

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

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

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, March 8, 2021

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

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

Please be seated.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I rise on a matter of contempt.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Boniface—order, please. I'm going to have to point out to the honourable member for St. Boniface that he is not dressed accordingly to the code of the Legislature, and I'm going to—sorry, I'm going to have to tell the member that he needs to have a tie to be in the Chamber and to be acknowledged.

**Mr. Lamont:** I sincerely apologize, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you. We accept your apology.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Economic Development and Jobs):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Manitoba Development Corporation 2020 Annual Report.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

#### International Women's Day

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, and I would note that the required 90 minutes notice prior to routine proceedings was provided in accordance with our rule 26(2). Would the honourable minister please proceed with her statement.

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Today, March 8th, marks International Women's Day in Manitoba and around

the world, and on this day people across the globe celebrate the hard-won, collective progress we have made towards women's rights.

Today is also an opportunity to reflect on the status of women in society and reaffirm our commitments to advancing legal and economic equality for women and freedom from violence.

Women in our province and across the world are making a difference during this pandemic. They have become leaders in our fight against COVID-19.

We must continue to support women and ensure there are no barriers that hold women back. We must change the narrative and continue to support and celebrate the women who are leading innovation and challenging the status quo.

I am proud of the work our government is doing to support women and stand up for gender equality. Just this past September, our government reached gender parity amongst our deputy ministers for the first time ever in Manitoba history, Madam Speaker. Nearly a third of Manitoba's Cabinet ministers are women, and Minister Audrey Gordon made history this year as women's first—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

Just a reminder to the minister that we are not allowed by our rules to mention colleagues by name, only by their positions.

**Mrs. Cox:** I am proud to work alongside my colleagues each and every day to help build a healthier, more inclusive and prosperous Manitoba. In December, our government released Manitoba's framework to address gender-based violence. This important framework builds on Manitoba government's commitment and actions to address gender-based violence, and outlines how our government is organizing itself to address this critical issue.

Our government recognizes the importance of investing and promoting women in non-traditional careers as a key component of economic recovery efforts from the impacts of this pandemic.

This morning, Madam Speaker, I had the privilege of announcing two programs that will increase women's representation in the areas of technology and skilled trades. Our government has

invested \$25,000 with the Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology towards their Empower program and to attract young women to join their information and communication technology training program. We have granted Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology \$25,000 to continue this program.

We have also granted the Manitoba Construction Sector Council \$25,000 to assist young women in exploring careers in heavy construction, in partnership with the River East Transcona School Division.

Madam Speaker, this year's international theme is Choose To Challenge, and we all know that a challenged world is an alert world and from challenge comes change. I would like to join with everyone as we celebrate International Women's Day and call for change for Manitobans and Canadians in trying to make a positive difference for women here and around the world.

Happy International Women's Day.

**Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** It is not just today but every day that my colleagues and I acknowledge and honour the work of women in Manitoba and across the world for their significant contributions to daily life and our economy

Women make up less than half of our nation's workers but account for 63 per cent of all job losses. Women make up the majority of folks on the front line, whether it is for community-based organizations, health care, retail services and hospitality sectors. And all of these sectors were really hit hard by the pandemic.

The CCPA released a policy brief this morning that notes that women are 'overrepresented' among minimum-wage and low-wage workers and that Manitoba women lost the second highest percentage of jobs out of all of Canadian provinces.

Manitoba women's unemployment rate is now 9.4 per cent, which is up from 4.9 per cent last January 2020.

With all of this information available, the government needs to develop sector-specific supports that considers the lived experiences of Manitoba women. These supports must factor in child-care considerations, as women are most likely to be juggling both careers and homemaker responsibilities.

We urge the government to invest more in training opportunities, 'apprentishes'—apprenticeships and career development. Women need more wage

subsidiary opportunities and microcredential programming to increase their representation in trade careers.

Women's unemployment rates have doubled in the last year by nearly 10 per cent, and that's why it's imperative for the Minister of Economic Development and Jobs (Mr. Eichler) to show concern and support for women in the Manitoba economy and not just leaving it up to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Cox).

To all Manitoba women and women all around the world: my colleagues and I hear you and we stand by you. We wish you all a safe and happy International Women's Day.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

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

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and happy International Women's Day.

This is the second consecutive year now where celebrating International Women's Day has changed quite a bit due to us not being able to get together in person. But this year, organizations have had enough time to prepare virtual events.

\* (13:40)

Just yesterday, I was able to virtually participate, with a couple of my colleagues, including the members for Notre Dame and Burrows (Mr. Brar), in the Pinays association of Manitoba's International Women's Day event.

Madam Speaker, on top of this year's theme, choosing to challenge, the group decided to dedicate the event to our health-care, front-line and essential workers, providing proper recognition to those who have and continue to risk their own health and well-being in some way for our province.

Focusing on this year's theme, I decided to challenge myself, and I came up with an idea and wrote to you, Madam Speaker, in a letter last week. I understand that this letter has since been forwarded to the Minister of Central Services (Mr. Helwer) and the clerk of the Executive Council.

I won't read the whole letter here, but I will table it and, in summary, share with the House the essence of the letter and how there is value for the Legislative

Assembly to canvass the hundreds and hundreds of employees here at the Leg. about resources and needs that employees may have—for example, on-site child care.

The letter further explains how often, as legislators, we encourage workplaces to better accommodate families and their needs. And that's why I think we should lead by example and strive for the Legislative Building to be a more modern institution.

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and happy International Women's Day everyone.

### MATTER OF CONTEMPT

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I rise on a matter of contempt.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Boniface is rising on a matter of contempt.

**Mr. Lamont:** The issue of contempt of parliament or contempt of the Legislature is not to be raised lightly. I'm raising this matter of contempt at the earliest possible opportunity given new facts that have only come to light in the last few days, as well as a brief period required to research and prepare this matter.

That new information was a public 'instament'—in—statement by the MLA for Radisson, posted on social media, that the 19 placeholder blank bills that the government attempted to introduce last November had not even been finalized. We believe that this government's decision to table 19 blank placeholders, and claiming it be bills, though no text was available and may not even have existed, is a breach of democratic norms so great that it meets the threshold for contempt.

Now, there is an important distinction here to be made about what constitutes contempt as distinct from a breach of privilege, which is directly relevant to the case at hand. Chapter 8 of the book *Contempt of Parliament*, by Kieron Wood, states that, while almost every breach of privilege can be contempt, not every contempt is a breach of privilege.

A handbook on parliamentary procedures, published in 2006 by the government of Queensland, Australia, said, quote, contempt of parliament, end quote, was much wider than just breach of privilege, because it included, quote, any offence against the dignity of the House or interference with its process where no established privilege has previously existed. End quote.

The website of the New Zealand Parliament said there are many acts other than breaches of privilege which, although they do not interfere with freedom of speech, freedom from arrest or the House's other privileges, nevertheless interfere with the work or the House of its members—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order. Order, please.

I am going to indicate to the member that that particular issue is under advisement. It has to be ruled on. And I would indicate to the member that he has not put forward any new information related to that. He is referring back to some members—to some privileges that are already under advisement, and as such, that is not allowed to be spoken about in the House until those rulings come down.

And he appears to be making some comments—or, he appears to be indicating something based on comments made outside of the House by a member. Comments made outside of a House by a member cannot be something that I address as a Speaker. The Speaker only has the authority to deal with issues that—and comments that are made in the House or in committee. A Speaker cannot rule on comments that people make outside of the Chamber.

I do not have that authority to make—so, respectfully, the member does not have a matter of privilege or a matter of contempt.

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### Elder Ruth Christie

**Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk):** Madam Speaker, today, on International Women's Day, I 'celebrate'—celebrate a very special woman from the Selkirk constituency.

Elder Ruth Christie, a retired nurse, brilliant storyteller, historian, keeper and educator of Indigenous knowledge, honorary doctor of law from the University of Winnipeg and most recently a recipient of the Manitoba 150 Trailblazer Award from the Nellie McClung Foundation.

Ruth's story began in her home community of Loon Straits, Manitoba. At the age of 12, Ruth was afflicted with rheumatic fever. Despite this, she would go on to complete her grade 6 studies by having a cousin sneak in textbooks, assignments and test papers without her parents' knowledge. Ruth's driven nature saw her leave her home community to attend nurses' training at a time in history when Indigenous

women faced many hardships and challenges in obtaining an education in the health-care field.

Ruth returned to her home community as a trained nurse. This achievement would see her featured in a book called *Twice as Good: A History of Aboriginal Nurses*.

Ruth is a world-renowned storyteller, a gift that appeared at a very young age. Her storytelling has taken her on an oxcart from Pembina, North Dakota, to The Forks, across the Atlantic Ocean to Iceland, across Lake Winnipeg by canoe.

She has spent 20 years at Lower Fort Garry educating students and tourists on Indigenous history and what it was like living through settlement times. Today, Ruth continues her knowledge-sharing at the University of Winnipeg, Selkirk Friendship Centre and within the Lord Selkirk School Division.

Ruth has lived by the words of her grandmother: If you know where you come from, you'll always know where you are going. She is proud of her heritage and has made it her life's work to educate, share the positives and correct misconceptions of Indigenous culture.

Madam Speaker, it is an honour to celebrate Elder Ruth Christie, a cherished community member.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

### **Support for Indigenous Women on International Women's Day**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Last night, on the eve of International Women's Day, myself and the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) attended a late-night vigil for Jana Williams, age 29. The remains of Ms. Williams, pregnant with her third baby, were found near the Red River. Ms. Williams' remains were thrown away like garbage, like Tina Fontaine and Felicia Solomon Osborne before her.

Indigenous women, girls and two-spirit continue to be under attack in this province. Since last International Women's Day, we've seen the shooting death by the Winnipeg Police Service of 16-year-old Eishia Hudson. We've witnessed the murder of Joyce Echaquan at the hands of health-care providers at a Quebec hospital. We saw Chantel Moore and Regis Korchinski-Paquet die after coming into contact with the New Brunswick and Toronto police on wellness checks, Madam Speaker. Last month, we saw two of our houseless women die in a campfire trying to keep warm and while in a bus shelter. Months ago, all of

Winnipeg was on alert for a missing 10-year-old Indigenous girl.

International Women's Day isn't just about niceties or posting on social media, it's a day to commit to action and actually do something to tackle the myriad of issues that women face.

So the question on this day is where is the MMIWG2S national inquiry's calls for justice? Where's the public inquiry into the shooting death of Eishia Hudson and where is the care, justice and protections for Indigenous women and girls?

Finally, Madam Speaker, I dedicate my members' statement to Jana Williams and to her family, and I ask for leave for a moment of silence.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave of the House for a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please stand.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### **Childhood Arthritis Awareness Month**

**Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson):** It's very good to be back here in the Legislature with you and with my colleagues from all sides of the House as we strive to serve our constituents and all Manitobans as best we can.

March is childhood arthritis month here in Canada. Juvenile arthritis affects more than 1,500 children in Manitoba ranging from infants to young adults. That's 3 out of every 1,000 children. In fact, juvenile arthritis affects more children than any other chronic disease.

\* (13:50)

Juvenile arthritis is a sometimes severe inflammation of the joints. The cause is not well known. It can be progressive and disabling, affecting not just the joints, but also the eyes and other organs.

Over the years, I've spoken at hundreds of different events, but one that really stands out in my memory is the Faces of Childhood Arthritis Luncheon. There I got to meet children who live with juvenile arthritis. I'll never forget meeting young Natalie and her little sister Allison, who shared their story on the big stage at the Metropolitan Entertainment Centre in front of hundreds of people.

They spoke in the matter-of-fact way that children who have been heavily involved in the medical system can speak about the pain that they have endured, the corticosteroid injections that they've received and the

hope that newer biologic drugs offer them. And they were grateful for the special relationship that they had developed with the doctors and medical team that provided their care.

These kids have to work incredibly hard to do what the rest of us would consider normal, but they do it every day—and usually without complaint. And even through the pain, they manage to smile and enjoy life. They are incredibly brave. They're an inspiration to me and so many others about how to deal with adversity, and I am so very, very proud of them.

So every day, but especially during childhood arthritis month in March, please remember these brave kids and support efforts to combat and control juvenile arthritis.

Thank you.

#### **Vaccine Rollout for Northern Manitoba**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Even though this government has replaced the disastrous former Health minister, unfortunately what we've seen so far is a continuation of the same lack of knowledge and respect for people in the North. I'd like to focus on the vaccine rollout for the North.

We, as northern MLAs, have asked for but have not yet had any meaningful—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Lindsey:** —conversation with anyone from the minister's office on the vaccine rollout plan. I have tried to contact health officials, only to be told I could only speak to the minister about such things. So, in that spirit, I have called the minister's office several times, never actually spoken to the minister—only her assistants—and I've repeatedly been told someone would get back to me, but no one has to date.

The government's super centre concept that—the Vaxport located in Thompson simply does not work. The expectation for everyone from the North to make their way there to get vaccinated is silly at best. Seniors who have spent months staying home are now being told get on a bus, get on a plane, go to Thompson. In some cases, that means being in close quarters with others for eight hours or more. Now imagine just one person on the bus or plane already has COVID-19. Every one of those travelling together has now been exposed for many hours, potentially rendering the vaccine useless.

It is my understanding that the Vaxport is not ready to receive people yet anyway, so folks who do

fly in will now have to board a bus and go into Thompson and back. I've been in communication with several communities who've been left to scramble with the ever-changing plan.

Madam Speaker, there is a much simpler solution: take the vaccine to the people rather than the people to the vaccine. We know it can be transported because we have seen it taken to many communities already. To say community representatives or members of the communities are frustrated with this government and the constantly changing plan to transport people to Thompson would be an understatement.

A super centre may work in Winnipeg, but it is time for the government to listen to the people of the North and abandon this ill-conceived concept for the North. Please tell us the vaccine will be transported to our communities, as it should be.

Thank you.

**Eric Labaupa**

**Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley):** During the pandemic—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

The member is going to have to use the microphone at the podium.

**Mr. Reyes:** During the pandemic, many Manitobans had been enjoying the outdoors and what our province has to offer and ice fishing has been one of them. Today, I'm honouring Waverley constituent, and my good friend, Mr. Eric Labaupa.

Eric was born and raised in Winnipeg. His family had immigrated here from the Philippines. One of his lifelong passions has been recreational angling, a sport that he has enjoyed ever since his father taught him how to fish.

Over the years, he has gradually become more and more involved in the local angling community, volunteering for various fundraisers and fishing events, partnerships based on his enthusiastic community engagement.

In 2017, his weekend hobby culminated in a full-time job promoting the sport for Travel Manitoba, going on to become a territory sales manager for multiple fishing and hunting companies across this country.

In that same year, Eric started the Filipino Anglers Association of Manitoba. The association was born out of the collective and negative experience

of Filipino-Canadian anglers who did not feel accepted by the local groups.

Instead of looking for a place to belong, Eric decided to create one instead. Their first-ever meeting consisted of ten members, and ever since, the Filipino Anglers Association of Manitoba has grown to well over 100 households, with almost 200 individual members.

His association's mandate is to provide a welcoming environment for anglers of all cultural backgrounds and experience levels to share knowledge, make new friends and exhibit positive community engagement in a family-friendly atmosphere.

This grassroots organization has raised money for the Selkirk Youth Fishing Initiative and the Barangay West End community group. Additionally, their spring and fall Red River shoreline cleanup initiative has been very popular, with members helping to pick up litter at various popular fishing spots in Lockport and Selkirk.

Every January they hold a members' championship of-ice fishing derby at Gimli Harbour to crown the angler of the year. This year, it was held via Facebook with members submitting photos of their catches online.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honouring and recognizing Mr. Eric Labaupa for his positive work sharing his passion with others across our great province.

Thank you, Eric.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Manitoba Hydro Revenue Projections Wage Freeze and Rate Increase

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, after the October storm of 2019, the Premier said: If you get a chance to thank—to say thank you to some Hydro workers, do it. How did the Premier thank them? He froze their wages, he forced them to take unpaid days off and, seemingly every day, he finds a new way to undermine and attack their employer.

Now, for these 2,300 workers, it means that they now could walk off the job because of the Pallister government's mistreatment of them. Now, this is despite the fact that in Manitoba Hydro's recent third-quarter report, which I'll table for the House today, it shows that Manitoba Hydro is projecting a profit of \$111 million this year: \$64 million—than originally expected.

Will the Premier reverse the wage freeze and allow Hydro to negotiate in good faith?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, where to begin, Madam Speaker? The member fails to recognize that the reality of the situation at Hydro that was created by the NDP is that their debt is now triple what it was a few years ago.

And this was done not to help Manitobans, Madam Speaker. This was done to help the NDP politicians change Manitoba Hydro away from a company that worked for Manitobans' benefit to a company that would export power. And they rolled the dice with Manitobans' money without asking them.

So the people, the workers in Manitoba Hydro know that record. The member likes to ignore it, but the reality is \$10 billion of burden was placed on Manitoba Hydro and, therefore, was placed on the people who work at Manitoba Hydro, too.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, it's clear that this Premier and his government don't care one bit for the more expensive Hydro bills that they've forced onto the people of Manitoba.

It is absolutely shameful that during a pandemic, when so many average families are just struggling to get by, that the get-along gang over here chooses to increase their rates 3 per cent this past December without even having a public hearing.

Now, this report that I've just tabled, that shows Hydro is profitable to the tune of \$111 million this year, was created in December. So the Premier knew how profitable Hydro was at the very same time he was ordering his ministers to increase rates without a public hearing.

Will the Premier simply back off, allow Hydro to negotiate in good faith and apologize to people for raising their hydro rates unnecessarily?

**Mr. Pallister:** The bluster, Madam Speaker, doesn't change the absence of facts in the member's preamble or his absence of understanding about the damage the NDP's done to Manitoba Hydro over the years.

Ten billion dollars isn't a small amount, Madam Speaker, but it could have been used for something other than building Hydro up for Americans' benefit.

\* (14:00)



Could have been done to build new schools. Could have built 20 hospitals. Could have built 100 personal-care homes. Could put—could have put 1,000 new miles of road in. But it didn't do any of that.

And who's going to pay for all this? Is it Americans, Madam Speaker? Is it the NDP? Of course not. It's Manitobans.

So they hand Manitobans the debt while they tried to hand Manitoba Hydro away to American customers, Madam Speaker.

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

#### **Government Management of Subsidiaries**

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the member for Fort Whyte is so obsessed with American customers. Maybe that's why he's been neglecting the Manitoba Hydro ratepayers right here at home.

Maybe that's why he increased their hydro bills 3 per cent in December at the same time that he knew Hydro was profitable—\$65 million more profitable than originally expected. And the worst part of all: he raised rates while he knew it was profitable without ever even bringing it to the Public Utilities Board. No public oversight whatsoever.

The other point that we draw from that report that I tabled is that Manitoba Hydro International and Teshmont pulled in a combined \$6 million to help keep rates low.

With this knowledge, will the Premier now admit it was a mistake for him to privatize Teshmont and to cut Manitoba Hydro International?

**Mr. Pallister:** Has a record of relying on propaganda, Madam Speaker, the NDP does—the member does, too—and coercion. These are techniques that he uses.

He tries to treat Manitobans with a lack of respect, Madam Speaker, when he acts like \$1 million is a giant amount but \$10 billion isn't of any consequence.

It is, Madam Speaker. It is, and the NDP dug \$10 billion worth of hole for Manitobans to repay. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** Now, the other thing is he talks about a small rate increase—smaller than six of the seven years previous under the NDP—and he ignores the fact the NDP actually raised the hydro rates on hard-working Manitobans by 40 per cent while they were in power.

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

#### **Affordable Child-Care Fees Role in Economic Recovery**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Let's quickly correct the record.

Last year was the first time any government has ever increased hydro rates on Manitobans. They did it through legislation. Every other year, it was the Public Utilities Board. What are they afraid of, Madam Speaker?

Now, we know that child care—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —is necessary for an equitable recovery, but I'll table a document that shows that this government sat on a decision for over a year to, quote, eliminate the enhanced operating grant for nurseries, child-care programs across the province.

When do they decide to push ahead with this cut, Madam Speaker? Right in the middle of the pandemic.

Starting April 1st, parents are going to see their nursery fees double. There's nothing equitable about doubling child-care fees during a pandemic.

Will the Premier reverse course and commit to affordable, accessible, universal child care now?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, let's set the record straight, Madam Speaker.

The NDP dug a \$10-billion debt hole for Hydro so they could internationalize it and never asked Manitobans once. And the member has the audacity to talk about the Public Utilities Board as if the NDP ever respected it.

They went ahead, Madam Speaker, and dug that hole without even listening to the Hydro experts, who told them don't do that. Don't go halfway around the province and waste billions of dollars on a hydro line that won't work as effectively as the one we're recommending. But they ignored them.

Then they ignored their people on the Hydro board, too, and didn't listen to them—didn't listen to them. The people on the Hydro board tried to tell the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), no, no, no. You don't go up and waste billions on that Keeyask dam for some kind of a phony legacy. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** You don't do that. You don't do it. But they didn't listen to their own people on the Hydro board.

And then they ignored the people on the Clean Environment Commission they'd appointed. And they ignored the people that they put on the Public Utilities Board, too. And they jacked up the rates by 40 per cent on Manitobans while they were in office, Madam Speaker. That's disrespectful.

We're going to clean it up, Madam Speaker. They made the mess, but we'll clean it up.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, everyone knows that an equitable recovery will have to include child care. That's why it's so shameful that the Premier couldn't even say the word—word child care within his response.

He's still flailing around, trying to justify spending \$1 million on the Wall report just to buy one day's media coverage when there was no new information in that report.

But we know what child-care experts are telling us, Madam Speaker. Samantha Milne, a mother—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —and an early-childhood educator, says the cuts will mean that maybe her son stays home with me, and I don't go back to work, because child care is so expensive.

That is the impact that will be had because of this Premier doubling child-care fees for these families. It means that mothers will not be going back to work, will not be joining in on the recovery.

Will the Premier admit that these cuts are wrong, admit that doubling the child-care fees are wrong, and commit to affordable, universal, accessible child care now?

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, the member chooses again to ignore the record of the NDP while in government in respect of child care, a record that was blemished significantly by the reality of longer and longer waits for families to get the child care he talks about.

He talks now in theory about making—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —child care available but, while in government, couldn't make the child care available, Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** He talks about keeping fees down; we're doing that, Madam Speaker. Our fees are the second lowest in the country of Canada.

So, Madam Speaker, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), who rattles on from her seat, doesn't seem to have the ability to get in question period, but she can heckle all she wants and it won't change the record of the NDP government when it comes to failure on providing child care.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the document I tabled shows that this government has been planning for more than a year to double child-care fees for these parents that we're talking about here. That is wrong. It would be wrong during any period of time; it's even worse to do that during a pandemic.

Everyone else around the world says that right now is the time for accessible, affordable, universal child care—except, of course, for this government, where you have a Premier who says that doubling fees is somehow an improvement, and the minister beside him now saying in question period that this is cleaning up a mess.

Well, on behalf of all the families who are going to be paying twice as much in child-care fees: Stop. This is wrong. This approach is a mistake.

Will the Premier abandon this misbegotten policy and instead commit to universal, accessible and equitable child care now?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, Madam Speaker, here again the NDP leader wants to ignore the record, and I understand why he would do that. It is a horrible record that the NDP had on making child care available. They created an inequitable system and then they let it fall apart. So, the fact of the matter is they own that record and the member now owns it, too, because he's defending it.

But he—he also is defending the record of the NDP when it comes to ignoring the very people, the families, who need child care and need other things, too. They need money on the kitchen table. That's why they didn't need their hydro rates to go up by

40 per cent, like the NDP did. They didn't need their hair—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —they didn't need to get taxed. They didn't need the PST to go higher. They didn't need to pay PST on—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —on their home insurance. They didn't need to pay higher car insurance premiums. They didn't need to pay more to register their vehicle.

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

This is ridiculous. I cannot hear the member's response. So, let's not ramp this up from heckling to yelling. There's no advantage to that. That is not democracy at work; that's just silly behaviour, and let's have people be able to hear the question and hear the answer.

The honourable Premier, to conclude his response.

**Mr. Pallister:** Same behaviour I saw at the House of Commons committee where the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) shouted down women who were coming there to talk about being oppressed in their communities. She shouted them down, Madam Speaker. She has no shame.

See, the people—women on this province, International Women's Day, they understand it's not good for them to have to pay more for hydro and haircuts and home insurance and car insurance and car registration.

Madam Speaker, we're leaving more money with Manitoba families so they can find their way. The NDP took that money; we're making sure it goes back to where it belongs.

\* (14:10)

#### **Safe Consumption Site City of Winnipeg**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** Last fall, we raised some serious concerns with the rising toll of addictions.

Fortunately, under this Pallister government, things continue to get worse. Needle use continues to increase. There is an unacceptable rise in congenital

syphilis, overdoses and overdose deaths continue to rise at a staggering pace and the minister continues to refuse to work with the City of Winnipeg on opening a safe consumption site.

Will the minister today commit to working with the City of Winnipeg to open a safe consumption site so that lives can be saved here in Manitoba?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery):** I thank the member for the question.

Our government takes very seriously opioid deaths, and we are wanting to improve health and well-being for individuals that are struggling with mental health and addictions. That is why we have six RAAM clinics. That's why we have expanded access to naloxone and we also offer very comprehensive opiate agonist therapy services.

So our government is taking action on addictions and overdose deaths. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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

#### **Drug Overdose Deaths Public Reporting**

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** You can't fight what you won't see, but that has been one of the biggest problems with the addictions crisis.

In Manitoba, data on the situation is out of date by the time it is released. Surveillance and reporting is simply not complete and released in a timely fashion. Meanwhile, other provinces such as BC and Saskatchewan provide nearly real-time updates on drug overdoses and timely updates on overdose deaths. In Manitoba, we rely on media and advocates to get the information out.

Will the minister today make sure that this gets fixed? Will they begin to publish information on drug-related deaths regularly?

**Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Mental Health, Wellness and Recovery):** I'm always thrilled to stand in this House and talk about the good work that we are doing around mental health and addiction supports.

I'm not sure if the member's had an opportunity to read the VIRGO report. It's been in—available to the public for a couple of years now, but 125 recommendations came forward in that report, and our government has taken action on those recommendations.

And I encourage the member to read the recommendations and look at the great work that we are doing on this side of the House to assist individuals who are experiencing mental health and addictions challenges.

Thank you.

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

**Mrs. Smith:** The Pallister government is flying blind in addiction crisis, and I encourage the minister to actually speak to those families who are actually grieving and fighting to have a place where their overdose deaths are documented.

Advocacy groups are tracking an alarming rise in the number of overdoses and deaths here in Manitoba. But they shouldn't be—they shouldn't feel alone to sound this alarm. This Pallister government should be using the full force of government to inform the public and to reduce the harm on this public health crisis.

Will the minister today commit to timely and public reporting on overdoses and overdose deaths in Manitoba?

**Ms. Gordon:** I was so honoured to have the opportunity early in my mandate to meet with the Harm Reduction Network and to hear of the great work that is being done by the peer advisory councils, to speak with our grand chiefs about the programs and services that they want to see made available within their communities and to meet with stakeholders, Shared Health, Manitoba Health, and just hear about all the services that are being made available.

And I encourage the member to take a really close look at all the good work that our government is doing, because it is many, and we will continue to build on that.

Thank you.

### **Safe Access to Abortion Services Request for Support for Bill 207**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Last week, I introduced Bill 207 for the third time—hopefully this is what it takes—which would establish safety buffer zones around any clinic, hospital or health-care facility offering abortion services, as well as around public schools, Madam Speaker, from anti-choice protesters.

Bill 207 protects women and children, as well as health-care providers, from being harassed, intimidated or persuaded on abortion. No Manitoban

accessing health care should be harassed and molested by anti-choice protesters. And I'm sure that we can all agree that accessing health care should be a safe exercise.

Will the Minister of Health commit to supporting and passing Bill 207 to keep Manitobans safe?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Health and Seniors Care):** Access to safe health care is certainly something that we are very much in favour of on this side of the House, Madam Speaker.

But I will point out for the member opposite that she herself was involved in an illegal blockade, Madam Speaker. And this type of situation, bringing this forward—this bill—is rather hypocritical, I would say.

Madam Speaker, I think it's very important that the member opposite knows and understands that people have freedom of speech. We need to listen to those who are protesting out there. We do every day. We listen to those who are offering their guidance, their views, their opinions, on these things.

We will continue to listen to Manitobans.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Manitobans attempting to access health for services are often faced with harassment and aggression from people who oppose their right to choose what they do with their bodies, Madam Speaker.

Keep in mind that these anti-choice protesters don't only target folks accessing abortion, but all Manitobans, like those that are there for D & Cs or labour or treatment or births, Madam Speaker. Anti-choice protesters harass everyone walking into medical facilities. Children are being exposed to adults holding posters outside schools attempting to persuade or intimidate them.

Will the minister support and pass our bill to protect all Manitobans?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Madam Speaker, I always appreciate questions from the member opposite, and all members opposite, when it comes to harassment issues in this Chamber and in Manitoba.

Members opposite chose, when they were in government, to ignore those issues when people came forward. There was no open door policy back when the NDP government was there, and they should all be ashamed of that.

Now, this member—*[interjection]*—and still the harassment continues, Madam Speaker. But I will say to this member, this is about freedom of speech. People have the right to protest in our province. We will continue to ensure that they have the right to express their views and opinions on these very important matters.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** The minister's response is so unfortunate, Madam Speaker.

It's unfortunate that, for the last two years, Manitobans could have been protected while trying to access abortion services, but instead, all of those members opposite have stood up in this House and voted against protecting Manitobans accessing health care. Shame on them, Madam Speaker.

I'm providing them an opportunity to right their wrongs by reintroducing Bill 207, which goes even a step further to protect our children from anti-choice harassment.

So I'll ask the Minister of Health: Will she commit today to protecting Manitobans and support and pass Bill 207?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** It seems that the member opposite likes to pick and choose, you know, who she stands up for, Madam Speaker. And it seems that if people agree with her, then it's okay, protest all you want. But if you disagree with my views, then you don't have that chance. That's where she comes from. That's not where we come from.

\* (14:20)

Madam Speaker, we respect the freedom of speech of those individuals out there to have the opportunity to have legal protests. They have to abide by the rules, the laws of our province. And we will continue—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** —to stand by those who are holding protests in a legal fashion.

#### **Employment Support for Women Paid Sick Leave and Child Care**

**Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** Women are bearing the brunt of the pandemic recession. As COVID-19 created challenges for families, it fell to women to fill the gaps, often putting their careers aside to do it, yet the Pallister government has refused

to create the supports that women need during this time. We need comprehensive paid sick leave for women and for all Manitobans.

Will the Pallister government implement comprehensive sick leave provisions to ensure women and all workers do not have to sacrifice their careers because their family is self-isolating?

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** As we celebrate International Women's Day, I was proud today to announce two programs that will provide benefits to women across our province, benefits that will ensure that women have good-paying jobs here in the province of Manitoba, opportunities for women to be involved in new types of employment that provide stable jobs, better opportunities for them well into the future. And these jobs—\$50,000, Madam Speaker, provided all of these jobs for the individuals.

Moving forward, we know that there's going to be many opportunities, many more opportunities that I can hardly wait to disclose that information here in the Chamber in the future.

We're working, Madam Speaker, to ensure that women have strong—

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

The honourable member for Notre Dame, on a supplementary question.

**Ms. Marcelino:** That announcement was for 33 women, and there are 30,000 women in Manitoba currently unemployed.

Women are hit the hardest by the pandemic recession. Their unemployment rate is nearly double what it was one year ago, 30,000 remain unemployed a year after the pandemic began, and without intervention, this will leave lasting scars of the careers of many women in this province.

We need a path forward. Comprehensive sick leave is a start, but women will need more, including significant investments in affordable and universally accessible child care to ensure that they can go to work in the first place.

Will the Pallister government meet the needs of women and commit to ending the funding freeze and instead investing in quality accessible and affordable child care?

**Mrs. Cox:** We recognize that women have been most impacted during the pandemic, and that's why we have provided hundreds of millions of dollars for

businesses, to help them bridge to opening in a safe and sustainable manner, Madam Speaker.

This allows individuals to hire women back—women in the hospitality industry, the restaurant industry, women who are working in those jobs on the front lines. It's important that they have these funds available to the—to the not—for these businesses to ensure that women have those jobs.

And not only that, we have provided additional funds for seniors, for female women who have been struggling during this pandemic, Madam Speaker. We provided over 123,000 female—women seniors in our province have received support through the seniors—

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

The honourable member for Notre Dame, on a final supplementary.

**Ms. Marcelino:** The pandemic has taken the deepest toll on women who predominantly work in health care, child care and service industries. When they and their families are exposed to COVID and have to self-isolate, they don't have access to financial supports nor access to paid sick leave.

This is a deep unfairness for those living pay-cheque to paycheque. We can do more. We must do more.

Will the minister meet the needs of women in this province and commit to implementing paid sick leave immediately?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** I, first of all, want to thank the Premier (Mr. Pallister) for taking the lead, in terms of sick leave, with an NDP premier out of BC, that led to a national sick leave program during the pandemic, which is extremely—is important.

Our government had temporary leaves for people during the pandemic, which we think is extremely important as well, as well as providing numbers of dollars for child-care centres, including \$1.6 million for PPE, \$1.4 million for 1,000 ECEs to get supports under the Risk Recognition Program, and over \$2.4 million to centres to make sure people and children and families were supported in the child-care second.

We've done a lot. We will continue to work to ensure that women, as well as men, are employed here in the province of Manitoba.

### **Youth Victims of Sexual Assault Northern Manitoba Health Services**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak):** Children and youth living in northern and isolated communities have less access to essential health-care services, care and support when they've been sexually assaulted.

I recently introduced Bill 213 which, if passed, would be an important step towards ensuring health-care equity for children and youth in these communities.

Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Health commit today, supporting this very important bill?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Health and Seniors Care):** Yes, it was indeed an honour to put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 213. We had a good, healthy debate and I hope that debate continues, Madam Speaker. I really want to appreciate and thank the member opposite for bringing it forward for us to have a good, frank discussion about this on the record in this Manitoba Legislature.

As I mentioned then and I'll mention again, Madam Speaker, I have asked the Department of Health to look into this matter to ensure that we do have access to these kinds of services for children and youth in—not just in northern communities, but in other remote communities in Manitoba. It's absolutely essential that we find ways to get them access to the services that they need, and we're committed to doing so.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak, on a supplementary question.

**Ms. Lathlin:** Currently, in northern communities, any time a minor reports a sexual assault, they get flown to Winnipeg for health care, testing and support. This not only creates additional layers of trauma for these victims, but also creates barriers that prevent youth from reporting sexual assault in the first place.

Will the minister commit today to investing in more resources for underage victims of sexual assault in northern and isolated communities?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Yes, I look forward to working with the member opposite on this very important initiative.

I want to thank her for her advocacy role that she has played in ensuring that we're finding new, creative and better ways to—for our children and youth to be able to have access to these services, not just in

northern Manitoba but across—in remote communities in Manitoba.

So I have mentioned that I have asked the Department of Health to look into this matter, to come back with some solutions, as a result of the member opposite bringing this forward. And I want to thank her for bringing it forward so that we can provide—you know, find solutions to what is a very, very important issue for our children and youth in our province.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak, on a final supplementary.

**Ms. Lathlin:** Bill 213 would require the Province to provide public annual reports on the number of health-care professionals trained and approved to examine children—child victims of sexual assault, as well on the number of evidence kits available in all health regions.

This bill is common sense, Madam Speaker. Young people deserve to know whether or not this government is investing in meaningful and accessible resources in their communities.

Will the minister commit to support Bill 213 today?

Ekosi.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** What I will say is that, more important than just reporting, is obviously ensuring that those individuals get the health-care services that they need, and we are committed to doing that, Madam Speaker.

What I will also say is that members opposite know that they have the opportunity to designate certain bills within the Chamber to come forward for a vote, and I would encourage the member opposite to ensure that this is one of those.

### **Early-Childhood Education Universal Child-Care Services**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Early-childhood educators are a critical part of the economic recovery. They've been called essential in the pandemic but, unfortunately, have been treated as disposable. Most families can only make ends meet if both partners are working, and without child care, they will not be able to work and pay the bills.

\* (14:30)

Now, while this government does blame the NDP for their ideological approach, it's important to recognize there was no universal, affordable, quality care

under the previous government, and there won't be under this one.

Why is this government doubling down on the NDP's failures on child care?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families):** Our government prioritizes child care. That is why we invested \$181 million in the child-care system this year, which is \$20 million more than the NDP ever invested.

Since forming government, we've also created 2,500 new spaces through our capital program. In fact, that capital program is going to create 795 new spaces this year. And our temporary child-care grant for home-based centres created 130 spaces this year at a time when we know Manitoba families needed it the most.

Our government is committed to creating a child-care system that is accessible for all families in the province of Manitoba. I just wish the Liberal member would get on board.

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

**Mr. Lamont:** I would like to share the words of a child-care worker and advocate.

Quote: I look up long-term-care homes and what has come to light regarding private, for-profit care homes. We see lower quality in private care, we see understaffing, unsafe practices, lower wages and burnt-out, higher rotation of staff because quality is not a priority in private programs. End quote.

This should be a public service, like education.

Why has this government kept ECE in the Department of Families instead of under Education, where it clearly belongs?

**Ms. Squires:** I'm pleased to have an opportunity to put some more words on the record about what our government is doing to ensure that we've got a strong child-care sector in the province of Manitoba.

We've also invested another \$9 million, for a total of \$11.5 million, in a new Child Care Sustainability Trust, eight and a half million dollars in start-up grants by the Winnipeg and the Manitoba chambers of commerce, and we've created a \$4.7-million Child Care Centre Development Tax Credit to create 682 new spaces this year.

Our government believes in a strong child-care sector. There's more work to be done. We're ready to

roll up our sleeves and get to work with the sector to ensure that all families have access to child care in the province of Manitoba.

### **Legislative Assembly Employees Family-Friendly Resources**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** My question is for the Minister of Central Services (Mr. Helwer).

Will the minister support the formation of a committee here at the Manitoba Legislature to canvass everyone who is employed through the Legislative Assembly—and, Madam Speaker, this includes guards, interns, departmental staff, clerks and the hundreds of hundreds of people who work here—to see about the resources and needs that employees here at the Leg. might have, in the hopes of better accommodating a family-friendly atmosphere?

An example of the this may be on-site child care.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families):** Our government is very committed to making this a good workspace, a safe workspace for all members of the Legislature and all members of our civil service. I want to thank the member for bringing forward this issue today. I look forward to reading the proposal.

And I'd also just like to share with her that that is why our government implemented a \$4.7-million Child Care Centre Development Tax Credit, so that workplaces could ensure that they got those spaces for child care on their workplaces as necessary.

So, again, I thank the member for bringing forward this initiative, and I look forward to reading her proposal.

### **Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy Education and Immigration Initiative**

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** Madam Speaker, the Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy was loss-launched recently as a shared vision among post-secondary partners, industry, government as to the direction and actions needed to accelerate our post-COVID recovery and advance Manitoba's economy and promote positive outcomes for individuals and businesses.

Can the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration share with this House how this whole-of-government strategy will have a positive benefit to our various partners and across the province?

**Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration):** I'd like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Portage la Prairie, for this very timely question.

As the new Minister for Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration, it was my pleasure to bring forward the Skills, Talent and Knowledge Strategy. We are taking a whole-of-government approach, Madam Speaker. The strategy was the result of a collaboration with over 600 stakeholders, post-secondary partners, businesses and immigration professionals.

Employers consistently indicate that hiring and retaining workers with the right skills is their greatest challenge regarding competition and growth. This strategy recognized the need for a range of skills, from knowledge workers with specific technical skills to those general workers with basic skills. Our government continues to invest over \$1 billion, Madam Speaker—

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

### **Menstrual Product Availability Request to Supply All Schools**

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** Madam Speaker, I believe—or, at least, I hope—that every member in this House recognizes the importance of investing in our youth. We know that Manitoban students—many of them—have to miss school once a month simply because they cannot afford or gain access to essential menstrual products.

Will the minister commit today to making menstrual products accessible in all Manitoba schools?

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister responsible for the Status of Women):** Thank you for that question.

You know, we worked very hard in this province to ensure that there's many opportunities for women across the province, and knowing and recognizing that women have some of the highest rates—or that Manitoba has some of the highest rates of domestic violence across the province, we've provided additional funds for young girls for USB data blockers here in the province of Manitoba, to ensure that women are secure when they're using their computers, Madam Speaker, when they are charging their computers, their laptops, their iPhones, things of that nature.



So we're ensuring that Manitoban young–youth are safe here in the province of Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

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

### Speaker's Ruling

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

Following the prayer on October 14th, 2020, the honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) raised a matter of privilege regarding the government's failure to table several reports, in contravention of statutory tabling provisions.

In raising the matter, the member asserted that the failure to table these reports directly impeded her ability to do her job as an MLA and to hold the government accountable.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader concluded her remarks by moving, and I quote, "that the matter of the failure of this government to respect the laws of this province and to put forward information to this Assembly, required by statute, be referred to an all-party committee for immediate consideration." End quote.

The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) also spoke to the matter of privilege. I then took the matter under advisement. I thank the honourable members for their advice to the Chair.

There are two considerations that must be satisfied in order for a matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege: was the issue raised at the earliest available opportunity, and was sufficient evidence provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the member or of the House were breached?

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader asserted that she was raising the issue at the earliest opportunity in response to a ruling delivered by the Speaker on October 13th, 2020. This ruling drew the attention of the honourable member to footnote 106 on page 443 of Bosc and Gagnon, House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third edition. She indicated that research had been conducted to verify tabling dates, and after the research was completed, the matter was raised at the earliest opportunity on the next day. After hearing this explanation, I am satisfied that the matter was raised at the earliest available opportunity.

\* (14:40)

The second issue to consider is whether the evidence provided was sufficient to demonstrate that a prima facie case of privilege has occurred. The footnote from page 443 from Bosc and Gagnon describes an April 1993 ruling made by House of Commons Speaker John Fraser. This ruling involved a situation where the then-federal government failed to table a document in a timely manner as required by statute.

In ruling on this matter of privilege, Speaker Fraser noted that members cannot function if they do not have access to the material that they need to do their work. In order to allow further discussion of the issue between government and opposition, he found that there was a prima facie case of privilege. The motion for the matter of privilege was immediately agreed to and the issue was referred to the Standing Committee on House Management.

In conferring with procedural staff of the House of Commons, confirmation was received that the issue of timely tabling of reports and documents in compliance with statutory provisions continues to be relevant, and that a prima facie matter of privilege could be found if there was a failure to table such materials as required by law.

In order to determine whether a prima facie case of privilege exists, it is necessary to compare the statutory tabling requirements and verify whether the reports were or were not tabled within the legally mandated period.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, in raising the issue, noted that three separate reports were not tabled in a timely manner in accordance with statutory provisions. These include a report required to be tabled under The Path to Reconciliation Act, an annual report required to be tabled under The Climate and Green Plan Act and a report to the Legislature on a comprehensive review of The Police Services Act.

In looking at The Path to Reconciliation Act, sections 5(1) and (2) of the act do require that within three months after the end of the fiscal year the minister must table a copy of the report in the Assembly and make it available to the public.

There are also provisions requiring the report or a summary of the report to be translated into the languages of Cree, 'dakotay,' Dene, 'inuktituk,' 'mischif,' Ojibwe and Oji-Cree. In looking at the list of sessional and intersessional documents tabled in 2020, the 2019-20 report had not been tabled in the

House when this matter was raised. However, I am advised, on November 18th, 2020, an order was made under The Emergency Measures Act to move the tabling deadline to December 3rd, 2020 and is deemed to have come into effect on June 30th, 2020.

Sections 5(1) and 5(7) of The Climate and Green Plan Act require that the minister responsible prepare an annual report on the programs, policies and measures employed within that year to implement the Climate and Green Plan. The report is to be tabled within 15 days after it has been prepared if the Assembly is sitting or, if the Assembly is not sitting, within 15 days after the next sitting period begins.

At the time the matter of privilege was raised, the report had not been tabled, but was subsequently tabled on October 26, 2020. The date on the report is December 31st, 2019.

Section 90 of The Police Services Act states that within five years after this act comes into force the minister must undertake a comprehensive review of the act and must, within one year after the review is undertaken or within such further time as the Legislative Assembly may allow, submit a report on the review to the Assembly. The provision in the act came into force on June 18th, 2015. Subsequent to the raising of the matter of privilege, the report was tabled on November 5th, 2020, and the date of the report is indicated as September 2020.

In speaking to this matter of privilege, the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) noted that there were exceptional circumstances this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and that could be a contributing factor. I am sympathetic to the challenges that we have all faced this year as a society, the provincial government included, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Speaker does not have any authority to override the statutory requirement for the tabling of these reports, even if there may be valid extenuating circumstances that cause delay in the preparation and tabling of the reports.

For that reason, given that the reports were not tabled in accordance with statutory requirements and due to the precedent of the 1993 ruling by House of Commons Speaker Fraser, I must rule that there is a prima facie case of privilege.

As a result, the motion moved by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) can go forward in the House under orders of the day. It is a debatable motion, and the House must also vote on

and adopt the motion in order for the remedies suggested in the motion to proceed.

### **Speaker's Statement**

**Madam Speaker:** I have a statement for the House on the process for debating a privilege motion.

Now that the ruling has been delivered, for the benefit of all members, I would like to explain the rules and practices governing the process for debating a privilege motion and outline the steps the House needs to take.

In accordance with Manitoba rules and practice, and as noted on pages 143 to 153 of the third edition of the House of Commons Procedure and Practice, when a prima facie case of privilege has been established, the following procedures apply: (1) the privilege motion is debatable and amendable and takes precedence in debate over other orders of the day, meaning the Speaker shall call the motion for debate at the start of orders of the day on the same sitting day as it is ruled to be prima facie; (2) the motion is subject to all procedures and practices governing debate on a substantive motion; (3) speaking times for a substantive motion are set out in our rules 44(1) and (2) as follows: 30 minutes for members; recognized party leaders have unlimited time.

Should the debate on the motion not be completed by the daily adjournment hour, the motion will take priority over all other orders of the day at the next sitting and it will appear on the next day's Order Paper as the first item of business listed under orders of the day.

### **PETITIONS**

#### **Dauphin Correctional Centre**

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This petition has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

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

The honourable member for Flin Flon. The honourable member for Flin Flon? If not, I will go to the honourable—[interjection]—oh, the honourable member for Flin Flon.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

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

### **CancerCare Closures at Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) On September 4th, 2020, the provincial government announced that CancerCare outpatient services will be cut at the Concordia Hospital and Seven Oaks General Hospital, effective December 2020.

\* (14:50)

(2) Closing two CancerCare sites in Winnipeg will mean a third of existing sites are lost, with increased burdens placed on outpatient cancer services at the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital.

(3) To cut out these—the cut of these outpatient services has provoked concerns from patients in northeast Winnipeg and northwest Winnipeg residents, health-care workers and CancerCare nurses alike, who have stressed to the provincial government that the cuts are detrimental to the health of the area residents.

(4) Patients who do not have access to a vehicle or reliable transportation will be hit the hardest by this cut, with the burden following largely on seniors and Manitobans on low incomes.

(5) Cuts within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, including the provincial government's closure of the Concordia emergency room and Seven Oaks emergency room, have already compromised health-care access close to home for residents of northeast and northwest Winnipeg.

(6) The deterioration of health care within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has meant increased wait times, compromised patient care and worsened health outcomes. This cut will only continue to deteriorate the quality of care for patients, while forcing more demands onto health-care workers.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to halt its proposed closure of CancerCare sites at Concordia Hospital and Seven Oaks General Hospital, while guaranteeing access to high-quality outpatient cancer services in northeast and northwest Winnipeg.

### Dauphin Correctional Centre

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I may say, happy International Women's Day.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This petition—this has been signed by many Manitobans.

### Early-Learning and Child-Care Programs

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Early-learning and child-care programs in Manitoba require increased funding to stabilize and support a system that is in jeopardy.

Licensed not-for-profit early-learning and child-care programs have received no new operating funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

High-quality licensed child care has a lasting positive impact on children's development, is a fundamental need for Manitoba families and contributes to a strong economy.

The financial viability of these programs is in jeopardy if they cannot meet the fiscal responsibility of achieving a balanced budget, as all operating expenses continue to increase.

The workforce shortage of trained early-childhood educators has continued to increase; quality child care is dependent on a workforce that is skilled and adequately remunerated.

Accessible, affordable and quality early-learning and child-care programs must be available to all children and families in Manitoba.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

### Quality Health Care Access

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government's program of cuts and restructuring in health care have had serious negative consequences, reduced both access to and quality of care for patients, increased wait times, exacerbated the nursing shortage, and significantly increased workload and the reliance on overtime from nurses and other health-care professionals.

(2) Further cuts and consolidation are opposed by a majority of Manitobans and will only further reduce access to health-care services.

(3) The provincial government has rushed through these cuts and changes and failed to adequately consult nurses and health-care professionals who provide front-line patient care.

(4) Ongoing cuts and changes appear to be more about saving money than improving health care.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government reverse cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality health care and,

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will improve the timeliness and quality of care for patients by increasing the number of beds across the system and recruiting and retaining an

adequate number of nurses and other health professionals to meet Manitoba's needs.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

### Dauphin Correctional Centre

**Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May of 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

And we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba Legislature.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also affect or impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27th, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This petition was signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

\* (15:00)

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS MATTER OF PRIVILEGE (Continued)

**Madam Speaker:** The House will now consider the privilege motion.

I would call on the honourable Official Opposition House Leader to move the motion.

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that the matter of the failure of this government to respect the laws of this province and to put forward to this Assembly, required by

statue—statute, be referred to an all-party committee for immediate consideration.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), seconded by the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that the matter of the failure of this government to respect the laws of this province and to put forward information to this Assembly, required by statute, be referred to an all-party committee for immediate consideration.

The honourable government—the honourable Official Opposition House Leader.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Well, Madam Speaker, I want to say miigwech for your ruling today and your statement. I think we're all in a little bit of shock in some respects. This is actually the first time that we have won a matter of privilege, and I have it on good authority that this is a long time coming, that this has not been seen in this Chamber for many, many, many years.

So, you know what I think we—I want to do, Madam Speaker, is I just want to take a couple seconds here to read the motion again because I think that the motion is quite extraordinary on this day, on this International Women's Day. And again, it is that the matter of the failure of this government to respect the laws of this province. I could read that sentence over and over in this Chamber because it's quite extraordinary to be standing up, March 8th, 2021, for this House to call into the official record the failure of this government, the failure of this Pallister government to respect the laws of this province. That's quite extraordinary.

And, you know, maybe it's because we're sometimes often in a little bubble in this Chamber, but I would really impart on Manitobans that would be watching this or watching the debate later when we post this—because you can be sure I'll be posting this on every social media platform that I have—that today the House confirmed and affirmed that the Pallister government is a failure and that the Pallister government cannot respect the laws of this province.

And that's extraordinary. They're the government. They're supposed to be adhering to, they're supposed to be honouring, they're supposed to be so diligent about respecting the laws of Manitoba, and they failed. They failed.

And you know when we started talking about this? Probably a little bit before, but certainly we, on this side of the House, the NDP caucus, started talking about the Pallister government—all of the caucus, all

of the get-along gang and their boss—not respecting the laws of Manitoba when they called an early election.

That was law. We have fixed-date elections, fixed election dates here in Manitoba, but they called it in a year earlier because the Premier (Mr. Pallister) just woke up one morning and was like, you know what, I'm going to break the laws of Manitoba, and I'm going to call an early election. And that's what he did.

And so it is quite a day in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly today to have the Assembly, to have the House, to have the Chamber here acknowledge and affirm that the government is a failure and that they refuse to respect the laws of Manitoba. That is extraordinary.

So, for Manitobans, FYI—and what we're talking about here today—is back in October, I rose in the House on what's called a matter of privilege. I think that folks will sometimes hear that language, either a matter of privilege or a point of order, and those are I guess you could call them, like, tools that we have as MLAs to bring forward concerns to the Legislative Assembly and how the Assembly is supposed to operate.

And back in October, I brought forward a matter of privilege, and the matter of privilege was that the government, the Pallister government, was failing and strategically keeping back reports that, by law, are due. And they had not tabled pretty important reports.

And so, you know, some of those reports, for those that are watching or those that will watch later on, is The Path to Reconciliation Act. The government, the Pallister government is required by law to table The Path to Reconciliation Act during a certain time period, and they had not.

The other thing that is required under law to table is The Climate and Green Plan Act, which is a pretty big thing. We are in the midst of a climate crisis and the Pallister government—and we know what their track record is in respect of their, you know, their so-called climate plan, which they kind of threw—they just threw in the garbage. They didn't file that report as well. They didn't table that report.

And then the other report that they did not table was The Police Services Act. And we know that they were—they had research—they commissioned research on The Police Services Act but they failed to table that report.

And so it makes it very difficult for MLAs on this side of the House that actually care about Manitoba and actually care about Manitobans to actually do our job when we don't have all of the information. When you don't table a report, you don't have the information about what the government's doing or what they didn't do.

And the government failed on tabling these reports, and so it puts into question and jeopardy my ability as an MLA to do my job. It puts in jeopardy or in question the ability of my whole NDP caucus to do our jobs, which is to fight for Manitobans, to hold this government to account. How can you fully hold this government to account when they don't release their reports? Sorry—can I get a glass of water, thanks.

So, Madam Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about The Path to Reconciliation Act. You know, I think that it's particularly harmful and disingenuous and, you know—my favourite word—pretty gross, that the Pallister government can take its time or, you know, doesn't have the commitment or the dedication to follow the law and table The Path to Reconciliation Act report.

You know, I remind everybody in this Chamber and those that are out and will watch this that this very building, this very ornate, colonial structure is situated on Treaty 1 territory. And when you look at Manitoba's history and, of course, across the country—but I would suggest to you, Madam Speaker, and I would suggest to members of the House, that Manitoba is extraordinarily situated when we're looking at reconciliation in this province.

We have such an active Indigenous community who, for generations, have been fighting for our rights and recognition and to be safe in our own territories. And we have individuals from our own territories, from Treaty 1 territory and from my home community of Sagkeeng First Nation, that actually started the journey for reconciliation.

And so I'm very proud to share that, you know, Phil Fontaine, who is my cousin—his mother and my grandmother are sisters. They are, each of them, are of—in a family of 18, and Agnes, Phil's mom, is the oldest and Nora Fontaine is the youngest, and that's my grandmother.

\* (15:10)

And I don't know if a lot of people know this, but in 1991, Phil Fontaine, who was the grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs at the time, went on The National in the evening, and he did an interview

with Peter Mansbridge, and they were talking about residential schools. And in that interview, Peter Mansbridge asked Phil about what his experiences were in residential school.

That was a historic moment for us in Canada, because not everybody knows or realizes that that was actually one of the first times in Canadian history that an Indigenous leader got up in public on such a national stage and spoke about the sexual abuse that he had suffered in residential school.

And so, you know, and Phil Fontaine then went on to become the national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and so he started—just with that one interview—he started this whole path to where we ended up with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and where we ended up with restitution for residential school survivors. In that one moment of courage, it started this whole domino effect.

He comes from Manitoba. He comes from Sagkeeng Anicinabe First Nation. He comes from Treaty 1 territory. We have extraordinary Indigenous leadership in this province. We have incredibly courageous Indigenous women who are leaders in our province, and all of, you know, Indigenous leadership, our Indigenous women's leadership, our elders, our youth—all of those are propelling this province, are pushing this province, are pulling this province towards reconciliation.

And so it is pretty disheartening that the Pallister government cannot even take the time to operate within the laws of Manitoba and table a report that moves us, that makes us accountable towards reconciliation. I actually find that quite hurtful.

And so, you know, I said earlier in my member's statement, I spoke about being at a vigil last night with the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara). That was an incredibly difficult vigil, and I've been to thousands, thousands and thousands of vigils in my life. I've been to funerals, I've been to feasts, I've been to memorials, I've been to protests, I've been to marches, I've been to ceremony all in honour of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirited.

But there's something so difficult in, you know, in the last year. Every, almost—it feels like almost once a week I'm posting on Twitter, you know, Indigenous woman missing, last seen at, or we are trying to figure out how we can support a family whose loved one is—has been murdered.

There were so many people at the vigil last night, including Miss Jana Williams' family, including her mom. And at one point while women were drumming, and it was pretty quiet but women were drumming, and then all of a sudden you just heard just sobbing, like wailing, and then you could—I looked over here and it was a family member and everybody rushed over to help her and the community came together. They got a chair that was smudged.

And that's why it's so important for these reports that are embedded in Manitoba legislation to be taken seriously. The work that goes into these reports, the work that goes into the reports reflects the works that should be going on in the department and in all departments. You know, reconciliation, the path to reconciliation should be something that happens and is explored and dedicated to and committed to in every single department in the Pallister government.

And so, you know, I'm happy today, I'm pleased today that this Chamber, this House, this Legislative Assembly recognizes and affirms that the Pallister government is failing in respect of tabling The Path to Reconciliation Act.

And it has to do a better job, Madam Speaker. I've spoken up in this House, particularly when the Pallister government put into legislation—so on that hand they're okay to follow legislation, when they're stealing money from Indigenous children in care, they're all for legislation there. But not this type of legislation.

You know, I've said it many times that you cannot, you know, get up on your computer or your iPhone and tweet, you know, support for this or for—support for that, you know, or—you know, I've gotten up in this House, I don't know how many darn times I've gotten up in this House, and I've asked for members opposite not to say our Indigenous people, or our First Nations, or the member for—I—the Minister for the Status of Women, I believe—no, no, the Minister for Mental Health said today in one of her answers, you know, our Indigenous leadership, or our grand chiefs.

You know, I know that people—it's very simple language. Don't use the our. You know, those grand chiefs do not belong to her. Those grand chiefs do not belong to anybody here. We're not your Indigenous people. It's very simple, and I don't know why members opposite persist in that possessive language of Indigenous peoples.

If you really care about reconciliation, stop saying our. It's very simple.

And so, you know, you get up, you tweet something, you say our in this House—those are literally simple things that members opposite can stop doing. Stop tweeting about Orange Shirt Day when you're stealing from Indigenous children. Stop pretending that you care about missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls and two-spirit when you haven't done anything on the file.

I said it today in my member's statement: Where are the calls to justice? What has the Pallister government done in respect of the calls of justice for MMIWG2S?

And I don't want to hear that they've—they—you know, the nonsense that they say that they've done. Not one of them, not one of the PC caucus were at the memorial, the vigil last night—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order.

I would indicate that the member is straying from the topic of the motion and I would ask her to be relevant in her comments. While there may be many issues out there, the member is asked to stick to the motion that is on the floor and speak to that motion.

**Ms. Fontaine:** Madam Speaker, respectfully, you know, I am speaking to the motion respectfully. The Path to Reconciliation Act, tabling The Path to Reconciliation Act encompasses what the government is doing towards moving towards reconciliation in this province, including protecting Indigenous women and girls and two-spirited.

That's—that should be a part of that report, but we don't know what they're doing. We don't have that report. We didn't have that report when this matter came forward.

And I am simply pointing out the failure of this government. I'm—you know, in this respect, the Pallister government is keeping hidden or not doing or doesn't care or is not dedicated or not keeping, you know, doesn't want to respect the laws of this province by tabling these reports.

**An Honourable Member:** They've been tabled.

**Ms. Fontaine:** At the time, they have not been tabled.

So I think that it goes to say, Madam Speaker, it is—it shows the lack of concern in respect of reconciliation in this province.



And then, Madam Speaker, we know that included in this motion was The Climate and Green Plan Act that was not tabled. I mean, we're literally in the midst of a climate crisis, and the Pallister government doesn't see any urgency—none whatsoever—of tabling their Climate and Green Plan Act.

\* (15:20)

If we don't get together, if this province, if this government doesn't get its act together, we're in for a very, very difficult time in many years to come.

But it goes to show that alongside what was their disastrous Manitoba green plan, which they were pay—the consultant was paid a lot of money for, which we all paid for, including his \$60,000-plus for airplane rides to go back home every weekend, which is really the antithesis to helping climate. We don't see an urgency on this government from—to deal with this issue. We on this side of the House know how important it is to have the information on The Climate and Green Plan Act.

So, Madam Speaker, I just want to again reiterate today, on March 8th, 2021, International Women's Day, which, to me, of course, anybody in this Chamber knows that every day is women's day in my world, every day is—we should be respecting and honouring women that are in our lives. On this day, the best day of the year, this House affirmed and confirmed that this government is a failure, and that they do not care about the laws in Manitoba.

Miigwech, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** I would like to say a few things regarding the motion that is now before the House following your ruling, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I think context is important, and the first contextual thing that I would put on the record is, of course, the reports that the member opposite is referring to are not hidden. They've been tabled, and they've been tabled now for many weeks.

And so they exist before the Legislature, and they exist for the public to read them. I think the member—although I'll give her the benefit of the doubt, maybe she spoke in a way that wasn't as clear or as eloquent as she would like it to be, but they are not being hidden, they have been tabled for some time.

Now, the question about timeliness of their tabling is something that you have ruled on, Madam Speaker, and I respect your ruling. I think the context of what was happening last year is also important.

A pandemic that was not anticipated and not welcomed by anyone struck Manitoba almost a year ago now to the date.

And I—it feels in some ways like it was just yesterday and in some ways it feels like it was 100 years ago, but it was a year ago today that incredibly difficult decisions were being made regarding schools, ultimately regarding businesses, decisions that lawmakers—and all of us are lawmakers here in our own way—but hadn't been made in our living memory.

And it was the NDP, it was the opposition—together with the Liberals, I'm sure, although I don't remember specifically—who demanded that the full focus of government, after they were done their filibuster, of course, should be on the pandemic. And that is as it should be, Madam Speaker.

And I would say at this time, because it's worth putting on the record, that the civil service, the public service in Manitoba, you know, pivoted from all the different things that they were doing prior to the pandemic, coming into Manitoba and in the world, pivoted from all of the things that they were doing then to something that they had not planned for, that was not anticipated, that could not have been predicted, and all of their efforts switched to that.

And, of course, every day there were things that were new that we were learning about COVID-19 and the virus, seeing what was happening in different parts of the world, preparing here, standing up programs that didn't exist in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, sometimes standing them up in a matter of days or weeks at the behest of the opposition as well but, of course, for the benefit of all Manitobans.

All Manitobans were asking that the full focus be on dealing with the pandemic, Madam Speaker. It's not that this was like some flight of fancy of the government that they decided to, oh, let's go and work on issues around the pandemic. Everybody was saying that everything should be focused on the pandemic.

In fact, the member opposite, the Official Opposition House Leader, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) will say, well, you know, there are rules of this House, and certainly there are, but the rules also say that we should be sitting in the spring, and we didn't sit in the spring either. That was all changed as well and the opposition, I don't think, had an objection to that. I think they supported that because things had to change during a pandemic.

The civil service, the public service moved all of their focus to dealing with the issues around the pandemic, and that is what the opposition expected. That's what they were demanding. It's what the public was expecting. It's what they were demanding. And there were so many things that changed over the course of those few months.

And that does not mean that these reports are unimportant, Madam Speaker. They are important. But it's important, also, to put them in the context of everything else that was happening in the world. And I'm sure that, had of we asked the members opposite at that time, where should the full focus of government be at this time in the pandemic, they would have said—in fact, they've said many times—it needs to be on dealing with the pandemic.

And government, of course, isn't just the elected members. It involves, of course, the public service, who've done an incredible job over the last year in dealing with the many challenges.

And so, yes, Madam Speaker, there are many timelines, of course, that were trying to be juggled and met. The full focus was on the pandemic.

When it comes to these three reports, they have now been tabled. They have been produced. They're not a secret. But I think if you would ask Manitobans, Madam Speaker, if they were following this debate and this particular issue word for word, they would recognize that these reports are important. I think they would say that.

But I think the one thing that all Manitobans and all citizens of the world have learned over the last year is maybe we need to have a little bit of grace on some of the things that happened. Businesses have been closed. We've been asked to do things in ways we've never done—been done before.

We didn't have Christmas in a traditional way that we normally would. There were many other holidays that weren't done in the way that they normally would take place. It is hard-pressed to find anything that is exactly the same as it was about a year ago.

So it is not that this isn't important, Madam Speaker—and, of course, you've made your ruling—but I think there's context around what is going on here that the member opposite is simply not giving enough credence to. It is a once-in-a-lifetime—we all hope—situation.

I wouldn't—it's not an exact parallel, but I remember being here, not as an elected member of the

Assembly but as a staff person during the 1997 flood. And there were days when the Assembly was suspended. I remember the then-Deputy Speaker sitting where you are, Madam Speaker, with boots on—with rubber boots on because he had just come from his own constituency in St. Norbert, fighting—fighting the flood, and I'm pretty sure that probably broke some kind of convention or rules, too.

There are so many things that happen during an emergency that you need to deal with things at the time that, absolutely, mistakes can be made. And this was nothing more than a simple mistake that was then addressed, Madam Speaker, with reports coming forward.

But remembering the context, I don't think that anyone at the time in—whether it was the 1997 flood or other emergencies that 'prebated'—predated that in Manitoba, Madam Speaker, would have expected that there wouldn't have been some things that didn't operate exactly as they normally did. Because in an emergency, sometimes you have to focus on the things that need the important focus at that moment.

And when it was raised to the attention of the respective departments regarding these reports, it was dealt with. So there was no malfeasance. There was no active desire not to have these reports out, Madam Speaker. All of the government and all the public service was focused fully on the health and well-being and the safety of Manitobans at the time.

The reports have now been made public, Madam Speaker, and I don't think that there is much more to this matter than that.

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** It's indeed a pleasure to rise this afternoon and just address this very important motion that's before the Legislature.

This is an unprecedented ruling, I think, coming forward from yourself, Madam Speaker. It's something I think all of us as legislators need to take very seriously, we need to consider very seriously. And, quite frankly, the motion that's before this House is actually one I would argue is quite reasonable and quite, you know, quite—should be quite amenable for all members of this Legislature.

\* (15:30)

You know, not to say that there's—and not to make any judgments on past matters of privilege or points of order that have been brought before this Legislature. We could certainly get into the merit of some of those. I'd be happy to talk about that.

But I think, you know, when we—sometimes when we bring these forward, you know, there's a tendency to say what has happened is so egregious that we need to, you know, sort of overreact in our response, that we need to make, you know, sort of a, you know, make a motion that would be difficult for, you know, quite frankly, for the government to act on and maybe not even realistic in the context of the business that we do as legislators.

However, in this case, I want to commend our House leader, who brought this particular matter of privilege forward, for being quite reasonable in what she's asking for. And by asking instead of, you know, that the government, you know, sort of self-flagellate and, you know, mea culpa and sort of go out in the press and sort of say how terrible they are, literally all that's being asked for by this motion here this afternoon is an all-party committee.

Now, I don't have all of the details, all of the history of all-party committees in this Legislature, but I do know that it is a tool that has been used effectively in the past.

Now, I take the Government House Leader's (Mr. Goertzen) assertions to heart, to say that, you know, he said mistakes were made; he said that this was obviously a mistake that was made by himself and his government. Again, we can talk about why those mistakes were made. But if we take him at—take that statement at face value, if it's a mistake, then he should be willing to join with us in supporting this motion and simply say an all-party committee that looks at why these reports weren't tabled would be in order. I think that's a fairly reasonable request.

I want to just back up because something that the Opposition House Leader said was very true, and that is that this particular day that this is being brought forward and that the ruling was made by a female Speaker to a female House leader and supporting that House leader's work and argument here this afternoon on International Women's Day is significant and should be recognized.

So I'm proud to be part of a caucus that has as our House leader a very strong woman and a very capable woman who has brought this forward.

This is incredibly important that we take this seriously because, you know, this has been a discussion now not just in this country but in North America and across the world about the importance of protecting democracy, the fragility of democracy. This isn't just something that, you know, we talk about

or we say. These aren't just words; they have real, concrete consequences.

And so I think when we're talking about what are the typical—you know, sometimes we talk about what are the norms within the Legislature and there's a lot of those. There's a lot that we sort of take for granted, but once we've gotten into it, you know, on a day-to-day basis, we start looking at what are the actual norms or what are the rules and what exists within the rules.

Sometimes these are just norms that we're following. Other times, they are rules. They are something that's been set down. Oftentimes, they've been rules for a very long time, or sometimes they've only been in place for a little while, but they are rules that, you know, were made by people who had good intentions and tried to make—tried to do what is best to facilitate the debate here.

*Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

But what we're talking about here is actually the law, and this is very concerning because this ruling specifically says that, quote, the failure of this government to respect the laws of this province and to put forward information to this Assembly required by statute be referred to an all-party committee for immediate consideration. That's a very serious charge, Madam Speaker. That's a very, very serious charge: failure to respect the laws.

Now, you know, this House leader wants to talk about the last year and the pandemic. And certainly we all know the effects that the pandemic has had in terms of how we conduct business, how we conduct the business of government in our case, how we relate to each other as people, how we listen to one another. There are serious consequences and there are serious ways that we have changed the way that we relate to one another.

However, as I said, in this time when we're talking about the fragility of democracy—and we don't have to look very far, we only have to look to our southern neighbours to see that when norms are thrown out the window, when rules aren't followed and when laws are disregarded, that there are serious consequences to those actions.

Now, here in Manitoba, we are seeing that happen, and it's been commented—I won't go too far into that—down that road, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Sufficient to say that it's not just one side of the Legislature talking at the other side of the Legislature about concerns about transparency and about

accountability, but it's actually people who have great knowledge about these issues. And those people who are commenting right now are talking from a place of protecting that democracy and protecting, first and foremost, our democratic traditions. And they've been critical of this government. They've been critical of the way that this government has not been transparent, has not followed those norms and not followed those rules.

So when we get a ruling like this that clearly spells out, from the words of the Speaker and from the words of her staff and researchers, this is something that we need to take incredibly seriously. We need to take a step back, we need to put down the partisan hats, maybe we do need to come together as an all-party committee. And I would challenge that, you know, every member of this Legislature has the ability to support this motion, has the ability to say, you know, party aside, it is important that we return to some of these norms and that we continue to prioritize those things that Manitobans have told us are wrong.

Despite the upheaval that we've seen in—because of the pandemic, this Legislature has continued to function in so many ways. We've continued to come here throughout the pandemic, even when the uncertainty was incredibly intense. The first few days and first few weeks of the pandemic, we in fact returned to this Legislature to pass a series of bills that supported people who needed the support during the early days of the pandemic.

Then we came back in the spring, you know—House leader seems to forget that we came back in the spring; though on a limited basis, we did come back as legislators. We asked our staff, we asked our clerks, we asked members of this Legislature to put themselves at risk, to come to the building to debate laws which were important. This fall, we had a full session with participation virtually; we accommodated all members of the Legislature and allowed everybody to speak, have their voice heard and represent their constituents. So we did that work.

And, in terms of the work of the government, it never stopped the government from operating, you know; it never stopped the Minister of Health from making cuts—for instance, closing CancerCare in my constituency. That went ahead during a pandemic. There was no break or no stoppage to that. But there was a break and a stoppage to releasing information that's critical for us to do our work here in the building.

So I don't buy that argument, and I don't think it's one that we should entertain here today.

What we're seeing here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unfortunately, is a credibility gap. And this is important—and again I'm trying to put down my partisan hat here—because, you know, as the House leader said many times in his remarks, we get up every day and we're critical of the job that they're doing. That's absolutely true, and we are. That is our job as an opposition.

However, what is very concerning here is that if one side is saying, you know something—if, you know, we're saying, well, you're cutting health care—which is true, I want to add—and they say, well, no we're not, that's a dispute over the facts and that's for the public to decide. However, if the public doesn't have the information about that particular cut or those particular policy decisions, then where does that leave us? It leaves the government without—no credibility.

And I'm not just talking about the credibility of the government and the executive and all of the—you know, all of that. What I'm talking about is all of us—the credibility of all of us. And so this actually is important for all of us, that we all have the credibility, so that when constituents—when we go talk to our constituents, they have the ability to make decisions based on that information that's out there.

\* (15:40)

And we're not talking about, Mr. Deputy Speaker, reports that aren't important. It's not like we—you know, we dug up—and this probably could happen—our researchers are probably—have already probably, you know, looked at doing this in the past, but no, we didn't go and dust off some, you know, obscure reference to a report or an act that really doesn't have any relevance to the work that we're doing here.

In fact, we brought up—you know, these are incredibly important reporting mechanisms that are built into the Legislature because of how important these topics are. And they couldn't be more important than they are right now.

The Path to Reconciliation Act is so vitally important to who we are, who our identity is as Manitobans. And if we want to forge a future together, this is absolutely key to doing that.

The Police Services Act. You know, after a year of increased scrutiny of police services, of—I think—good-intentioned, you know, protest and coming together of people to cry out to say we need to look at

our police services and make sure that we're providing those services the best way we can, that is an act that wasn't reported on as it should have been.

And The Climate and Green Plan Act, which, you know, my—I don't want to steal any thunder here from my colleague who may wish to speak this afternoon, but, you know, you can't talk to any young person in this province and not hear their No. 1 issue is the future of our planet and climate change.

So how is it that this government could deem those reports not necessary and not important to bring forward? Well, I think because there was a deliberate action here. I really do think that that was a deliberate action on the part of government.

You know, every single minister who's responsible for these reports will get briefed daily on this. They'll know what reports are required by statute. They'll know exactly what is supposed to come before the Legislature. And it was a conscious decision not to bring those. And I don't know why not.

You know, it's—you know, we're happy to have this debate any time. As I said, if they're going to bring forward their position, we're going to bring forward ours. Let the people of Manitoba decide. That is the way it should be. But if they're continually hiding these reports or not bringing them forward in a timely manner, that is where our credibility and all of the credibility of this Legislature falls apart. And that is very—that is a very worrisome trend.

So, the climate and green act, for instance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, requires that the minister responsible prepares an annual report on the programs, policies and measures employed within that year to implement the Climate and Green Plan.

Now, we have a new minister of the environment, you know; I think this was before her time. But I think that it's—it, you know, it couldn't be more important for the people of Manitoba to see this. So why was this not something that was front-and-centre for this government?

The legislation calls for the report to be tabled within 15 days after it has been prepared if the Assembly is sitting or, if the Assembly is not sitting, within 15 days of the next sitting period.

At the time of this matter of privilege, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the report had not been tabled, and was subsequently tabled, but was not at this time when this was brought forward.

Again, this is something that I think every single Manitoban would want to see. They're questioning the plan of this government. They're questioning the attitude that they've taken towards climate change. They're wondering what the plan really is.

And I know I've read that report and I still can't tell you what the plan is. It's hard to decipher exactly how this government is calculating their emissions targets and exactly how they're trying to manipulate the numbers to prove that they are doing something on the climate.

But, as I said, the most important thing is to have that information before the Legislature. And that's simply what we're asking for here.

The Path to Reconciliation Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker—this section, sections 5(1) and (2) of the act, require that within three months after the end of the fiscal year the minister must table a copy of the report in the Assembly and make it available to the public.

There are also provisions requiring reports or summaries of the report to be translated into the languages of Cree, Dakota, Dene, Inuktitut, Michif, Ojibwe and Oji-Cree. And these weren't—this wasn't accomplished either.

And then, as I said, finally, the section 90 of The Police Services Act states that within five years of this act coming into force the minister must undertake a comprehensive review of the act and must, within one year after the review is taken or within such a time as the Legislative Assembly may allow, submit a report to review of the Assembly—some of the most important subjects and issues or our time, and that is what was not presented by this Legislature.

So to say that, you know, this just—well, what did the minister say? Mistakes were made. You know, mistakes were made. Well, that's not good enough, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know.

And I can't think of another example—I was sort of trying to brainstorm here what's another example in real life, let's call it, where, you know, somebody could be, you know, deemed to have, you know, been in a failure to respect the laws of this province and then be given the opportunity to vote on whether some—there's some consequence to that?

You know, you don't get a speeding ticket and say, well, you know, mistakes were made and, you know, oh, the pandemic, and anyway let's vote on whether I should see any consequences to that. That's not how the real world works.

In this case, we're not even asking for a ruling or for a decision to be made on whether there was something that was malicious being perpetrated by the government or by the ministers. We're simply asking that we come together in an all-party way, that there's a committee to be struck, that there's a way that we can discuss this.

And, you know, as I said, I don't have the complete history of the all-party committees that have been brought forward to the Legislature. What I do know is that in the past, they have been very successful. There's been a lot of good that has been done by those particular commissions and committees because, you know, when you allow members of the Legislature to come forward outside of this arena, outside of the sort of day-to-day back-and-forth, outside of question period and sort of the theatrics or the political theatre of this place, and just ask them to get to work and actually do something about this, well, good things happen, you know. So if the government was open to this, let's vote, let's support this and let's actually strike this committee.

If MLAs sit down and say, oh, well, you know, actually, as a matter of fact, you know, there was a filing error or, you know, a certain member of the staff didn't bring it forward and the minister tried to but missed the deadline, I mean, let's explore that. But, you know, I'm thinking, based on what the minister—or, sorry, the House leader—Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) had to say, that that may not be the case, that, in fact, there may be something else afoot, and I think that is incredibly concerning.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I don't want to take all afternoon here. I do know that there are others who do want to speak to this, you know. And, as I said, I mean, it's incredibly important any time, but on International Women's Day it just—there is something poetic about that, that it's come forward, this ruling, and supported the work of our House leader to bring this forward.

I think that—I think that this is something that we should consider incredibly seriously, that we should take very seriously. We—you know, we've got lots of time to get into debate around this place, and certainly we have different—very different views than the government does, on how we should be proceeding.

But, when it comes to issues like this, I think why don't we get together, why don't we have—find some common ground to actually figure out what the root of this issue is, and strengthen these norms, give people of Manitoba some confidence in the work that we do

as legislators, let them know that we can rise above this kind of stuff and that we will return to some sense of normalcy around this place and throughout democracies around the world. That's what they're looking for right now.

And when I talk to young people, as we did over the last month, going into classrooms virtually—which was a different experience—one of the things that I always talked to them about is how important their democratic involvement and democratic choices truly are, you know. As I said, if they don't have faith, if the public doesn't have the faith in the work that we do, ultimately they're going to make the decisions that don't serve anybody and we're going to see something like what happened south of the border and that kind of politics, that kind of, you know, blow-everything-up, light-a-match, throw-it-behind-you-and-walk-out-the-door kind of politics.

\* (15:50)

I don't believe in that, and I don't agree with that, and I think a step in the right direction would be for all of us to come together to see how serious this is and to actually make some decisions that, hopefully, will ensure that this kind of thing doesn't actually happen again and that we actually can come together, we can make decisions that are for the betterment of Manitoba. And don't worry, for anyone, you know, who's following along and saying, oh, this is all, you know, going to be a Kumbaya; no, we're going to continue to have serious disagreements, but not about the facts. The facts are the facts, and that's what we're asking that the government respect by allowing these kind of documents to be tabled and this information to get out there.

And I'll—maybe I'll just say, finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker—maybe I'm getting a little optimistic here, but I know there's a number of matters of privilege that are still before the House for, you know—to be ruled on. This might be the beginning of a trend that, you know, that shows that the work that we're doing as opposition is serious, that we're bringing forward important matters of privilege, and that we are truly trying to keep this government—hold this government to account—again, not in a, you know, in a partisan day-to-day way, but in a, I think, a way that strengthens the democracy of our province for the long term, because that is one of the goals that we also want to adhere to.

We are the—Her Majesty's official opposition, her loyal opposition—I can't remember the wording, but it is important that we do take that job seriously, and I

think this is a step in the right direction. We have a duty to do that, and I hope that, you know, as these matter of privileges come forward that it doesn't become just a partisan thing.

There was a moment where I thought the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) was going to challenge the ruling of the Chair, but maybe he saw you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the Chair and he backed down. I'm not really sure, have to go back to the Hansard to check that. But I do know that it is important for us to respect those rulings, to respect the democracy and the democratic traditions we have.

I do hope that the government supports this motion, that we vote on it in favour and we move forward.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook):** Before I recognize the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), I believe it's the honourable member for River Heights' turn.

Is the honourable member for River Heights available? Is he on Zoom?

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, I am online.

I want to speak for a few minutes on this matter of privilege and the resolution that—and the motion that comes from it.

This is very specifically, as we have heard, the matter of the failure of this government to respect the laws of this province. That's a very serious matter, and I appreciate the Speaker of the Manitoba Legislature ruling that this is indeed a matter of privilege, and it needs to be discussed, and it needs to be acted on, in—certainly in my view.

It is vital that appropriate documents are tabled at the appropriate time, especially when mandated by law. But I would suggest that also, under our common law system, that there are a variety of traditions which have similar function as laws which need to be respected as well. And so it is important that government follows the laws and traditions of the province, and that the business of the Province gets done.

The government has argued that it was so 'bidy'—busy with the COVID pandemic that it forgot about the ordinary business of the Province, namely these matters dealing with reconciliation, climate change and police reports.

I suggest to the government that there's a whole lot of ordinary business which continued—the work of police and firefighters and garbage collectors and so on, as well as the provision of essential services, food and various other services, which are critical for the ordinary running of the province—and that the presence of the COVID pandemic, while it might restrict certain things, should not have restricted the ability of the government to be able to table reports, which, in some cases, as we saw, the reports were dated before this matter of privilege was brought up and could have been tabled earlier. So the government clearly is at fault here for not respecting the law, and that needs to be considered.

I also think that the matters that we're dealing with—reconciliation—reconciliation is extraordinarily important in Manitoba today. We need to make sure that we are recognizing the problems that have plagued this province in the past and that we are dealing with them and moving forward in a positive direction. There is a big problem, therefore, when the government fails to produce the report and to describe the actions that have or have not been taken with regard to reconciliation.

Climate change is another matter of extraordinary importance and, once again, it has been described, as the COVID pandemic has been described, as a crisis situation and it is really important that reports in relationship to climate change are produced and are tabled at the appropriate time.

And lastly, the third area was police reports. This is a report which was undertaking a comprehensive review of section 90 of The Police Services Act and that the report be submitted and that this is, you know, a vital component of continuing to have a province which is based on provisions of law and order and those provisions in a way that serves people well, but also recognizes the needs of people who have mental illness, and so on. So I would suggest that this was not a report that should have been delayed, that the government should've considered the—breaking the law over this report.

So these three are very important areas and these reports should've been presented and the government should not have broken the law.

Now, I move forward. The last speaker talked about, this is not a partisan issue. Yes, I agree with him. The NDP was significantly at fault at times when they were in government. I will give some examples and they are not the only examples.

The July 1 of the year 2000. There was a deadline in law that the government present a sustainable-development strategy and that, in that strategy, there should be procurement guidelines and that there were various components of that strategy which were deemed essential to be discussed and that the strategy should be tabled.

The government, at the last minute, the NDP government in that period, I think, had not adequately realized this—I raise this; they put together a short and inadequate report; and, in doing so, they didn't meet the standards of the law for inclusion, for example, of procurement guidelines.

I raise this fact, this omission, on July 6th in the year 2000—we were sitting that summer—and then I raised it again on July the 17th, the fact that the government was not following its own laws, and I raised this again on July 25th.

I will quote from my question in question period on that particular date: Mr. Speaker, I said, my question is to the minister of Justice, a minister 'mknown' for his tough talk toward those who break the laws of Manitoba. It has become quite apparent that members of his own government have broken provincial laws by failing to deliver a sustainable-development procurement policy by July 1st, by failing to call a meeting of the round table on sustainable development in more than one year. I ask the minister of Justice what is he doing to address the law breakers in his own government.

\* (16:00)

This was not the only time that I raised such concerns of the government breaking its own laws. Later on—and this is relevant, we are dealing with a climate change plan—on July 19th I raised concerns that the action plan that the government had produced was incomplete. I asked: Can the minister explain why his sustainable development strategy, which was a 'costly' report, does not include the action plan which he's talking about to reduce greenhouse emissions in Manitoba.

And then a follow-up question, my supplementary to the minister: Since there was a July 1 deadline for producing this strategy and you didn't meet it and it was a legal deadline, I was—ask the minister whether he believes that individuals are not necessary to meet legal deadlines for getting driver's licences or hunting licences or fishing licences or paying taxes. If individuals was as cavalier as his ministry, this would be a very poorly functioning

province. Can the minister please explain why he is being so cavalier?

Tabling reports and getting them right is very important, no matter which government, and if you don't get things right, if you don't develop and put forward good strategies, you won't succeed.

On July 20th of that same year, 2000, I asked again, what are the minister's plans in terms of greenhouse gas emissions. I pointed out that the minister was due to reduce Manitoba's greenhouse gas emissions by 6.5 megatons to a level of 16.2 megatons, as required under our international agreement, and that was the Paris climate change.

The problem of not bringing in an adequate strategy was that the government, in 17 years—this is 17 years of NDP government—they completely failed to reach the target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 6.5 megatons.

If you don't produce documents, if you don't adequately report on a timely basis, you will fall behind and that is a problem for our province. That is a problem when things don't get done, when the reports—and don't get tabled. It means that everything gets delayed and action gets delayed, and the work of the Province doesn't get done properly.

Putting forward and having a committee to look at the requirements of the rules and the fulfilling of these rules would be a useful exercise. It would be important—I suggest—to whatever government may be in place now and in the future, it would be useful to have this as an all-party committee, because it is not just a problem of this government, it is also a problem experienced under the former NDP government.

When laws are broken, when mistakes are made, it is good to have a committee to look at them; this is a normal procedure. It is good to have a committee to make recommendations as to how this problem is avoided in the future because when this problem happens it is not just that laws are broken but that strategies don't get properly implemented, well-meaning intentions don't get followed through and the work of this Province doesn't get done properly.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are my comments on this motion. I hope that all members will agree that there should be a committee to meet and to suggest some solutions to this breaking of laws by governments.

Thank you.



**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** As an MLA, we have the opportunity to raise matters of privilege on breaches to our privileges that impact our abilities as MLAs and as opposition to do our jobs.

I'm going to take some time to read out loud the matter of privilege that the member from St. Johns brought forward, which is important to highlight since we are debating its contents today and it was almost six months ago that this matter of privilege was raised.

So let me begin. It reads this: I rise at the earliest opportunity, as the breach I will identify of my privileges was based on a ruling only provided yesterday by yourself, Madam Speaker. I required time to assemble the relevant facts. I believe this shows the first test of the matter of privilege—that I rise at the earliest opportunity—to be met.

The second test of a matter of privilege—to show in what way my privileges as an MLA have been breached—are based on the following, Madam Speaker: my abilities to perform my job as an MLA and fundamentally hold the government to account has been undermined by the government's flouting of statutory requirements to lay before this House reports required by law.

Madam Speaker, in your ruling yesterday, you stated, and I quote: On the matter of tabling documents by a minister, Bosc and Gagnon, House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Third Edition, cites a ruling of Speaker Fraser from 1993, which can be found on page 443, citation 106. The Speaker ruled that a prima facie breach of privilege had occurred when the government failed to table a document required by statute in timely manner.

This is key element of finding a prima facie breach of privilege. A member raising the issue must identify where in legislation there is a requirement that a specific document be tabled in the House. End quote.

And so, Madam Speaker, the facts are as follows: The Path to Reconciliation Act states, inter-section 5(1), and I quote: "For each fiscal year, the minister responsible for reconciliation must prepare a report about the measures taken by the government to advance reconciliation, including the measures taken to engage Indigenous nations and Indigenous peoples in the reconciliation process and the measures taken to implement the strategy." End quote.

And section 5(2) states, and I quote: Tabling report in Assembly and making public: "Within three months after the end of the fiscal year, the minister

must table a copy of the report in the Assembly and make it available to the public." End quote, Madam Speaker.

It is October 2020, long past three months of the end of the fiscal year-end, and no report has been put before this House, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, the Climate and Green Plan Act states, at section 5(1), and I quote: "Annual report on climate and green plan: The minister must prepare an annual report on the programs, policies and measures employed in that year to implement the climate and green plan." End quote.

And section 5(7) Tabling report, and I quote: "The minister must table a copy of the annual report within 15 days after it has been prepared if the Assembly is sitting or, if it is not, within 15 days after the next sitting begins." End quote, Madam Speaker.

The Climate and Green Plan came into force in November 2018. It is October 2020, and no annual report has been placed before this Assembly since that time, Madam Speaker.

The Police Services Act states, at section 20, and I quote: "Within five years after this Act comes into force, the minister must undertake a comprehensive review of it, and must, within one year after the review is undertaken or within such further time as the Legislative Assembly may allow, submit a report on the review to the Assembly." End quote, Madam Speaker.

The majority of this act came into force in 2009, and the final provisions of the act came into force on June 18th, 2015. As a result, the minister undertook a comprehensive review of the act and announced this review on May 29th, 2019, in a press release.

There has been no report submitted to the Assembly from this review. The act states that the government—and I quote—must within one year after the review is undertaken submit a report on the review to the Assembly. End quote.

No report has been submitted to the Assembly. What's more, Madam Speaker, no attempt has been made to seek further time to submit the report.

What makes the breach of this privilege so egregious is that the minister of Justice, the minister responsible for the proper administration of justice and the following of our laws in Manitoba, has ignored the statutory requirements that apply to him.

In addition, the minister has publicly stated he's actually in possession of a copy of the report but has chosen to fail to present it to the Assembly.

This report is nearly five months overdue at this state, Madam Speaker. This flagrant flouting of statutory requirements that applies to this government directly impede my ability to do my job as an MLA and to hold the government accountable.

\* (16:10)

The facts are clear, Madam Speaker, and so are the procedural authorities.

What's more, I seek you to rule on this matter as quickly, as 'expeditiously' as possible. Every day this information is withheld from the Assembly compounds and deepens the breach of privileges to members. Every day this information required by statute is withheld further prevents MLAs in the chamber from—in the Chamber from doing their job properly.

As a result of the breach of the rules, of the practices of this very House, of my privileges as an MLA in the laws in the province, I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe), that the matter of the failure of this government to respect the laws of this province and to put forward information to this Assembly required by statute, be referred to an all-party committee for immediate consideration.

So, it's good to review what was spoken back in October and today makes a day in history, Deputy Speaker, as the opposition has won a matter of privilege. I know how often we've been hearing that some of the matters of privilege that this opposition have brought forward have just been ways to delay or somehow impede the work of the government. But I think today's ruling really shows us the important role that the opposition plays when things aren't going as they should and when the government is not acting as it should.

Now, as the Speaker outlined in their ruling, there are two conditions that must be satisfied that a prima facie case of privilege be met and that sufficient evidence be provided. And both of these were satisfied.

As the Speaker explained earlier, and I quote: The second issue to consider is whether the evidence provided was sufficient to demonstrate that a prima facie breach of privilege has occurred. That footnote from page 443 of Bosc and Gagnon describes an April 1993 ruling made by House of Commons Speaker John Fraser.

This ruling involved a situation where the then-federal government failed to table a document in a timely manner as required by statute. In ruling on this matter of privilege, Speaker Fraser noted that members cannot function if they do not have access to the material that they need to do their work. This sounds quite similar to another situation we're in right now.

You continue by—sorry, the Speaker earlier continued by saying: In order to allow further discussion of the issue between government and opposition, he found that there was a prima facie case of privilege. The motion to the matter of privilege was immediately agreed to and issue was referred to The Standing Committee on House Management. End quote.

Now, as we've established, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) met these requirements so let's dig a bit more into the contents of the master of privilege found in favour.

A number—November 18th, 2020, the government made an order under The Emergency Measures Act to move the tabling deadline to December 30th, 2020, and then deemed it retroactively come into effect on June 30th, 2020.

And why did they do this, Deputy Speaker? Because they knew they were wrong. They knew they were breaking their own laws but instead of adhering to their own laws, they just decided to change them because I guess this government thinks they're better than the law.

The government's actions were not only shameful and disrespectful to all Manitobans who are feeling the effects of climate change, to all Indigenous people as we all tried to move forward on reconciliation and to all individuals awaiting police reform.

They also tried to blame the COVID-19 pandemic on reports that should've been tabled long before the pandemic struck.

Now I'd like to speak first to the failure to provide the report on The Climate and Green Plan Act. The Climate and Green Plan Act states at section 5(1): Annual report on climate and green plan: The minister must prepare an annual report on the programs, policies and measures employed in that year to implement the climate and green plan.

And section 5(7): Tabling report: The minister must table a copy of the annual report within 15 days after it has been prepared if the Assembly is

sitting or, if it has not, within 15 days after the next sitting begins.

The Climate and Green Plan came into force in November 2018. Pallister's government has refused to show leadership or accept responsibility for growing emissions across the province. We continually hear them blaming the federal government for their problems, and they released a plan that has no real emissions, goals or targets.

Now, I recall, you know, when I was gifted with the role of critic for Environment and Climate, I obviously spent a lot of time in study, and I continue to spend a lot of time in study. I won't pretend that this was a topic area that I was an expert in or that I had that kind of science background. So I spend a lot of time in study on this issue.

So, of course, one of the first things I did was thoroughly read the Climate and Green Plan, and it was, even as a non-expert, it was absolutely alarming to me: the vague phrases, the complete lack of any kinds of targets, any kinds of goals to work towards as a government. There was absolutely no accountability in this plan, and that was painfully obvious to me from the very beginning.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

And so, you know, some of the other things that have started to concern me over the last little while, because I'll say, you know, I can't hold the current minister accountable for this plan because it wasn't prepared by the current minister, but I'm very concerned that even our current climate minister has been on record to say that, really, climate is an individual's problem; it's an individual problem, you should just make changes in your own life and try to educate your neighbour to make changes in their lives and that is the minister's plan for tackling climate change.

So, on one hand, picking fights with the federal government, saying they're not doing enough, but clearly stating, on record, that this is an individual problem and it's not something that you can kind of mandate people to make changes on. It's pretty hard to table a report that shows any changes that you've done if you actually haven't done any, so I can kind of see how this happened, but, unfortunately, it's also breaking the government law.

This government hasn't followed their own plans or any actual laws on climate change. The climate green plan implementation act states that the minister has to produce a report annually, and there has not

been a report released for 2018-2019 or 2019-2020 to date.

Keep in mind that most of the time frame involved in that took place before we were dealing with a pandemic, so any excuses about the pandemic taking priority just don't fly. It doesn't make any sense; it's just a way to detract and distract.

What we know, what we can presume is that nothing happened, that nothing was happening on this file, so there is nothing to report on—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Order. I would like to draw the attention of the honourable member that the subject matter of the reports in question is not what the motion is involved with. The remarks in debate of the motion should deal with the issue of tabling of the report and whether this issue should be referred to a committee. The member is moving away from the relevance of the actual motion that's on the floor and shouldn't be talking about the content of the reports, but about the tabling of those reports.

**Ms. Naylor:** Thank you for educating me on that.

Clearly, that's—we're in new territory here, never having been in the position of having an order of privilege ruled on in a positive way for us, so I'm learning as I go.

When it comes to fighting climate change, the Pallister government is consistent about one thing: being inconsistent, flip-flopping on the carbon tax, creating uncertainty for Manitoba, and wasting precious time that we could be—spend fighting climate change.

So, I want to just add to these notes that it's critically important that reports are tabled. As an MLA and as a relatively new MLA, this is how I learn to do my job. I read your reports. I actually take them seriously. It matters to me what this government is doing and it matters to me what's happened in the past and it matters to me what's going to happen in the future. But the only way for me to know what's happening on the other side of the House where Manitobans' dollars are being spent, if you are, you know, your budget goals are lining up with your policy goals, the only way for any Manitoban to have that information, including MLAs in this House, are to have those reports tabled in a timely manner.

\* (16:20)

And I'd also like to speak a little bit about The Path to Reconciliation Act. The Path to Reconciliation Act states in section 5(1): "For each fiscal year, the

minister responsible for reconciliation must prepare a report about the measures taken by the government to advance reconciliation, including the measures taken to engage Indigenous nations and Indigenous peoples in the reconciliation process and the measures taken to implement the strategy."

And section 5(2) states: tabling report in Assembly and making public, within three months after the end of the fiscal year, the minister must table a copy of the report in the Assembly and make it available to the public.

To this day, we have not seen this report. The Pallister government has a statutory responsibility to produce a report on the steps they have taken to advance reconciliation, and they have not met that test. Instead, they propose watering down the reporting requirements. If you see last year's minor amendments act, Bill 11, which was not passed, it's not surprising in 2016 the Pallister government promised to produce a duty-to-consult framework by May 2017. However, they didn't create this framework until three years later in 2020.

The entire board of Manitoba Hydro resigned because of the Pallister government's failure to work with Indigenous communities. And Pallister—sorry, the Premier called the MF—MMF a special palace, a special interest group and said an agreement his Hydro board negotiated was hush money. The Premier has also called the division over night hunting a race war—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

The member has strayed again from relevance and is talking now more about the content of the reports, and I would urge her, she needs to be talking about the need or want for those reports to be tabled and then the motion that this goes before a committee of the House.

So it's very limited in terms of the scope of what she could be talking about, so I would urge her to bring her comments very specifically to why those reports are or are not tabled, to speak specifically to that.

**Ms. Naylor:** I guess it's just a bit perplexing to me when these reports have not been tabled and we don't know what's in them. All we can do is guess at the content based on the things that are said in the House, the things that are said to the media. So I was just choosing some of those quotes that indicated what we might find in a report like that if it had, in fact, been

tabled to allow us to do our jobs properly in this House.

And I'm finally just going to comment on The Police Services Act, which states at section 90, and I quote: "Within five years after this Act comes into force, the minister must undertake a comprehensive review of it, and must, within one year after the review is undertaken or within such further time as the Legislative Assembly may allow, submit a report on the review to the Assembly." End quote.

The majority of this act came into force in 2009, and the final provisions of the act came into force on June 18th, 2015. As a result, the minister undertook a comprehensive review of this act and announced this review on May 29th, 2019 in a press release. A Statistics Canada survey released last November revealed that Manitobans' trust in police is the lowest in all of Canada. Only 34 per cent of Manitobans surveyed responded that they strongly trust police, compared to a national average of 41 per cent. Based on their track record, this government's Police Services Act review and recommendations are not credible or trustworthy.

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

The member is still straying quite a bit and quite a bit further from actually talking about the tabling of the reports. That was what the matter of privilege was about, and I would ask her—she needs to be very careful in how far she's going with her comments, because she's quite irrelevant right now in her comments specific to the matter of privilege.

**Ms. Naylor:** I'll just wrap up by saying that once again, the government broke the law. Section 90 of The Police Services Act requires a review every five years, from its proclamation in 2012, and they waited until 2019 to begin. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further members wishing to speak?

**An Honourable Member:** Yes.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Flin Flon.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I really find this to be somewhat of a historic day, that on the International Women's Day, women in positions of power have called for a ruling and have made a ruling that really respects the rule of law, and holds us all to proper account for that. So, thank you for that.

What was this matter of privilege really all about? Well, it's about three very specific reports that never got filed. It's about the law that says they should have. But it's about the bigger picture. It's about the actual respect for the law. It's about this government's decision to not respect the rule of law. It's really that which is the heart of the matter.

Now, I listened very carefully to some comments that the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) made; it was kind of like, oopsie, we made a mistake. Oh, well, move on.

Well, it's much more than that. It's really—Madam Speaker, how many times in the past have we called the government to task about being open and transparent?

And yet, here we are again, with the government refusal. Either by design or by their inability to do their jobs properly that they've, again, not been open and transparent.

You know, we've been accused by this government of doing something nefarious by raising matters of privilege. Now, they're quite upset that, oh, it gummed up the works and we couldn't file some bills that we wanted to.

But, really, your ruling today really justifies why we are forced by this government to raise matters of privilege. If we were to just ignore things that we think are important as the official opposition, it would be a failure on our part to do our jobs as the opposition.

And our job is to try and hold the government to account, to make sure that we're doing our best to represent the people's wishes that want this government to do the right thing.

So, did it hold up some legislation that they wanted to bring in? Yes, absolutely. But as been clearly demonstrated by your ruling today, that we are absolutely justified in doing that. Because here we are, talking about the rule of law, and following the rule of law—in this very Chamber that is charged with the duty to create the laws—we should follow the laws.

We, as a—as representatives in this Chamber, should do that.

\* (16:30)

So, if we sat silent, and allowed the government to break the law, then we would also be guilty and complicit in breaking that law.

So I really want to acknowledge our Opposition House Leader for her strong stance on this issue. And as you've correctly pointed out, Madam Speaker, we're not here to debate the content of those reports or the lack of content of those reports. We're here to debate this government's failure to actually produce the reports in a timely fashion so that we can do our jobs.

Now, it's been clearly pointed out by speakers previous to me, these reports, in fact, were dated prior to when they should have been introduced, prior to when this matter of privilege was raised, and yet, the Government House Leader says, oops, it was just a mistake, they didn't get introduced.

So it really leaves one to wonder about that statement. It leads one to wonder if we as the official opposition hadn't called them out on this, and if you as the Speaker hadn't done the research—and kudos to both you and your staff and alleged staff that put the hours in to research this and to really come up with the proper ruling—if this government hadn't been caught, would they have released the reports when they finally did? Leads one to wonder perhaps not.

So that really lends credence to what the heart of this motion is, that there should be an all-committee investigation into this. Because to just allow it to slide is really just starting down the slippery slope of what else should we just allow the government to say, oops, we forgot, we made a mistake, we didn't do that, we didn't do this, we didn't do something else.

It is absolutely imperative that the meat and potatoes of this matter of privilege and this motion really come to fruition and that there is this committee struck that talks about the failure in this case. But it shouldn't just be to point fingers and say this person did that, that person did this; really, the whole point of any investigation, whether done by a committee or anyone else, the whole point of it is: what should be done to prevent something like this happening in the future?

Whether it's these reports that we're talking about here or something else, what needs to be in place to ensure that the government of the day has the resources in place to ensure that they follow the law?

You know, the Government House Leader talked about well, you know, we're in the middle of a pandemic and we couldn't focus on everything. Well, yes, that's kind of their job, Madam Speaker, is to focus on everything that they are required to focus on.

They can't just ignore some parts of what's required of a government simply because they're busy somewhere else.

One is left to wonder if we still had a full complement of staff in all these government offices, if perhaps maybe this failure wouldn't have taken place. If there wasn't such turmoil within the civil service because of the actions of this government, would these reports have been released in a timely fashion?

So, those really are our questions that, hopefully, this all-committee report—or, all-party committee can look at, is how the civil service, as it's been restructured or, some might suggest, destructed by this government. Did that have a bearing on what took place here when the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) stands up and says, well, you know, people just got busy, and we couldn't focus on everything?

Is it a direct result of a shortage of people? I think that's an interesting question that really needs to be answered. And that's really what this committee should be looking at.

I've heard other members speak previously about the importance of the rule of law, and certainly, that is important, as we've seen in some jurisdictions not that far away from us.

What happens to the democratic process when those in charge, when the government in charge of the day, decides to not follow the rule of law, but to try and create their own law just because they happen to be the government?

Just because this Pallister government happens to be the ones charged with being the government today doesn't make them above the law. It does make them accountable for their failures to follow the law. At least, it should.

And that really is part of our mission, our job, our duty, as members of the official opposition, is to pay attention to the government and things that they're not doing right, things they've missed, things that we think are wrong, things that the people that voted for us think are wrong. If we don't do those kind of things, then we're as guilty as the government.

So, one has to ask—and perhaps that's another function of this all-party committee—was the government—was this Pallister government trying to hide something with their failure to release reports when

they should have been? Were they trying to slip something by, not just us in the opposition, but were they trying to slip something by the press? Were they trying to slip something by the people of Manitoba?

When did they finally get around to deciding to follow the law? When did these reports actually come out? Was it during a time when the Legislature was in recess, rather than at a time when we were sitting, either virtually or in reality in that Chamber?

Because it does make a difference, as you're well aware, Madam Speaker. The attention that items get when they're debated, discussed, in the Chamber, as opposed to when they're released at times when people—the press—aren't paying as much attention?

So, again, it gets back to the very important issues—and I won't go into it to great detail about what was in the reports or what wasn't in the reports because, as you've quite correctly pointed out, Madam Speaker, that's not the point of today's debate. We're not here to debate those actual reports.

What we are here to debate is the actual need to release those reports or others because there is a good question, Madam Speaker. Are there other incidents where this government has failed to report things? Are there other incidents where this government has failed to follow the rule of law?

\* (16:40)

And I know, certainly, it's been a challenging time for everyone during this pandemic. But, I'm sorry, the government doesn't get a free pass. Just because we're in the middle of a pandemic doesn't mean that they can or should fail to follow the law, the laws that we've created in this very Chamber, the laws that are designed to hold the government of the day to account.

And there are a lot of things, Madam Speaker, that should be reported on, as required by law, and now we see the government, through legislation—which, obviously, they're allowed to do, they're the government—they're trying to change some of those laws so that they don't have to report, they don't have to report as often, they don't have to report, really, things that were deemed to be important. And, certainly, some of these reports, I mean, we know that this government struggles on the path to reconciliation.

So we know that report is vitally important to not just us and our ability to do our jobs, but it's important

to the public and the members of Indigenous communities to know that this government is being held to account on how they are doing.

Because, certainly, there can be a perception of a lack of action, and without the reports, people are left to their perception which may negatively impact the government as much as anything else because if they can't—won't report on what they have done, then the assumption is that they've done nothing or very little.

So, Madam Speaker, I can't stress enough how important this matter of privilege was to democracy, to the purpose of the rules of the Legislature. And as you've quite correctly pointed out, this government failed in their duty to follow the law, they failed in their duty to allow us to do our jobs as official opposition.

So then, really, the point of the committee that has been proposed here should be to look at the why of this failure. On purpose? Don't know.

Is it just that this government can't really handle the responsibilities that they've been given because too many bright lights are happening and they've lost focus? Perhaps.

Is there something else going on that the public, that we, as opposition, need to know about? Is there something going on, Madam Speaker, that the government itself needs to know about how—why these reports did not get released when they should have?

Should each and every one of those members on the backbench on the government's side be asking the Cabinet, how did this happen? How did you allow this embarrassment to befall us as mere backbenchers? How do we go about speaking to our constituents defending a government that clearly can't or won't live up to its obligations?

If it was willful that they've decided to ignore these reports, that's quite an important matter that, in and of itself, needs to be fully investigated and the facts found out.

Madam Speaker, I know that there's been any number of suggestions and proposals put forward on various other matters of privilege that have been raised about all-party committees meeting to discuss these things.

And as you've, again, correctly pointed out: this matter does require some serious investigation

because, in fact, by your very ruling, we have been—perhaps obstructed is too strong a word, perhaps it isn't—in our ability to act as the official opposition.

I would like to give the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) credit and a certain amount of respect to think that at least he's not aware that these reports weren't tabled on purpose; that it wasn't that nefarious on the part of the government that he's a part of—that it was just an oversight, a blunder, a mistake, as he's characterized it.

But that in itself is a serious condemnation of his own government: to suggest that, oopsie, made a mistake, oh well, move on.

I'm sure that if it was just a mistake, the Government House Leader is as interested as we are in finding out why that mistake took place. How did it get missed?

It kind of stretches my trust, if you will, that they made the same mistake three times with three different departments, three different ministers, three different reports. That is clearly something that we should be all very concerned about.

If that's the story that the minister would like us—or the Government House Leader—would like us to believe, that they just made multiple mistakes because they got too busy doing something else. What else have they missed because, 'osh', it's been a busy time? What other important parts have they missed?

I'm left to wonder that. I really struggle to wonder just what else this government has missed. And certainly, we, in the opposition, will continue to do our level best to find out what else the government has missed.

You know, Madam Speaker, we've seen a lot of confusion and missteps and mismanagement of the whole COVID response by this government. Is this failure to issue these reports merely a symptom of a bigger problem? Is it merely a symptom that the government really can't manage the ship, as they've claimed they can?

\* (16:50)

So, really, those are the important issues that we should be getting this all-party committee to flesh out, to investigate and perhaps to report back to this Legislature. Let's not just leave the government in charge of providing that report in a timely fashion, though; let's make sure that if this committee does

happen and if they complete their investigation and there is a report, let's make sure that it actually gets released in a timely fashion so that all members of the Legislature, all members of the press gallery, all members of the public know full well what took place, what the failures were, what the missings were.

But, as importantly, Madam Speaker, that all those very same people know what steps the government has now taken, or what steps the government will now take, based on the committee's report to ensure that they don't miss following the rules of the law in the future. It's really just that simple. Find out what happened, what the missings were, put the missings in place to make sure it cannot happen again.

And with those few comments, Madam Speaker, I will cede the floor. Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** Are there any further members wishing to speak on debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is the motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) that the matter of the failure of this government to respect the laws of this province and to put forward information to this Assembly, required by statute, be referred to an all-party committee for immediate consideration.

All those in favour of the motion please say—oh, is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

**Madam Speaker:** I hear a no.

#### Voice Vote

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

#### Recorded Vote

**Ms. Fontaine:** Miigwech, Madam Speaker. A recorded vote, please.

**Madam Speaker:** A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

Order, please.

For the information of all members, for virtual sittings of the House, we are required to conduct votes in a different manner than during normal sittings of the House.

For members in the House, the vote will be conducted in a manner similar to our previous practice. For this part of the vote, those in favour will stand to be counted first, followed by those against.

I will note for members that we have modified this system in one respect: once the page states the name of the member standing to be counted, the Clerk will acknowledge that the member has voted by repeating the member's name, rather than saying aye.

Once the count in the House is complete, we will conduct an alphabetical roll call of members participating virtually.

For this part of the process, the page will call each remote member's name alphabetically, and then each remote member must audibly state their vote, responding clearly with either I vote yes or I vote no. The Clerk will then respond with the member's name, followed by yes or no.

Finally, after the bells stop ringing for any vote, the moderator and the table will need to take a moment to verify that all members listed as remote are actually present on screen and in their seats and therefore eligible to vote.

This delay should be brief but is necessary to confirm who can vote because for remote members, being seated before the camera is the equivalent of members being seated in their assigned seats in the Chamber when the bells stop ringing.

\* (17:00)

So the question before the House is the privilege motion.



**Division**

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

**Yeas**

*Adams, Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliw, Wiebe.*

**Nays**

*Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Friesen, Goertzen, Gordon, Guenter, Guillemard,*

*Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wishart, Wowchuk.*

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** Yeas 21, Nays 33.

**Madam Speaker:** The motion is accordingly defeated.

\* \* \*

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

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Monday, March 8, 2021**

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