



## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

### VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS No. 58

#### SECOND SESSION, FORTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE

#### PRAYER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

10:00 O'CLOCK A.M.

Mr. BALCAEN moved:

THAT Bill (No. 232) – The Victims of Impaired Drivers Commemoration Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)/Loi sur la Journée de commémoration des victimes de conducteurs aux facultés affaiblies (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a Third Time and passed.

And a debate arising,

And Mr. BALCAEN, MLAs LOISELLE and BEREZA and Hon. Min. FONTAINE having spoken,

And the Question being put. It was agreed to, unanimously.

The Bill was accordingly concurred in, read a Third Time and passed.

Mr. JOHNSON moved:

Resolution No. 17: Ensuring Reliable Emergency Services in Rural Manitoba

WHEREAS reliable access to emergency services, including 911, is a fundamental public safety necessity and can mean the difference between life and death; and

WHEREAS on March 23, 2025, a resident in the RM of Fisher tragically passed away after family and friends were unable to reach 911, despite making numerous attempts, due to an internal 911 routing malfunction at major cellular provider; and

WHEREAS during the emergency, loved ones attempted to provide CPR while frantically trying to connect with emergency medical services, ultimately only reaching help by contacting a local RCMP officer directly; and

WHEREAS the March 2025 tragedy is not an isolated incident, there have been reports of failed 911 cellular calls from neighbouring RMs; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government indicated in April of 2024 that it was undertaking a review of 911 services and that a final report would be expected in the coming months however further tragedy ensued with no report released; and

WHEREAS rural Manitobans continue to face challenges accessing emergency services due to unreliable cell service and gaps in the ability of service providers to connect with emergency telecommunication infrastructure, especially in areas like the Interlake; and

WHEREAS the 911 dispatch centre serving rural and northern Manitoba was not alerted to the fact that they were not receiving inbound 911 calls until hours after the incident, raising concerns about the lack of real-time monitoring and coordination between telecommunication service providers and emergency response systems; and

WHEREAS local officials, including the RM of Fisher, have previously raised concerns with the Provincial Government and the RCMP about the reliability of 911 services in rural areas, calling for immediate action; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government must ensure that emergency communication systems are adequately staffed and resourced, particularly for rural and northern regions, and that 911 access is not compromised by private sector infrastructure failures; and

WHEREAS failure to invest in resilient, province-wide emergency response systems and telecommunications infrastructure puts rural lives at risk and undermines public confidence in essential services.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to investigate and release a report in its entirety regarding the causes of the 911 network failures that contributed to the tragic loss in the Interlake region and commit to working with municipalities, telecommunications providers, and first responders to strengthen 911 reliability so that all Manitobans, including those in rural and northern communities, have uninterrupted access to emergency services.

And a debate arising,

And Mr. JOHNSON having spoken,

And MLA COMPTON, Messrs. NARTH and PIWNIUK, MLA PANKRATZ and Mr. WOWCHUK having questioned the Member,

And the debate continuing,

And Hon. Min. MARCELINO, Mr. PIWNIUK and MLA CORBETT having spoken,

And MLA DEVGAN speaking at 11:55 a.m. The debate was allowed to remain in their name.

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In accordance with Rule 34, the Opposition House Leader announced that the Private Member's resolution titled "Removing Retail Sales Tax on the Construction and Sale of Homes" will be considered on the next Thursday of Private Members' Business.

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Pursuant to sub-rule 24(7), the division on the proposed motion of MLA CROSS was deferred to take place today at 11:55 a.m.

THAT Bill (No. 208) – The Manitoba Small Business Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)/Loi sur le Mois de la petite entreprise au Manitoba (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs), be now read a Second Time and be referred to a Committee of this House.

And the Question being put. It was agreed to, on the following division:

**AYE**

ASAGWARA	LAMOUREUX
BALCAEN	LATHLIN
BEREZA	LOISELLE
BLASHKO	MALOWAY
BRAR	MARCELINO
BUSHIE	MOROZ
BYRAM	MOSES
CHEN	MOYES
COMPTON	NARTH
COOK	NAYLOR
CORBETT	NESBITT
CROSS	OXENHAM
DELA CRUZ	PANKRATZ
DEVGAN	PIWNIUK
FONTAINE	REDHEAD
GOERTZEN	SALA
GUENTER	SANDHU
HIEBERT	SCHMIDT
JOHNSON	SCHOTT
KENNEDY	SCHULER
KHAN	SIMARD
KING	STONE
KOSTYSHYN	WIEBE
LAGASSÉ	WOWCHUK.....48

**NAY**

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The Bill was accordingly read a Second Time and referred to a Committee of this House.

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1:30 O'CLOCK P.M.

The following Bills were read a First Time and had their purposes outlined:

(No. 47) – The Fair Trade in Canada (Internal Trade Mutual Recognition) Act and Amendments to The Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act (Buy Manitoba, Buy Canadian Day)/Loi sur le commerce équitable au Canada (reconnaissance mutuelle en matière de commerce intérieur) et modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs (Journée « Achetons manitobain, achetons canadien »)

(Hon. Mr. MOSES)

(No. 234) – The Pride Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)/Loi sur le Mois de la fierté (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs)

(Mr. BLASHKO)

(No. 220) – The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la confiscation de biens obtenus ou utilisés criminellement

(Mr. WASYLIW)

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Pursuant to sub-rule 28(1), and in accordance with the provisions agreed to by the House on March 26, 2025, MLA CHEN, Mr. WHARTON, Ms. LATHLIN and MLAs LAMOUREUX and PANKRATZ made Member's statements.

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Following Oral Questions, the Speaker made the following ruling:

Following Oral Questions on May 15, 2025, the Honourable Government House Leader raised a point of order regarding questions that had been asked by the Honourable Member for Brandon West during Oral Questions that day. The Honourable Government House Leader explained in her point of order that, while understanding that Members do have the protection of parliamentary privilege to speak freely in the House, there are lines that should not be crossed. Specifically, the Government House Leader stated that Members should not be invoking Members' families in debate in the House, asserting that there should be a principle in the House "that our families, our children, our loved ones are not brought into this Chamber".

The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader also spoke to the point of order before I took it under advisement.

Let me say first that the Honourable Government House Leader has raised some important concerns in her point of order. Members will know that I have been concerned about decorum in this House for many weeks now, and language used by some Members has been a part of those concerns.

In response to another matter raised in this House recently, I spoke about the privilege of freedom of speech shared by all Members. I am going to expand on those comments now, as they are directly relevant to this point of order.

The question of whether language used in the House is unparliamentary or not is related to the fact that under the protection of parliamentary privilege, Members enjoy the right of freedom of speech during legislative proceedings. Bosc and Gagnon devote considerable attention to this topic in the Third Edition of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*. On page 89, they state that:

By far, the most important right accorded to Members of the House is the exercise of freedom of speech in parliamentary proceedings. It has been described as:

*... a fundamental right without which [Members] would be hampered in the performance of their duties. It permits them to speak in the House without inhibition, to refer to any matter or express any opinion as they see fit, to say what they feel needs to be said in the furtherance of the national interest and the aspirations of their constituents.*

However, Bosc and Gagnon also emphasize the need for the judicious use of privilege of freedom of speech, and the necessity to take great care in the exercise of this privilege. On page 97, they address the responsibility that comes with the exercise of freedom of speech, noting that:

The privilege of freedom of speech is an extremely powerful immunity and on occasion Speakers have had to caution Members about its misuse. Ruling on a question of privilege in 1987, [House of Commons] Speaker Fraser spoke at length about the importance of freedom of speech and the need for care in what Members say[.]

And here I will quote directly from Speaker Fraser's 1987 ruling:

Such a privilege confers grave responsibilities on those who are protected by it. By that I mean specifically the Hon. Members of this place. The consequences of its abuse can be terrible ... All Hon. Members are conscious of the care they must exercise in availing themselves of their absolute privilege of freedom of speech.

This is the context in which I am considering the point of order raised regarding the comments made by the Honourable Member for Brandon West. The Member has the freedom to make such comments, but I would urge him and other Members to consider whether or not they should make such comments. I also echo Speaker Fraser's sentiments and note that the privilege of freedom of speech in this place brings with it a significant responsibility to not abuse that privilege.

Regarding the point of order under consideration: in her comments, the Honourable Government House Leader stated that Members should not be invoking other Members' families in debate in this House. Unfortunately, this was not the first instance of such a thing occurring in the House. Hansard contains a few references through the years of Members mentioning other Members' families in various debates. These instances have not been ruled unparliamentary. I would also add that this practice is consistent across other Canadian jurisdictions, though on some occasions a caution has been given in such circumstances.

Accordingly, I am ruling that, while the Honourable Government House Leader does make a good point, of which all Members should be mindful, under our Rules and practices she does not have a point of order. However, I would strongly encourage Members to be cautious when referencing family members in debate.

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The following petition was presented and read to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

MLA LAMOUREUX – To urge the Provincial Government to increase the funding for youth after school and recreation programs; and to increase funding for Indigenous and newcomer led programs and organizations that help Indigenous and newcomer communities.

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In accordance with Rule 30, Mr. EWASKO rose on a grievance.

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Hon. Mr. WIEBE tabled:

Reply to Written Questions (No. 12), asked by Mr. NESBITT on April 22, 2025, and (Nos. 13 to 17), asked by Mr. BALCAEN on April 23, 2025:

12. As the Manitoba Legislative Building, also known as Manitoba Provincial Heritage Site No. 40, is a historical building in which alterations must be approved, could the Premier table a copy of any analysis and approval completed prior to the permanent alterations that occurred in March 2025 above the north side entrance?
13. What was the total funding provided to the Winnipeg Police Service for the retail crime project in 2023/2024 and what were the statistical results of the project?
14. What was the total funding provided to the Department of Justice on retail crime projects outside of the Winnipeg Police Service and what were the statistical results of the projects?
15. Between budgets 2023/24 and 2024/25, outside of municipal police grant funding, how much funding was provided and/or promised to the Winnipeg Police Service and R.C.M.P.?
16. Aside from the funds provided to the Winnipeg Police Service and the R.C.M.P., how much funding was provided and/or promised to the other municipal law enforcement agencies for staffing?

17. On March 17th, 2025, Melissa Whitfield wrote to the Minister of Justice as well as the Premier on behalf of Joyce Barwick and Darrell Kempthorne. The letter contained specific questions that they had in relation to the death of their son Collin James Kempthorne after an assault occurred in September while he was being held in the Brandon Correctional Centre. This same letter was tabled during question period on April 7, 2025. To date, the Minister of Justice has not answered the eight questions put to him in that letter. Could the Minister of Justice provide the answers to those questions as well as his rationale for refusing to communicate with the parents of Colin Kempthorne?

(Sessional Paper No. 61)

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Hon. Min. FONTAINE tabled:

Revised sequence for consideration of the Estimates by the Committee of Supply for May 22, 2025.  
(Sessional Paper No. 62)

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The House resolved into Committee of Supply.

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The House then adjourned at 5:00 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. Monday, May 26, 2025.

Hon. Tom LINDSEY,  
Speaker.