been disproved so many times, and yet, that's still the theory that this government is operating under.

Now, we see in this particular piece of legislation that the inflation rate in Canada has gone up exponentially. We know that. We know that from anybody that buys groceries. And maybe the folks opposite, maybe they don't buy their groceries. Maybe somebody buys them for them. Maybe they don't notice.

But we know that the price of the basics, the basic foodstuffs, have gone up dramatically. We know that this government continually plays with Manitoba Hydro rates to make sure that they go up with no real justification. We know that the cost of gasoline has gone up dramatically in this province. We know that all those things have taken place, and yet this government is basically still sitting on their hands, doing next to nothing to help people that are struggling.

We know that in the North, people are struggling that much more, people that work minimum wage, simply because the cost of living in the North is already dramatically higher than it is in the south.

So, this minister waiting 'til the fourth quarter of this year before he actually does something is quite shameful. And it's unfortunate that the Minister of Labour refuses to listen to these comments. It's unfortunate that he's refused to listen to hard-working Manitobans who've told him that they need help now. And yet, we see 'consantly,' while they talk about making life more affordable for Manitobans, it's all smoke and mirrors. It's only making life more affordable for some Manitobans.

So we know that this bill is completely insufficient and inadequate. Simply by the terms that they've laid out, it says they can't do anything until the fourth quarter. They simply can't do anything until they've consulted, which isn't their strong suit—consulted and listened, I think, which, listening is even less of their strong suit, because even sometimes when they do talk to people, they refuse to listen to what they've been told. It's more of an illusion of consultation.

So, we know that people need help today—not tomorrow, not next month, not three months down the road—and yet, the way this government has structured this bill, people are left hanging again.

We know that other jurisdictions raised the minimum wage. We know that in BC, for example, the minimum wage has gone up dramatically in a short period of time—well, since the NDP came to power in

BC. And you know what, contrary to everything that every member on that side of the House believes, it did not negatively impact employment. The world didn't come to an end; the sky didn't fall.

What happened was people could afford to pay their bills. People could afford to buy groceries. People could actually afford to maybe get a little bit ahead in the world. And that's where the boost to the economy comes in that this bunch refuses to recognize: people that all of a sudden have more disposable income get to rent a little nicer place, maybe they get to buy some new clothes, maybe they get to put their kids in sports that they couldn't afford to do before.

But they don't care across the way. They don't care if somebody's kids get in sports as long as their kids get in sports. They don't care about other people. They care about themselves only. And, clearly, this bill yet again demonstrates that they don't care about the people of Manitoba as a whole, people who get a basic living wage, which means that it keeps them above the poverty line, which even \$15 an hour doesn't do that anymore.

Keep in mind also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that \$15 an hour, if you're working full-time hours, doesn't get you above the poverty line; \$15 an hour if you're working part-time hours does not in any way, shape or form get you above the poverty line. That's why we have people that are struggling, because both people in a household have to go to work to try and make ends meet. Some of the time, both people are working two and three jobs, which then makes affordable daycare so much more important, that this government has managed to stumble and bumble their way into making a mess of that as well.

The minister won't tell us today how much he's planning to put minimum wage up, but he says, well, we need to make it predictable. Well, how is keeping it a secret making it predictable? How is not telling hard-working Manitobans today, when he had the opportunity, when he could have introduced legislation that said it's immediately going up while we consult to see what the ultimate goal should be in October. He could have put it up to \$15 today. He could have put it up to \$14 today while he consulted to see where it needed to be.

But he didn't do that. The only thing that's predictable with this minister and this government is they want to hold people in poverty. They want to make sure that people stay poor—well, except for ones that

they give exorbitant amounts of money to to start businesses that apparently may or may not be going out of business.

And that's the great unfairness of this government's mentality. It's the them-and-us mentality. That's what used to separate Canada from the US, was we actually cared about people in this country. We had social safety nets to make sure that vulnerable people could survive in this country. And Manitoba, once upon a time, was a leader in minimum wage and trying to make sure that some of those protections were there for people. We're about to become dead last in minimum wage, dead last in caring about vulnerable Manitobans.

Is that something that this government wants to stand up and crow about? Look at us. We're dead last in caring about people because we won't tell you how much a minimum wage is going to go up today while you're struggling today.

\* (15:30)

We might tell you something tomorrow, or next month or maybe in October, which is just so egregious, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they treat people in this province with such disrespect.

**An Honourable Member:** No more talk of best-improved province or whatever that—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Lindsey:** No, no, as the member from Fort Garry says, no more talk of best-improved province; we're No. 1.

We're No. 1 at being worst. We have a Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) that has the lowest approval ratings of any premier in the country. We have a province that used to be first or second in economic growth and we're nowhere near that anymore. We used to have a province that was No. 1 mining jurisdiction in Canada, or the world. Now I think we're at 35, thanks to this government, thanks to this government and their great ability to take a thriving economy and completely destroy it. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Lindsey:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've talked a little bit about how minimum wage increase actually is good for the economy. It's good for the economy; it's good for who this bunch claims they represent: small businessmen and medium-sized businessmen because people spend their money while their friends, the wealthy well-to-do take their money and hide it in

tax shelters and find ways to not spend it. We see the increase in the 1 per cent, the number of people that are becoming exorbitantly wealthy continues to grow while the number of people who are falling into poverty also continues to grow. So that gap keeps getting bigger under this government and their right-wing agenda.

One small step to fixing that great inequality could be to make minimum wage an actual living wage so that people rise above the poverty line, so that people can focus on something in life other than trying to figure out where their next meal is coming from. They could focus on: maybe I could afford to send my kids to university; maybe my kids can have a better chance than what I did, if we can sock away a little bit of money. Not millions of dollars, but maybe enough to start looking at meeting this government's ever-increasing tuition costs, which, you know, once again, shows how they disrespect the average Manitoban is—at the same time they're making the cost of second-post-secondary education more expensive, they're making sure that the minimum wage has fallen so far behind the actual economic needs of its citizens that those people have little to no hope of their kids ever getting that university education.

And I don't understand why the government doesn't want the economy to flourish, why they don't want the citizens to flourish. It escapes me how that kind of mindset works. Because if this minimum wage was to rise up immediately, people would be able to afford to pay the power bill and they'd be able to afford, maybe just have a little extra money so that their kids could get into organized sports.

Imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that if a kid going to school sees that a lot of his friends get to play hockey, they're on a team, they go to the local community club, but imagine your kid can't go because you can't afford to pay the entrance fees. You can't afford to buy all the equipment. Imagine how your kid feels.

Now, maybe the members opposite, maybe their kids don't go to those schools that see that. But imagine what it would do for those families and those kids to know that all of a sudden they could afford to participate, they could afford to be equal participants in the cultural growth that—growth of this province.

Imagine what a difference it would make, long term, to things like crime rates. Imagine what a difference it could make to issues around mental health, that all of a sudden people have the economic means to get ahead in the world. Imagine what a different province

we could live in. And this could have been one small step in doing that. But it isn't, because we don't even know if it is a step.

We don't know that this Province is actually committed to raising the minimum wage. We know that they've been taking some bad press for all of a sudden being dead last, so they want the illusion of doing something. They want the illusion of saying, well, we heard you. We listened. But they didn't hear and they didn't listen. I don't know, maybe there's a by-election going on somewhere that they want to be able to say, look at us, what a bunch of heroes we are.

People in those communities that fall within the Thompson constituency aren't going to be fooled by what's been presented here today, because what's been presented here today isn't even smoke and mirrors. It's less than that. It's this government's usual plan to have a plan to have a plan someday. It's a failure on the part of this minister, of this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) and this PC caucus, this PC government. It's a failure, an abject, complete failure, yet again, to do the right thing for people in this province.

They could've stood up tomorrow and said, we recognize that people are struggling and we raise the minimum wage as a start to \$15 an hour. They could've said that. They could've done that. And they made the very conscious decision to not do that. They made the very conscious decision to make sure that they put something out to try and deflect the negative press that they've been getting for being dead last; to say, well, we're going to do something someday. We can't tell you what. We can't tell you how much. We can't even tell you for sure when. You might be able to afford to pay the power bill somewhere towards the last quarter of this year.

And then there's all kinds of things in the bill about how things may look going forward. There's certain things that an extraordinary change in the minimum wage would only come into effect if inflation in the first quarter of a year is higher than their benchmark. If it went up higher in the second quarter—well, too bad for you. It's too bad you're poor because your still going to be poor with this government's plan.

So there's so many things wrong with this bill that this Minister of Labour's introduced, but it, I suppose, doesn't really come as a surprise to anybody in Manitoba that the most they would do is the minimum. And, in this case, we don't even know what the minimum is. It's because it's a secret. It's a secret going forward and, oh, we're going to have this big consultation piece and, oh, everybody'd be mad if we didn't

consult and didn't listen to what people had to say. And yet, for the last six years they haven't consulted when it came to minimum wage. For the last six years they haven't listened to what people have had to say about the minimum wage.

So, should Manitobans have a great deal of faith that they're going to listen now all of a sudden? I'd suggest not. They may delay the process of increasing the minimum wage with the illusion of consultation and listening, and I'm sure they'll have some meetings and they'll maybe hear what people have to say, but will they listen? Will they act on what they hear?

\* (15:40)

I'd like to be optimistic and hope they will, but their track record tells me something different. It tells me that, particularly when it comes to things like workers' rights, minimum wage, paid sick leave, all those things that could make Manitoba a great province to live in, pretty great province to work in, we know that, to date, in the six years—six-plus years, six long years, six agonizing years—that they've been in government, we know that they haven't listened to all those voices out there—well, except when those voices became so loud that they chased one premier out of town. And they were forced—because even they could read the writing on the wall when it came to their education bill, bill 64, that they had to turn tail and run, withdraw it.

So there was so many other things—that Manitoba Hydro thing where they want to keep raising rates at the Cabinet table and circumvent the Public Utilities Board. And this minimum wage piece ties into that, doesn't it? Because affordability for Manitobans should be a critical part of the Public Utilities Board process.

So, we know that every time this bunch decides to unilaterally raise hydro rates without any kind of public oversight, it disproportionately affects people that are already struggling. It disproportionately, when it comes to hydro rates, once again, disproportionately affects people in the North, people that don't have access to natural gas, that have to rely on electricity or, in some cases, still relying on fuel oil to heat their homes.

So, once again, not to belabour the point too much, this government had the opportunity today to stand up and say, look at us, we did something good for Manitoba. Once again, they failed miserably. Once again, they should be ashamed that they won't even

tell us how much they're planning to raise the minimum wage, if at all. That's the sad part.

And with those few remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll call the minister to stand up and say what the number's going to be, how much are they going to raise it, and I'll call on him to stand up today and say, we're doing it today, not six months from now.

Thank you.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I think the importance of us discussing the minimum wage today is essential and vital to so many Manitobans across our province who are working in minimum wage—for minimum wage but still living in poverty.

And that's the critical question that we ought to be debating and challenging this government to look towards in this legislation: Will this legislation help to bring Manitobans who are working full time out of poverty?

And when I had a chance to review the bill today, and I looked at the details, what the government was offering with this bill, it simply doesn't answer that question. It doesn't answer the question as to whether Manitobans who work full time, will they be in poverty or not?

Well, this bill doesn't clear that up for them. And, sadly, it should. Quite frankly, if we're just talking about minimum wage in Manitoba, and if we're not talking about getting minimum wage up to \$15 and then up to a living wage, then we're failing. We're failing those Manitobans who rely on the minimum wage and live on minimum wage. We're failing them. We're failing the young people who get a part-time job, maybe even a full-time job, in even—in order to pay for their tuition, in order to give themselves an opportunity through education in this province.

And every year that university and college tuition gets higher and more expensive under this government, it makes that minimum wage look smaller and smaller and smaller. And without a significant increase, without this government doing significant work to increase the minimum wage, it makes life more challenging for every young person and every student in Manitoba who is just trying to get ahead.

And, like I said, that tuition rate has increased year after year after year under this government: 3.75 per cent for universities this year will be the increase. Again, that's after years and years of the increase. Colleges will have a \$250 increase into their tuition as well.

And when we look at that amount—we look at those amounts that will be the burden on the back of students, how can we not entertain—how can this government not even entertain the ability, the option, for us to raise the minimum wage up to a living wage level? That's what we ought to be doing not just for ourselves, but for those those who need the money the most. For those Manitobans who are—the ones we hope can someday be the leaders of our community, the drivers of our economy—we want them to be set off on the right foot. And those young people who are trying to go to university, trying to afford college, are being set back by this low level.

And so, the changes proposed in this government's bill—first of all, we're not sure how much that minimum wage is actually going to increase. It's based on a consumer index of the first quarter of this year versus the first quarter of last year. Then if it hits the magic number the government set out, of 5 per cent—which, I don't know if there's clarity on why that 5 per cent was chosen. Why not 4 per cent? Why not 3 per cent? But if it does hit that number then they'll go into some group in some—in their Cabinet chamber, and at that table they'll decide how many cents they're going to rub together to increase the minimum wage. Is it going to be two nickels like it was a couple years ago? Well, we'll just have to wait and see from this government. Because every time we've dealt with the minimum wage from this government, Manitobans have been sorely and sadly disappointed with what this government has had to offer.

In addition, this bill also details quite plainly, here in section 8(2), that there are—that this government can make adjustments to this. Meaning that an adjustment is not warranted—it says here in the section (b) of the bill—an adjustment is not warranted given the additional amount prescribed in the preceding calendar year under section 7.1. Meaning that if they give that increase under this bill—the one that they decide around the Cabinet table—in year 1, if that is allowed and approved by the Cabinet to be given out to Manitobans in year 1, that in year 2, they don't have to make any increase at all. That they give it in one hand and then they seem to take it away in the other—while the poorest Manitobans, the ones who are trying to get ahead, the ones who are trying to make a difference in Manitoba but they can't because they're stuck working one, two, three jobs, because minimum wage is just too low.

And when we make that call, when we hear—when we listen to those folks, when we listen to those folks who are in desperate need of an increased minimum

wage, and we hear what they're 'askily'—actually asking for and we hear the amount's around \$15, when we hear getting up to the living wage, does this bill, Bill 44, even approach that, even get close to that? Can it even measure up to what the people affected by minimum wage are calling for? Not even close.

\* (15:50)

So, we call on the government to do so much more. Yes, we can have regularly—regular increases to minimum wage so that the business community can be aware of what the minimum wage increase is going to be. We can do it on a regular basis. But we can also do it up to a level that will actually be sufficient for a Manitoban to get out of poverty, to get a job and get out of poverty. That's what we ought to be doing: help Manitobans improve their lives.

We all get elected here, you know, presumably to better our communities and make this place in Manitoba a more welcome place to live. And when we have an opportunity to do that by actually increasing the condition for people who earn minimum wage, we've had this government who said no thanks, who said we're not willing to help you out; we're going to shut the door for you.

And I question whether they have those motives to help everyday Manitobans, whether they have the motives to help people get out of poverty. And without a concrete solution to increasing the minimum wage, we seem to see that it's true—they don't have that motivation. They don't have that motivation. They simply don't provide any options, through increased wages, for those folks living in the most marginal conditions, trying to get ahead through their work.

Now, we're seeing—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Moses:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Now we see this 'persevate'—be prolific around our province. This attitude of, you know, low-income folks ought to—minimum-wage earners ought to be able to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and make their wage—their way through our economy by just simply hard work.

And, yes, I know that Manitobans are a hard-working group of people. I know people on our side of the House are especially hard-working, and I also know that minimum-wage earners are some of the hardest-working Manitobans. And we want to make sure that their hard work can be rewarded by an actual living minimum wage, one where they don't need to

sacrifice the time spent with family by having two and three jobs, where they have to delay going back to being educated by attaining higher education because it takes them an extra two or three years to earn and save up the money because the minimum wage is simply too low, where they can't spend the time educating their family, their kids, and participating in school activities because they have that second or third job.

And so, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's quite clear: the needs of Manitobans is to have a higher minimum wage, at least \$15 and rising up to a living wage. This bill doesn't cut it. We call on the government to do so much more to help those Manitobans who need to have a higher minimum wage, and that's something that we on this side of the House are committed to doing.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Yes. I'll just put a few brief comments on the record today.

Look, in debate last week, you know, we asked whether we're going to live in a province where the economy is based on exploiting workers who can't afford to feed their families or pay rent. You know, when Manitoba has one of the worst minimum wages in the country, it sends a clear message to workers: leave. And that is what Manitobans have been doing in record amounts.

And I'm very surprised to see this bill because, up 'til last week, the PCs were defending their policy of indexing it. This is a complete about-face. You know, a higher minimum wage is essential to attract and keep workers and will boost the economy, but I'm particularly concerned that the minister, when he was asked a question about this, referred to this as aid.

This is not welfare. This is not EIA. Making sure that people are paid properly and aren't being exploited is one of the things that governments need to do in order to keep people from being—like I said, being exploited. It is not aid. It is pay for work done.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

And while there are certainly problems with this bill—that it's vague, it has no timelines—I will also say the NDP have also never raised the minimum wage to a living wage. They have also not said whatever their idea of a living wage would be or when they would get it with a target.

And, quite frankly, you know, it's painful sometimes to hear the official opposition say that the PCs

just don't care when, for 20 years, the NDP had extremely similar policies. They didn't have a living wage. They didn't have EIA at a living wage. It was frozen. They kept housing in miserable conditions. The Manitoba NDP maintained many of the policies of the Filmon PCs.

Aside from embracing and endorsing tough-on-crime policies, you know, freezing the EIA, selling off Manitoba housing, these are all things that the NDP did as well as the PCs. And there's no question Manitoba has a poverty problem among children and seniors. And the NDP didn't do anything about it. They argued for and supported Conservative tough-on-crime policies which resulted in an incarceration rate twice the national average.

And when we talk about this—the other, sort of, pretend debate we have in this Chamber is when the PCs pretend that the NDP didn't cut taxes. In the spring of 2008, the NDP government announced they had reduced taxes by \$1 billion a year—a whole range of business, personal and property taxes. And a whole bunch of those were for small corporations. And small corporations, that tax rate was reduced to zero per cent. Well, who owns lots and lots and lots of small corporations that don't have any employees? The wealthiest people that—Jack Mintz—again, he's no Liberal; he's a professor at the University of Calgary in finance—said small corporations are being used for tax avoidance by the wealthiest Canadians. They have many, many, many of these small businesses or small corporations in order to reduce their taxes.

And so it's absolutely bizarre because there has been no difference whatsoever between the NDP and the PC policies about this. And there—at one point, there was even a calculator on the government website, that if you made \$15,000 a year between 1999 and 2015, the—you got the—you would have saved \$13,951—\$13,951—in taxes. But if you made \$500,000 a year, you would have saved \$68,182 in taxes. And that in office, the NDP reduced revenue by a billion dollars and then all of a sudden had to scramble to increase the PST because the Conservative—the federal Conservative government of the time was cutting and cutting and cutting.

And, you know, part of the concern about this is the fact that we've got inflation. Inflation is—again, is being blamed on government when it should be blamed on price gouging. If you look at where companies are—if you look at the profitability of com-

panies, whether it's oil companies or grocery companies, they're going through the roof because they are price gouging.

So maybe, just maybe multi-billionaire owners could also take a smaller profit. That's something we should be talking about, that massive chains in Manitoba that are owned by foreign hedge funds, maybe we shouldn't be, you know, encouraging people to—not just encouraging people to spend at them—but talk about the fact that they are extracting. They're using the pandemic and they're using a crisis to profiteer.

But the important thing is that when people have studied the minimum wage and actually measured what happens based on evidence and not just right-wing ideology, it shows it works. But there are lots and lots of ways where there is still no job security and it's a very, very serious problem because one of the reasons for inequality is that people just don't have the stability.

For most of my adult life, I have had to work multiple jobs, some of them minimum wage, sometimes a bit more, sometimes a bit less. But we also live in a province where, you know, the big arena downtown gets millions of dollars in tax breaks and subsidies and the only people who are unionized in that building are the NHL players.

So it is absolutely legitimate and worthwhile to have a minimum wage at a living wage. No one has any plan to do that at all in this province that I can tell. And this bill seems to be a pretty desperate and vague attempt which, again, needs to be explained because, until last week, the government was saying over and over again that just indexing things to inflation would be enough when clearly that's not—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lamont:** —really so.

We do support—we do ultimately, you know, we'd like—*[interjection]*

\* (16:00)

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please. *[interjection]* Oh.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 24 minutes remaining.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I wonder if there would be leave of the House to call a vote now.

**Madam Speaker:** Would there—I'm seeking some advice.

Is there leave of the House to put the question on second reading of Bill 44?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Madam Speaker:** Am I hearing leave has been granted?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is second reading of Bill 44, The Employment Standards Code—[interjection]—oh.

As we are moving into voting on this, I would indicate then it—there is no ability for it to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont).

So, is there leave to—the question before the House is second reading of Bill 44, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Minimum Wage). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? [Agreed]

#### REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

**Madam Speaker:** The time being 4 p.m., I am now interrupting debate to put the question on the remaining report stage amendments on the following specified bills: 7, 8, 9, 17, 27 and 34.

The House will not adjourn until all of the applicable questions have been put. In accordance with our rules, all matters of privilege and points of order are deferred until after these actions have been concluded.

For each report stage amendment, the sponsor will move the report stage amendment and send the motion up to the Speaker, who will start reading the report stage amendment back to the House. The Speaker will then rule on the orderliness of the report stage amendment.

As agreed to by leave, the sponsor of each report stage amendment will have up to five minutes to speak, and the sponsor of the bill will have up to two minutes to speak, then the question will be put on the report stage amendment without further debate or amendment.

#### **Bill 7—The Police Services Amendment Act (Enhancing Independent Investigation Unit Operations)**

**Madam Speaker:** I will now call the report stage amendment of clause 2(a)—[interjection]—yes.

I'm just reading my script, which says I will call the report stage amendment to clauses 2(a), 3 and 8 of Bill 7, The Police Services Amendment Act.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

*THAT Bill 7 be amended*

*(a) by striking out Clause 2(a) and Clause 3;*

*(b) by replacing Clause 8 with the following:*

*8 Clause 64(1)(d) is amended by adding "or to which a community liaison was assigned" at the end.*

*(c) by striking out Clause 12 and Clause 14(a); and*

*(d) by replacing Clause 18 with the following:*

*18 Section 88 is amended by adding ", a community liaison" after "civilian monitor".*

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux),

*THAT Bill 7 be amended*

*(a) by striking out Clause 2—*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

The report stage amendment is in order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, in the bill itself, the bill seeks to replace the civilian monitor with a community liaison person. And it is our view that the 'civilian'—civilian monitor—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Gerrard:** —and community liaison person are actually performing two very distinct and separate functions.

That the civilian monitor is still needed to monitor what is happening, to make sure that everything is done well; and the community liaison is needed to link with the communities which may be affected, and provide input from those communities.

So, Madam Speaker, it is our view that, instead of getting rid of the community monitor and just having a community liaison, that what should happen is that we should continue to have a community monitor as



well as having this new position of a community liaison, and that this would function in a much better way than just having a community liaison.

So, that is the essence of what this amendment is trying to achieve, and I hope that the government will support it.

Thank you. Merci.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Well, I thank the member for bringing forward the amendment and I—you know, I appreciate his thoughtful comments.

This particular piece of legislation, as we know, will continue to be monitored and looked at in terms of how it can be strengthened. This is another step in strengthening it after significant consultations, and we look forward to it passing.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** The—I hear a no. The—oh.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

**An Honourable Member:** On division, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** On division. The motion has been lost on division.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to the second report stage amendment, clause 6 of the—of Bill 7, The Police Services Amendment Act.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

*THAT Bill 7 be amended by replacing Clause 6 with the following:*

*6 Section 60 is replaced with the following:*

#### Investigators

**60** The civilian director may select a person to serve as an investigator with the independent investigation unit only if

in the opinion of the civilian director, the person understands the impact of cultural diversity in communities on the experience of members of those communities in interacting with law enforcement; and

the person

is not a current or former member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or any other police service in Manitoba or another Canadian province, and

has the prescribed qualifications and experience, including investigative experience.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux),

*THAT Bill 7 be amended by replacing Clause 6 with the following:*

*6 Section 60 is replaced with the following—*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, the changes here address two shortcomings in the bill as it has been—or the amendment to Bill 7, as it has been presented.

The first is that it is really important that the civilian director selects a person to serve as an investigator who has an understanding of the impact of the cultural diversity in communities, and knowledge of the experience of members of those communities in interacting with law enforcement.

\* (16:10)

We have seen this issue come forward time and time again: that we have people who are involved with processes like this who don't have a first-hand experience or an understanding of the experience of Indigenous people or Black people in interacting with police in Winnipeg or other parts of Manitoba.

And so it is our view that it is very important that the person who serves as an investigator has knowledge about and an understanding of the cultural

diversity in Manitoba, and the experience of people who are in varied communities, immigrant communities, Black community, the Indigenous community in particular.

The second part of this addresses the concern that we have involved in the investigation police—or, members of police forces and that it is important to have people who are independent of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or a police service in Manitoba or another Canadian province, and that we are dealing not just with somebody who is not just a current member, but somebody who is also not a former member of these police services.

We are concerned that individuals who are former members will bring their perspective of the police force into the situation and that they will not be as independent as really is needed under this circumstance. This has to do with the whole credibility of the investigations done by the independent investigative unit and ensuring that they truly are independent and have credibility in the community.

We also require, of course, the prescribed qualifications and experience, including investigative experience, but we think that it would be important for Manitoba to achieve the credibility of the independent investigative unit that is needed, that it no longer has current or former members of police forces as investigators or involved in the investigation.

Thank you.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Yes, I appreciate the member bringing forward this amendment.

I mean, the particular issue regarding retired police officers is a long-standing issue. It's one that I often talked about myself in opposition, and at that time when this bill came forward, it was my hope that there wouldn't be current officers. The then-minister of Justice indicated, of course, that it's difficult to find people who have investigative skills who aren't police officers.

This is a movement towards not only independence, but the perception of independence by having retired police officers and not active serving officers, but I take the member's point. But the challenge remains in terms of being able to find people who have investigative skills who are aren't law enforcement or former law enforcement.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

We will move now—

**An Honourable Member:** On division, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The motion has been lost, on division.

#### Bill 8—The Court of Appeal Amendment and Provincial Court Amendment Act

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to Bill 8 and the report stage amendments of clauses 6 to 9 on Bill 8, The Court of Appeal Amendment and Provincial Court Amendment Act.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** I move, seconded by the member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino),

*THAT Bill 8 be amended by striking out Clauses 6 to 9.*

Miigwech.

#### Motion presented.

**Ms. Fontaine:** I'm—you know, rise this afternoon for five minutes, I believe I have—*[interjection]*—I do—to have sections 6 to 9 removed from Bill 8.

Both the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) and myself sat in committee couple of weeks ago—last week—a couple of weeks ago, and we heard from a variety of different folks—stakeholders, experts in judiciary—in respect of their concerns for Bill 8, and one thing that was incredibly loud and clear was that nobody—absolutely nobody and their dog—asked for these changes in Bill 8. Nobody.

Not only did nobody ask for these changes in Bill 8, these—the way that the bill is situated right now, the way that the judiciary appointment committee is set up right now—which has been the way that it's been set up for the last 30 years—has worked. It's a good model. It's an equitable model. It's a democratic

model. It ensures that no particular party or government that is in power can stack a judiciary appointment and ultimately put the judges that they want to see on the bench and judges that perhaps might lean or slant their political way.

And it's been working very, very well for 30 years. And I cannot stress this enough—I know I stressed this in second reading, in the standing committee and in third reading—that nobody asked for these changes.

We know that these changes were brought forward under the previous minister of Justice when we also know that the previous minister of 'justed' had—Justice had been given a list of names of individuals who were recommended by the judiciary—the Judicial Appointment Committee to be appointed. But, for some reason, that former Justice minister sitting right over there didn't like that list, didn't do anything with that list, and then out of that exercise decided that, you know what? We're going to change the appointment—the way that appointments work for judges in Manitoba. We're going to stack it with one more government-appointed individual. We're going to take the chief judge away from the chairperson of this appointment committee.

And, again, there's concerns with that. There's concerns that it is stacked in favour of whatever particular government is in power and whatever political leaning that government leans towards.

I mentioned this in a question—in a QP, question period, that who did that, who—was Donald Trump. One of the things that Donald Trump did—and a lot of people don't realize this—is that as soon as he became president in 2016, he started putting in judges at all levels of the judiciary in the American system that leaned towards his way. The most well-known—or should be most well-known—are his politically appointed Supreme Court justices, which lean towards the right, which lean towards anti-choice.

And look at where we are situated right now. We are weeks away from a judgment from the Supreme Court that is taking away a citizen's right to access abortion. That's why it is so dangerous when you do not have an equitable, unbiased, democratic way to appoint judges.

And so, I'm pleading with the minister to do what's right and to remove the sections 6 to 9 and allow it to continue as it has operated for the last 30 years. He can choose to do what's right today and agree to my amendments.

Miigwech.

\* (16:20)

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** While I do appreciate the comments from the members opposite—the member opposite, for St. Johns—because I, you know, believe—while I might feel they're misguided, I do believe she brings them forward from a position that she strongly holds.

Trying to equate the American system of appointing judges to the Canadian system—and this particular system and the movement we're moving in now is aligned with the federal system—and I don't believe that any of the concerns that she's raised are falling true, federally.

I mean, we've recently seen Supreme Court decisions that people might have concerns with, Madam Speaker, just in the last week. And those judges, under this system federally, were appointed by different levels of—or, different stripes of government: Stephen Harper's government, Justin Trudeau's government. And yet, it doesn't seem to be impacting a political narrative on the Supreme Court of Canada.

So I think that the member opposite might want to look more closely at how judges are appointed in the United States, how those nominees find their way into the nomination progress or a confirmation hearing. It's very different than the Canadian system. And I don't think it serves her well, or any one of us well, to try to suggest that those are parallel systems, because they're not. They're extremely different, they have different results. This is aligned with what's happening at the federal government level, where I've not heard the kinds of concerns that the member opposite is raising, nor have I ever heard the member opposite raise concerns about the federal government and how they appoint judges.

So I think that this is not only not well founded, but not founded upon a foundation of fact, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** On division, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The amendment is defeated, on division.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** And I would now point out that with the next report stage amendment to be brought forward by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that that amendment is automatically out of order as it is identical to the amendment that was just defeated on the floor.

#### **Bill 9—The Scrap Metal Act**

**Madam Speaker:** So we will therefore move to the amendments on Bill 9, The Scrap Metal Act, and the amendment is being brought forward by the honourable member for Elmwood, to clause 4(1).

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey),

*THAT Bill 9 be amended in Clause 4(1) by striking out "two years" and substituting "five years".*

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Maloway:** We've actually been dealing with this issue, the catalytic converter and scrap metal legislation, now for a few years; it just didn't start very recently. And I think, in the beginning, a lot of people didn't really understand what this issue was about; matter of fact, lot of people didn't even know what a catalytic converter is.

But I can tell you that, now, it's very well known. Practically every day, I'm getting a response on it, and we have had petitions submitted to this House on the issue now for some time.

And I can tell you that the bill itself, while it's a good one, it's essentially a copy of the Alberta legislation. And we just know that, now, after three years, past the Alberta—passing their legislation, that the number of catalytic converters now stolen in Alberta, I think, are like \$4 million worth a year, and in BC it's similar, and Manitoba's headed the same direction.

So, clearly, the legislation itself is not going to solve the problem completely. There has to be a multiple approach to this legislation.

So we think that the bill requiring scrap metal dealers to keep the records of all the purchases they make of catalytic converters for two years is not enough, that we have to—we should be keeping five years of records.

And if we assume that criminals are the people that are stealing these catalytic converters, and we know this because there's rings of them and they are coming in with truckloads of these things, that it's going to take law enforcement a number of years to make a case. And I think if you've got scrap metal dealers keeping records for five years, you've got a better chance of catching the perpetrators of these crimes than if you only have two years of records. I don't think two years of records—it'll take a couple years to get started keeping the records, and people keeping track of who's bringing in these catalytic converters are not going to give you a clear enough picture. I think you're going to need five years.

And I've spoken to the minister about this, and he had at least previously indicated that he might look at a split on the number, not necessarily go five years, but do it at three. We'll see whether that, in fact, happens.

But there's more things that have to be done. We have to have more approaches to this problem. It's not just Bill 9, but there's also a bill before the Legislature that I have to require car dealers to put the VIN number—the vehicle identification number—on the catalytic converters for every car that they sell—new and used.

Also, we think that MPIC should be giving a discount for people that get their VIN numbers engraved on their catalytic converters, very similar to what Gary Doer did back 10, 15 years ago when it came to auto theft. We cut auto theft down to practically nothing, but it didn't happen overnight. It took two or three years, and it took—the first year they offered a little bit of a discount; public never paid attention to it. But once the discounts become substantial, the public did start paying attention and there was requirements put in that people—where people took it seriously.

So I think that has to happen here, too, and the minister will have to, you know, consider those other options. There's certainly other ideas that we could get involved with, with the parts dealers of Canada. The

federal government should be involved, and this is a role for the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson). The Premier should be taking this up with the Prime Minister when she's discussing matters with him at her, you know, weekly or monthly or whatever meetings that they have to try to get a kind of a national strategy here, right. But we've got to move on this immediately. I think the minister's on the right track and we should try to get this passed as quick as possible and enforced.

Thank you very much.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** So, I just want to say that I do appreciate the member's passion about this issue, because it is a very serious issue, not one that's easily solved. I know it's a problem across North America, Madam Speaker. I've been reading reports recently in every jurisdiction in North America where this is a struggle. I know that there is a—I believe it's a member of the US Congress, maybe the Senate, bringing forward legislation to try to have the auto manufacturers have the VIN numbers on this particular part. That seems to make some sense, to have it done at the manufacturing level than to have it post-manufacturing.

But I wanted to say to the member, while I don't know that this particular issue would have much of an effect and certainly not much of an effect for a couple of years, and I don't know that people are prepared to wait for a couple of years for a—some sort of a resolution. I do have consistent contact with MPI and have, again, most recently, about additional things they may be able to suggest to try to curb it here in Manitoba, recognizing that every jurisdiction in North America is dealing with this because of the high cost of precious metals.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Madam Speaker, on division, please.

**Madam Speaker:** The amendment is defeated, on division.

#### Bill 17—The Family Law Act, The Family Support Enforcement Act and The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act

\* (16:30)

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to Bill 17, The Family Law Act, The Family Support of Enforcement Act and The Inter-jurisdictional Support Orders Amendment Act, and we will address the report stage amendment 1 to clause 1, schedule A.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

*THAT Bill 17 be amended in Clause 1 of Schedule A (The Family Law Act) by replacing the definition "family member" with the following:*

"family member", except in section 40, includes a member of the household of

- (a) a child;
- (b) a parent of the child;
- (c) a spouse or former spouse;
- (d) a person in or formerly in a marriage-like relationship; and
- (e) a grandparent of the child;

as well as a dating partner of a person listed in clauses (b), (c), (d) and (e) who participates in the activities of the household. (« membre de la famille »)

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux),

*THAT Bill 17 be amended in Clause 1 of Schedule A—*

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, this addition recognizes that grandparents can play an extraordinarily important role in the lives of children, and that particularly in some cultures, the grandparents become the

acting parents or spend as much time with the children as the parents do and that it is important to recognize this critical role of grandparents.

Now, we're talking about household. In some instances, you may have grandparents and the parents living next door, grandparents playing a vital and critical role in the raising of the child. In some cultures in particular, but it's not specific, necessarily, to a culture, you will have the grandparents looking after the children and doing most of the care of the children because the parents are either at work or they are not able to adequately care for the child. And it's important to recognize this and to not leave grandparents out. And, of course, if this was the grandparent and there would be a dating partner also included.

So, that is the reason for this amendment. I think it is critically important that we recognize the important contribution that grandparents can make and that this be included in this act.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**An Honourable Member:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to report stage amendment No. 2 of Bill 17, of clause 35(3)—schedule A.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

*THAT Bill 17 be amended in Clause 35(3) of Schedule A (The Family Law Act) by adding the following after clause (a):*

(a.1) the nutritional requirements of the child, including breastfeeding;

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux),

*THAT Bill 17 be amended in Clause 35(3) of Schedule A (The Family Law Act)—*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

The amendment is in order.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, this amendment recognizes something which is particularly important in the early life of a child, and that is breastfeeding.

And I bring it forward after 'hadding' had experience in a number of instances where children have been taken away from breastfeeding mothers, and they have been taken away without giving the mother—the 'chile'—a—an opportunity to continue breastfeeding.

And we know from many, many studies over many years, that breastfeeding—the nutrition in breastfeeding and, indeed, the attachment to the mother in breastfeeding, are extraordinarily important in the early life of a child. And it is because that, in the current law, and which has—this one has been changed, but many aspects have continued—it has not been adequately recognized, time and time again in my experience, the importance of breastfeeding. And, therefore, it is really, really important that we add this clause to recognize how—the contribution of breastfeeding and how important it is and what a role it can play.

Now, we've been dealing with COVID and, as an example, the breastmilk may transfer antibodies to the COVID virus and be protective of the infant early on, and that can be critically important, particularly if an infant has got other difficulties or disabilities, but it would be important for every child. And it's been quite clear over many years that breastfeeding will decrease the likelihood of problems with diarrhea, of infections. And these antibodies related to COVID are not something that would be found in a bottle.

And we know from what's happening in the United States right now that there is a shortage of formula. And this—in emphasizing breastfeeding—that this would provide protection should there be, in Canada, the same shortage of formula that is now being experienced in the United States.

We know that the act of breastfeeding can be very important in terms of the—not only the nurture, but also the attachment. I will give a specific example of a mother whose child was taken away from her on about day 2 or 3—is my recollection. She had started in hospital in Brandon, breastfeeding. She had been breastfeeding, there was an attachment developed, and the child was getting the nurture from the breastfeeding. But the agency involved decided that the mother was a risk, and they apprehended the child, and they curtailed the breastfeeding. It—there was no way that she could continue breastfeeding.

Six weeks later, this situation came before a court of law in Brandon and the decision to take away the child was reversed, and the child was given back to the mother, but the child had not been able to breast-feed.

This would make a correction to this, and I urge the Minister of Justice to allow this to pass.

Thank you.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I do appreciate the member bringing forward this and the previous amendment.

\* (16:40)

This particular bill's undergone significant consultation with those practitioners in the field and with others, but I will take back his suggestions as potential fodder for future amendments.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

**Mr. Gerrard:** On division, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The amendment is defeated, on division.

#### Bill 27—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Alternative Measures for Driving Offences)

**Madam Speaker:** The—we will now move to report stage amendments of Bill 27, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Alternative Measures for Driving Offences), and there will be report stage amendments number—there will be one to clauses 4, 5 and 7.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Friesen),

*THAT Bill 27 be amended by striking out Clauses 4, 5 and 7.*

#### Motion presented.

**Mr. Goertzen:** I've put on the record, both in committee and, I think, Q and A at second reading, of the challenges that this particular provision has and the inability for it to be used properly.

All of those things remain true, but I do want to take the time with Justice officials to see if there are ways to achieve what hasn't been achieved before.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any—no debate?

Is it the pleasure of the House—the—is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? [*Agreed*]

I declare the amendment carried.

#### Bill 34—The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment and Planning Amendment Act

**Madam Speaker:** We will now deal with Bill 34, The City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment and Planning Amendment Act.

I will call report stage amendment No. 1 to clause 17.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park,

*THAT Bill 34 be amended in Clause 17 by striking out "20 days" in the following provisions and substituting "45 days":*

*(a) the proposed subsection 234.3(1), in the part before clause (a);*

*(b) the proposed clause 234.4(1)(b), in the part before subclause (i).*

#### Motion presented.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, we have had some discussions and we had presentations at committee which suggested that the current 20 days is completely insufficient, and would create big, big problems for

the City of Winnipeg and, indeed, for other municipalities; but particularly, we heard this for the City of Winnipeg.

After discussions, we found that any lengthening would be beneficial; that 45 days, which we put here, would be the absolute minimum. We would actually be supportive of moving to 60 days, which these—the other opportunity, an amendment which is still to come.

But we have put forward this bill with a—45 days so that it would give the government an option, but I suggest to the government that the government needs to choose between either 45 days or 60 days and I think that 60 days would certainly be a good choice. And so, if this is defeated, I hope that's what the government goes with, but if it is—if they want to use 45 days, here is the option for the government to do that.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I should indicate that that report stage amendment was in order.

**Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I would just like to share with the member opposite that ensuring municipal governments make timely decisions on 'pelling' applications provides greater certainty needed for development and investment.

Now, more than ever, this is a—critical to support recovery efforts from the challenges created from the pandemic.

Determining whether an application is complete or not within 20 days is not a new requirement, and it is consistent within existing requirements in the charter. For example, the City is already required to determine whether applicants—applications for permits is complete within 20 days; section 246(1.1). Only notification that the application requirements are met is required within a 20 calendar day. The bill provides additional time for the review and approval of each application up to an additional 180 days for combined applications.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Yes.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

**Mr. Gerrard:** On division, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The amendment is defeated, on division.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to report stage amendment No. 2 to clause 17.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I move, seconded by the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith),

*THAT Bill 34 be amended in Clause 17*

*(a) in the part before clause (a) of the proposed subsection 234.3(1), by striking out "20 days", and substituting "60 days"; and*

*(b) by replacing the proposed subsection 234.4(1) with the following:*

Do I need to read it?

**Determining if—**

**Madam Speaker:** Oh, the honourable member for Concordia.

**Mr. Wiebe:** My apologies, Madam Speaker.

To continue—well, maybe I'll just repeat (b) to be clear:

*—by replacing the proposed subsection 234.4(1) with the following:*

**Determining if plan is sufficient**

**234.4(1)** A designated employee must

(a) give the owner of real property notice of the date that the city received the proposed secondary plan submitted by the owner of real property in respect of a designated application; and

(b) within 60 days after the plan is received by the city,

(i) determine that the city—the plan meets the requirements set out by the by-law for submission of the secondary plans, and

(ii) to give notice—sorry—give notice of the determination of the owner of real property by ordinary mail.



**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), seconded by the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith),

*THAT Bill 34 be amended in Clause 17*

*(a) in the part before clause (a)–*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Did I hear dispense?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** The report stage amendment is in order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record with regards to this particular amendment.

And, first of all, I just wanted to start by thanking the members of—who joined in on the committee, members of the public who came to this place as part of our practice to, you know, put on the record their concerns with the legislation that's coming forward.

And, you know, as is what I think the best of that process, this is in direct response to the words that we heard directly from them. And both James Platt and Marc Pittet were in attendance and gave some really good, I think, perspective on not just this particular bill, but on the entire process of Bill 37, formerly bill 48, and how that was brought forward. And I think there's a lot that we can learn from what both gentlemen brought to the committee.

\* (16:50)

Both of them, you know, work directly with the government on shaping this kind of legislation and ensuring that there is, you know, that this is responsive to what's being brought forward or being asked for out in by both the City planners and planners throughout the province and with developers.

And so it was quite concerning to hear from both of them that they had major concerns with how this—not only how this bill was brought, was rolled out and the consultation that was done, but with regards to the specifics that were brought forward.

So, this amendment changes the requirement for City of Winnipeg employees to have—send out by ordinary mail a confirmation letter to property owners that have submitted a proposed secondary plan.

Again, this is a wasteful requirement and would cost the City significant amounts of money, which they would then have to find through raising taxes on their ratepayers or cutting services. This amendment would allow for the confirmation letter to be sent virtually instead.

This really does come down to the fact that, as the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) pointed out, 20 days is simply not enough. You know, the minister at committee said she was listening to the presenters and would study this carefully. I think it was quite clear they were asking for 60 days just because it is much too short considering that secondary plans are complex documents that can often be hundreds of pages long. The 20-day deadline would cause undue stress for City employees.

We believe that this is a reasonable amendment. The member just brought forward a 45-day amendment, which was categorically shut down by the minister, which I find very frustrating. But maybe it's because she was holding off for the better amendment, which we have in front of us here, asking for 60 days as was asked for by—as I said—two very, very knowledgeable and competent planners who are brought—bringing forward very specific concerns that could be addressed here today with this particular amendment.

So I ask the minister to support this, and let's, you know, make the legislation better for not just the City planners, but for developers and for everybody who interacts with this process.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Clarke:** This amendment is very similar to the previous one brought out from the previous colleague. And I just want to say, extending it, we have indicated why 20 days is right to remain as it is because this is not a new requirement. This is within—the City is already doing this to have it complete and that—also that the bill provides an additional time for the review and approval of each application up to 180 days.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the motion lost.

**Mr. Wiebe:** On division, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The amendment is defeated, on division.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** Moving now to report stage amendment No. 3 to Bill 34, to clause 22(3).

**Mr. Wiebe:** I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (MLA Lindsey),

*THAT Bill 34 be amended in Clause 23(3) by striking out ", by ordinary mail" in the proposed clause 246(1.1)(a).*

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Concordia, seconded by the honourable member for Flin Flon,

*THAT Bill 34 be amended in Clause 23–22(3) by striking out ", by ordinary mail" in the proposed clause 246(1.1)–*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Concordia.

**Mr. Wiebe:** I appreciate the opportunity to once again rise on a bill that I would—or an amendment I would imagine the former minister of Municipal Affairs would be quite, quite interested in, and he would, I'm sure, be very supportive of—*[interjection]*—I hear him continuing to heckle, so maybe not, but I'll give him the benefit of the doubt until we hear from the current minister, who I do believe maybe has a better relationship with municipalities. And so, maybe she will actually want to listen to those concerns that are being brought forward.

Once again, this is brought forward by two City of Winnipeg employees who came—who took time out of their day to come to committee to educate members of the Legislature.

And it was Marc Pittet, who is the manager of real estate and land development for the City of Winnipeg, who was speaking on behalf of the City of Winnipeg's property planning department; and was essentially telling us, quite surprisingly, that, although he sits at a table where he interacts with provincial employees who are drafting this legislation and creating it, he claimed that, you know, he wasn't consulted in the way that he thought would be, you know, appropriate. He was completely blindsided by this legislation.

Essentially, what those members told the committee was that, you know, this bill, the entire bill, was rushed. While the City is working on developing the handbook being—updating the regulations, ensuring that everybody is aware of the situation, essentially there's this bill that targets the City of Winnipeg rather than the overall planning district and doesn't actually accomplish, I think, what the minister intended it to do.

So, this should be a friendly amendment, and hopefully the minister is taking it as such, because it removes the requirement for the City to send out by ordinary mail a letter to the owner of property that has submitted a development application, confirming that they've received it.

City officials were concerned over the amount of additional time and resources, once again, that this requirement would take. According to the City's calculation, it could cost them an additional 400 to 600 thousand dollars annually to send out these confirmation letters by mail. This would cause the City to make cuts or raise taxes once again, Madam Speaker, and the bill doesn't 'approve'—provide, of course, any additional funds or supports for this new requirement.

Marc, of course, also spoke about how having to mail these letters out goes against their efforts to reduce the paper footprint, and ultimately takes them out of alignment with planning departments across the province. So, it really goes against what I think the minister has been talking about, making things more efficient and more applicable across the province.

We agree that—with these presenters that having to send out confirmation by ordinary mail is an unnecessary provision in the bill. The amendment doesn't remove the requirement that the City notify property owners that they've received their development applications; it just changes, so that they don't have to be done by ordinary mail, which is wasteful and expensive.

Again, I believe that this is a friendly amendment. I see the minister looks like she's—might be on-board with this. The former minister wanted to heckle, but maybe the new minister is setting that new tone she keeps talking about. Hopefully we can see it in action.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** In case I didn't say it, the report stage amendment is in order.

**Ms. Clarke:** Madam Speaker, this bill requires that the City—to provide timely updates to applicants at various stages of the application review process. These updates, provided by ordinary mail, provide a formal notice of property owners and ensure property and development rights are maintained. Providing formal notice by ordinary mail is not a new requirement, and is consistent with existing requirements in the charter.

However, the Province recognizes the City of Winnipeg's concerns and we will work directly with the City to find the best way to modernize notification processes going forward.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost.

**Mr. Wiebe:** On division, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The amendment is defeated, on division.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** We will now move to the report stage amendment No. 4 to clause 25(2) of Bill 34.

\* (17:00)

**Mr. Wiebe:** I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare),

*THAT Bill 34 be amended in Clause 25(2) by replacing the proposed subsection 275(1.1) with the following:*

#### Development application process

**275(1.1)** In respect of an application under subsection (1),

(a) the city must send the owner of the real property confirmation of the date that the city received the application; and

(b) a designated employee must, within 60 days after the application is received, determine if the application is complete.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Concordia, seconded by the honourable member for Transcona,

*THAT Bill 34—*

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

The report stage amendment is in order. It is a report stage amendment to Clause 25(2), which is in order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** This is another important amendment that's being brought forward, again, due to the concerns of those who are working with the City of Winnipeg, who are administering these changes on a day-to-day basis.

This amendment strikes out the requirement for the City to send owners of property that have applied for a development application a confirmation letter by ordinary mail.

Again, this—at the City's request, it also lengthens the period of time that the City—that City employees have to determine whether an application is complete from 20 days to 60 days, with no additional funds provided for additional staff. The requirement for the—to review applications within 20 calendar days could put an increased amount of stress on City employees. We want to make sure that the City employees aren't having to rush to meet deadlines and are able to continue doing a thorough job.

Once again, the City was not consulted on this provision, so we hope the government will listen to their feedback now and support this amendment.

I will say, Madam Speaker, that I'm quite surprised that, you know, it sounded like the minister was in support of my last amendment that was brought

forward. She recognizes there's problems with the bill, there are issues with the bill.

Now, if bringing bills to public committee, to hear from the public and, especially, hear from experts in the field who are identifying issues that could be a—changed through amendments that are brought through this Legislature—if that's not the point of the process, I don't know what's happening here.

I mean, the minister has the opportunity to, you know, take ideas—sure, they may be coming forward as opposition amendments, but really they're just reflective of what the public has told us and what members who are dealing with this on the front lines are telling us. So, I don't understand why she wouldn't be, you know, more receptive to these ideas.

And, you know, and at the end of the day, if she wants to copy these and wanted to bring them forward as her own amendments—we just heard the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) bring forward an amendment to his own bill that we all passed in this Legislature—so, I mean, it can be done that way, too. I'd be happy to run these over to her, give her leave, she can re-introduce them as hers, and we would support them, Madam Speaker. It is simply listening to the public.

And, you know, ultimately, at the end of the day, the member talks about doing things differently. And again, I know she has a good relationship—good working relationship with municipalities throughout this province. What I'm not so sure about is that she's listening to, you know, folks at the City of Winnipeg, folks at other municipalities, who are asking her to do things differently—not just say things differently, but do things differently.

And I think there is a way that we could be listening and, hey, reducing red tape. That's a good idea, isn't it, Madam Speaker? I was sure the members opposite—I was expecting a cheer from the opposite side, but maybe they've changed tactics here. We certainly understand when there are regulations that need to be changed or amended and they need to be streamlined. We can do that, and this is exactly what we're asking for here, Madam Speaker.

So I, you know—I guess maybe I'm prejudging the minister and what she's going to say here, but I think if I kind of look at how we introduce these, I think I've already heard—or, I know what she's going to say. But I do encourage her to put down the notes and to speak directly to those Manitobans who came out, who identified that there's problems with this bill that could be, you know, they could be addressed through the

report stage amendments that we're bringing forward here today, and just maybe tell them why she's not making these good changes, why she's not listening to their experience, not listening to what they had to say.

Because, you know, ultimately, we're not done yet. We heard from, of course, Kam Blight at committee as well, the president of the AMM, who told us very clearly: There's a lot more work that needs to be done and there's a lot more issues that need to be addressed with the bad legislation that came forward as Bill 37.

And, again, the minister over there doesn't seem to be paying—the former minister doesn't seem to be paying too much attention even as he brought forward Bill 37, which was roundly, you know, decried by municipalities across this province.

Now it's up to the current minister as he points over and says it's now her job to clean it up. If we can clean it up, let's do it. Let's listen to folks like Kam Blight. Let's listen to the city planners at the City of Winnipeg. Let's listen to municipalities across this province who are giving us good ideas, and let's actually pass some of these amendments and try to repair some of the damage brought forward by this government.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Clarke:** It's nice to see the—my critic is enthusiastic about this bill and the amendments to it. And I do appreciate their input—so much, in fact, that the member from River Heights, when he proposed an amendment, I was happy to hear that amendment at committee and it was passed. So it's not that we won't look at the amendments, but we do have a very good and a very reputable bunch of professionals sitting at the table working on these decisions, and I trust their input.

And I'm happy to say again that, you know, there is the 20-day—it's not a new requirement; it is consistent with what's going on right now in this city. And that's it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Voice Vote**

**Madam Speaker:** All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

**Madam Speaker:** All those opposed, please say nay.

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

**Madam Speaker:** In my opinion, the Nays have it.

**Mr. Wiebe:** On division.

**Madam Speaker:** The amendment is defeated, on division.

\* \* \*

**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**

**Monday, May 30, 2022**

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