

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

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	Ind.
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

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

Please be seated.

Before we begin normal proceedings today, I have a couple of items that we have to take care of, the first of which is to introduce our newest member.

Introduction of New Member

The Speaker: I'm pleased to inform the House that the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly has received from the Chief Electoral Officer a letter declaring the election of Carla Compton as a member of this Assembly, representing the constituency of Tuxedo. I hereby table the notice of the return of the member elected.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you to the Legislative Chamber of Manitoba and wish you well in your parliamentary career.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, I have the great honour of presenting to you Carla Compton, the new member for the constituency of Tuxedo, who has taken the oath, signed the roll and now claims their right to take her seat.

The Speaker: On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba and I wish you well in your parliamentary career.

Speaker's Statement

The Speaker: Next I would like to share with the House a letter which I received from Grand Chief Garrison Settee of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, dated September 17, 2024, as well as my response to the grand chief's letter.

Dear Speaker Lindsey, on behalf of the leadership of the 26 Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. MKO First Nations, I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude to you and the entire Manitoba Legislature for the solemn arrangements made to allow the late Grand Chief Cathy Merrick to lie in state. The gesture was not only a profound recognition of her contributions to our communities, but also a powerful testament to the impact she made in her role, an advocate for First Nations people in Manitoba.

Chief-Grand Chief Merrick was a beacon of strength and resilience, and her commitment to fostering understanding, reconciliation and unity among diverse communities remains an inspiration to many. The decision to honour her memory in such a dignified manner underscores the respect and appreciation that Manitoba holds for her legacy. Allowing our citizens and, indeed, thousands of Manitobans to pay respects to her in the heart of our Legislative Assembly was a moving experience for everyone who knew her or was touched by her work.

Thank you for ensuring the significance of this occasion was felt not only for those who knew Grand Chief Cathy Merrick personally, but also by all Manitobans. Your leadership in facilitating this tribute speaks volumes about the values we share in honouring those who have dedicated their lives to the betterment of others.

I kindly ask that you convey my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to all members of the Legislative Assembly for allowing us to commemorate Grand Chief Cathy Merrick's life and contributions with dignity. She will be remembered fondly, and her legacy will continue to inspire future generations.

Sincerely, Garrison Settee, grand chief.

In response, I wrote: Grand Chief Settee, thank you for your letter dated September 17, 2024, expressing gratitude to the entire Legislative Assembly for facilitating the arrangements that allowed the late Grand Chief Cathy Merrick to lie in state.

The Manitoba Legislative Assembly recognized the importance of Grand Chief Merrick's leadership within the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and was honoured to participate in that celebrate—honoured to participate that celebrated her legacy.

We extend our appreciation to Premier Kinew for leading the collaboration with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to ensure her commemoration was carried out with dignity.

Our thanks also go to the Legislative Assembly staff, as well as to the building maintenance and security teams, for their respectful efforts in supporting this significant tribute.

Yours truly, Honourable Tom Lindsey, Speaker.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs Sixth Report

MLA JD Devgan (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the sixth report of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs.

* (13:40)

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs—

The Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on July 29, 2024, at 1:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- *Appointment process for the Ethics Commissioner and Information and Privacy Adjudicator*

Committee Membership

- *MLA COMPTON*
- *MLA DEVGAN*
- *HON. MIN. FONTAINE*
- *MR. JACKSON*
- *MR. OXENHAM*
- *MRS. STONE*

Your Committee elected MLA Devgan as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected Mr. Oxenham as the Vice-Chairperson.

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- *MLA Lamoureux*

Officials Speaking on Record

- *Deanna Wilson, Executive Director, Legislative Assembly Administration*

Motions

Your Committee agreed to the following motions:

- *THAT the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs recommends to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba that Jeffrey Schnoor be reappointed as the Ethics Commissioner for a term of five years from date of commencement.*
- *THAT the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs recommends to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba that Jeffrey Schnoor be reappointed as the Information and Privacy Adjudicator for a term not to exceed three years from date of commencement.*

MLA Devgan: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Seine River (MLA Cross), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: No further reports? Ministerial statements? *[interjection]* Oh, yes?

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: Little rusty here yet, so—I do have a report to table.

In accordance with section 49(2) of The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act, I am tabling a report by the Ethics Commissioner regarding the honourable member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie), dated September 19, 2024.

Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Carpathia and River Heights Schools

MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo): Every child in Manitoba deserves the opportunity to live and play in a safe and flourishing community. That's why today I would like to recognize the students from Carpathia and River Heights schools. They first approached me during the by-election for a new playground in their local park and continued their advocacy right through to their grade 6 graduation ceremony.

By working together, these bright, spirited young individuals recognized such a need in their community. Thanks to their hard work, they brought change to their community and we are not—oh, pardon me—and are not only making life better for their peers, but for future generations who will play in that park.

As a health-care worker, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of play to the mental and physical well-being of our youth.

The new playground near Edgeland creates the opportunity for parents to come together as a community, keep kids active and nurture healthy relationships in Tuxedo.

It's important to acknowledge the determination of these students and it reminds us of how vital it is to engage with young Manitobans. Leadership knows no age limit, and it can be found in our classrooms, hallways and neighbourhoods, if only we are willing to listen.

As we approach our one year in government, I am proud that we are already making progress for Manitoba families.

I am—and I proudly extend my gratitude to Nuwal and Johar Hassan, La'Veil Yeskiw, Prakiilitos, Zander, Conner, Amir and all their friends who raised their voices for their community.

Thank you.

Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Today, I rise to commemorate September as Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Bill 209, the childhood cancer awareness act, is a piece of legislation that is particularly close to my heart, as I introduced it in 2016. Cancer is a leading cause of death from disease in children and adolescents in Canada.

Approximately 10,000 children are living with cancer in this country, and 1,500 more are diagnosed each and every year. September is national Childhood Cancer Awareness Month, a crucial time to reflect on how we can better understand and address the needs of children affected by cancer in our province and across the country.

While cancer occurs in people of all ages and affects many parts of the body, unlike cancer in adults, the vast majority of childhood cancers do not have a known cause. According to the World Health Organization, early diagnosis consists of three components: awareness of symptoms by family and primary-care providers; accurate and timely clinical evaluation and diagnoses; and access to prompt treatment.

Thank you to all the organizations, countless volunteers and donors for continuing to help educate and bring awareness to this deadly disease. We have come a long way, but we still have a long way to go. We are all touched by cancer, and we all need to keep fighting.

That being said, I encourage all fellow Manitobans to continue educating themselves about childhood cancer and to explore various ways to support those who are most vulnerable in our communities. Consider donating to remarkable organizations such as the Children's Hospital Research Institute of Manitoba or the CancerCare Manitoba Foundation, just to name a few. We must remind ourselves that we all play a role in the fight for a cure.

Honourable Speaker, let's kick cancer and let's find a cure.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Islamic Heritage Month

MLA Nellie Kennedy (Assiniboia): Honourable Speaker, I'm proud to mark the beginning of the first Islamic Heritage Month. It was important to me, as the first Muslim elected to the Manitoba Legislature, to introduce a bill that honoured the contributions of Manitoba's Muslim community.

It was also personal, as my paternal grandparents were some of the first Muslims who settled in our province in the early 1900s. My family and those that came after them arrived with humble means. Over time, they helped shape our province as we know it. They became leaders in business, science, health care, arts and even politics.

Over the wild and unfamiliar Prairies, our ancestors remained true to their Islamic faith. And today we see a community of more than 20,000 united in our values of charity and compassion.

Few in the Muslim community have made a more lasting impact than Shahina Siddiqui. Auntie, as she's fondly known, is a trailblazer who built a support network for newcomers and who founded an institute that celebrates and lifts up Muslim women. She is also a prolific writer, speaker, spiritual counsellor and human rights activist.

She works tirelessly to foster understanding and community between Muslim and non-Muslim Manitobans to address Islamophobia.

While I could go on forever about her incredible work, today I would like to thank Shahina for the invaluable contributions she has made to Manitoba and the Muslim community.

In closing, I'd like to share a brief message for those who are watching the violence in Lebanon unfold. As someone with family in the region, I understand what it means to wait anxiously for the next phone call or text message. I sincerely hope that we will see a peaceful resolution soon.

Until then, let us remember our province's diversity is one of our best strengths, and we need to stay strong and support each other through this incredibly challenging time.

Now, I ask that all my colleagues please rise and help me in congratulating Auntie Shahina on the remarkable contributions she's made to our province.

St. Laurent School Hawks

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): Honourable Speaker, I rise to recognize the induction of the St. Laurent School Hawks boys' varsity A basketball team into the 2024 class of the Manitoba basketball hall of fame, which includes my little brother, David Johnson, who joins us today in the gallery.

This is a tribute not only to the extraordinary achievements of the '92, '93 and 1995 provincial A championship teams, but also to the values that shaped them.

Under the leadership of coaches Art Koop and Tim Juer, the Hawks embraced their school's core principles of honesty, attitude, work ethic, kindness and sportsmanship: HAWKS.

* (13:50)

These teams were not just successful because of talent alone, but they had plenty—but they exemplified what it means to rise above expectations. Competing as an A team, they constantly faced off against AA, AAA and AAAA opponents from across Winnipeg and Manitoba.

Despite the odds, they embraced each challenge with determination and heart, providing repeatedly that success is not defined by the size of your team, but the strength of your spirit.

Their legacy continues to inspire us, not just in sports, but in life.

The St. Laurent Hawks showed that honesty and kindness can be just as powerful as skill, and attitude and work ethic can overcome any obstacle.

Today, we honour them not only as championships, but as examples of what can be achieved when you strive for greatness with integrity.

Honourable Speaker, I submit the names of these into—the teams into Hansard for each year.

And please join me in congratulating the '92, '93 and 1995 St. Laurent Hawks on their outstanding achievements.

1992 Coaching staff: Tim Juer, coach; Art Koop, coach; Shelley Allard, manager; Melissa Buors, manager; Judy Chartrand, manager; Vicki Lambert, manager

Players: Tony Allard, Henry Carriere, David Johnson, Larry Klyne, Chris Lavallee, Gerald Lavallee, Joe Saltise, Chris Schoen, Nathan Wiebe

1993 Coaching staff: Tim Juer, coach; Art Koop, coach; Shelley Allard, manager; Amanda Friesen, manager; Krista Karlenzig, manager

Players: Tony Allard, Grant Buors, David Johnson, Chris Lavallee, Gerald Lavallee, Rene Leost, Darvin Lepine, Joe Saltise, Nathan Wiebe

1995 Coaching staff: Art Koop, coach

Players: Harry Allard, Darryl Carriere, Kevin Chartrand, Leon Chartrand, Miles Day, Andre Ducharme, Jamie Klyne, Shawn Klyne, Norman Lagimodiere, Cameron Lavallee, Chris Lavallee, Darvin Lepine, Wade Saltise

Keira's Law

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): This past April, the House unanimously supported the passing of Bill 209—Keira's Law—through second reading.

During this debate we had guests join us in the gallery from the Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters, an Indigenous crisis shelter, the Brandon women's resource shelter, the Rotary Club and some who have experienced intimate partner violence themselves.

Honourable Speaker, this legislation of expanding judicial education to include topics of intimate partner violence and coercive control follows the footsteps of several other jurisdictions across the country, nationally and provincially, and has been supported by all political stripes.

Honourable Speaker, the Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters said this bill is a crucial step towards supporting survivors of sexual assault, intimate partner violence, family violence and ending violence against women.

Manitoba has some of the highest rates of intimate partner violence across Canada, and far too often, children are caught right in the middle of it. This legislation will better protect everyone involved. I table a recent Winnipeg Free Press article from August 21 that speaks to how intimate partner violence in Manitoba is an epidemic, and it is only getting worse.

Honourable Speaker, presenters include health-care providers, representatives from shelters, resource centres, community groups and individuals who have experienced first-hand how desperately this legislation is needed. They have all signed up to speak at committee.

I am calling on this government to send Bill 209 to committee and allow for Keira's Law to come to a vote at third reading to better protect Manitobans.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: At this time, I have several introductions I would like to make.

Seated in the loge to my right, I draw all honourable members' attention to Karla Bernard, MLA for Charlottetown-Victoria Park in the PEI legislature.

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

* * *

The Speaker: Next, I would like to introduce the Manitoba legislative pages for this year. I'd like to take this time to introduce the new pages for 2024-25. I'm pleased to introduce to the House the 10 students who've been selected to serve as pages for this session. I would ask all members to hold their applause until I have completed the introductions, starting from my right.

From Dauphin Regional Comprehensive Secondary School, Madelaine Bayly; from Oak Park High school, Imogen Zemplak; from St. Maurice School, Janlloyd Dabalos; from St. Paul's High School, Isaac Lavitt; from Miles Macdonell Collegiate, Christian Olson; from Warren Collegiate, Seth Stepanick; from Maples Collegiate, Bisman Randhawa; from the University of Winnipeg Collegiate, Ayla Embury-Hyatt; from collège sainte Jeanne-Sauvé, Kathryn Sacher; from Kelvin High School, Luca Morin.

I am pleased to announce that the pilot project for the senior page position last year was successful, and we have permanently added this position to the page program. The senior page is a returning page who is currently in their final year of high school. The senior page assisted in training the new pages and will mentor and work with them as they learn their duties.

Our senior page for this year is Mai-Anh Huynh. She is a student at Churchill High School. Mai-Anh attended the Assembly's education and outreach program, Learning at the Leg! Lunch and Learn, where she was the keynote speaker. She promoted the page program to the educators in attendance, and she assisted in training this year's pages. The Assembly is pleased to have Mai-Anh back with us for the second year.

Please join me in welcoming all this year's pages.

Next up is the introduction of legislated interns.

I would like to draw attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have the six individuals who are serving in the Manitoba Legislative Internship Program for the 2024-25 year.

In accordance with established practice since the program originated in 1985, the interns are divided between parties recognized in the House, with three interns assigned to the government caucus and three to the official opposition caucus. They will be performing a wide variety of research work and other important tasks for members in each caucus.

The interns commenced their assignments on September 9, 2024, and will complete them in June, 2025.

Working with the government caucus, we have Ms. Madeline Blais from the University of Manitoba; Ms. Sabrina Kruger from the University of Manitoba; Ms. Christina McKay from the University of Winnipeg.

Working with the official opposition caucus, we have Ms. Selam Beyene from the University of Brandon; Ms. Tawsha Bristol from the Brandon University; Ms. Silvia Ofori from the University of Winnipeg.

The new academic director for the program is Professor Malcolm Bird from the University of Winnipeg. The day-to-day administration of the intern program is carried out by Andrea Norlock of the Clerk's office, administrative assistant assigned to the internship program.

The program operates under the direction of our Clerk, Rick Yarish. The caucus representatives on the internship administration committee are the member for Riel (MLA Moyes) and the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson).

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all members to congratulate the interns on their appointment to the program, and I hope that you will have a very interesting, productive and successful year with the Assembly.

And we have one more introduction to make on—members may have noticed a new face at the table, and I would like to take a moment to introduce to the House our new clerk assistant/clerk of committees, Ms. Melanie Ching.

Hailing from her family farm in the Pembina Valley region of Manitoba, Mel began working for the Legislative Assembly on May 6, 2024, and today is her first day serving as a Clerk at the table.

Mel has always had a passion for politics and the legislative process. In high school she participated in Forum for Young Canadians, and then went on to study political science at Carleton University, where she worked as a Senate page and participated in the Carleton-Leeds Parliamentary Internship Exchange.

* (14:00)

She continued at Carleton and completed a masters of arts in Canadian Studies before joining the federal public service as a junior policy analyst. She moved

home to Winnipeg in 2019 and joined the Manitoba public service, finishing her time there as a senior policy analyst.

The clerks are delighted to have Mel on their team, and I'm sure members will make her feel at home.

On behalf of all members, we welcome you to Clerk's table and to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as a table officer.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Session Resumes Acknowledgements

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): I, too, on behalf of our PC caucus, would like to welcome the new MLA for Tuxedo for joining us here in this incredible, incredible building.

Also welcome the new independent member who has joined us on our side of the House as well. To the clerks, to yourself, Honourable Speaker, to the table staff officers, to Ms. Ching, welcome to the Assembly as well.

Of course, our pages who have joined us today, thank you and I know that you're going to have a very educational experience here in the Manitoba Chamber.

And, of course, we're joined by our interns as well, and I trust that—and welcome Mr. Bird, who has taken on the new role as director of internship.

Thank you, everybody, and we'll get to the first set of questions, Honourable Speaker, in a few seconds.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I'd like to welcome everybody back and congratulate those who are joining us for the first time.

The reasons given for the expulsion of one of our former MLAs were accurate. However, upon reflection, my desire for transparency to the people of Manitoba should have been outweighed by my deep respect for the independence of the justice system. All that I should have said publicly is that there are irreconcilable differences with that MLA, and we wish him well.

As a result of this, earlier today, I apologized to Gerri Wiebe privately, and I now repeat that apology publicly: Gerri Wiebe, I am sorry.

I also want to say this: I apologize to defence attorneys as a profession. You perform an important function for our society. I offer these apologies with

the deepest of humility, with the utmost sincerity and without reservation.

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

Education and Child Care Funding Concerns

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): As we know, and we've already started hearing the apologies, I think that's going to be the sessional mantra of this Premier, is going to have to be doing apologies all the time.

The Premier cut education funding. He cut nine new schools, over 700 new child-care spaces, and basically, Honourable Speaker, the hallway education is a new term now in Manitoba, and it's clearly on his record.

Will he stand in his place today and apologize to Manitobans and their families and their children for having to be able to study in hallways right here in Manitoba, Honourable Speaker?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, it's clear that the PCs are out of touch with what's going on in the school system, because kids are excited to be back in school learning now that cellphones have been banned as a result of our Education Minister.

Teachers and educators are happy because we've given them a great new collective agreement and we're finally staffing up. We have 630 new educators in the classroom this year because of that good work.

And what's more, even though the PCs said it was a bad idea throughout their time in government, we now have a universally accessible school food program so that no child has to go to school hungry. They're going to learn instead.

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

Provincial Projects Funding Concerns

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, universal child—the nutrition program is not universal, and that Premier knows it, the minister knows it, and also I have not heard yet an apology for the fact that there are children in this province learning in hallways today.

In addition to those cuts, we've seen cuts to roads. We've seen cuts to the parks plans. We've seen cuts to Green Team, summer jobs, daycares, personal-care homes and other projects, Honourable Speaker, that Manitobans were actually excited to see come to fruition.

Is he now telling Manitobans that these projects are not a priority of this NDP government?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): The only thing we cut was the size of the PC caucus.

I'd like to welcome the new member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton), and she's joining a team that's staffing up health care, a team that's hiring educators, that's feeding hungry kids, that, yes, is building schools right across this great province.

But do you know what else is important about the member joining? It's a historic day. Not only is that member the first leader of a PC Party to ever lose the constituency of Tuxedo in the history of this province, but this is the first time we've had a member on this side of the House.

The Speaker: If we could just hold on for a minute, we'll find out what's going on with the alarm. We may have to take a recess. We'll see what comes up.

* (14:10)

Order, please. Order, please.

If I could have everyone's attention.

Apparently, it's been reported as a false alarm, but we are going to recess until they get it reset and under control. So there'll be the two-minute warning bell prior to us resuming.

The House recessed at 2:11 p.m.

The House resumed at 2:22 p.m.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Welcome back, everyone. Hopefully that's not the way the rest of the day is going to go.

And we will start with the honourable First Minister responding to the question.

Mr. Kinew: As I was saying, the only thing we've cut is the size of the PCs' caucus.

Today's an historic day. History was made by the member opposite because he's the first leader of the PC Party in Manitoba history to lose the seat of constituency of Tuxedo. But more importantly, history

was made by the great people of that constituency by, for the first time ever, sending a New Democrat to represent them in this esteemed Chamber.

And while they want to get involved in the mud-slinging and muckraking, we're going to keep working on health care, keep working on education and keep working for you.

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

Health-Care System Government Record

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, he's also cutting his own caucus equivalency, as we've seen by the apology that he needed to stand up today and say.

Cuts, cuts, cuts, Honourable Speaker, that's what we've seen. But we've also seen increases. Increases for surgery wait times, emergency wait room—wait times. They just continue to get longer and longer under this Premier. They stood by a sign, a lawn sign, saying that they would fix health care. Just not as advertised.

There is no plan. Hopefully, the Premier will stand up today once again and apologize to Manitobans for their failed attempt at fixing health care.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Health care is the top priority of Manitobans, and that's why our team is delivering for you. We've already staffed up 873 more workers on the front lines of health care in Manitoba right now. That's thanks to our great Health Minister and to the strong team on this side of the House.

Again, for years and years, under the PCs, we were losing nurses from the front lines. They were retiring, leaving the province, their jobs were being cut. But those days are over because, one year ago tomorrow, people of Manitoba showed the PCs the door and they asked us to fix health care. The good news is, one year into office, we're delivering: hundreds more nurses, 100 more physicians, hundreds more working on the front lines right across this province.

We're just getting started. We're going to keep working hard for you.

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

Public Safety Concerns Government Record

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, the Premier stands in his place and continues to try to pick some of that low-hanging fruit because the former PC government increased the nursing seats, increased the doctors' seats. He just has to stand there and just pick some of that fruit.

Honourable Speaker, the—another thing that's increasing in Manitoba is safety and crime under this Premier's leadership. Manitobans, ask yourself, do you feel safer after one year of this Premier being in charge? I don't think so. That's not what we're hearing.

Will you admit, Mr. Premier, will you admit to Manitobans that you have failed, and will you apologize for your failure to address crime and safety for all Manitobans in Manitoba?

The Speaker: I would just remind the honourable member that—address his comments through the Chair and not directly to another member. *[interjection]* And I would remind the member not to talk back to the Speaker.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Everybody knows that Heather Stefanson cut health care. Hundreds of fewer nurses because of her cuts and the—it was supported by every single member. Even the new MLAs supported Heather Stefanson in the last election campaign. What a terrible decision.

Good thing is, they were shown the door. Manitobans invested us the awesome responsibility of carrying out that sacred task of fixing health care.

We are delivering 873 new people working on the front lines of our health-care system, but we're making steps on public safety as well.

The member opposite said we're increasing safety. I'll defer to him. If he wants to put that on the record, so be it. We've launched a very popular security-camera rebate program and we've invested in downtown safety, plus we're making a dent in retail theft.

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

Mr. Ewasko: The only way that that program that they've been using is successful for any of the homeowners or businesses is the fact that they're able to now watch the criminals come to their property and watch them leave with the things that the criminals

have stolen, Honourable Speaker. So that's something the Premier is going to have to wear.

Honourable Speaker, growing dissatisfaction among Manitobans regarding his government's handling of these issues.

On our side of the House, we led on bail reform. We committed to building schools, personal-care homes, and we actually built them, Honourable Speaker.

What is his response to these concerns? And he can't just stand there and say that I'm pushing over a lamp. Would he take some accountability for a change, Honourable Speaker?

Mr. Kinew: You know, there was a time when Conservatives were about an accurate rendering of history of our country, but not today. All we see is revisionist history. They don't even mention the hundreds of nurses that they cut. They don't talk about the emergency rooms that they closed. They don't talk about the cuts to school funding each and every year that they were in office. That's why they're sitting on the opposition benches—because all that they did was cut.

One year ago tomorrow, Manitobans asked us to rebuild and that's what we are delivering on. More people working on the front lines of health care, more educators in the classroom working with your kids. The only thing that there's not more of is a gas tax that they had every day in office. In fact, we've made life more affordable for every single person in Manitoba.

Provincial Deficit Concerns Timeline for Balanced Budget

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, we recently heard that this Finance Minister has said that there is no way that he can balance the books, despite the fact that the S&P Global credit agency said that this was possible.

This minister is choosing to go on a spending spree and has created the largest \$2-billion non-pandemic deficit in Manitoba's history. After a \$373-million surplus in '23 and a credible path to balance under this former PC government, this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and this minister has thrown it and wrecked it out of the box.

Will this minister commit today to getting to balance by the 2026 public accounts or is he choosing to deficit finance the NDP's entire \$3-billion election promises?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): I'd like to start out by welcoming the member to her new role as critic for Finance and Hydro and wish her best of luck in the sittings ahead.

To the question, the very important question, when we came into government, Honourable Speaker, one thing we were shocked to find out was the state of finances that were left to us by the previous government.

* (14:30)

To look into that, we hired MNP, an independent accounting firm—which is not, of course, in the bag for us; they're an independent, respected accounting firm. And what did they find? That the last government made a number of budgetary decisions that constituted high budgetary risk. And, as a result, they sent our province to have one of the largest deficits in our history. That's a result of their bad budgeting.

We're doing better. We're going to make sure we deliver on our balanced budget commitment to Manitobans.

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

Mrs. Stone: Let me be perfectly clear, Honourable Speaker. This NDP government has taken seven years of credible fiscal performance by the former PC government and, in the matter of months, ripped it to shreds. The NDP has ballooned the deficit to \$2 billion with their \$700-million special warrant, yet still cutting highways, parks, green teams, schools and surgeries. Interest rates are coming down, fed transfers are up a billion dollars, and they still can't hit the broadside of the fiscal target.

Why is this minister cutting priorities for Manitobans with interest rates coming down, fed transfers going up, and will he balance the books in 2025?

MLA Sala: You know what we're proud to cut, Honourable Speaker? We're proud to cut costs for Manitobans. We did that right after we got into government by cutting the gas tax. And what's happened? Every single time Manitobans go to the pump, they're saving money. That's a charge that every single member opposite put on Manitobans every time that they went to the pump, and they did that every single day for seven and a half years that they were in government.

We're making life more affordable, and we're balancing those investments and making life more affordable with ensuring we deliver fiscal—good fiscal management, fiscal responsibility, accountability,

transparency, something we didn't see for seven and a half years.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Midland, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Stone: If this is the minister's first crack at fiscal management, then Manitoba is in big trouble. It's the NDP that needs to be accountable for its \$3 billion worth of election promises. It's the NDP that needs to be countable for its \$2-billion deficit.

The reality is, is the minister is raising taxes, cutting necessary services and increasing debt; \$2.1 billion of debt servicing costs on Manitobans. Now he's getting a billion in federal transfers. Interest rates are going down.

Will the minister stand up and commit today to eliminating the \$2-billion deficit, returning us to balance by the 2025-26 public accounts?

MLA Sala: The release of public accounts was like a report card for the members opposite. And what did it say? F in transparency, F in accountability, F in budgeting skills, F up and down the report card. And, unfortunately, they left Manitoba in a very difficult place as a result.

Fortunately, Manitobans, on October 3, elected a government that understands the importance of fiscal responsibility, and we understand that fiscal responsibility will allow us to deliver on the things that Manitobans sent us here to deliver on: better health care, better affordability, better education. That's what we're going to do.

We're going to keep doing that work of making life more affordable while we balance our fiscal commitments. We're going to deliver on that balanced budget commitment, and we're committed to it, Honourable Speaker.

Manitoba Housing Benefit Inquiry into Pause of Benefit

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): Manitobans were concerned when they found out that a benefit paid to renters who needed assistance in paying their core housing costs were paused without notice. We learned that this pause was—put over 400 applicants in the queue at risk of homelessness.

Can the minister inform the House when she learned of this pause and explain why it took nearly a month to inform applicants and organizers of this pause?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): I want to thank the member for that question. It gives me an opportunity to let Manitobans know that members on that side, when they were in government, underspent this CMHB. Year over year, there were funds that were given back.

Our government made sure that these benefits were expended. So 1,500 extra folks in this province are housed with this benefit. And we did even more; \$1.2 million more is going into housing folks. We've housed over 1,100 people in this province since October, something that members opposite didn't even have on their radar.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a supplementary question.

Mrs. Hiebert: Honourable Speaker, organizations and local stakeholders describe this cut and pause as catastrophic for individuals in need of housing. The Premier (Mr. Kinew) told media that he only found out about this through media reports.

Can the minister explain why the Premier was not informed of this pause and put 400 people at risk of homelessness?

Ms. Smith: Well, we—our end project is to build more housing, to work on maintaining our social housing, something that the Stefanson government never did. In fact, in one transaction, they sold off 300 units. They cut the maintenance budget year after year, 87 per cent in fact, which left people homelessness—homeless in this province.

We are taking the compassionate approach. We are taking an approach that's going to end chronic homelessness in two terms.

We committed that to the people of Manitoba, and we're going to get it done. We're on track. We've housed over 1,100 people in this province since October, and we will continue to get folks the housing that they need.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Morden-Winkler, on a final supplementary question.

Mrs. Hiebert: We know that this benefit is critical for many Manitobans to have access to stable housing. Applicants are fearful that the program may be paused without notice.

Can the minister confirm today for Manitobans that there will be no pause for future for the Manitoba housing benefit? And also, I do know that the current

government is selling Manitoba Housing units as we speak.

Ms. Smith: Well, let me tell the members opposite what we've done since coming into office.

We've committed \$37 million in funding over 17 projects with 525 social rent-geared-to-income units. We've helped permanently house over 1,125 people, many with housing-first supports. We've doubled the number of households benefitting from the CMHB funding from 1,500 to well over 3,200. We provided over 1,700 rent relief loans through Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association.

And we're a government that's listening. We are going to take a compassionate approach, and we are going to make sure that we end chronic homelessness in the next two terms.

We are listening to Manitobans, and we hear you, and we are going to be working hard every—each and every day to make sure that we get the folks housed, because you sent us here to do that.

Portage Regional Health Facility Inquiry into MRI Services

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, Manitobans are speaking by the thousands. In fact, when I asked this minister to explain why they refused to consider including an MRI in the new regional hospital in Portage la Prairie, they couldn't be bothered to reply.

So I ask the minister again, publicly. Our town hall will be on October 22. Will they commit to attending to listen to the residents of Portage la Prairie and the rest of Manitoba?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I thank the member opposite for that important question about diagnostic capacity here in Manitoba.

Our government is committed to making sure that, no matter where you live in our province, you have improved access to the services that you need. Under the previous government, there was absolutely no plan or approach to take steps that were necessary to boost capacity across our province, including in regards to MRIs.

Our government is taking a completely different approach. We're hiring the staff that are needed to staff that technology, and we were proud to announce very recently that we have a net new 873 health-care workers on the front lines of our health-care system.

That includes allied health-care professionals, and there's more good work being done.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, on a supplementary question.

MLA Bereza: Obviously, the minister hasn't seen the plans to the new hospital in Portage la Prairie.

The citizens of Portage deserve to know why this minister won't take the local hospitals foundation of a \$5-million commitment towards an MRI. I have heard from residents who lack reliable transportation. I've heard from over 35 doctors who are hesitant to schedule needed scans, knowing the wait time.

I have heard these calls because I listen to all Manitobans no matter what political stripe they are.

Why does this minister insist on ignoring them?

* (14:40)

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I think it's really important to note that the previous PC government laid out the plans for that hospital to be established without an MRI.

And despite what that member says and does, that member has actually gone as far as to draw a random circle on a map to say, could go here, showing how little information he has or awareness or respect for the experts in our province, who we've done our due diligence with and consulted with in order to make sure that we are working with our health-care leaders to have a plan for diagnostics in this province—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —that meets people's needs.

So, Honourable Speaker, we're going to continue to listen to folks living in Portage la Prairie, making investments in health care, like adding an MRI to the—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Provincial Crime Rate Increase Request for Resources to Address

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): The Kinew government promised a safer Manitoba for all. Unfortunately, survey says 66 per cent of respondents say it's only gotten worse over this past 12 months.

The NDP's solution is to burn out police officers with successive overtime as crime runs rampant.

Is the Minister of Justice prepared to fund the 78 additional officers that acting Winnipeg police

chief Art Stannard has called for, or does he not care about, and I quote, violent crimes are straining police resources and draining officers?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): We heard loud and clear from Manitobans that they were sick of the rhetoric and the words coming from the former government, and they wanted action.

That's why, when our government came into office, we were happy to meet with municipalities, to talk to them about how we can partner to make their municipalities safer. We could talk with law enforcement and we could increase the funding year over year in a way that has not been done in over seven and a half years.

This government, Honourable Speaker, will continue to be a real partner with community, with business and with law enforcement as we go forward to make our province safer.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Brandon West, on a supplementary question.

Mr. Balcaen: Honourable Speaker, this minister and this government continue to believe in band-aids and buzzwords. They figure this will make communities safer.

He's wrong. Talk to Manitobans who have had their cars stolen, their garages broken into, stores robbed or been held up with a machete, and you will know that they want images of police arresting suspects, not images of criminals stealing what isn't nailed down.

So again, on behalf of the ever-growing list of victims of crime, can we expect the policing resources required for this province?

Mr. Wiebe: Honourable Speaker, I guess I shouldn't be surprised that this member continues to be so out of touch when it comes to the reality of public safety across this province.

It was just over the last few weeks that we received a report from Macdonald-Laurier, who did a scathing review of the activities under the previous government, and really highlighted how crime was skyrocketing under the previous government.

And what action did they take? Well, they froze funding for municipalities, they froze funding for municipal policing and they refused to be a true partner.

That's what we're going to do things differently, Honourable Speaker. We're going to step up, we're going to be a partner, we're going to fund law enforcement, we're going to fund community and we're going to make sure that people see a safer province going forward.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Brandon West, on a final supplementary question.

Mr. Balcaen: Honourable Speaker, I'm not sure where this funding is going. Just last month, the Winnipeg Police Service has had never-before-seen-of records of 440 calls waiting in the queue for a police response.

That's 440 individual victims of crime left on hold because the Kinev government is too busy infighting rather than fighting crime.

At what point will this minister take action? Will it be 500 calls? Will it be 1,000 calls; 1,500 calls? How many people have to be left to wait for a police response until this minister wakes up to the crisis that he's created for the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Wiebe: Again, the member opposite is completely out of touch. This government, in Budget 2024, brought forward a 28 per cent increase in the funding to municipal policing across this province.

It's this government that funded the WPS to the tune of \$2 million to enhance security for retail theft and other hotspots throughout the city. It's this government that brought forward \$1.5 million to partner with downtown Winnipeg, the DCSP, to ensure that they have the resources to make a difference.

We didn't stop there, though, Honourable Speaker. We went to Brandon. We went to Thompson. We invested in a way this previous government never did.

It's the same old Stefanson PCs over there. We're going to do it differently.

The Speaker: Member's time is expired. *[interjection]*

Order.

Expanded Training for Provincial Judges Request to Call Keira's Law to Committee

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Bill 209—Keira's Law—needs to go to committee.

On May 30, 2024, here in the House, our Premier (Mr. Kinew) said, and I quote: I actually think there's a legitimate public value to having a committee on this because of the list of presenters. And it gets better, Honourable Speaker. The Premier further said, and I

quote: Let's pull a committee together for the fall. I table this Hansard.

It's fall now. Will the Premier tell us today when Keira's Law, Bill 209, will be sent to committee?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister responsible for Women and Gender Equity): Miigwech to the member for Tyndall Park. Certainly we're willing to work with the member to call it to committee.

But I do want to share and put on the record, you know, our government is committed to ending intimate partner violence and tackling gender-based violence.

I've worked and collaborated with people at the UN. Just this past July, we hosted, alongside federal minister Marci Ien, an FPT here in Manitoba with status of women ministers from across the country to tackle gender-based violence and discuss intimate partner violence. And there is a consensus across the country that intimate partner violence is on the rise and that we are all collectively committed to tackling this in a meaningful, comprehensive—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a supplementary question.

MLA Lamoureux: Bill 209—Keira's Law—passed through second reading unanimously. It has been supported by resource centres, women's shelters, physicians and individuals whose safety would have personally benefitted from this legislation. This is the only piece of legislation on the docket that the government has explicitly chosen not to send to committee.

Can the government explain why they do not believe this legislation is important?

MLA Fontaine: As I just said a couple seconds ago, we will work with the member to call it to committee.

But let me also just put on the record here some of the things that we're supporting in community. In respect of prevention, we're looking at education materials and engagement from the YMCA. We're working with an Indigenous cultural education through northern men and boys programming. Educational engagement through the empower men program at Ma Mawi. We're looking at counselling services from the newcomers men's GBB program at Elmwood Community Resource Centre. We're looking at women's—or, we're supporting women's counselling supports through MAPS. We're supporting counselling

services through NorWest Men's Relationship Program. We're supporting wrap-around supports and cultural programming for—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

The honourable member for Tyndall Park, on a final supplementary question.

MLA Lamoureux: Will the House leader here today put on record what the Premier (Mr. Kinew) did and commit to calling Bill 209—Keira's Law—to committee this fall?

MLA Fontaine: Miigwech, Madam Speaker. I—or Honourable Speaker, I apologize. I can't be more clear: we will work with the member to call it to committee. I've said it three times.

* (14:50)

But now, allow me to just continue with some of the resources that we're supporting. We're supporting a drop-in program at the Aboriginal health supports through N'Dinawemak. We're supporting culturally safe wrap-around supports at Giganawe [*phonetic*]-ganawe [*phonetic*]. Klinik's sexual assault response program, the drop-in centre at SHARE program, wrap-around supports for survivors from the mental health program at Thrive Community Support Circle, counselling services and youth services for survivors from the community-based sexual assault services in Brandon-Westman.

We're doing so much work. We take this issue—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Health-Care Workers Hiring Commitment Update

MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo): It's a great honour to rise today for the first time, on behalf of my constituents and as the first NDP MLA ever for the riding of Tuxedo.

And I'm especially honoured to take on the role of special advisor to the Premier for nursing, culture and safety.

As a front-line nurse, I was so excited to hear the Premier and the Minister of Health update the people of Manitoba last week on our goal of hiring 1,000 net new health-care workers.

I'd like to ask the minister if they could tell the House about our progress and what impact it will have on health care in Manitoba.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): I thank the member for Tuxedo for that excellent question.

I think I speak for all of us when I say how excited I am to have her here on our team, how excited I am personally to have another front-line nurse here with us in the Chamber.

Which is a great segue into saying, yes, we committed to hiring 1,000 net new health-care workers and I'm so proud to say we are 87 per cent of the way there. We've hired 873 net new health-care workers in the first half of this year, and while we're not sounding the mission-accomplished bells just yet, we're hopeful and we're so thankful to all the health-care workers who have helped to make this happen.

We know there's a lot of work to do still, but I want to offer a sincere thank you to all those who—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Is there a question from the official opposition?

If there are no further questions from the official opposition, then we will move on to the next member in rotation—okay, it's not that there are no further questions from the official opposition; they've chosen not to ask these next two questions.

So we move on in rotation to the next member on the rotation list, which is the honourable member for Fort Garry.

Manitoba Housing Benefit Inquiry into Pause of Benefit

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): In early September, housing advocates were notified by this government that Rent Assist had stopped processing new applications since August 2.

This meant 300 of the most vulnerable Manitobans, including youth exiting child-welfare system and families fleeing domestic violence were now facing homelessness.

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) learned about this cut. How did he respond? Did he take responsibility? No. Did he immediately reinstate the program? No.

So I ask this Premier why he didn't reverse the cut from August and why he waited two months until there was a media backlash before he reversed the cut.

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): I asked for a pause, and I did apologize to the organizations because it wasn't communicated to them in time; 1,500 people

under that government since 2022, or former government—former Stefanson PC government; 1,500 people were housed since 2020—since the CMHB came into effect.

We housed over 1,500 people under the CMHB benefit in under a year. We were oversubscribed. We further added another \$1.2 million, which will house another—which will house hundreds of other people.

Mr. Wasyliw: So the Premier claims he doesn't know what's going on in his own government, that he had to listen to the radio to find out what's happening.

On September 11, a story broke that the Kinew government had cut the Rent Assist program. No response from the Premier. On September 20, the Premier was asked again by the media. His response: No apology, no commitment to fix this. Instead, he whined about how the media wasn't giving positive stories about their homelessness policy. His reaction couldn't have been clearer: he supported this cut.

Four days later, after a media backlash, he did a major backflip.

Can the Premier please tell us what changed?

The Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness. *[interjection]*

Order.

Ms. Smith: Again, we doubled the amount of people that were in receipt of this benefit. No one did not get benefits that were eligible for this benefit.

We provided—we're providing over 1,700 people with rent relief loans through Manitoba non-profit associations. We are—actually \$37 million in funding to over 17 projects. That's 525 social rent-geared-to-income units coming online, something that the former Stefanson government never did. They never prioritized social housing.

We are taking a different approach. We are—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Mr. Wasyliw: The cut to Rent Assist happened on August 2. It took until September 24 and a media backlash for the Kinew government to reverse the cut.

Without that media backlash, that Premier was more than happy to go ahead with the cut, more than happy to put 300 families back on the street. The Premier is now pledging new funding for 550 families. What he

has not done and what he needs to do is pledge to support the families that come after that 550.

Will the Premier pledge today to grant all future qualifying Rent Assist applications to every Manitoban who needs one, and if not, why not?

Ms. Smith: So, what I will tell that member, what we are focused on—something the previous Stefanson government was not focused on—is maintaining our social housing, which is building up our housing. We know that there's a shortage of housing here that's rent geared to income in our province that's affordable. Our government is focused on building housing.

And let me tell you what we've—\$1.8 million towards 48 units for Market Lands; Transcona, \$3 million for 31 units; Balmoral, \$2.25 million for a further 15 units; family—Centre Village, \$2.2 million for 30 more units; Roblin projects, 32 supportive units—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired. *[interjection]*

Order, please. Order, please.

I have a ruling for the House.

Time for question period has ended.

Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker: And I have a ruling for the House.

Prior to routine proceedings on May 29, 2024, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Johnson) raised a matter of privilege regarding an incident that occurred during House proceedings on May 28, 2024. The incident related to a complaint filed with the Ethics Commissioner and tabled in the House by the member for Riel (MLA Moyes) that day.

* (15:00)

The Official Opposition House Leader claimed that throughout question period and later during the Committee of Supply meeting that day, the Premier (Mr. Kinew), the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), the Minister of Health and the Minister of Education all referenced that complaint using language that attacked the member's reputation and impeded him in the fulfillment of his duties and functions.

The member concluded his remarks by moving that the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), the member for St. James (MLA Sala) and the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) and the member for Transcona (MLA Altomare) be held in contempt of this House and the matter referred to an all-party committee for consideration and review. The Honour-

able First Minister spoke to the matter before I took it under advisement.

As the House knows, for a matter of privilege to be ruled as a prima facie case, the member must demonstrate that the issue has been raised at the earliest opportunity while also providing sufficient evidence that the privileges of the House have been breached.

On the condition of timeliness, the Official Opposition House Leader indicated in his submission that on May 28, the previous sitting day, the member for Riel tabled a complaint that he filed with the Ethics Commissioner. He further stated that, and I quote: I have shown that this matter could not be raised at an earlier time, end quote.

The member failed to provide any further context regarding his claim of meeting the test of timeliness. In my opinion, the member could have raised this matter on the previous sitting day after one of multiple instances of the alleged incident occurring. In failing that, he should have provided more information to the Chair explaining how he met the condition of timeliness.

Accordingly, I'm ruling that the member failed to meet the test of timeliness in his submission.

Regarding the second condition of whether a prima facie case was demonstrated, the fact that the details of the complaint were raised in question period and the Committee of Supply is a matter of debate rather than a matter of privilege. And therefore, in my view, this matter is a difference of opinion over facts.

Past Manitoba Speakers have ruled on several similar occasions that a dispute between two members as to allegations of fact does not constitute a breach of privilege. As well, Bosc and Gagnon advise on page 148 of the third edition of the House of Commons Procedure and Practice that if a question of privilege involves a disagreement between members as to facts, the Speaker typically rules that such a dispute does not prevent members from fulfilling their parliamentary functions nor does such a disagreement breach the collective privileges of the House.

Further, Beauchesne citation 31(1) advises that a dispute arising between two members as to allegations of facts does not fulfill the conditions of parliamentary privilege.

Finally, Joseph Maingot, on page 223 of the second edition of the Parliamentary Privilege in

Canada, states that a dispute between two members about questions of facts said in debate does not constitute a valid question of privilege because it is a matter of debate.

Accordingly, I'm ruling that the member failed to demonstrate a prima facie case of breach of privilege.

I do have an additional concern regarding this matter, which I need to share with the House.

As you know, the conflict of interest process that came into effect last fall contains important provisions governing the behaviour of every member of this Assembly. These provisions are an essential check on all of us and should be respected accordingly.

As we all know, it is the role of the Ethics Commissioner to address and respond to complaints raised through this process. The Speaker has no role in that regard. But I do have a role to play in governing how such complaints are considered in this House.

Furthermore, during the complaint process, there will be other opportunities for members to have their say or give their opinion on the legitimacy of such complaints as part of that process. Using a matter of privilege to debate anything about a complaint is not part of this process, and I strongly discourage members from attempting to do this in the future.

My concern is this case—is that in raising this matter of privilege, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Johnson) seemed to be attempting to utilize an ethics complaint as a strategic procedural tool in the House. Specifically, the member appeared to be wanting me to take the matter under advisement so that it could not be referenced in debate in accordance with House practices. I'm further concerned that ultimately both sides of the House seemed to be trying to influence the Speaker regarding whether or not I should have ruled on this matter in the moment or taken it under advisement.

Let me be clear on this for all members. It is not appropriate for the Speaker to be drawn into political and strategic maneuvering. Members will certainly have political differences and grievances with each other, and it is entirely appropriate for them to be addressed, discussed and debated in this place, but all members should leave the Speaker out of such disputes. My role is to preside over such interactions, not to be drawn into them as a participant. I expect all

members to show greater respect for the role of the Speaker in the future.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

* * *

The Speaker: Petitions? No petitions? Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MLA Mike Moyes (Riel): Honourable Speaker, for the inclusion into the House records, I'm tabling complaints that I made to the Ethics Commissioner that were filed and distributed intersessionally in accordance with section 44(4) of The Conflict of Interest Act.

The Speaker: I thank the member for that.

House Business

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Could you please canvass members for leave to have the House adopt the following debate provisions regarding the consideration of reports from the Ethics Commissioner, and to have those provisions remain in effect until the end of the second session of the 43rd Legislature?

1. The statutory requirement that the Assembly must consider a report of the Ethics Commissioner within 10 days after a report is tabled (in accordance with section 51(1) of The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act) shall be met through the House's consideration of an ethics report motion.
2. This arrangement will apply to all Ethics Commissioner reports regarding complaints against members tabled in this House, including the report tabled earlier today.
3. The wording of an ethics report motion shall follow this model:

That the Legislative Assembly accept the report of the Ethics Commissioner regarding the honourable member for dash, dated dash—blank, dated blank, and approve the recommendation contained therein.

4. The tabling of a report from the Ethics Commissioner by the Speaker shall serve as notice of the accompanying motion, which shall then appear on the Order Paper the following sitting day under the heading: Ethics Report Motions.

5. The Ethics Report Motions shall be listed on the Order Paper without referencing a sponsoring member.
6. An ethics report motion shall be considered as the first item of business under the orders of the day, government business.
7. If the Government House Leader does not call the motion for debate by the 10th sitting day after the report was tabled, the Speaker shall call the motion for debate on that day.
8. On the day an ethics report motion is to be considered, if routine proceedings has not concluded 60 minutes prior to the usual adjournment hour, the Speaker must terminate routine proceedings and proceed to orders of the day.
9. If the 10th sitting day after the report was tabled coincides with any of the deadline days related to specified or designated bills, or the deadline day for the financial process referenced in rule 2(1), the resolution of this process will take precedent.

* (15:10)

10. Debate on ethics report motions shall proceed under the following terms:
 - (a) The Speaker shall read the motion to the House to open the floor for debate.
 - (b) During debate on an ethics commission report motion:

No member shall speak longer than 10 minutes.

All members may speak to the motion, in the following debate rotation:

 1. The member who is the subject of the complaint, or a member of their party.
 2. The complaint member, or a member of their party.
 3. A member of the subject's party.
 4. A member of the complainant's party.
 5. An independent member.
 - (c) An ethics report motion cannot be amended.
 - (d) Debate on an ethics report motion shall be limited to one sitting day. The House shall

not adjourn until all members have had an opportunity to speak to the motion. When there are no further speakers in the debate, the Speaker shall put the question.

- (e) Ethics report motions may not be considered during debate on:
 - The motion for an address in reply to the Speech from the Throne; or
 - The motion to approve in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker: Is there leave to have the House adopt the debate provisions regarding the consideration of reports from the Ethics Commissioner as described by the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine), and to have those provisions remain in effect until the end of the Second Session of the 43rd Legislature?

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Leave has been granted.

Speaker's Statement

The Speaker: I have another statement.

I'm advising the House that I have received a letter from the Government House Leader and the member of Fort Garry indicating that the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) has identified Bill 210, the homeowner protection from unsolicited purchase officers act, as their selected bill for this session.

As a reminder to the House, rule 25 permits each independent member to select one private member's bill per session to proceed to second reading vote and requires the Government House Leader and the member to provide written notice as to the date and time of the debate and the vote.

I have therefore been advised that Bill 210 will be debated at second reading on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, starting at 10 a.m., with the question to be put at 10:55 a.m. Note that in accordance with rule 24(7), any recorded vote requested would be deferred to Thursday, October 17, 2024, at 11:55 a.m.

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

The Speaker: We'll proceed to the opposition day motion on the Order Paper under the name of the honourable member for Spruce Woods.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): Welcome back.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Garry, that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba direct the Ethics Commissioner to investigate the serious allegations brought forward by the MLA for Fort Garry of a toxic, deceitful and dysfunctional workplace created by the Premier (Mr. Kinew) within the provincial government between MLAs, civil servants and political staff and that the Ethics Commissioner's findings be tabled in a report to the Legislative Assembly.

Motion presented.

The Speaker: And I—no—the motion is in order.

Mr. Jackson: Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and to my colleagues for their support on bringing this forward, as well as to the honourable member for Fort Garry for bringing this motion forward together with us and for seconding it.

You know, it—this is an incredible time for the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. I would suggest fairly unprecedented, certainly with the accusations of a one—towards a one-year-old government coming forward publicly from a long-serving, and I would say dedicated to their cause, member of the New Democratic Party.

And so we are, you know, we are where we are. And I think, you know, our Progressive Conservative team has brought forward this motion because these allegations are serious and they are deeply concerning to people who work in this building, to Manitobans who believe that this is the people's House. And Manitobans understand that everybody deserves a safe and respectful place to go to work. And so when we have allegations come forward publicly about that not happening in the seat of democracy of our province, that's something that we need to take seriously.

And we need to have a transparent third-party investigation into these allegations to get to the bottom of it. And so, I just want to, you know, start my comments today with that.

I acknowledge what the First Minister said earlier today. You know, it's unclear how those comments were received by Ms. Wiebe, by the broader legal community, both within Manitoba and across the country. You know, the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) comments previously did significant damage, not just to his own personal reputation with the legal community in this province, but in terms of perception of defence lawyers and the legal profession overall.

And so, you know, he's put some words on the record today. Whether those were put on the record out of sincere regret or more likely, as we've seen in other examples, simply trying to take the quickest off-ramp out of a mistake that he made and do some damage control. But nonetheless, they've been made and so we have yet to see what the response will be from the legal community across the country. I look forward to seeing that publicly.

But what we really don't understand is, why was this necessary? The MLA—why was it necessary to run down a highly respected lawyer in this province, who just recently received the King's Counsel? Why was it necessary to run down defence lawyers at all and their profession, which is a constitutional service that they provide to all Manitobans and all Canadians? Why was this necessary?

You know, if the First Minister and the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw) can't get along, why not say that? Of course, we know he's said that now. But why the mistruths and the, you know, obfuscation of how, you know, it was his former legal partner's relationship with a client that meant he had to go.

How do we—how is that, you know, how do we get from that to four days later, having a situation where the truth comes forward? And so, you know, why would the MLA for Riel have agreed to that statement going out? As the caucus chair—who I'm assuming their caucus represents defence lawyers—why would that statement have been agreed to in his leadership role with the NDP caucus and why was the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) absolutely silent as his leader and team sent out a press release—or a statement—dragging a defence lawyer and the entire practice of defence lawyers through the mud just for doing her job?

Where were these folks? And why not just tell the truth? It's more than a bit bizarre that it took several days and a host of approvals for this to take place and these messages to be put out there in the public record, you know, before the reality of the situation—of this situation took place.

And so, nonetheless, in spite of the Premier's comments today, there are still some serious allegations here that we need to address.

* (15:20)

On the topic of truth, the MLA for Fort Garry has told his truth. He's told it publicly, day after day, and he has made it known that he has some serious allegations against the conduct of this new provincial

government and how they are governing their—themselves and the political and civil servant staff that work for them. And, you know, it took him a little while to get here, particularly with respect to events pertaining to our colleague, the MLA for Fort Whyte, but he's here now.

And so we're happy that the MLA for Fort Garry has come forward with his truth, and we believe that this needs an independent investigation because, as I said, these allegations are serious. And let me just name a few of them.

There's a dysfunctional and toxic leader, and he's created a dysfunctional and toxic Legislature and culture that operates within this building. There—he's a bully and when he cannot convince people to do things, he pressures them, bullies them and demeans them.

The problem is that it's coming from Wab Kinew, so people are scared to lose their jobs.

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

I would just remind the member that we can't use other members' names; their constituency name or their title.

Mr. Jackson: I apologize, Honourable Speaker. As you said earlier, we are a bit rusty coming back from the summer recess.

The First Minister is—it's coming from the First Minister, and so people are scared to lose their jobs. There's an atmosphere of bullying, there's demeaning behaviour to Cabinet ministers, and that's the First Minister. That's the atmosphere that he brings in his leadership role. There are comments and mechanisms to protect people, but they are toothless and don't work. That's the problem. It is political suicide. If you do it, you will basically be shunned and thrown out of your own party.

And then there are some other comments that are deeply, deeply concerning: that he's trying to remove strong, independent voices who are critical and provide other thought on the direction of his government.

It goes on and on, and this is hard stuff to read, Honourable Speaker, it really is. The Leg. and the First Minister are both toxic and dysfunctional, and it is such a hostile, negative environment, and you have to try and navigate it as an elected official. It's not a collaborative environment, it's sort of the First Minister telling people what to do and then being horrible to them when it's not done perfectly. He

controls all decisions at the Legislature; no one has any agency; all the decisions are his.

These are some pretty serious allegations that have been made publicly, repeatedly by an elected member of this Assembly. And, while we do have respectful workplace policies, we think, as the Progressive Conservative team, that it's important for an independent investigation.

And I've worked for a few years in this building now, and I have a great deal of respect for the civil servants that I work with here who do excellent work on behalf of all Manitobans. They deserve a safe workplace. I have respect for the work that political staff do—of all stripes—and they deserve a respectful workplace. And I do have respect for MLAs, even those across the aisle, and the work that we all do. And they also deserve a safe workplace.

And so we've brought this forward for an independent investigation to ensure that's in—that, in fact, what is happening? What is happening? And if the MLA for Fort Garry's claims, as the Premier (Mr. Kinew) seems to suggest, are unfounded, then Manitobans at least may once again have confidence that the seat of their democracy is a respectful workplace.

The Premier should welcome that and support this resolution and investigation. He has nothing to fear if he has nothing to hide.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): The members opposite would have you believe that they actually care about the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw), when really the members opposite are just using this an opportunity to attack the NDP over here and put falsities on the record here.

I do agree with the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson). He says that we should all work in a place—what did he say? Something about that we should be—we should work in a safe and respectful place or space. I agree with the member for Spruce Woods.

You know what I want to share with the member for Spruce Woods is a little bit of history on his own members.

Let me start by the person that sits to his left, the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk). The member for Swan River sexually harassed his assistant out of a job. *[interjection]* I don't know, did you have a conversation with—

The Speaker: Order.

Please address your comments through the Chair, not directly to another member.

MLA Fontaine: The member for Swan River sexually harassed a woman out of her job, and yet, we have to sit in the Chamber day after day, day after day and look across the way at him.

Some more lessons: The former MLA for Kildonan, a man by the name of Nic Curry, all of a sudden one day he was here and the next he was gone. He disappeared. He hid his head in shame. Why did he hide his head in shame? Because he had made sexually suggestive comments to his staff and we never saw him again in this Chamber. Did the former premier, Brian Pallister, do anything about that? He did nothing about that.

But let's continue. Let us continue. The former MLA for Emerson, Cliff Graydon. Cliff Graydon was removed by the PC caucus after, if you can believe it, Honourable Speaker, he asked two staffers to sit on his lap. That is so gross on so many different levels.

The members opposite may or may not know or care to know that their former colleague, a colleague who was a PC woman Cabinet minister, also recently disclosed that another colleague sexually assaulted her.

So, again, the members opposite don't care about the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw). They're using this as a political football to detract from their horrible record and to not concentrate on the good work that we're doing.

So I want to just map out for the members here, because they're, I think, very confused on what is actually important to Manitobans. And what's important to Manitobans is that we do the work on behalf of them and we ensure that we are making our promises as we have.

And so, as has been said here in this Chamber, we are making life more affordable for Manitobans. We've extended the gas tax, something that they've done and took that money and God knows what they did with it. They've left us with an incredible financial mess that we are now—our amazing Finance Minister is navigating us through.

We know that our—we made a promise to ensure that children would be fed in schools. We've kept that promise and now children, who members opposite, including the former premier, Heather Stefanson, thought was a bad idea to feed children. That's actually who they are. I don't know anybody in

Manitoba who would think it's a bad idea to feed hungry children, but the Heather Stefanson government and all of her colleagues did.

Our amazing Health Minister, who—again, I don't want to bring up the former Health minister, but left an absolute disaster for health care. Our Health Minister has been working so hard and has added 873 net new health-care workers to Manitoba.

* (15:30)

Again, I want to remind members opposite, when they're talking about safe and respectful workplaces, these are the same members that fired 500 nurses and had incredible audacity to ensure that everybody was on a mandatory overtime. I remember one time speaking to a nurse who was eight months pregnant and who was mandated overtime. I think she had done something like—I think it was like 30 hours of work.

Our government has opened three new minor injury and illness clinics. We—I want to remind folks, as well, the good work that we're doing. We doubled the prenatal benefit, which is very excited—exciting news for expectant parents in Manitoba.

An Honourable Member: Relevant?

MLA Fontaine: It is relevant because members opposite are trying to detract from the good work that we're doing and actually just waste time with an opposition day motion that we know is not in their best interest—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine: So I want to go on. I know members opposite would probably do well to just listen to what I'm saying here. I want to just say a couple of other things. I don't have much time here. I wish I had more time but I don't.

I do want to say here that their former deputy premier, Rochelle Squires, recently told a group of high school students, and I quote: Their leader at the time, the person who first put me into Cabinet, couldn't relate to me, was an older gentleman that had a lot of bias.

I think that most of us know that the former deputy premier, Rochelle Squires, is talking about Brian Pallister. And those of us that had to sit in this Chamber when he was premier can remember the toxic nature of this Chamber that he nurtured. He was a bully. He attempted to intimidate women opposite. I remember one time, several of us on our side, including some Liberal members, actually stood in front

of the media to talk about that Brian Pallister was intentionally trying to intimidate and bully women across the way who were also elected.

The member for Dawson Trail (MLA Lagassé) has said, and I quote: Some of our messaging was almost hateful in a way.

And he's referring to the political campaign that members opposite all ran on, which, again, was borne on the backs of trans children and on the backs of four Indigenous women that were murdered by a serial killer.

That's, you know, again, going back to former deputy premier, Rochelle Squires, she has used words, and I quote, about that campaign that they were atrocious, it was beyond the pale, it was despicable, it was deeply regrettable, it was heinous. Those are some of the words that are used by former PC colleagues about the—what members opposite have stood on.

So we have a political campaign that was borne off of vulnerable trans children. We have a political campaign that was borne on the backs of women that were murdered. We have members that still sit opposite who sexually harassed women out of jobs. We have a history for members opposite of kicking out men from their caucus who sexually harassed women staffers.

And so no one believes today, no Manitobans would believe today that members opposite actually care about a safe and healthy workplace when they still have the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) who sits beside them and even lets him get up on occasion to ask a question or debate in bill—debate during bill debate.

And so, you know, I think that—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Fontaine:—members opposite should pick up a mirror, look at themselves in the mirror and say, you know, what are we going to do in our caucus to first rectify some of the atrocious and grotesque behaviours that's taken in the past since 2016? How are we going to rectify those behaviours and make amends to the women that we've harmed, to the women that we pushed out of jobs, and that—to those women that have never been apologized to?

Those women haven't even been acknowledged in this Chamber by any of the members opposite. Not one single PC caucus member has ever apologized to the women that they sexually harassed or to the

families of the women that they based their whole entire political campaign. If I were them, I would use this afternoon to get up and apologize to those women.

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): You know, we're talking about bullying and conduct in the House, and just as I stand up, we have the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) heckling me as I stand up. The epitome of bullying right across the way here, toxicity across the way here.

This member from St. Johns wants to stand up and throw shots across the way and throw out history here, and advocating for doing the right thing. Well, now is her opportunity to do the right thing.

If the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw), her former colleague and I would assume former friend, or maybe current friend, if she cares that much about doing what's right in this building, why will she not vote today for an independent investigation?

It's that simple, Manitoba; that's all you have to ask yourself. If members opposite are that concerned with the claims of toxicity, of bullying, of harassment that are happening in this Legislature and have happened in this Legislature, why are they not calling for an investigation? It's that simple: because they know it's true. They know what their Premier (Mr. Kinew) is doing. They know what the member from Fort Rouge did to the member for Fort Garry.

Members opposite know the truth. That's why they aren't asking for an investigation. There's no other answer. If this was any other workplace, there would be an investigation—anywhere else. But because he's the Premier and he has 30-plus lackeys to support him, he will do what he wants. He will treat the colleague from Fort Garry like he wants.

And, let's get this straight, Manitoba and members opposite, we all know this and the member for Fort Garry said this himself: we are not friends. You can go back through the history and you can see in the building here the pleasantries we've exchanged with one another, the heated debate we've had one—with one another.

In this Chamber, we're not friends. But for the member to—Fort Garry to call me and say he has something to say to my face, face to face—when I asked him over the phone, he said no, I have to see you face to face. And he apologized to me for what happened last year on Turban Day.

He didn't have to do that. He recognized his mistake, gave me the reason why. We shook hands. I

said thank you very much for coming forward, it means a lot to me for him to say that. Apologized for coming out late. Said it doesn't matter, it's okay, member for Fort Garry, you came out. Thank you.

There's no time limit on when you can come out about these things. The members opposite can still do the right thing. The Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine) went on for 10 minutes talking about things that have happened in this building and how there has to be the rights—it has to be corrected, that we have to go forward in a respectful workplace. That's all we're asking for.

If the members opposite, if the government believes that their leader is innocent, why not have an investigation? It's that simple.

Now, this isn't about me at all. This is about the NDP. This is about this Premier and his lackeys supporting him, knowing the truth. The member for Fort Garry had nothing else to lose; he's already been kicked out, so he came forward with this story.

Now, there are members opposite that were there last year when this Premier intimidated, threatened myself. Members just sitting there. They know who they are. They can come forward. They had a front row seat. They know what happened. They're honourable people. Better late than never. Better late than never to do it.

The members know exactly who I'm talking about. They were sitting there when this happened. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe), all high and mighty, if he wants to do the right thing, why not have an investigation? Why not is—the question is that simple.

Instead of bullying and threatening people like the member from St. Johns just did, why won't the member from St. Johns just call an investigation? It's the same old NDP. We've seen history, incident after incident, of toxicity and dysfunction within this NDP party, and now it's showing its head in this NDP government.

* (15:40)

We're here today to talk about an independent investigation of the actions of this Premier (Mr. Kinew) and this government, and they don't want it. Why? The answer—the question is that simple: that they're hiding it. Like I said, if this was anywhere else, that leader of that of that organization, the Premier, would take a leave. He would step away from his role. The

members in this House will gladly accept his leave today if he wants to do the right thing and allow the investigation to happen.

But he won't because he knows he has 30 people on that side that would do whatever he says because if they don't, they will be kicked out like the member from Fort Garry. That is the definition of a dysfunctional team, and that is what these members are, plain and simple.

Members opposite are laughing. I don't see what's so funny about that. I don't see what's so funny about that when they have a dysfunctional team that kicks out their team member, then today, the leader of that team makes up some excuse because he has defence lawyers across Canada upset about him, that he blatantly admits today that he lied about the reason why the member from Fort Garry was kicked out, that he now says, oh, after all the blowback across Canada, he now says a different story, revisionist—

The Speaker: Order, please. I would ask the member to withdraw his comments referring to someone lying. That's not allowed by our rules, so the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) would please apologize and withdraw that comment.

Mr. Khan: Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and I withdraw my point—

The Speaker: And apologize. *[interjection]* Order, please. I get that the member for Fort Whyte withdrew his comment, but I did ask him to apologize too, so.

Mr. Khan: I apologize and I withdraw, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Thank you, yes.

Mr. Khan: And I quote, the issues and concerns of bullying, workplace harassment, workplace sexual harassment have been a long-standing issue across the political spectrum, including within the Manitoba Legislature, and within the New Democratic Party of Manitoba, and, quote, working in the Manitoba Legislature for the NDP government was no different: loyalty and 'aquacessing' were expected while senior staff and MLAs were exempted from respecting others or refused to take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Who said that, Honourable Speaker? Not the member from Fort Garry. And I'll table it here for the members opposite. That is from an NDP-issued report on operations that happened here in the Legislature. Their own report says, in 2018, an internal review done by the NDP, that the issues of concerning and

bullying workplace harassment and sexual harassment's been long-standing within the NDP. Their own report says it in 2018. Who was here in 2018? Our now Premier, the member from St. Johns. Let's go down the Rolodex and see who else was here. They are all part of this dysfunctional government and toxic behaviour that's happening right now, and I table their own report for them to read and refresh their memory.

You can go on, and I only have a minute and 45 seconds here, so I'm going to have fly through this here. But if we look at the terminating incident with this Premier, if you look at what the member from Fort Garry has said, if you look at a report in 2016, an article by the MLA of Fort Richmond at that time, a pattern of NDP bullying and toxicity, where that MLA was yelled at, harassed and bullied. And I'll table that article, as well, for the members opposite to read.

I will go on to table another article, in 2019, where now the member from St. Johns repeated her targeted heckling attack on members in this House. This is all for the public to see that this is a repeat pattern done by this NDP and members opposite.

And when you ask the now Premier what his comments were on that, that incident with the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine), the MLA for Fort Rouge says he admitted to seeing fellow New Democrats involved in shouting shame at a fellow PC MLA, but he did nothing. Speaks to the character of the Premier (Mr. Kinew) across the way and their entire toxicity and dysfunctional team that we have across this way running this Province.

They will be exposed for the truth. They are being exposed for the truth. Why won't they call for an independent investigation today? If they're so worried about workplace safety and harassment and bullying, they will do the right thing today, partisan politics aside, and they'll vote in favour of a third-party investigation.

The Speaker: There are no other members wishing to debate?

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): I want to thank my colleague, the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson) for bringing forth this serious motion today to direct the Ethics Commissioner and an independent non-partisan officer of the Legislative Assembly to investigate these serious allegations of a toxic, deceitful and dysfunctional workplace within the provincial government between MLAs, civil servants and political staff working in the Legislative Building.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And I also want to thank the MLA for Fort Garry for coming forward with these serious allegations.

So what have we heard? And why are we calling for there to be a full independent investigation? Toxic, dysfunctional, bully, demeaning, hostile, controlling, deceitful. These are just some of the words that we have heard used to describe the Premier from his own teammate over the past few weeks.

The allegations brought forward by the MLA for Fort Garry are very serious and should be of concern to all members of the Manitoba Legislature, should be of concern to all those who work in the Manitoba government in and outside this building and should be a concern to all Manitobans across this province.

As my colleague, the MLA for Fort Whyte mentioned, in any other workplace in this province, if someone is accused of these serious allegations, HR would be involved, an investigation would be launched and an individual would be put on immediate leave.

These are allegations that we on this side of the House have seen, not just from the Premier himself, but from his ministers and key members of his Cabinet. Since my own election just a year ago, I have witnessed the Premier, the Deputy Premier and many ministers exhibit toxic behaviour inside and outside these Chambers.

Right after the election, the allegation of being a toxic and dysfunctional leader was on full display as the Premier took office. Highly capable, non-partisan civil servants were forced out of their positions because their expertise did not mesh with the Premier's existing thoughts and ideologies.

As my colleague, the MLA for Fort Garry has said, he gets an idea in his head, he goes ahead with it no matter the damage. Well, thanks to this Premier's behaviour, Manitoba's loss has now become Ontario and Alberta's gain. A toxic leader creates a toxic team, which creates a toxic workplace.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) showed despicable behaviour in this House in the spring, shouting down another member where the Speaker said, and I quote: The actions and behaviour displayed by the Minister of Justice were not becoming of someone in a position of such responsibility. By repeatedly shouting down another member of the House who had the floor in debate, not only did he do himself and other members a disservice, but the level of disrespect he showed the Deputy Speaker, who repeatedly tried to call him to order was appalling.

I table this for the House so that the Minister of Justice can refresh his memory and he can go back to the Cabinet table and start to make changes to the toxic workplace that his Premier and he himself, along with other Cabinet ministers have not only created, but also encouraged amongst themselves, and we've seen it here in this House and outside these Chambers.

* (15:50)

We also saw this year the Minister of Labour and Immigration (MLA Marcelino) and the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) bully and threaten Manitobans from exercising their democratic right to protest. We have seen the Minister of Finance (MLA Sala) forcing pieces of legislation through in this omnibus bill to avoid accountability and to hide from Manitobans who may disagree with some of their legislative changes.

These are examples of toxic behaviour and are the direct result of toxic leadership that has been created by this Premier of Manitoba.

Now let's look back prior to the election, because this has been going on a long time, with the toxic and dysfunction of the NDP caucus. My colleague, the MLA for Fort Whyte, spoke about his experiences on Turban Day, and I commend the MLA for Fort Garry for giving the MLA for Fort Whyte a personal call and having a discussion with him personally. As the MLA for Fort Whyte said, it's never too late. It took a lot of courage to come forward and right what was wrong.

It was disappointing to see members of the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) Cabinet and caucus come to the defence of the Premier. The Minister of Infrastructure jumped into a full-'throttled' defence. It seems that there is no room for truth and honesty at the Cabinet table. The Minister of Infrastructure clearly doesn't stand by her words, as she appears to have deleted that account.

In 2018 there was a review, and I quote: the issues and concerns of bullying, workplace harassment and workplace sexual harassment have been a long-standing issue across the political spectrum, including within the Manitoba Legislature and within the NDP of Manitoba.

We saw this about 10 years ago, where there were significant issues among Cabinet members within the former Selinger government and Cabinet, where many women came forward and spoke their truth. This investigation also said working in the Manitoba Legislature for the NDP government was no different, loyalty and 'aquaccessing' were expected, while senior

staff, MLAs, were exempted from respecting others or refused to take responsibility for their behaviours.

This is telling words, Honourable Speaker. And where do they come from? They're not coming from us. They're coming from an internal review of the NDP.

Well, it's been six years and seems nothing has changed. The allegations in this report line up clearly with the allegations that the MLA for Fort Garry has said. For a Premier that keeps talking about how change is possible: well, as I mentioned, toxic leadership creates a toxic team and creates a toxic workplace.

My colleague, the MLA for Fort Whyte, also tabled some documents that exhibited bullying behaviour that has occurred over the past 10 years within this Manitoba Legislature, and I do want to point out that the MLA for Keewatinook, on International Women's Day in 2022, had to retract his comments attacking female legislatures.

The Minister of Families attacked a member of this legislator, indicating that she did not deserve her accomplishments and that they had been handed down to her from a family member.

As I mentioned, Honourable Speaker, toxic leader, toxic workplace. Toxic, dysfunctional, bully, demeaning, hostile, controlling, deceitful. These are strong, strong words that was not easy, I would assume, for the MLA for Fort Garry to be saying. It took a lot of courage for him to come forward. It takes a significant amount of courage for anyone to come forward when they have been presented with or have been a part of, or bullied within their own workplace, and I really do commend the MLA for Fort Garry for coming forward with these allegations. This is very serious. The Manitoba Legislature should take this very seriously. I was disappointed that while other colleagues were speaking to this motion that there was heckling and laughing from the other side of this House.

That is the behaviour that we're talking about, Honourable Speaker. That is the behaviour that Manitobans should see because this is the behaviour that we're seeing. And Manitobans are just starting to get a glimpse of that with the allegations from the MLA for Fort Garry, and we will ensure that Manitobans continue to hear and understand about this toxic leader and their toxic team that is creating a toxic and dysfunctional workplace within this Manitoba Legislature.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm happy to be able to rise this afternoon and just put a few words on record as this does seem to be a growing issue within the Manitoba Legislature.

You know, over the last eight and half years, there have been numerous occasions where I've had the opportunity to both witness first-hand, as well as experience first-hand, inappropriate and—inappropriate behaviour and hurtful behaviour, deceitful behaviour happening here in the Chamber of the Manitoba Legislature.

In my experience, some of the newer MLAs did not witness all of this behaviour over the past year; this does go back probably over a decade, probably much longer, Honourable Speaker. But I'm glad that MLAs are beginning to speak up more and more about the behaviour because it's unacceptable and it's unexcusable, yet it continues to happen.

I've spoken with colleagues over the years on both sides of the House, and it truly is a shared feeling that these Chambers are often the most toxic part of our work experiences as sitting provincial legislators. And that's something we have the ability to change, and yet it's not changing. And we've heard people speak up about it over the year. I've had colleagues here in the House raise experiences and examples of that this afternoon.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, according to our own respectful workplace policy, the Manitoba government is committed to foster a work environment that is respectful and free of all forms of harassment, including bullying. A respectful workplace requires the co-operation and support of each and every employee. And I would make the argument that throwing people under the bus, whether in debate, whether in conversations with one—each other, in the loges and the hallways, I don't think this is a productive way to be able to move forward on this issue.

We here in the Legislature, we need to set a positive example and avoid behaving disrespectfully. According to our own policy, this includes avoiding offending, intimidating, embarrassing and humiliating others. And I don't believe for one minute that people within the Chamber are always following this, Honourable Speaker.

Research indicates this type of bullying and toxic behaviour can lead to psychological stress, limited—limiting productivity and promoting a culture of fear

and retaliation. No one should be fearful of having to come, whether it's into these Chambers, into the Manitoba Legislature. My colleagues have spoken to this already, Honourable Deputy Speaker. This is the people's building. This is a public building, yet there's so much fear that goes on here that defeats the entire purpose of living in a healthy democracy. We need to do better to engage in behaviour that promotes respect, dignity and fairness not only to set an example, but to do the work that we were elected to do.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, our Honourable Speaker often refers to us acting like children. I shouldn't say he refers us as acting like children. When we have children in the gallery, he often has to remind us that there are children in the gallery. And it's because of the embarrassing behaviour that MLAs are putting on. It's unacceptable and wouldn't be acceptable in other workplaces, yet it continues to happen here in the Manitoba Legislature.

And, again, just the amount of MLAs on all sides of the House, over the course—and, again, this is my experience, eight and a half years, but I'm sure it exceeds that, Honourable Deputy Speaker, the amount of individuals who have vocalized that being in these Chambers are the worst part of their job; something needs to be evaluated. Something is not working. That's clear; that's evident. So let's do something.

* (16:00)

I think we all need to strive towards being kind even as we debate this motion, and remember that we're all here for the same purpose. We're here to serve Manitobans.

Thank you.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): The distrust, disillusionment and marginalization among Manitobans who are disappointed by this government's actions and its lack of action mirror the distrust, disillusionment and marginalization we have heard about within this NDP government and caucus.

This is not leadership we are seeing from the Premier (Mr. Kinew), and it is part and parcel of a government steeped in dysfunction. The allegations from the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw) concerning the inner workings of this government show a clear need for an investigation by the Ethics Commissioner.

A trust in government is essential for the fostering of civic engagement and co-operation. When leaders

are seen as untrustworthy, people are less likely to engage with government programs or to support policy changes.

The NDP's dishonesty actually hurts democratic engagement, and this failure to deliver on commitments directly correlates with a growing sentiment of disenfranchisement amongst Manitobans.

Honourable Speaker—or, Deputy Speaker, what did Manitobans get when they voted in this NDP government a year ago? They were given false spin and disinformation. And they can pretty easily test the veracity of NDP claims.

Did the Premier control the prices of groceries like he said he would? No. That is a broken promise. Grocery prices have increased more in Manitoba than in other similar jurisdictions in the past year.

Did the NDP change our provincial approach to ending homelessness? No. Manitobans were deceived. This government actually made a decision to cut homelessness prevention funding.

Did the NDP bring universal snacks, breakfasts and lunches to all kids at schools on all learning days? No. That promise has been watered down by this government. It's another letdown and more false advertising.

Has the NDP made life more affordable? No. Manitobans can see that the cost of living has only increased. The NDP take more of your money through income tax, and the NDP take more from families in property tax, and they plan to take even more in the future. Not even gasoline is more affordable today, Honourable Deputy Speaker, than it was last year.

Nothing in Manitoba has improved because the NDP is not as advertised.

Now, let's look at public safety. Do Manitobans feel safer in their communities? Almost certainly not. Surveys in Winnipeg in particular have concluded the public's perception of safety is worsening. This comes after the Premier (Mr. Kinew) has said some things that weren't true on the debate stage about his ability to effect—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

The member's commentary is straying away from the motion. I'd ask that you steer clear of policy and speak to the motion.

Mr. Nesbitt: Thank you for your guidance, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

I think I'm building on the trust factor and how you need to have trust in the government. And after what we've heard over the past couple weeks, I think that trust is missing.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, real consequences are the issue here. The continual decline in public confidence in this government in these ways I'm highlighting juxtaposed against the NDP's public statement and promises proves the NDP cannot be trusted.

For instance, the significant drop in the percentage of Manitobans who believe in the quality of health care speaks volumes about systematic issues and signals a crisis that demands immediate and effective responses, not an ongoing listening tour as a public relations exercise for the Health Minister and Premier to shore up support with the health workers they had said they would help if elected.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, it's all about trust. One year later, no real action and no real plan. The false advertising, false hope and phoniness are all part of the NDP and, unfortunately, are all now big problems for Manitobans.

This is what we know we can count on with the NDP. They are consistent in deceit and in dysfunction and, as we are learning from internal reports and recent allegations once again, that they are disrespectful.

Indeed, the Premier himself is demeaning and this is far from the image of positivity the NDP sold to voters just about a year ago.

The leadership crisis in this government and the NDP's historical precedent of neglect and mismanagement should combine for the Ethics Commissioner to probe serious questions about the party's ability to govern effectively or even ethically.

Honourable Deputy Speaker, the NDP's record of broken promises and the unfulfilled commitments is not just a massive failure, it is a betrayal of the trust that Manitobans placed in them.

And I would like members opposite to reflect on this: Why did you get into politics? Do you support this? It takes bravery to stand up to your leader, especially if he is a bully. But the NDP caucus has the power to stand up to their leader and help Manitobans embrace a more honest, transparent and professional government in the near future.

I encourage members on the opposite side of this House to support our call for an investigation and to stand up for Manitobans. The NDP's inability to be authentic with voters and its demonstrated failure to

keep promises worsens distrust and disillusionment, and it is a product of dysfunction. It is time for leaders who are respectful, accountable and professional.

On this side of the House, Honourable Deputy Speaker, we have respect for one another, respect for our staff and respect for all Manitobans. It is for all Manitobans that we are calling on this investigation.

Thank you.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak about the serious public allegations of bullying by the Premier, which have now led to a toxic and dysfunctional government that is failing Manitobans and failing to get things done in our province.

In recent weeks, we are gaining a clear picture of the dysfunction that exists within the government and especially the NDP caucus. There are serious ethical implications of this dysfunctional leadership and the demeaning of staff that extends beyond the scope of ordinary human resource concerns and instead cut to the core of our democracy and efficient functioning of our government.

The recent removal of the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw) from the NDP caucus just shed light on the toxicity that exists within the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) government, but was only one example of how serious the concern is. The Premier clearly saw the member for Fort Garry as expendable as he maneuvered to have him kicked out of caucus with a sham explanation that angered and vocalized nearly every defence attorney and their professional association across our country.

Following this, the public was given some insight into the culture of the NDP caucus and the leadership—or should I say, dictatorship—of this NDP Premier.

We only need to look at a few of the quotes from the member for Fort Garry to get a pretty clear picture of the type of person leading our province. These are comments like: the Premier is a dysfunctional and toxic leader, and he's created a dysfunctional and toxic Legislature and culture, and not having to be part of that, I'm alike—quite frankly relieved.

Without some more specific detail, it's hard to know what exactly this dysfunction exactly looks like, so later, another quote starts to paint that picture: the Leader of the NDP is a bully. When he cannot convince people to do things, he needs to pressure them, bully them, demean them.

This is a comment that I think everyone starts to relate to. We all were once in grade school and had to deal with a schoolyard bully, whether it be directly or witness to, and we keep these feelings with us for life. These are scars that, as much time may heal, are always something that we feel when it's seen again.

Many people throughout their work life have unfortunately also—have also come across co-workers or superiors that try to influence actions or operations by this type of behaviour. Unfortunately, many of us have experienced just how helpless you can feel when this behaviour comes from a superior, someone who you depend on in some way or someone who you respected in the past.

* (16:10)

This behaviour is toxic. It is not only toxic because of the influence that it has, but toxic because it makes the victim feel trapped.

The member for Fort Garry explains that this—explains this in another comment: The problem is—it's that it's coming from the Premier, so people are scared to lose their jobs. We can't keep staff at the Manitoba Legislature. This is a party that is doing well, high in the polls. Yet staff who could be there for many years are choosing to leave their—being there for months. There's an atmosphere of bullying, there's demeaning behaviour to Cabinet ministers, and that's the Premier. That's the atmosphere he brings. He's somebody that will get into a screaming match with MLAs in the hallway and will berate them in privilege—in private to talk about how he's the leader, he's the Premier. You have to listen to him, he has said.

These are prime examples of abuse and manipulation. These are examples you hear about in toxic environments and dysfunctional and abusive relationships. We teach our children and the people around us that this type of behaviour isn't acceptable, but yet it is being allowed at the highest position of our provincial government.

This is completely unacceptable for a progressive and inclusive province like Manitoba. This type of behaviour is something that has been recognized as unacceptable for decades, and the effects of this behaviour is well documented. Therefore, policies have been developed in nearly every workplace across our province and criminal laws have been developed to combat against this type of behaviour in spousal relationships.

Both the Legislature and civil service policies have an unambiguous and clearly require—that clearly

require all employees, MLAs and ministers within the government and civil service to abide by the respectful workplace rules.

Our Progressive Conservative government improved the respectful workplace policies with no wrong door for complaints to move forward from the days of NDP harassment complaints, and we introduced strengthened whistle-blower protections to help prevent reprisals that protect whistle-blowers on wrongdoing. These are important pieces of legislation that help to safeguard our democracy.

The Premier seems to be going directly against the policies that were created to keep everyone safe and respected. A concerning fact is that this behaviour doesn't seem to be unique to an isolated incident or one previous member for the NDP caucus. We have seen this behaviour being persistent throughout the lifetime and definitely the political career of this Premier.

In the past year, the Premier was seen strong-arming and attempting to bully the member for Fort Whyte. This appears to be a pattern of the Premier not being able to control his temper and attempting to intimidate others.

I, myself, was a target of the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) intimidation earlier this year when there was a vote on legislation brought forward that I didn't vote the way the Premier was expecting all members to vote. Instead of listening to the rationale for someone to have a difference in opinion from that of the Premier, he insisted publicly and belittled and intimidated me and others who voted the same way, saying that in the future, if we were to ever vote in—with a difference of opinion to what he portrayed as hate to the others who have voted different—voted in a different way, we would need to answer to him and the government of Manitoba.

As a newly elected MLA, I remembered thinking about what that meant and what type of situation I—that vote had put me in. I was unsure of exactly what the implications could be by the Premier onto me. These types of comments by the Premier are intentionally intimidating and made to leave the victims uncertain about their future and their safety.

Not only is this type of behaviour damaging for the relationships immediately involved, but creates and encourages hate and division by those influenced by the Premier. People who have respected and are guided by the Premier as many would towards someone elected to lead the province will be in-

fluenced and encouraged to act in a similar manner. These are types of scenarios and situations that us as Manitobans need to avoid creating and nurturing at all costs.

So the question is: Who will he strike next? Who will be his next victim? A member from his Cabinet? A staff member? A civil servant? Or will he push and intimidate other MLAs? These are scenarios that we can all agree should never be possible in today's Manitoba, especially from a government that has convinced Manitobans that they promote inclusion and are acceptable of the diversity of Manitobans.

We are calling for the full, independent investigation in the interest of all Manitobans to investigate and determine the veracity of these very serious allegations. An independent investigation needs to take place so that we can ensure that all employees and civil servants can have the respectful workplace they deserve.

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): I have a few words that I want to put on the record. I once heard that the Manitoba Legislature was described as a toxic playground for broken people. And I can tell after five years in this building, I can't think of a better description of this place.

And it doesn't have to be. It absolutely doesn't have to be. These are choices that are being made. It doesn't need to be toxic and dysfunctional workplace, and Manitobans in fact would expect that it isn't and are surprised to hear about the level that it is here.

But my concerns with the Premier date back some time, and he is probably one of the best political communicators in my lifetime. And he's created a well-crafted sort of media image, which sort of differs from what people actually see behind the scenes. So I want to share this story with the House because I think it would provide some insights into why we need an inquiry.

So it was the summer of 2019. It was the election and I was canvassing in my riding of Fort Garry, in the south part by the Victoria Hospital. And I'd be going door to door, knocking, and for—I imagine nobody would really know this but there's a lot of apartment towers in that area, and they're filled with seniors. And the reason why the seniors congregated in this area was because of the Victoria Hospital ER. They are aging. They wanted to be literally a minute away from an ER.

So the politics of the day—there had recently been some closures in the city hospitals, including the

Vic ER, and it was big news. And my constituents were upset. This was the No. 1 thing that I would hear door after door after door. They wanted that ER open. And they felt that they were sort of given the bait and switch.

So being, you know, a constituency MLA, I take that information and I'm going to advocate for my constituents. So we have a press conference at St. Vital Park and I attend there. And, of course, the ER closure's major story of the election, major story of the day. Our communications team knows that this question is coming to the leader, who is now the Premier, and they brief him. And they say to him, don't take a position. Just don't commit one way or the other.

And, of course, the Premier does not listen. He's not somebody that takes advice. And he goes up to the podium and confidently declares that, like, there is no way he would open up any ER in a Kinew government.

I was shocked, right? Nobody's been consulted. Our caucus, our candidate team had not been consulted. There'd been no discussion. The MLAs who would have been directly affected by this announcement weren't even given a voice or input into this unilateral, impulsive, knee-jerk decision that was going to change the lives of people in my riding.

* (16:20)

So everybody disperses. I get a moment with the Premier (Mr. Kinew). And I say to him, like, we got to reverse this. We got to say that we're in favour of opening up the Victoria Hospital ER. And I could see him getting frustrated, and I could see him getting agitated, and it was building, and it was building. And he was trying to deflect; he was trying to avoid the conversation, and I wouldn't let it go. This was too important to my constituents to let it go.

And then he snapped. He lunged at me. He grabbed my right arm and yanked it down. He screamed at me: I'm the leader. You do what I tell you to do.

I was shocked. I mean, we're a couple middle-aged men. This is a leader of a political party. Did he just assault me in broad daylight in front of witnesses? But he had. And I was speechless. I didn't—how do you react to that? How do you react when a grown man does that to you.

So that night, I was supposed to go with the Premier to Folklorama, to the Ukrainian pavilion. He wanted me to introduce him to members of my com-

munity. And I was shocked. I was upset. There was no way I was going to do that. I spent that evening in east Fort Garry, knocking on doors, and my phone was just ringing constantly off the hook. And that night I got home, and Liam Martin, who was the chief of staff at that time, had forced the leader to call me. He would not have called me if his chief of staff did not force him to call me that night. They obviously knew I was upset.

So the phone call—and if you want the sort of details or the contents of that phone call: it was eerily similar—almost identical—to what the Premier had said in this House after he assaulted the MLA from Fort Whyte. After he assaulted the MLA from Fort Whyte, he came in—it was question period at that point—and rose and pre-emptively gave a speech and pre-emptively gave a non-apology—the, sorry that you're sorry about this, or, sorry that you're upset about this, non-apology. I had to relive the conversation I had with him that night. It was identical—almost word for word. I can only imagine how many times he's had to say it to people.

And so, nothing got resolved. He never apologized. He never took responsibility. He never acknowledged it to this day.

So they say, you know, when you're under stress that it sort of reveals character. And that's the sort of character that I saw get revealed that day. And of course, and I've said this in the media, that this is a pattern; that this is somebody who cannot accept responsibility, who cannot admit that they've done something wrong.

And why this should matter to Manitobans—it's not just ego of a couple politicians—it's about how we govern ourselves. If you don't listen to anybody, if you never make mistakes and you never acknowledge those mistakes, what type of decisions are you making on behalf of all Manitobans? What type of government are you going to create when that's the atmosphere: that the leader can do no wrong, and the leader is entitled and can get away with whatever they want?

So I think that this isn't just, you know, a disagreement between two people. This is a matter of governance. That Manitobans expect leadership from their leaders and the sort of, you know, smartest guy in the room can't make mistakes, and it's your problem, not mine—Manitobans deserve better. They deserve more.

So I would—some of my colleagues know this story already. Many don't; probably hearing it for the first time. And I would ask you to have those difficult conversations in caucus. It's going to be a long three years, and you do not have to live this way. You do not have to have a leader like this, and there is a way out of this.

And so we'll see, you know, the ball's in your court, it's a test of your character now, and a lot of people over there are good people that I respect, and I'll be very interested to see what you do next.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I'm honoured to be able to speak about this topic today because it's a very, very important topic. Bullying, in general, is just not a good idea and it's terrible, it's damaging for everybody who has to endure it.

Let's start with basic facts. What is the definition of workplace bullying? Intimidating or undermining employees by demeaning their work standards, not giving them credit, setting them up for failure and constantly reminding them of old mistakes, threatening employees' personal self-esteem and work status, isolating employees from opportunities, information and interaction with others.

According to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, what is their definition of—what is workplace bullying? Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could physiologically or mentally hurt or isolate a person in their workplace. Sometimes bullying can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. It has also been described as assertion of power through aggression, and that is something that really concerns me, that I've heard a lot about what has happened to an MLA personally here in our Chamber and to others as well.

I love being an MLA, I love working in this building, I love working with my colleagues and I love working with our staff. And to be honest, when I hear their stories, and meet them in—at community events, I also feel a lot of love for Manitobans; it's an honour for me to serve them. That is never lost on me, and I so—will—so will bring my best to this building every day that I can. It really matters to me deeply, and sometimes take for—I sometimes take for granted that everyone who gets elected feels the same way

about the responsibility that we have to honourably and ethically and to bear—to represent our communities. And I believe that if many of our constituents—many people in this room—if your constituents could actually see how you behave in this room, I think they'd be very disappointed.

I have been treated with respect for the last year that I've been here by my caucus and by my colleagues, and I've never had an issue with bullying at all. My concern is that I've been bullied by others in this Chamber, and yet I've been working with others in this Chamber who have been amazing to me, respectful and kind; and that is how we need to be with each other. I want to encourage everybody to take the high road, because I think that, as elected officials, that's our job: to respect others around us. And I think that's very important.

I want to encourage and ask you all to rise to a level where you are respectful to everybody, because we're all human beings here in this room. And the stories that I just heard the last speaker speak about are very traumatizing for that MLA. Any kind of bullying can be traumatizing for anyone, and then to have people heckling those stories when they're telling how—what happened to them, and if they weren't in the room when it happened and they're heckling them for sharing something that was actually quite hard on their emotions and on their mental health is actually quite disturbing, and it shows a lot of character as to who is doing those things.

So I just want to speak out about that. I want to try to be as forward and honest as I can. I always want to speak the truth, and I appreciate all those around me that speak the truth.

* (16:30)

And I want to respect everybody around me as well. And I think that you all deserve my respect, as long as you behave in a respectful way back.

I've heard stories of people and staff in this Chamber and in this building who have had to work with some ministerial offices that have been forced to do things that they haven't agreed upon, and they've actually sought and left other employment because of the bullying that's been going on in this building. And it hurts me to see that that's what we do as elected officials. That should never happen.

And I want to just bring attention to anybody who's ever had to leave here because of something that's happened in an office. That they, you know, come forward and just talk it over and find resolution

and get help and healing for that, because bullying damages people, and it's hurtful.

And I just want to bring attention to that, we need to really be supportive and open. We need to embrace people and not judge them for coming forward if there's been an issue, and we need to work towards healing and supporting each other, whether we're women, men, whatever the situation is. Women against women, men against men, whatever the situation is, if there's bullying happening, please, let's talk about it, let's stop and let's talk to each other in this Chamber in a respectful way, because I really need that.

When I have to leave here and feel gross after because of the—some of the things that have been yelled across the aisle, I just think that's not a right place, that's not workplace safety.

So I just want to encourage all of us to just be respectful of each other and make it, you know—and a healthy, good place to work. And I want to thank the—my colleague for bringing some these—things forward, because it's important that we start looking at what's happening here and making it a better place to work.

Thank you.

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, members of the Legislative Assembly, I rise today to speak on a motion that calls for a thorough investigation by the Ethics Commissioner into the serious allegations made by the MLA for Fort Garry. These allegations, which suggest a toxic, deceitful and dysfunctional workplace within the provincial government, are deeply concerning and demand our immediate attention.

First and foremost, let us be clear on what is at stake here. We're all at stake here. The allegations point to a workplace environment that has deteriorated under the leadership of the Premier (Mr. Kinew), affecting not only the MLAs, but also civil servants and political staff. Such an environment, if proven true, strikes the very core of our democratic institution and the integrity of our governance.

When those who are entrusted to serve the public are embroiled in toxic relationships and deceit, it undermines not only their ability to function effectively, but also erodes the public's trust in government.

Again, I want to thank the member of Fort Garry for bringing this important topic across. Because as

the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux) said, about sometimes this is the worst part of our jobs of being here in the Legislative Building. And, again, it's the toxicity that we feel in here.

But the 'other' part of it too that I want to talk about is the caring that we feel about in here too. I was going through some family issues a while ago. And there's some members across the aisle that held my hand and held me up, and I'll never forget that. And that's what a workplace facility should be.

There's no place for hate. We can debate all we want, and we may not all agree on what we're saying, but there is no place for hate or bullying in here.

I experienced this myself while sitting in a committee with the member from Morden-Winkler. The member of St. Johns went on for four or five minutes and attacked me and bullied me because I couldn't tell my members how to vote. And I am so proud to wear this bracelet every day, but there is no place in this House for bullying, no matter what side it's on. We need to teach people that want to come into this Legislative Assembly that this is a safe environment to work in.

I did not feel safe that day, and it's unfortunate that I'm being heckled right now. It's a form of bullying that I'm having to accept right now. Again, I've said this over and over. We can debate this at any time. But you know what, the hate has no place. It has no place in my mind, it has no place in the workplace—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. Order. Order.

MLA Bereza: As again I've said over and over, this is the best job that I've ever had, but some days it is the worst place I have ever been to, and it's because of the way that some people treat other people.

Again, I'll say this over and over again. We don't always have to agree, but there is very good friends of mine on this side of the House and there is very good friends on that side of the House that I'm proud to stand with every day.

But we also want to do our jobs; we want to listen to our constituents about what is important to them. And it's up to us to bring that forward, and to be able to bring that forward in a productive way and not feel bullied or intimidated by what's going on.

Honourable Speaker, it's no secret that the success of any government depends on the co-operation and the collaboration of all of its parts. No one who works

in this building should feel intimidated. MLAs, civil servants and political staff alike; these individuals are the backbone of public service and they deserve to work in an environment that is respectful, transparent and supportive. When the workplace becomes dysfunctional—as this has—it creates a ripple effect, stalling progress on important policies for our province, diminishing morale and ultimately impacting the quality of service that the public deserves and should receive.

If there—it is therefore appropriate that this matter be referred to the Ethics Commissioner, an independent authority whose mandate is to investigate and report on ethical breaches within government. The Ethics Commissioner serves a crucial role in maintaining the integrity of our institutions, and their investigation into these allegations will provide a much, much-needed clarity. The public deserves to know where these allegations are substantiated and if so, what steps will be taken to rectify the situation.

It's not just about the member from Fort Garry; it's some of the members on my side, it's some of the members that I've seen the actions on the other side as well too. But we need an independent investigation to make us be better.

Honourable Speaker, I also wish to emphasize that this is not about politics, this is about people. *[interjection]*

It seems to be funny that we try and talk about people, but it's bullying by laughing about taking advantage of people. This is about doing what is right for the people of Manitoba. If we are to preserve the credibility of our democratic institutions, we must hold ourselves—all of us—to the highest ethics standards.

* (16:40)

The Ethics Commissioner investigation will help ensure that those standards are met and that they—that any wrongdoings are brought to light. If indeed there has been a breach of trust, an abuse of power, it is critical that those responsible are held accountable.

I hope someday that my daughters or my granddaughter or my grandson chooses to follow in my footsteps, and if we can make this a little better and a little better for all of us in here, then that's a better day. The motion calls for the Ethics Commissioner's findings to be tabled in a report to the Legislative Assembly. This is an essential step in ensuring transparency and accountability.

The public deserves to see the results of this investigation and we as legislators must be prepared to act on the findings, whatever they might be. If there is—if there are systematic issues within the government, we must be willing to address these head-on in order to move forward. It is only through transparency that we can rebuild the public's trust in government and restore confidence in our leadership.

Thank you so much, Honourable Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Before I call on the next speaker, I'll just do a gentle reminder that props and exhibits aren't allowed in the Chamber.

But with that, the honourable member for Lakeside.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on the record today. Not sure I can use up all my time; I'm feeling a little under the weather here with a little bit of a cough but I'll—I do—did want the opportunity to talk here today about the public allegations about bullying by the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and that have led to toxic and dysfunctional government that's failing Manitobans and failing to get things done for our province.

I just want to say to our member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) how I admire your courage and strength for not only telling us your story today but bringing out the allegations of bullying when you were removed from caucus. I admire that strength. You've got big shoulders to be able to do that.

And you know what, we as leaders that were elected to this building, I think that's what those people elected us for, was to be strong for their—for our constituents and to stand up for what they believe. And that's why they put us here.

You know, I come from a long line of leaders in my family. My grandfather, my father and—spent a lot of time on a lot of boards and committees, whether it be the curling club or the skating rink in my community. But, you know, people rely on good leadership to see things move forward, and what we've been seeing here is not good leadership. We're seeing someone who's bullied in the past, someone who's bullied in the present, and we're seeing that being fed off of their leader into other parts of this Chamber, and I find that unfortunate.

You know, when I was first approached to run for the MLA, there was no way. It was not something that I had aspirations of doing. But as people heard that I was approached and that I was thinking about it, they said, you know, it's people like you that we need in

our Manitoba Legislature, or at any level of government, to bring a little more peace and get things accomplished.

Bullying and heckling back and forth, to me, is just totally unproductive for any level of government. I never did it at the curling club board, I never did it at the skating rink board, I never did it on the RM council. Good leadership brings good people together to make good things happen.

So those are just some of the words that I wanted to put on record. You know, we are elected to represent our constituents and we're not here to be intimidated. We're here to do good work for our good people and they have the faith in us as good people to do that work for them.

This NDP government have all shown tendencies of bullying. There are examples today, just by accusing us of being some people that we're not, and Manitobans don't want to listen to this toxic behaviour. All these bullying tactics, it's just—it's totally wasteful. We deserve a safe workplace in here just as any other workplace in our province, so an independent investigation is definitely needed to—for these allegations.

The member from Fort Garry has brought forward his concerns. Our friend and colleague, our member from Fort Whyte, has experienced those bullying tactics as well, so I think it's only fair to the people that work in this building, in this Chamber, the people that elected us that that independent investigation is done, and there should be no reason why every one of us shouldn't vote in favour of something like that. There's nothing to hide, then let's get it done. Excuse me.

So having said that I—you know, I don't want to use up all my time because I'm really not—I feel like I'm going to start coughing here again right away. So again, I encourage us all to work together for the better of all Manitobans.

And as colleagues back and forth, I mean, I think back to—excuse me—when we had our MLA school a year ago. We—the different parties got together, we built a little bit of a camaraderie. To me that was good; I felt that we could work together.

But, you know, as the—our colleague from Tyndall Park had said earlier, you know, people ask you from time to time: How's the new job? You know, it's—well, I sure enjoy it in my constituency with my people. But some days when I have to come and sit in

this building, it's a little bit hard to put up with. And those are all true facts, coming right from the heart.

So having said that, Honourable Speaker, I'm happy to put those words on the record, and I encourage us all to work together, have a respectful workplace, respect that's used when it comes to leadership. And we're all leaders in this building. We're not just talking about our First Minister who is going and being accused of being a bully. We're all leaders here from our communities. So let's show our communities that we are the leaders that they elected us to be. It all starts right here in this building. If we show good leadership, it'll only work all the way down the line.

So again, I encourage us all to stand behind this motion.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake-Gimli): I think we all know the words: Lead by example. And maintaining professionalism within the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) office is not just a matter of decorum; it is essential for effective government—governance and public trust. If you don't follow respectful workplace rules and you don't adhere to professional code, you should have to answer to that.

Professionalism depends on accountability, and it's disappointing that the NDP Premier refuses to take accountability for his experience and of his now former colleague. His denial and deflection, his flippant comments about lamps and tables is designed to reverse the victim, and offer to shift blame and attention away from his own bad behaviour. But if you've done it your whole life, I guess it's just how you operate.

We should lead by example. This is incredibly unprofessional, and it's how he acts in front of the media with bravado and confidence of a practised showman instead of an ounce of humility or self-reflection, like a proper statesman might.

* (16:50)

It's incredibly disappointing to witness this behaviour, especially given that so many people had high hopes for this Premier. They thought he had changed, and now he stands accused of bringing bad behaviour into the honourable office that he holds, which demands an absolute highest level of professionalism.

The NDP's blatant disregard for professional standards has apparently fostered a toxic environment

that directly impacts the quality of government services. You cannot run government if you are running from the truth. And you cannot create change when you refuse to change yourself.

The Premier himself is demonstrating a failure to change and rise to the occasion. The NDP, the party he leads, he believes in them. Do they deserve to lose for toxicity in the past that has similarly demonstrated an inability to change? So it's deeper than just the Premier; it's rooted in the NDP party.

Will they hold their leader accountable? Will they show change as the NDP party, or will they maintain this ethic among their members? Manitobans expect better from their leaders. We must demand government that prioritizes professionalism. Progressive Conservatives would, and we did.

The NDP are failing to do so, and when political leadership steps—sets a poor example, it ripples through every department creating chaos and dysfunction right down to the program level. Ask any CEO: Culture eats strategy for breakfast. The NDP lacks—their lack of professional standards is a real problem that demands a thorough, professional investigation. The Ethics Commissioner should be involved and this House should receive his report and learn from it, especially the members opposite.

A culture of professionalism is vital for effective governance and leadership. The NDP's failure to uphold these standards has led to disillusionment among public service and the public alike. Manitobans deserve leaders who exemplify professionalism in their conduct and decision-making. It is time to restore integrity to our government, starting with this investigation and soon, by supporting a re-elected Progressive Conservative government.

Some reports from public servants indicate a decline in morale and effectiveness due to the NDP's lack of professionalism, creating an environment where employees feel undervalued and unsupported. These implications from these actions are far-reaching.

The NDP's toxic leadership style has led to ministers feeling intimidated—they're looking across, nodding their heads—resulting in one selling a business his family had owned for decades and in disarray across government departments.

Who makes decisions in the NDP? Who actually does the decision-making? Who cut the homelessness prevention funding and who brought it back?

Professionalism is important for effective decision-making.

I urge my fellow MLAs to support the motion for an ethics investigation and return professionalism to the Manitoba government. This is a critical first step. We must hold the NDP accountable for its failures and demand a culture of integrity that services the interests of all Manitobans.

Together, we can ensure that our leaders uphold the standards and—that the people expect and deserve.

And my time is running short, so I'll skip a few of my notes here and I will end on it's about transparency. The public deserves transparency. The people that work for government deserve transparency. Openish—openness and decision-making and financial matters deters corruption and misuse of powers. The public can hold leaders accountable when they are informed. The public needs to be informed.

Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Honourable Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on this particular opposition day motion on the record, although it's not with any great delight that I do it, given the subject nature of the motion that was brought forward by my colleague from Spruce Woods and seconded by my new seatmate from Fort Garry, which would have been a surprise to anybody just a couple of months ago.

I think I want to start, if you'll indulge me, Honourable Speaker, with a couple of words that relate to this motion and to the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) apology earlier today.

Gerri Wiebe is a respected defence lawyer of the defence bar here in Manitoba. We were in law school together for three years. She grew up in a community not far from where I grew up. And I've had the pleasure of 'interacting' with her in a number of different roles that I've held here in the Assembly and beyond.

And I have not always agreed with the defence bar on things, and they've not always agreed with me, and that's a matter of public record. But what I've always maintained, and what I truly believe, is that the ability for an individual to have a strong defence makes the justice system stronger.

It makes it stronger because it makes decisions stronger. It makes appeals less likely if, in fact, there is a conviction. It ensures, as best it can be, that people are not wrongfully convicted. And certainly Canada

knows, through many cases, not the least of which would be David Milgaard, the impact of wrongful convictions, and Manitoba has not been an exception to that, even in recent months.

And so I particularly, when I saw the comments from the Premier a couple of weeks ago, felt for Gerri Wiebe because she did not to be—deserve to be dragged into the political mess of which this is.

I did have the opportunity, when I was serving as the Attorney General, to sign the order-in-council to ensure that Gerri Wiebe would be presented with a King's Counsel designation that came from a recommendation of a committee. Members of the House may or not know how that process worked, but she was recommended from that committee, and I believe the current Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) would have bestowed that officially upon her in the last couple of weeks.

So I think that this Assembly, already apology has been presented by the Premier, and it will be up to them whether they accept the apology, but I think it's worth repeating that she did not deserve to be brought into this because she is a fine defence lawyer and a credit to her profession.

What I think is important to remember is that there is history and context to this particular debate. In 2016, when the Progressive Conservatives won government, we discovered many things. Of course, the public would talk about things like finances and those sort of things that are often debated in the House and when a new government comes into place. But there were other things that were discovered.

People came forward who were members of the former NDP government, particularly during the Greg Selinger era of that version of the NDP, who said that they had been harassed, who said that they'd been intimidated, who said that they had been bullied. And when they were asked how they responded, they, of course, naturally went to an immediate supervisor; somebody trusted within the government at that time. And they were told—and I'm not saying anything that hasn't been publicly reported before—but they were told at that time that they needed to shut up and suck it up; they needed to be quiet.

And that sparked an investigation, I know, into the NDP itself. I believe that the current Premier (Mr. Kinew) would have been part of that process. In fact, I think the current Premier took some responsibility, maybe not personally, for what happened in the Selinger government, but committed that things

would be different within their party, because things had been toxic within that former government.

* (17:00)

Here in the Assembly, under the former government, a number of different processes were put in place, some that involved the Assembly itself, others that involved government. And we came up with something that was called the no-wrong-door policy, that an individual could go anywhere within government or the Assembly to be able to bring their concerns and to have them heard in a fair and neutral manner. *[interjection]*

Well, and now I hear the member for Rossmere (MLA Schmidt), who has decided to chirp in on this. And I'm not sure why she would want to make this a political situation given what her now-former colleague has said. Maybe she wants to talk about what's happening in caucus and in Cabinet as well, and I would welcome her to do that.

But the point that I would make to her and all members of the Assembly is that the policies that were put into place, the no-wrong-door policy, was never going to ensure that there was never individuals who did things that were wrong. But it was to ensure that there was a way that those things could be brought forward publicly and that that individual didn't have to worry about reprisal, didn't have to worry about punishment and didn't have to, as the NDP, the former NDP government of Greg Selinger, said, you had to shut up and suck it up.

The Speaker in the Chair

There was a mechanism to come forward and have those views heard.

So now the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) has come forward and made significant allegations. Significant allegations that need to be investigated. And we have new processes in the Legislature and through the Ethics Commissioner that didn't exist in—prior to 2016 when the former allegations were made against the former NDP government.

And it's important because we've seen this before, and we've seen the outcome of it before. When individuals are scared to speak because of reprisal, whether that's Cabinet reprisals or caucus reprisals or staffing reprisals, it's not that those things don't become public. My guess is that they almost always do. But they often only become public years later when that fear of reprisal is removed and that fear of reprisal is gone. And the individuals who are victim

of that live with that victimization for many years before they feel free to speak about that.

So we have opportunities for members to be able to come forward, but it seems like what's old is new again. And just like under Greg Selinger, a culture that this Premier said he was going to change when he became Leader of the NDP, now it seems, again, that there is a toxic environment within the government and within the NDP.

But that extends beyond Cabinet and it extends beyond caucus. And there's a power differential between the Premier and Cabinet and the Premier and caucus, but there's a real power differential between the Premier and staff, a very significant power differential. And I've witnessed that at many different levels.

And it's incumbent, if the Premier isn't the person—and I would say that the Premier should be the officer who's most responsible for setting the tone within government, for ensuring that there is a safe place and a safe space within government to be able to speak about abuse, about mistreatment and a variety of different forms of things that staff and others shouldn't have to endure.

But when it's the Premier (Mr. Kiew) himself who is accused of those things, that safe space doesn't exist. In a building like this, in politics, where the Premier assumes a great deal of authority; more, perhaps, than should be the case, but it's what's developed in the last 20 or 30 years in politics. Whether it's the Premier's office or the Prime Minister's office, a tremendous amount of power is vested in that particular 'office'—office and everybody else is succumbed to it.

If it's the Premier who's being accused of that, there needs to be an independent investigation, because there is no other proper way for anybody else to speak out without fear of reprisal. The only thing that happens, then, is they don't say anything, and then in the year 2030 or 2035, somebody's going to come forward and say all these things were happening, and then there'll be some sort of an investigation years after the abuse or the mistreatment has taken place. It's what happened under the former Greg Selinger government.

We can't allow that to happen again. And there is an opportunity now for an investigation to happen. And members opposite, they know that if they have nothing to fear and they have nothing to hide, an investigation would provide some sort of cleansing for

everybody in this House and within the government.
[interjection]

Well, I hear the odd heckling that happens on the other side, and I hope that that isn't indicative of how members actually want to behave on this particular issue, but they have the opportunity not to be what the former NDP government was. You don't have to go down the path of Greg Selinger. You don't have to go down that path. You can set a different course so that in 15 years from now or 10 years from now, we don't have to hear about all the stories that are happening today. Something can be done today, and we can actually pass.

So I encourage the member for—to pass this motion for St. Boniface. You can pass it today.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): It's a tough act to follow, my colleague from Steinbach, but I will do my best.

I am deeply troubled, Honourable Speaker, to hear claims that the Premier has created a dysfunctional and toxic working environment, particularly for staff and civil servants. And today, we're hearing even more troubling allegations of assault. These allegations cannot be ignored, and our call for an independent investigation is reasonable and absolutely necessary under the circumstances.

As MLAs, we all have a duty to ensure that everyone who works in or around government and political offices feels safe and valued and respected. And when that standard is called into question, it undermines the integrity of the entire institution and, of course, the well-being of the people who serve Manitoba.

A respectful workplace isn't a luxury. It's a fundamental expectation of all working people including the people who work in this building. It's essential for productivity, for morale and mental and emotional health.

Every person, whether they're in a leadership role, a staff person, an intern—they all deserve to be treated with dignity, Honourable Speaker.

Bullying, belittling, intimidation: these behaviours are not acceptable anywhere, especially in our workplaces, and certainly not within this building. It's particularly appalling coming from the Premier.

I want to put a couple of quotes on the record that describe what we're discussing today. Quote, the problem is, is that it's coming from the Premier,

so people are scared to lose their jobs. We can't keep staff at the Manitoba Legislature. Staff who conceivably could be there for years are choosing to leave after being there for months. There's an atmosphere of bullying. There's demeaning behaviour to Cabinet ministers, and that's the Premier. That's the atmosphere he brings, unquote.

A further quote that describes the kind of environment the Premier has created: Quote, he is somebody that will get into screaming matches with MLAs in the hallway and will berate them in private and talk about how he's the leader, he's the Premier, you have to listen to him, unquote.

And today, as I mentioned, we're hearing further allegations of actual assault by the Premier against yet another member of the Manitoba Legislature. And not just allegations of assault, Honourable Speaker, but, almost as disturbing: no apology, no acknowledgement and no accountability from the Premier for his actions.

If staff are subjected to toxic work environments, it affects their ability to do their jobs and, ultimately, it will affect the quality of services provided to Manitobans. The decisions made behind closed doors have a ripple effect all the way down to our communities, and we cannot afford to have those decisions compromised by dysfunction within government.

In any other workplace, these allegations would get you removed from your position pending an investigation. That's why these allegations must be taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and addressed transparently. This is not about partisan politics. It's about ensuring that our institutions are strong and healthy and functioning with integrity.

Leadership sets the tone. It starts at the top. If those at the top foster a culture of respect and accountability, that culture permeates the entire organization. Conversely, and, unfortunately, what we're seeing today, when leadership allows or perpetuates toxic behaviour, it harms not only those directly affected but also the reputation and effectiveness of the entire institution, and that's the Manitoba government.

For a party that talks a big talk about culture in health care, it's especially troubling to hear that this is the culture at the very top levels of government. We've heard from members of the Manitoba Nurses Union that culture change hasn't happened, and I think now we know why. If the culture from the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and his ministers is this bad, why on

earth would anything change within departments and service delivery organizations?

* (17:10)

It also calls into question their whole strategy of listening, which has been the major plank of the NDP's health policy. Health-system leaders and front-line workers are not going to feel safe coming forward in a culture where they could be demeaned or belittled or bullied.

And how are Cabinet ministers to stand up for the stakeholders in their portfolios at the Cabinet table when the Premier has created a toxic, dysfunctional, demeaning and bullying environment? After all, as the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) has said, quote, essentially what he—the Premier—is trying to do is remove strong, independent voices in the caucus who would be critical about the direction of his government. Unquote.

A Premier that surrounds himself with yes-people is a weak Premier. Leadership requires a diversity of voices around you. You cannot just surround yourself with the people who will agree with you, reflect your own views back to you and prop up your decisions even when they're bad decisions.

And it gets worse. Cabinet members and caucus members are actually upholding and enabling this behaviour. They stand beside a Premier accused of bullying, toxic and demeaning behaviour towards his colleagues and staff, and members of the NDP Cabinet excuse and endorse this behaviour.

When the issue suits them, members opposite will go on and on about the importance of not being a bystander, of calling out bad behaviour. But when it's their Premier, they close ranks around him and turn a blind eye to the very serious allegations being made.

They are the ones enabling this behaviour to continue. They could stand up to the Premier and demand better, but they're scared.

And it gets worse. Not only are they endorsing and enabling the Premier's behaviour, they're perpetuating it themselves. Earlier this year, we saw the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) stand in this House and berate the former member of—for Tuxedo in possibly the most disgusting, toxic and disrespectful display of behaviour I've ever seen in this Legislature.

I want to be clear: any environment that allows for disrespect, harassment or intimidation is one that fails its people. We can't allow that to continue.

And to the people of the Roblin constituency, I want you to know that, along with my colleagues on this side of the House, we will continue to advocate for transparency and accountability and, indeed, basic respect in our government institutions. And that's what an independent investigation will achieve.

I'm a former intern and a former staffer in this building and at City Hall. I know first-hand how the power balance works between political staffers and the politicians they work for. To hear that staff are being demeaned and belittled and forced to work in an environment so toxic that they're leaving in droves genuinely concerns me.

I know how stressful it is to be a political staffer. Your job is not protected. You serve at the pleasure of the politicians who hired you.

I may not agree with the politics of the Premier's political staffers, but I am sure they work very, very hard. I hate the idea of them toiling in fear of the Premier's temper. You can see it in the incredible turnover they've had in political staff since becoming government. Clearly, the environment they're working in is not healthy.

And when it comes to civil servants, it's even more disturbing. These are career public servants, apolitical experts in our system who deserve nothing but respect and gratitude for the role that they play. The toxicity and the dysfunction created by the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and his Cabinet makes it difficult for them to do their jobs, and that will have direct impacts on the people of Manitoba who rely on a civil service that's functioning at its best to deliver programs and services.

This motion will come to a vote today. And if members opposite vote against it, that will be very telling. That will be a very conscious decision, to continue to endorse and uphold this toxic, abusive behaviour displayed by the Premier.

If there's nothing to hide, then there should be no problem with an investigation. Support this motion, let's get to the bottom of these allegations and improve this workplace for all of the people who are privileged to work here.

Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): Gives me great honour to bring some words today and put them on the record about something that is very disturbing; something that is very telling of this Premier and this NDP government, something that worries not only us here in this Chamber, more so the staff that work here

and the citizens that we have been elected to serve. They expect better, they want better and they deserve better.

So I've heard a number of my colleagues today ask, what are you afraid of, of bringing this forward. What are you afraid of? So the saying is, we have nothing to fear but fear itself. So my question is, what do you fear? Do you fear being removed from a position if you stand up and say what exactly is going on with the intimidating and the bullying? Honourable Speaker, do they fear being kicked out of their caucus and removed as an independent? We've seen that happen here.

You cannot lead by fear and make successful government. Leading by fear creates yes-people, and the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw) spoke about that, about this Premier wanting yes-people. When I was in my leadership position prior to this, and running an organization, I made sure that I had naysayers or contrarians within my executive team and within my leadership group because I wanted to hear different opinions. I wanted to hear what they thought and then collectively we would make that decision. It appears—by the allegations that have been made by the member from Fort Garry—that that's not the case with this government; that it is one voice, one person who is telling everybody what is to be done. But more so it's the staff that have to go through this on a day-to-day basis.

And I know, from a large organization, the corporation of the City of Brandon that I was a part of, that a lot of the issues that come with intimidation or bullying can lead to mental health issues and can lead to poor decision making. And, therefore, people that are bullied, people that are intimidated and people that are pushed into decisions that they necessarily don't agree with have a tendency to slowly diminish their mental health because they have fear. There can be depression, there can be anxiety. And, again, I don't know what each individual is suffering, Honourable Speaker, but what I do know is that those sort of toxic traits can cause that sort of reaction by individuals.

What I also wanted to point out and what is very notable is that the only person so far from this NDP caucus that has spoke on this has been the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine). Folks, Honourable Speaker, their silence speaks volumes.

It's difficult, I know, to do the right thing for the right reason, and to support this very important resolution that we bring forward, and it's important that each and every one of you look deep inside and say,

do I want to work in a toxic workplace? Do I want to work for a toxic leader?

There is nobility in having a third party look into allegations, and the nobility of that is that you can completely remove yourself from this and allow the process to take place. That's the reasons why in the civilian world we have courts, and in those courts we have prosecutors, and we have defence lawyers, and we have judges and we have witnesses; all of those areas must be respected to come to a decision that is proper and that is binding. And I think that would be important for each and every one of us to agree to here within this Chamber.

* (17:20)

If there is allegations—and there is—of toxicity within the government, it needs to be addressed; not 10 years from now, not 15 years from now, but today. And the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. When I hear my—the member from Steinbach talk about the previous NDP premier, who has mentored this now-Premier (Mr. Kinew) and the bullying allegations and the threats and the innuendos of the toxicity within the organization, as I say, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree and we don't need to see a repeat of this.

The no-wrong-door policy that I heard the member from Steinbach talk about is new to me, but it makes absolute sense. There should be no wrong door to go to. There should be no wrong person to talk to that has any sort of authority. And that starts at the very top door, the door to 204, to make sure that that's where the tone is set and that's where the toxicity is erased within this organization.

I was surprised today to hear this Premier make his apology, but what surprised me even more was the silence, again, by the Minister for Justice at the time who allowed this to happen. And I understand that as a political position, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) would work with his team and work with his colleagues because it's a political appointment, the ministerial appointment.

But when you're the Attorney General for the Province of Manitoba, that very prestigious, very important position, that's where you need to stand up. And great leaders make tough decisions and often stand alone. And this was a time when the Minister of Justice, the Attorney General, could have made it clear, parted ways with the toxicity and with the leadership telling him what to do, and made a stand at that very time because defence lawyers are a major part of our justice system. And, at that time, the

integrity needed to stand up and depart from your leader is of the utmost importance.

I would encourage you, as I finish my words on the record today, to do some self-reflection. I know, and I'll put it on public record that when we meet as a team on this side, there is a lot of laughs, there is a lot of joy, there is a lot of good conversation and no toxicity. Matter of fact, it's hard to finish a meeting because there is a lot of fun that has happened.

So, Honourable Speaker, if I can put these final words on the record, I would encourage this NDP government to ask your leader for a free vote on this motion today.

Thank you.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I stand here today to call for the Ethics Commissioner to investigate these workplace allegations and consider this motion that my colleague from Spruce Woods has brought forward. And I would also like to commend the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw) for bringing these allegations forward and expressing it in the public, but also for sharing other experiences today here with us in this Chamber.

Heard lots of talk about bullying and what that is in leadership, in the workplace and in government. It's often viewed through the lens of inspiration, motivation and the ability to foster a positive environment. However, when we explore the darker side of leadership, we encounter toxic behaviours that can undermine these ideals.

Toxic leadership manifests into various ways, including authoritarianism, manipulation and a lack of accountability. A toxic leader prioritizes their own agenda over the well-being of their team, creating a culture of fear rather than one of trust. This approach stifles workplace creativity and collaboration, but also leads to high turnover and diminished morale, leaving people and co-workers or colleagues feeling undervalued, which in turn can lead to disengagement and a lack of productivity.

And we've heard of some of those situations here today, where we know staff are leaving within the NDP caucus, and, you know, with the tactics that the Premier has been putting and—putting forward and the pressure.

And this is why we are asking the Ethics Commissioner to investigate the serious allegations brought forward by the MLA for Fort Garry and the allegations regarding the conduct of the Premier in the

workplace, focusing on bullying behaviours and the implication on the workplace environment.

We've all heard and read about the most recent allegations, again, by the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw). And I'm going to quote: Essentially what he is trying to do is remove strong, independent voices in the caucus who would be critical about the direction of his government. This action, in itself, is bullying and creates the toxic work environment. The member from Fort Garry goes on to say: It's not a collaborative environment; it's sort of the Premier telling people what to do and then being horrible to them when it's not done perfectly.

What constitutes workplace bullying? It includes behaviours like intimidation, harassment and undermining colleagues. Abuse can be of many different forms. It can be verbal abuse, which includes yelling or insults thrown to one's way. It can lead to social isolation, exclusion from team activities or conversations. Like my colleague from Brandon West referenced here, it can lead to mental health issues, too. And undermining work or maybe even blaming another colleague for an error, threatening behaviour with words and/or actions.

The impact that bullying can have on a colleague or employee can lead to major health issues, like I've already referenced, and lead to significant decline in job performance, which, in turn, can affect the overall morale of a team.

An unhealthy work environment is just described—or is described what can be a toxic culture where colleagues are left feeling unsupported, angry, frustrated and perhaps very alone at times. Moreover, toxic leaders often engage in micromanagement, like that we've heard about of the Premier (Mr. Kinew) here today, undermining the team's autonomy and ability to make good decisions.

This not only breeds resentment, but also stunts personal and professional growth within a working environment. Importantly, the effects of this toxic leadership extend beyond the immediate workplace. They create a ripple effect in relationships and reputations within the broader community.

Over time, these types of leaders will struggle to attract and retain talent, ultimately impacting their performance and success. Leadership is a powerful tool for guiding teams toward success, and it is crucial to recognize and address toxic behaviours.

I personally have heard from many individuals who have felt threatened and fearful in the presence of

this Premier. This motion and investigation is about restoring respect at the highest level, holding the Premier to account for his demeaning, controlling and pressure tactics.

As leaders, we must all strive to inspire and empower those around, foster a culture of respect, collaboration and accountability. Only then can we truly harness the potential of effective leadership and drive our organizations toward a brighter future.

As well, Honourable Speaker, the NDP has a long history of dysfunction and disrespect toward its staff and public. History is repeating itself under this government, which is not as advertised. Toxicity has returned to government, and it's up to all of us to call out the pattern of dysfunction and put a stop to it.

* (17:30)

When we observe a pattern of dysfunction, we must confront it head on. The repeated failures of the NDP, including a failure to properly address long-standing issues of workplace toxicity and a lack of accountability reflect an enduring culture that prioritizes political interests over the well-being of Manitobans.

The political staff who work in this Legislature deserve a safe workplace. Under the previous government, they lived in fear of physical harassment, sexual harassment and toxicity. Now we hear that under this current NDP Premier, toxicity has returned.

We hear there are screaming matches in the Legislature, that the Premier is demeaning to staff and MLAs and that he generally displays disrespectful behaviour. As well as high-ranking officials from the previous NDP government have been rehired, raising concerns about whether any real change has taken place. The dark days of the NDP have returned.

Honourable Speaker, this is an issue not only of concern for staff within the Legislative Building and the NDP caucus, but the general public. There are reports that the NDP's ongoing failures have led to significant dissatisfaction among those in Manitoba.

This sort of toxicity also affects public servants. The NDP's disregard for professional standards has fostered a toxic environment that impacts the quality of government services. And when political leadership sets a poor example, it ripples through every government department, creating chaos, dysfunction throughout the whole program.

Manitobans expect better from their leaders. We must demand a government that prioritizes profes-

sionalism and respect here in the workplace and in government. The cycle of dysfunction must end. A government must demonstrate integrity and respect.

I urge my fellow MLAs to support this motion for an ethics investigation in order to return professionalism to the Manitoba Legislature.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Very happy today to stand up and put some words on the record. I thank the member from Fort Garry for coming forward. I know it can't be easy to come forward and talk about matters that affect our government such as this.

I've said it many times in this House, I've stood up and I've said that the behaviour in this House is childish. It is beyond childish. When I thought about running for government—I think of the government as being a higher calling, a place of great respect. We're the stewards of our province, and we need to make sure that we do something that leaves an impact for future generations.

I've said many times the behaviour that is happening in this House, if somebody would speak to your spouse that way, you would be offended. But yet, we continually do it day after day after day after day. It's demeaning to yourselves and to anybody else who holds this office.

I look around and I meet a lot of these individuals who are here, and I truly respect you. You were elected to be here, and for that, you will have my utmost respect. But as a person, when you're screaming and yelling, as we witnessed other ministers here screaming across the aisle and not stopping, you have no respect from me.

I've been at many events, and one of the recent events, the member from Fort Garry was there, and he came up to me and said, hey, I just want to make sure that if there's any other people from your party here, that I get all your names so I don't miss anybody. It's very important that we represent everybody and not have this as a partisan event. And for that, I respect you. You went out of your way—Honourable Speaker, he went out of his way to make sure that he gave respect to the office that we hold.

And people can try to gaslight the public and say because, you know, somebody is associated with somebody who might be associated and does something wrong, we don't want him in our caucus. Well, we all know that that is a terrible, terrible thing to say, and we had the Premier (Mr. Kinew) today say, I

apologize; that's not really what happened, we have thing of differences here.

I would assume that the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw) is much like myself. If I've got something to say, I'm going to say it and not always are people going to agree with me. And I get that. That is a healthy debate.

And every time I have something to say in my caucus, I am proud to say they listen to me. They might not agree with me, but they listen. Without retribution, I can say what is on my mind and how I feel. And that's what makes good governance.

To be here at this moment and we have to have a debate whether we're going to call for the Ethics Commissioner—that should be automatic. There should be a mechanism in place that says this is a toxic environment, we have people leaving, this is—we have reports of assault. This should be automatic that we stand up and we stand for the people in this House, the people in this building and the people in our province.

I've got involved years ago at a woman's shelter, and I talked to the director, and she said to me at the time, it takes nine times for somebody that's been abused to finally leave. It takes them nine times and an attempt to leave before they stay away. That is unacceptable, and the reason that is so unacceptable is because we don't have the mechanisms in place to make sure everybody's accountable.

So we need to make sure that not only in this House when there's a—toxic behaviour, we don't stand by the person who's creating the toxic behaviour because they haven't turned on you yet. You have to say, that's your battle. You stand on your own feet and you fight your own battle. I am here to support people who say that they have an issue.

And if the member for Fort Garry says there's an issue, it's an issue. It's true. That's their truth, and an investigation will determine whether or not that is determined by the investigator whether we need to address something.

Again, in this House, I've seen it today, we're talking about how toxic of an environment this is, and everybody admits that. It's a terribly toxic environment. Why? We're elected to come here to govern. We're lawmakers. There's nothing wrong with saying, you presented a law, and you know what? I think we can work with it. We can enhance it, we can make it better for all of Manitoba.

We need to stop this bullying and move forward together as a government.

Honourable Speaker, the fact that I'm standing here today, I'm speaking from the heart, and I say it every time: if you don't like what somebody's saying, shut up, wait your turn, and when it comes around to you, object respectfully.

Screaming across the aisle. I've been on boards; I've presented to boards all over North America, manufacturing companies that do work for Ford, Dodge, Fiat. I've been at Manitoba Aerospace Association talking to professional boards, and if people would talk like we talk in here, they would walk you to the door and you would never, ever come back.

But yet, in this House, we think it's okay to call somebody down, to jump up and down, scream over top of them when they're talking. How shameful. People, grow up. Grow up and do the job you're elected to do. Represent your constituents. Come here every day hoping to do better, not to shame somebody. We know across the way on each side that we're not going to agree all the time, and that is healthy. That is healthy for our government, to make sure that all represents—all people in our province are represented equally. But when we sit here on a daily basis screaming back and forth and not getting anything accomplished, it is absolutely ridiculous.

For anybody to think that voting against asking for an independent review of a toxic workplace is acceptable, I'm telling you right now: it is not. You have to make sure that you protect everybody in this building. If one accusation is made, that is one too many.

* (17:40)

So we need to stand together as colleagues in here representing the people of our province and let them know that we will stand for one Manitoban every single time.

Thank you.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, I couldn't hear that you acknowledged me considering all the clapping in here and I was waiting for somebody from the NDP side to maybe want to put a few words on the record.

It is, it's unfortunate, Honourable Speaker, for us to be debating this opposition day motion today in this incredible building that our constituents have elected us to come to and represent not only them but also all Manitobans.

And so today I take a look at the opposition day motion, and when I say debating the motion, it sort of—usually need a couple people to debate and from what I understand, the NDP are okay with sort of allowing it to go through. And as my good friend and colleague, the MLA for Selkirk had just pointed out, I think the government side will have a tough time voting against this motion because it is talking about some serious allegations brought forward by the MLA for Fort Garry towards the Premier (Mr. Kinew).

And so I just will reread the motion. The opposition day motion is that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba direct the Ethics Commissioner to investigate the serious allegations brought forward by the MLA for Fort Garry of a toxic, deceitful and dysfunctional workplace created by the Premier within the provincial government between MLAs, civil servants and political staff and that the Ethics Commissioner's findings be tabled in a report to the Manitoba Legislature.

Now, Honourable Speaker, I want to be clear. This is not some form of political fallout specifically about the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) versus the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew). This is something that is bigger than that, because I've witnessed it here. I've witnessed it here in the Chamber, in Estimates not that long ago. The Premier sat across from me. The member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle) actually was the one who was in the Chair, chairing Estimates.

And there was times when, I don't know, the member for St. Boniface potentially couldn't hear the Premier heckling from his seat when it was my turn to be speaking on the microphone, but it actually got to the point, Honourable Speaker, it got to the point where the member for St. Boniface who is Chair of the committee had to already just do what the Premier had asked because it was evident that there was going to be some form of consequences. And this was back at the end of May, and I called it out a few times.

And what worries me about the MLA for Fort Garry's serious allegations towards the Premier is that, who else is this happening to behind closed doors? Civil servants? Staff at the Leg. Assembly? Their own political staff? I don't know. I'm not behind there. But you know what, I look across, there's many members—many members—sitting across the way in the government—and, matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, you had a chance to sit on that side of the House in opposition—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I just remind the Honourable Leader of the Official Opposition to use the proper pronouns: Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Ewasko: Honourable Speaker, I apologize about that. I had a bit of a summer and yes; and so I apologize to you and I believe I've been doing better on the Honourable Speaker thing.

So, it's unfortunate that we're having heckling, especially on a debate of asking the Ethics Commissioner to talk about a respectful workplace. We know—we on this side of the House—we felt that there should be a respectful workplace. So we took the respectful workplace policy and we strengthened it, and we put in a process so that members, staff, they could go ahead, and they could report—follow the process and do what they need to do.

This is about protecting that respectful workplace. That's what we're doing here today. We're having these conversations, this debate, because we want to make sure that we're ensuring the people that come to work on a day-to-day basis here, not just political staff, not just MLAs, not just clerks of the Assembly, any staff, civil servants, know that they can come here, and they can come here and feel safe to work, and they can leave here feeling safe that they've had a great day.

So that's what we're calling on the Ethics Commissioner to do a review. The Speaker knows—the Honourable Speaker knows that I had written a letter to them and asked for a third-party investigation to the serious allegations brought forward by the member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv), not just to protect the member for Fort Garry but as to see what else is going on, because we have seen signs.

And I know that, you know, one of the members across the way are busy laughing, which is unfortunate, because, actually, the Premier (Mr. Kinew), after a month or so after degrading some of our prosecutors and some associations across this country, actually stood up and apologized.

And I think there's actually a few members across the way that are going to need to apologize as well, because they stood by him—they stood by him—and we haven't heard anything from those members. And, you know what, I'm going to refrain from naming their constituencies for now, Honourable Speaker. Because they know who they are, and they should be apologizing to Manitobans as well. And not just Manitobans, but Ms. Wiebe and other prosecutors and people that are in that profession.

We take a look at ethics. Want to talk about ethics. Every Manitoban expects and deserves leadership that prioritizes the public good over political gains. Public good over political gains. That is something, Honourable Speaker, that it seems to already—we're almost to one complete year. But I guess about 11 months in and the wheels started falling off the NDP government's vehicle. And it's unfortunate.

An Honourable Member: Cart.

Mr. Ewasko: The cart. Thank you. Well, we know that the horse can't pull the cart, because they've killed that horse.

But that being said, Honourable Speaker, our main focus here is to see that we're going to receive support on all sides of the Chamber to see this opposition day motion move forward. I know that your response to our request to ask for a third-party investigation, and if I may quote the letter—and this is for the public. This is for MLAs on all sides of the Chamber. This is for staff—political staff, civil servants, anybody who—the hundreds or thousands of people that are listening to us this afternoon.

And I quote, coming from the letter from His Honour—Their Honour, the Speaker of the Leg. Assembly, third paragraph: For your information, formal complaints made against a member under the policy referred to an independent external expert in investigations, the practice of using an independent investigator is consistent with the Legislative Assembly's commitment to ensuring all complaints are treated seriously without concern about political interference with such investigations. It is also important to note that respectful workplace investigations under the policy are conducted in a confidential manner.

Thank you for that, Honourable Speaker.

So now we're asking for the Ethics Commissioner to go ahead and do their investigation and table the findings.

We know that this isn't really anything new within the NDP party. We know that, back quite a few years ago already, eight years ago-ish, they don't do a great job vetting their candidates. We know that.

* (17:50)

And so today stands the Premier of Manitoba, and people are starting to shed some light on what happens in behind the curtain, behind the scenes when the cameras are off, the mics are off.

So with that, Honourable Speaker, I encourage every member of the House, vote in favour of this opposition day motion and move it forward for a positive vote.

The Speaker: Any other members wishing to rise in debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question before the House is the opposition day motion in the name of the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson).

Do members wish to have the motion read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

The Speaker: I hear a yes.

The motion reads that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba direct the Ethics Commissioner to investigate the serious allegations brought forward by the MLA for Fort Garry of a toxic, deceitful and dysfunctional workplace created by the Premier within the provincial government between MLAs, civil servants and political staff, and that the Ethics Commissioner's findings be tabled in a report to the Legislative Assembly.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

The Speaker: All those in favour, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

The Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Recorded vote, please.

The Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested, call in the members.

Order, please.

The question before the House is the opposition day motion brought forward by the honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson).

* (18:30)

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Ayes

Balcaen, Bereza, Byram, Cook, Ewasko, Goertzen, Guenter, Hiebert, Jackson, Johnson, Khan, King, Lagassé, Narth, Nesbitt, Perchotte, Pivniuk, Stone, Wasyliw, Wharton, Wowchuk

Nays

Altomare, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Cable, Chen, Compton, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Fontaine, Kennedy, Loïselle, Marcelino, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Naylor, Oxenham, Pankratz, Redhead, Sandhu, Schmidt, Simard, Smith, Wiebe.

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Ayes 21, Nays 26.

The Speaker: I declare the motion defeated.

* * *

The Speaker: The hour now being well past 5 o'clock, this House stands adjourned, and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

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