



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Third Legislature**

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

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

**The Speaker:** Good afternoon, everyone. Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**The Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

### Hamas Attack in Israel—Second Anniversary

**Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology):** Two years ago today, the world witnessed a horrific act—attack on innocent civilians. As we mark this sombre anniversary, we also renew our commitment to fighting anti-Semitism in all its forms and recognize how difficult these past two years have been for so many Manitobans.

Our government and our province must continue to build bridges of understanding, protect places of worship and ensure that every Manitoban, regardless of faith or background, can live free from fear and discrimination.

In Winnipeg and in Manitoba, we are home to a vibrant and resilient Jewish community, many of whom are my friends and neighbours in River Heights. From synagogues that serve as spiritual anchors and gathering spaces, to the cultural centres that celebrate Jewish heritage and foster community, the contributions of Jewish Manitobans enrich our neighbourhoods and our province every single day.

Over the past two years, however, we have also seen a troubling rise in anti-Semitic hate crimes and incidents here in Winnipeg, across Canada and around the world. Threats to places of worship, acts of vandalism and harassment have shaken their sense of safety for many Jewish families. These acts are unacceptable, and they must be condemned clearly and always.

The Jewish community in Manitoba has shown remarkable strength and unity in the face of this adversity. Their resilience is a testament to the enduring values of compassion, justice and community that define our neighbourhoods and indeed our whole province.

I am proud to be part of a government that has engaged in ongoing dialogue with Jewish leaders and

that is working to create safe, inclusive spaces for all. Together, we will ensure that Manitoba remains a place where diversity is celebrated and where hate has no home. We are, after all, one Manitoba.

To the Jewish community in River Heights and across Manitoba: We stand with you in remembrance, in solidarity and in hope.

As I wish my neighbours a Shanah Tova [*Good Year*], I hope that this new year will bring healing, peace and strength.

Thank you.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** Two years ago, the world witnessed the worst massacre of Jews since the Holocaust. Two years later, this painful mark continues to be felt by Jewish communities across the world.

Hamas' attack on October 7 was an affront to humankind that was designed for maximum casualties of Jews and Israelis. One of those murders on October 7 was a Manitoban herself, by the name of Vivian Silver.

Today, we continue to see the devastating war that has already cost thousands of lives, including innocent civilians and children. Meanwhile, several Israeli hostages remain in captivity since the horrific terrorist attacks, and even more bodies yet to be returned.

While the people of Israel and Gaza continue to see this devastation before their very eyes, Manitobans and Canadians have also seen the fallout here at home with anti-Semitism at an all-time high.

All people, whether here in Manitoba or anywhere else in the world, deserve to feel safe in their homes, safe to practice their religion and safe to go out with friends to a concert, without the threat of persecution or death.

We are heartbroken by the human suffering that is taken across the region and the terrible damage that war and conflict imposes on civilian populations. That is why we continue to call on Hamas to release the hostages and wholeheartedly condemn the killing of innocent civilians, whether they be in Israel or Gaza.

Progressive Conservatives will always stand for Israelis' rights to exist and defend itself. And we will

always support peace and co-operation between Israelis and the Palestinian people to rebuild their lives, free of conflict and war.

Thank you.

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Honourable Speaker, I ask for leave to respond to the minister's statement.

**The Speaker:** Does the honourable member for Tyndall Park have leave to respond? [*Agreed*]

**MLA Lamoureux:** Honourable Speaker, today marks two years since Hamas-led militants invaded southern Israel after rocket attacks devastated the area. The attack, which not only hit military targets, also hit farming communities and an outdoor music festival, killing 1,200 people who were mostly civilians, women and children. They abducted 251 hostages, and while some have been released, 48 hostages remain prisoners, with only around 20 of them believed to be possibly alive today.

The attack set in motion events that have led to Israel into combat with Iran and its other allies, including attacks by the United States on Iran's military and nuclear program. Two years of conflict has taken its toll on all who live in Gaza and Israel, their allies and their neighbours. The world is involved, with protestors regularly taking sides, angered by the injustice and the failure of democratic solutions and options.

Honourable Speaker, this war has taken thousands of lives, cost billions of dollars and will affect attitudes and economies for decades to come. The world is deeply divided, with regular protests globally and here in our province. The only way for people to heal is to end the war.

I continue to stand for an immediate end to the violence and to speak out against anti-Semitism and all hate crime. We need to put an end to the mindset that wars, fighting and killing are a means for solving humanity's problems. We need more open dialogue. There is no price worth paying in lives lost.

**Fédération des communautés  
francophones et acadiennes du Canada**

*French spoken*

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs):** Monsieur le Président, j'ai l'honneur de prendre la parole aujourd'hui dans cette Chambre, en français, pour souhaiter la bienvenue à

des représentants de la Fédération des communautés francophones et canadiennes – et acadiennes du Canada.

La FCFA a choisi Winnipeg pour tenir sa réunion annuelle d'analystes de communication et de politiques, et je sais que je parle au nom de tous mes collègues quand je dis que nous sommes fiers de les accueillir ici.

Avec nos partenaires de la Société de la francophonie manitobaine, la FCFA travaille sans relâche pour promouvoir le fait français et assurer que tous les gens d'expression française puissent s'épanouir dans leur langue officielle de choix.

Au Manitoba, nous sommes fiers d'être plus de 110 000 personnes qui peuvent converser dans nos deux langues officielles, qu'il s'agisse de notre langue maternelle ou une langue additionnelle. Notre – mais notre gouvernement n'est pas content de simplement maintenir le statu quo. Nous sommes en train d'effectuer une vaste consultation de la population manitobaine pour cueillir ses perspectives sur comment la rendre cette province véritablement bilingue.

Grâce à un sondage en ligne, les tables rondes publiques et plusieurs sessions ciblées avec différents secteurs, nous sommes à l'écoute de centaines de francophones et de francophiles qui ont partagé leurs rêves, leurs priorités ainsi que leurs préoccupations à ce sujet.

\* (13:40)

Nous sommes en train d'échanger avec les directions et présidences des organismes communautaires, les élus municipaux, les entrepreneurs et gens d'affaires, les immigrants, les jeunes, les aînés, les juristes, les experts en bilinguisme, le continuum en éducation, mais surtout avec madame et monsieur tout le monde.

Monsieur le Président, nous savons que le français unit les peuples, crée des espaces de solidarité et de compréhension mutuelles, et ainsi nous aide à mieux imaginer notre avenir partagé. Avec notre objectif de rendre la province véritablement bilingue, nous aimerions favoriser un environnement où la langue française est visible et entendue partout, et où son usage est complètement normalisé.

Comme gouvernement nous travaillons déjà pour améliorer les services en français et renforcer la capacité bilingue de notre fonction publique. La création d'une stratégie à long terme sur le bilinguisme et d'un plan d'action pour la mettre concrètement en œuvre ne peut qu'appuyer notre vision. C'est pour cette raison que la consultation présentement en cours est tellement

importante. Il s'agit d'une occasion historique et sans précédent pour décider la place future du français dans notre province.

Monsieur le Président, je demande à tous les membres de l'Assemblée de se joindre à moi pour souligner l'impact potentiel du bilinguisme, de reconnaître nos invités spéciaux dans la tribune publique qui ont la Francophonie à cœur, et de célébrer le fait français au Manitoba.

Merci.

### **Translation**

*I am honoured to rise and speak in French today in this House, to welcome representatives of the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadiennes du Canada.*

*The FCFA has chosen Winnipeg to hold its annual meeting of communications and policy analysts, and I know I speak for all my colleagues when I say that we are proud to welcome them here.*

*Together with our partners at the Société de la francophonie manitobaine, the FCFA works tirelessly to promote the French fact and ensure that all French-speaking people can thrive in the official language of their choice.*

*In Manitoba, we pride ourselves on being more than 110,000 people who can converse in both of our official languages, whether it is our mother tongue or an additional language. Our government, however, is not satisfied with simply maintaining the status quo. We are conducting an extensive consultation with Manitobans to gather their perspectives on how to make this province truly bilingual.*

*Through an online survey, public roundtables and several targeted sessions with different sectors, we are listening to hundreds of Francophones and Francophiles who have shared their dreams, priorities, and concerns on this issue.*

*We are currently engaging with the leadership and chairs of community organizations, municipal officials, entrepreneurs and businesspeople, immigrants, youth, seniors, lawyers, bilingualism experts, the education continuum, but above all, with everyday people.*

*Mr. Speaker, we know that French unites people, creates spaces for solidarity and mutual understanding and thus helps us to better imagine our shared future. With our goal of making the province truly bilingual, we would like to promote an environment where the French*

*language is visible and heard everywhere, and where its use is completely normalized.*

*As a government, we are already working to improve French-language services and strengthen the bilingual capacity of our public service. The creation of a long-term strategy on bilingualism and an action plan to implement it can only bolster our ambition. That is why the consultation currently underway is so important. This is a historic and unprecedented opportunity to decide the future status of French in our province.*

*Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in highlighting the potential impact of bilingualism, in recognizing our special guests in the Public Gallery, who care deeply about La Francophonie, and in celebrating the French fact in Manitoba.*

*Thank you.*

**MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Francophone people are an integral part of the culture and history of both Manitoba and Canada. That is why I am proud today to recognize the federation of Francophone and Acadian communities of Canada.

The federation began in 1975, originally being known as la Fédération des francophones hors du Québec. They were determined and focused to advocate for a federally funded global development plan for francophone minority communities. Today they carry on the good work with the same passion and commitment.

The federation seeks to empower French speakers to defend their freedoms and make their voices heard. They have been instrumental in the promotion and advocacy of interests and rights for the-of francophones and Acadians. The strength of their advocacy made the federation an active stakeholder in the work that eventually led to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, as well as the 1988 Official Languages Act, which helped enhance the vitality of the French-language speaking communities in Canada, assisted in their development and fostered the recognition and use of French in the Canadian society.

### **French spoken**

La Fédération est une 'organisation' fondée sur les principes : ils sont guidés par les valeurs universelles de respect, d'égalité et d'équité. Et croyant à l'engagement civique et au pouvoir de 'l'individu' ainsi qu'à un francophonie 'ouvre' et bien représentée.

### **Translation**

*The FCFA is an organization founded on principles—the universal values of respect, equality and fairness—and it believes in civic engagement and the power of the individual, as well as in an open and well-represented Francophonie.*

### **English**

Building connections to your community is of utmost importance. That is why the federation helps French-speaking newcomers to find a place where they can feel welcome through their Welcoming Francophone Communities initiative. It helps French-speaking newcomers settle in 24 francophone and Acadian communities in Canada, building connections and feel at home in their new community.

This initiative takes a by and for francophones approach, meaning that francophone communities—members—choose and recommend to the department which communities would take part. The federation for Francophone and Acadians serves as a national voice of the 2.8 million French-speaking Canadians living across nine provinces and three territories. The federation heads a vast network of organizations and institutions dedicated to the development of Canada's Francophonie.

These organizations span a multitude of development sectors and constituencies including literacy, culture, justice, youth, women, colleges, health and more. The federation has worked tirelessly to create positive change in francophone and Acadian communities, bringing people together and giving them the tools they need to succeed.

### **French spoken**

La protection des droits des moni – des minorités francophones est d'une importance capitale. Les gens méritent d'être entendus, et ils méritent d'être entendus dans leur langue 'appropriée' – appropriée. C'est pourquoi aujourd'hui nous célébrons cinq – cinq ans d'engagement de la Fédération et une voix pour les francophones et les Acadiens vivant partout au Canada.

Merci.

### **Translation**

*Protecting the rights of Francophone minorities is of paramount importance. People deserve to be heard, and they deserve to be heard in the appropriate language. That is why today we are celebrating five years of commitment by the FCFA, and a voice for Francophones and Acadians living across Canada.*

*Thank you.*

## **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **Acknowledging Y.E.S. Manitoba and Francess Amara**

**MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson):** Honourable Speaker, if you were to Google Manitoba youth, the first result is a place called the Manitoba Youth Centre, a correctional facility. Important, life-changing work happens there. But it also symbolizes something deeper: how young people have too often been seen as problems to fix, rather than the solutions that we need.

Across Manitoba, students send out hundreds of résumés hoping to hear one call back. Even graduates full of hope struggle to find their first foothold. This year, Canada's youth unemployment rate reached 14.6 per cent, the highest since 2010. The opposition talks heartlessly about it like a statistic. But it's really a siren, one that young people have been sounding for years.

Honourable Speaker, when we fail to connect youth to good jobs, we waste potential and weaken the economy that depends on them. Youth don't lack ambition; they lack opportunity, and it's our duty to change that. That's why I'm proud to recognize Francess Amara, a Radisson constituent who lives that duty every single day through her work at Youth Employment Services, otherwise known as Y.E.S. Manitoba.

Since 1973, Y.E.S. Manitoba has provided young Manitobans between the ages of 16 and 29 free and inclusive employment support. By using a person-first approach, Y.E.S. Manitoba offers youth in our province the training, mentorship and confidence needed to succeed in the job market today. Each year, this team touches the lives of over 700 young people.

Francess Amara, education program co-ordinator, has spent the last three years at Y.E.S., leading workshops that teach everything from résumés to interviews, but more than that, she reminds youth that their dreams are valid, that their skills are valuable and that their potential is limitless.

So, Honourable Speaker, please join me in uplifting Francess Amara and the Y.E.S. Manitoba team for their vital work helping youth build their future and ours.

### **Second Anniversary of Hamas Attack in Israel**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** On October 7, 2023, Israel was attacked by the terrorist group Hamas; 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals were killed in the

deadliest day of violence against Israel since the nation's founding in 1948.

Innocent Israelis were killed in their homes and in kibbutzes near the Gaza border. Civilians attending the Nova music festival were murdered and about 250 people were taken hostage. Today it's believed that approximately 22 hostages remain alive, with the bodies of 26 others still being kept from their families. We pray for their immediate release.

After the deadly attacks, many in the world rallied in support of Israel, but there has also been a documented rise in anti-Semitism, both in Canada and around the world, with synagogues being specifically targeted. It is incumbent upon elected leaders to speak out against the hatred of religion and the Jewish people, regardless of their own beliefs.

Last week, my family and I were invited by Rabbi Kliel Rose to attend Yom Kippur services at his congregation. As members of the Christian community, we were honoured to attend the synagogue and stand in solidarity with the Jewish people in praying for peace for Israel and the Middle East.

\* (13:50)

Support for Israel does not mean support for all of the actions of the Israeli government. But it does mean supporting Israel's right to exist, defend itself and live in peace. It also means defending the right of the Jewish people to live free from anti-Semitism.

On this sombre day of remembrance, let us as a Legislature renew our call for the return of all the hostages while we remember those who lost their lives in the attacks of October 7. We call for peace and security for the state of Israel and its people, and denounce all acts of anti-Semitism and religious hatred.

And, Honourable Speaker, I would ask for a moment of silence to remember those who were killed by the terrorist attacks on October 7 and those who are still being held hostage today.

**The Speaker:** Is there leave for a moment of silence as requested by the honourable member for Steinbach? *[Agreed]*

*A moment of silence was observed.*

#### **Trinity United Church's 60th Anniversary**

**MLA Jennifer Chen (Fort Richmond):** Honourable Speaker, as we gather in this season of Thanksgiving, I rise with gratitude to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Trinity United Church, a cherished place of worship

and service and a true anchor for families in Fort Richmond.

Since 1965, Trinity United Church has been a spiritual home where faith and fellowship come together.

For six decades, its doors have been open to all, welcoming people in prayer, guiding families in times of joy and sorrow and reminding us of the strength that comes from walking together in faith.

I've had the privilege of visiting the church several times, and each visit left me inspired. From young families at Healthy Start, seniors thriving through Pembina Active Living (55+), to newcomers supported by Mosaic, I saw first-hand how this space nurtures unity and belonging among all members of our community.

But what makes Trinity United Church truly remarkable are the people: the congregation and the volunteers whose kindness extends well beyond church walls. Whether it is through worship, acts of service or even greeting fans at Blue Bombers games, they show that faith is not only proclaimed, but lived every day.

Their community garden, where community members can grow their own produce, is another example of how this church nurtures community and care. Psalm 145:4 reminds us: One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.

Honourable Speaker, I invite all members of this House to join me in giving thanks for the countless lives touched by this church's ministry. May its legacy continue to inspire, nurture and unite our community for many years to come.

I would like to add my guests' names into Hansard.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

*Nancy DeLong, Sandi Fitzmaurice, Ken Johnson, Rev. Damber Khadka, Ron Mitchell, Irma Nadeau, Carolyn Pierson, Charles Powell, Ed Tymofichuk, Karen Wall.*

#### **Access Credit Union Arena's Annual Crop Fundraiser**

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** Today I want to share a story that speaks to the strength and spirit of rural Manitoba. It is a story about community, co-operation and the value of lending a hand when it is needed most.

In Warren, the Access Credit Union Arena is more than just a rink; it's a gathering place for families, kids and neighbours. It is where people come together to play, to watch, to volunteer and connect. What makes

it even more special is the way it was supported by the community itself.

Each year, a group of local farmers come together to raise money for the arena through the South Interlake Recreation Centre's annual fundraising crop. The Kotelko and Balan families, respectively, have donated the land, while local businesses and suppliers contribute seed, fertilizer and fuel. This year, six combines, seven trucks and a grain cart covered 210 acres in just two and a half hours, producing a canola crop expected to raise about \$70,000 for the arena.

Every dollar goes directly back into maintaining the facility, keeping user rates affordable, supporting important upgrades. Over the years, the proceeds have funded major improvements, including a rebuild of the ice plant, new heat controls, safer steps at the main entrance, as well as to help pay the mortgage. After next year's harvest, the original arena mortgage will be finally paid off, marking 25 years of community commitment, steady progress and teamwork.

This project shows what can happen when people work together with a shared goal. It's a simple idea that has made a lasting difference. The people of Warren, Rosser, Grosse Isle, Marquette, Meadows, Argyle and Woodlands have shown that when communities come together, good things follow, on and off the ice.

Honourable Speaker, I ask that the many names of the farm families that participated in this project over the years—that the list that I provided be entered into Hansard.

Thank you so much.

*Braun Grain Farms, Corbett Farms, Crockatt Farms, Hoas Farms, Keen Grain and Livestock, Casey Langrell, Lefley Farms, Lindsay Farms, Macmillan Grain and Livestock, Meridian Acres, RG Hamilton Farms, Riddell Seed Co., Rosser Holsteins, Rutherford Farms, Tait Farms, Tomatin Farms, Tulmar Farms.*

#### **Tamil Pavilion at Folklorama—25th Anniversary**

**Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière):** Honourable Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Tamil Pavilion at Winnipeg's Folklorama festival, which this year celebrated its 25th anniversary. For a quarter of a century, the pavilion has been a vibrant celebration of Tamil culture, tradition and heritage, and a cornerstone of Folklorama's success.

The Tamil Pavilion also holds a unique place in Folklorama history. It was the very first pavilion to be organized not by geography, but by language. This

innovation set an inspiring precedent for others, showcasing the strength and dynamism of Manitoba's multiculturalism spirit.

Over the past 25 years, visitors have been welcomed with warmth and hospitality, enjoying the rhythms of traditional drumming, the beauty of the Bharatanatyam dance, colourful cultural displays, intricate art activities such as Kolam making, and delicious cuisine that speaks to centuries of history. The pavilion has also been a place of education and understanding, helping Manitobans learn more about the Tamil people's heritage and their journey to Canada.

I want to commend the organizers, volunteers and performers whose dedication has kept the pavilion thriving for 25 years. Their efforts not only preserve Tamil culture but further strengthen the rich multicultural fabric that makes Manitoba so unique.

Joining us today are Sureshini Thananjeyan, Swarnambiga Ponnuamy, Gowri Subramanian, Swathi Saravanan Planivelu, Baskaran Selvaraj, Rathi Sachidananda Pandian and Akileshan Vamadevan.

Honourable Speaker, I ask all members of this House to join me in congratulating the Tamil Pavilion on its 25th anniversary and in celebrating the invaluable contributions of the Tamil community to our province.

Nanri [*Thank you*] and thank you.

#### **Introduction of Guests**

**The Speaker:** Prior to oral questions, there are some guests in the gallery I'd like to introduce.

In the public gallery, we have representatives from the Trinity United Church—Reverend Damber Khadka, Irma Nadeau, Ed Tymofichuk, Ron Mitchell, Sandi Fitzmaurice, Carolyn Pierson, Ken Johnson, Karen Wall, Nancy DeLong and Charles Powell—and they are guests of the honourable member for Fort Richmond (MLA Chen). We welcome you here today.

And if I could draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, we have with us today Susan Ching and her friend Suzanne Powell.

Susan Ching is the proud mom of our very own clerk assistant-clerk of committees, Melanie Ching, who happens to be sitting at the table today. And we welcome you both here to the Chamber today.



## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Minister of Families–Ethics Report Delay in Scheduling Debate

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Honourable Speaker, yesterday this failed Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) went out to the media and insisted that she couldn't schedule today's Ethics Commissioner report because the House was debating the machete bill.

News flash: the machete bill got royal assent six months prior to the ethics report even being tabled. Another example of this failing Minister of Families failing at her job. She can't even keep her made-up excuses straight.

Will the Premier stop making excuses for his failed Minister of Families and finally hold her accountable for all of the egregious mistakes she has made?

\* (14:00)

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** The issue at hand is that that member's political mentor, Heather Stefanson, broke the law, violated the constitution and ignored your will as the people of Manitoba.

After the last election, after she had been rejected by the people of Manitoba, she and some of their caucus members ignored the results of the vote; they tried to ram through a mine that was very, very controversial and that was subsequently rejected by the environment department. They did that after they lost power.

This is the very last day to have debate, under statute, for this. The PCs not only broke the law but have been engaged in a shameful tactic of delay and obfuscation. They have the temerity to show up today and say that they have been asking for debate?

Your cohort are going to be fined. You are all guilty of disgrace. Shame on every single one of you.

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

**Mr. Khan:** The issue at hand here is that the NDP are playing games. No answers, no accountability by this Premier.

I stood here in this very House on May 22, May 26, May 27, October 2 and October 6 and told the Premier to bring this forward. We were—are ready to debate and pass and accept the findings of the reports, and what has this NDP Premier done? Played games, delayed.

It's not my fault that his family of ministers is— incompetence and can't call this to the floor for debate.

So the question is simple for the Premier: Why is he keeping this failing, incompetent Minister of Families in her position?

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, I'll pull back the curtain a little bit, Honourable Speaker.

Before our team came in here today, I said: You know what, this is the deadline day to vote on the fines for Heather Stefanson and Cliff Cullen and the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), and the assertion that the member from Interlake-Gimli has no credibility in the eyes of the Ethics Commissioner.

And I said, you know what the PCs are going to do? What did I say? They're going to go in the gutter. They're going to try and change the channel. They're going to try and drag us down into the mud.

Of course, they choose to try and attack the Minister of Families. They are threatened by a confident Indigenous woman, you know. If you want to get in the mud, you know who the No. 1 goofball is; I'll jump down there and join you.

But when it comes to the people of Manitoba, let us never forget the travesty that each of them participated in. After they said, stand firm against the landfill search and lost the election as a result, they then broke the law, ignoring your vote and—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**Mr. Khan:** It's a real shame that this Premier thinks accountability is attacking. We are asking questions on the Minister of Families' accountability, on the failures by this minister and this Premier and this entire NDP government.

It doesn't stop there. The failing NDP minister of natural resources was caught lining his own pockets with government contracts while he was a minister of the Crown and found guilty. This Minister of Families blocked an entire Indigenous media team for holding her to account, blocked foster families for advocating for kids, rationalized political violence and now she's gone out to the media and told them a fairy tale of why this is being delayed in this House. It's being delayed because of this NDP government and failures by this Minister of Families.

So I ask the Premier: Is his hypocrisy and arrogance so great that he doesn't know when his own Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) is failing?

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, you know, like I said to our team and I shared with you, they've got nothing. And so they want to drag folks into the mud. For sure, keep attacking me; I signed up for this. But don't go ahead and target other ministers of the Crown who don't have the ability to respond during members' questions.

What I would say is this: this is the first time in history a premier has been fined. This is the first time a deputy premier has been fined; the first time another minister of the Crown has been fined, and this leader is keeping him in caucus. This minister is keeping him in caucus even though the Ethics Commissioner said he has no credibility.

There's a certain point in which the mistakes that you were a party to—speaking in the royal you, of course—become the problems of today. Because you know what they're doing here today? They're hiding, they're evading, they're denying accountability. They say they accept the report; why do none of them accept responsibility?

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

#### **Crime and Public Safety Timeline for Bail Reform**

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** It's not just his failed Minister of Families or the Minister of natural resources that the Premier gives a second, third, fourth or fifth chance to. It's now the minister—failed Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe).

On the evening of September 13, 25-year-old Kerry Ashley and 31-year-old Egor Popov, after being—were murdered, killed, after being struck by a pick-up truck. I table that article here today for the Premier. The accused driver who had already been charged with drinking and driving conviction has been granted bail. Two Manitobans are dead, the driver is out on bail and the Minister of Justice won't do anything to hold the criminal to account.

Will the Premier finally admit, after months of inaction, that Manitobans are not safer under his NDP, and he has yet another failed minister in his Cabinet?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** We're gathered here to vote on the fact that they all broke the law.

**An Honourable Member:** It's question period.

**Mr. Kinew:** Oh, don't worry. You'll have a chance to vote on your colleagues being fined soon enough today, I would say to the members opposite. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** But when it comes to the issue of these folks who lost their lives, may justice be delivered swiftly, sternly and fairly. My heart goes out to those who lost family members.

At the same time, when it comes to the integrity, which the members opposite know nothing about due to their high-fiving of Heather Stefanson and Cliff Cullen and the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) and their tolerance of the member from Interlake-Gimli—with no credibility, I would say he's doing a good job.

They cancelled ankle monitors; we've done 200. He's enhanced Crown bail policies. Millions in funding; 36 new police officers here in the city when they cut 55 policing positions. It's not only the fact that they broke the law—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**Mr. Khan:** Two people were murdered by a criminal that was out on bail under this NDP government. And what does the Premier do? He stands up and plays games, political games. Manitobans are being murdered under this NDP government and this Premier wants to stand up and take no accountability, no responsibility for his failed Justice Minister.

We learned yesterday that Ontario truck driver involved in a crash that left a mother and her young daughter dead was just released on bail here in Manitoba under this failed Minister of Justice.

Why is the Premier doing nothing—absolutely nothing—to keep repeat violent offenders in jail and keep Manitobans—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Kinew:** We brought back the ankle monitors that the PCs cut. We've added 36 policing positions where they cut 55. And we've put in place stronger bail policies for Crown attorneys.

The members opposite are showing up today to vote on the fact that they broke the law: the Sio Silica debacle. When it comes to the Crown in this case, reading his comments in the media, he said, and I quote: This release would endanger public confidence

in the Justice system, end quote. I happen to agree with that.

In this particular instance, I think we have to, with all respect that we have for the Justice system, encourage our judges and justices of the peace to reflect on the role that their decisions will have when they are learned of by the public. They have an important role to play in ensuring the impartiality and the fairness of our Justice system, but I would remind those sitting on the bench that you have to make your decisions based on the world as it is, not as you would like it to be.

Clearly, in some of these cases, the public—

\* (14:10)

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**Mr. Khan:** Say that to the families of Kerry Ashley, Egor Popov, Sara or eight year-old Alexa that were murdered by repeat violent offenders being let out on bail. This Premier (Mr. Kinew) refuses to take accountability for his failing Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) just passing the buck.

Early morning on October 3, in St. Vital, an innocent enough door knock turned into a home invasion with a knife. Random violence is spiking in the province of Manitoba under the NDP because criminals know there are no consequences.

But you'll hear the Premier talk about his spineless five-point plan, which consists of: (1) allow the inmates to run the 'asylum'; (2) blame Ottawa; (3) do nothing; (4) let Manitobans suffer; and (5) fabricate a press release to pretend you are doing something.

Where is the Premier's bail reform that he promised Manitobans 735 days ago?

**Mr. Kinew:** We're working with everybody to make communities safer, and my heart really goes out to people who've been the victims of crime.

When we look at what the National Police Federation has said about our actions on bail reform, our five-point plan, they said that we are a leader when it comes to the actions we've taken, and they're calling on other provinces and territories to, quote, follow Manitoba's lead on public safety, end quote.

But let's talk about them on crime. They committed it. They're a party to it, and they are defending their colleagues who were responsible for this.

And they want to say, oh, this was something in the past, and Heather's not here any more.

Plus ça change, plus ça reste le même. [*The more things change, the more they stay the same.*]

Heather Stefanson recently—[*interjection*]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —donated \$1,500 to the member chirping right now, in the leadership campaign in which he got less votes than the other contestant.

There is no separation between the corruption of the PC Party immediately following the most recent election and the corruption in the party that exists today—[*interjection*]

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

The member's time has expired.

And if I could get the clock stopped for a moment, I would just like to address some things that happened during this question-and-answer exchange.

The first one I need to address is the Leader of the Official Opposition used the term, lining his own pockets. That has previously been ruled unparliamentary, so I would ask the Leader of the Official Opposition to withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Khan:** I withdraw the comment.

**The Speaker:** The other thing that I need to address is when the Premier was answering questions, even though he says, through the royal you, answers and questions must always be directed through the Chair.

### **Fatal Car Accident—Driver Released Government Record on Bail Reform**

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** This Premier and that entire NDP bench owe Manitobans an explanation. The crash that ended the beautiful lives of a young mother and daughter in my constituency was violent and preventable. The driver now getting bail is an egregious and indelible mark on this government. They promised bail reform and they broke the system.

If fleeing the country isn't enough to be considered a flight risk, where does this NDP minister draw the line?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I just want to start by saying my heart goes out to the victims of this crime, and it is a terrible tragedy that's affected not only the family but the entire community.

With regards to bail, we've made our position very clear since day one. We're going to take action where we can in the province of Manitoba, and we're going to push the federal government to do their part as well.

Here in the province we have a five-point bail plan endorsed by the National Police Federation. The first point in that bail plan is a new set of enhanced bail policies for our Crown attorneys. In this case our Crown attorneys did the job that we asked them to do; they followed those policies, and, you know, ultimately, we need reform of the bail system at every level. Everyone needs to be pulling together to make the change—

**The Speaker:** Time has expired.

The honourable member for Borderland, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Guenter:** It's day 735. Still no sign of any plan of bail reform, and they promised it within their first 100 days.

I quote the prosecutor: There are suspicious circumstances, to say the least, surrounding this tragedy. End quote.

Allegedly, the driver was, quote: driving in an objectively dangerous manner. The actions of this driver have left a dear family and a community absolutely shattered. And yet, now, the driver is out on bail.

Why has the NDP Justice Minister allowed this?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Again, as the member opposite rightly pointed out, our Crown attorney in this case vigorously opposed bail, did his job and did it well. We also know that, you know, there are outstanding questions, and I think many Manitobans are asking that right now.

What we can do is we can take action here in the province of Manitoba. Our plan is endorsed by the National Police Federation because it's based on the idea that more co-operation, more funding and enhanced policies within our department can start to make a difference.

Ultimately, we do need reform at the federal level. We're going to be making that case again in the next few weeks with the federal minister directly. We've done that over and over again, and that's why we've been national leaders on this issue.

I'd ask members opposite to join us in that important work.

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

**Mr. Guenter:** All talk, no action. This driver should not have been on the road, much less behind the wheel of a semi truck. Despite making promises to police, he fled the country the next day. He's now been released on bail, just yesterday.

Will this NDP Justice Minister admit that he's failed on bail reform?

**Mr. Wiebe:** I'll tell you about failure, Honourable Speaker. Seven and a half years where the record of the members opposite was deplorable when it came to bail.

Not only did they have, you know, years of inaction, of underfunding police, taking no action where necessary, they actually cut the programs that were making a difference, like the electronic monitoring program. That was Heather Stefanson as Justice minister who cut that program.

That's the record that members opposite need to answer for. We're taking action; we're going to make sure that communities are coming along, that we're making sure that law enforcement is along with us. We're going to continue to push the federal government.

Members opposite have no record on this and they need to be held accountable for their inaction—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

#### **Fatal Car Accident—Driver Released Government Record on Bail Reform**

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** Incidents like this completely undermine the public's faith in our justice system. This driver was released on a \$7,500 surety after fleeing the country.

Is that really how low this NDP Justice system values the lives of Manitobans?

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I find it hard to believe that someone with a background in law enforcement would have such a lack of knowledge about how our Justice system works. And so that just leads me to believe that the member opposite is misrepresenting the facts here today.

What he will know is that our bail policy specifically addressed this as one of the most important issues that Manitobans are looking for in their Justice system, is the confidence that the administration of justice is being carried out to benefit all Manitobans.

We have set that policy; our Crown prosecutor followed that policy. Ultimately, members opposite have to answer why they didn't address those policies once in the seven and a half years when they were in office.

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

**Mr. Balcaen:** This minister has told this House time and time again about his failed multi-point plans. He isn't getting the point. This failed minister is responsible for the Justice system. He's responsible—the buck stops with him. Manitobans expect him to act and he has failed miserably.

When can Manitobans expect real bail reform that doesn't allow a flight risk to roam free?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Again, it's clear the member opposite is completely unserious when it comes to the issue of bail.

\* (14:20)

And I'm not surprised, because he signed up for a party that not only took us backwards when it comes to the issue of bail, cut the electronic monitoring program, cut the ankle monitor program here in this province, but, you know, ultimately, they were not following the law in a lot of ways, Honourable Speaker.

That's what we're here to debate today, in fact, in this Chamber, is how members of his caucus that he signed up for, his party that he signed up to run the banner under which he—what did he—what did we see? We saw that they actually broke the law. That's not a issue for debate, and yet this member wants to present himself as Mr. Law and Order.

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

**Mr. Balcaen:** Oh, such hard conditions under this failed Minister of Health—sorry, this failed Minister of Justice. The accused has a curfew from midnight until 7 a.m. and can continuously roam throughout Ontario and Manitoba. That is the NDP justice system in action.

How does this failed Justice Minister expect Manitobans to have any faith at all in a system that is how this system operates under this minister?

**Mr. Wiebe:** Members opposite, you know, they want to pretend to stand for law and order, but what did law and order look under the previous government? It looked like closed jails; it looked like cuts to police and law enforcement across the province.

They starved our courts, Honourable Speaker, and they wouldn't raise wages or add new positions. We did that.

And we also know that the members opposite, they stand with a caucus that broke the law; members opposite that are still in that caucus broke the law. The Ethics Commissioner there—again, there's no debate about it.

Now, members opposite have a chance to stand up, to apologize, to show some accountability and ultimately to vote to censure people within their own caucus. That's what Manitobans—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

### **Increase in ER Wait Times Request for Plan to Address**

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** Patients who went to the St. Boniface Hospital ER last night faced an estimated wait time of 15 hours, and I'll table that for the House.

We heard this afternoon from an individual who, as of right now, as we speak, has been in the St. Boniface Hospital ER for 20 hours.

Why are ER wait times so much longer now under this failing NDP Health Minister than they were two years ago?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Honourable Speaker, the question that Manitobans are asking is: Why did the member for Roblin advise Heather Stefanson to close three of our largest and most significant emergency rooms? The member for Roblin has time and time again stood in this House and drawn attention to the fact that she had a direct hand in the services being cut that she's demanding we work harder to fix.

Honourable Speaker, the member for Roblin was advising Heather Stefanson before the election where Heather Stefanson broke the law immediately thereafter.

One has to wonder what else has the member opposite been advising Heather Stefanson to do? One has to wonder. They don't want to debate the fact that the PCs have members who have broke the law, including in their own caucus right now.

Can the member opposite stand up—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mrs. Cook:** Honourable Speaker, under this NDP government, you can get bail faster than you can be

seen by a doctor. ER wait times are longer today than they were two years ago; that's a fact.

Under this NDP government, health care is getting measurably worse by almost every metric. Not only are they not keeping their promises, not only are things not getting any better, they are actively getting worse. There are Manitobans who have been sitting in the St. Boniface Hospital ER right now since yesterday afternoon.

Will the minister take responsibility today for the fact that after two years on the job, Manitobans are waiting longer in emergency rooms than they were the day they took office?

**MLA Asagwara:** Honourable Speaker, the member for Roblin advised Heather Stefanson to close three of our largest emergency rooms. She advised Heather Stefanson to fire over 500 nurses. She advised Heather Stefanson to fire over 90 rural paramedics. She advised Heather Stefanson to cut the health care that Manitobans depend on. We're not quite sure if the member for Roblin advised her to break the law, but I'll leave that to her to let Manitobans know.

On this side of the House, we've added over 1,100 net-new nurses, over 285 doctors, over 3,500 health-care workers and we are restoring capacity. Of course, there are still challenges in our health-care system.

Unfortunately, that is the consequence of seven and a half years of cuts and corruption that continues under a caucus and PC members who have no moral compass. That is something we know remains broken.

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

**Mrs. Cook:** Honourable Speaker, that was so telling because nowhere in that answer did the minister talk about anything that they're doing to address emergency room wait times.

Whatever this minister is doing, it's clearly not working—15 hours. In 15 hours, you could drive to the airport, get a plane, fly to Vancouver, have dinner, see a concert, take a cab back to the airport, fly back to Winnipeg and you still would not have been seen by a doctor last night.

Things are getting worse, not better.

If the Minister of Health can't get a handle on wait times, can't figure out how to bring them down, can they at least assure Manitobans that they're going to stop making things worse?

**MLA Asagwara:** Honourable Speaker, I want to thank the member for letting us all know what she does with her time. With my time, I'm working on fixing the damage she did to health care over seven and a half years.

We've added net-new health-care workers, including at St. Boniface. We're working with leadership across the province and experts at that site alone to make sure that we are repairing the damage done by the PCs. We're hiring net-new doctors to that site, net-new nurses, family providers to help address the challenges they've been experiencing with flow, that are the direct result of losing capacity, decisions that were made under previous government that were advised by the member for Roblin.

There's a lot of work we have to do to fix the damage done by the PCs, but we're doing that work every day for Manitobans and strengthening health care as a result. We're going to keep working with St. Boniface to make sure they're moving in the right direction.

Will the member be—

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

### **Manitoba's Unemployment Numbers Sector Job Loss Concerns**

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Honourable Speaker, I'd like to hear what the minister responsible for job creation has to say about the most recent Manitoba jobs numbers, numbers that show that unemployment in this province is on the rise.

Now, summer's a time when students and seasonal workers join the workforce. It's a time when the most Manitobans enter the workforce. Yet, StatsCan shows that Manitoba lost over 5,000 jobs in August, two thirds of them full-time jobs.

Can the minister in charge of creating jobs explain to this Chamber why he and his government are operating at a net loss?

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation):** Happy to say that over our course of us being in government, we've added 17,000 new jobs into our economy. So, in strength, we continue to grow for job creation.

But let's also focus on the problem that was caused by the failed PC government. One of those problems was a slow economic trajectory with no plan. They failed on that. But it's also corruption. We know Manitobans know the PC Party was corrupt, and

that corruption continues today with their blocking and their delaying of the conflict of 'intion' debate.

Now, they could have a chance to show accountability, but they're failing on that. They could have a chance to make amends and show a better path forward for Manitobans, but they're failing on that as well.

Will the member opposite today take accountability for their corrupt party and their actions and actually vote for the conflict of interest? Will they do that today?

**Mr. Narth:** Well, it's interesting, Honourable Speaker. One of the sectors where we saw the sharpest decline was in manufacturing: one month, over 4,000 jobs lost under this minister's watch.

But here's the problem, Honourable Speaker, here's where the math just doesn't add up. Manitoba represents less than 4 per cent of the Canadian manufacturing workforce, yet the province was responsible for 22 per cent of the Canadian manufacturing job losses.

Why is one in five manufacturing jobs lost in this province where we don't even make up 5 per cent of the workforce?

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Moses:** Honourable Speaker, we're very happy to have one of the best advanced manufacturing industries in all of Canada right here, the third largest aerospace sector, and we're—our government is doing far more to support them than ever before.

But one thing that's threatening our manufacturing space is the tariff from Donald Trump. And who thanked Donald Trump for those tariffs? Well, it was the member opposite; it was the leader of the opposition party who spent time thanking Donald Trump for his tariffs, the greatest threat to manufacturing here across Canada.

Now, that's on top of the record of corruption of the former government, corruption during their time in office and corruption that continues in today by deflecting and putting off their accountability of their own actions where we know Heather Stefanson was fined \$18,000—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Narth:** Well, Honourable Speaker, another sector where we saw major drop was in—was under this minister's watch. I don't know; maybe he has too much to do in his portfolio, but this minister also oversees the mining sector. Employment in Manitoba's resource

extraction sector has declined by 14.3 per cent in August. That's another thousand jobs lost.

Given this minister's mandate for job creation, and given that jobs keep disappearing under his watch, maybe the next job that should be lost is this minister's.

My question, Honourable Speaker, is: will he please take some of his colleagues with him.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** This minister's doing a great job; \$17,000–17,000 jobs added to the economy since we took office.

But on the subject of job loss, Heather Stefanson lost her job. Cliff Cullen lost her job. The member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) at the Cabinet table lost his job—

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** Again, all these folks lost their jobs. And I quote, from the Ethics Commissioner's report: Voters had rejected the former government and placed their trust in a new government.

They broke the law. They ignored your will.

There's too much corruption in the PC Party of Manitoba. This is a party of rich city people who go around and pretend to be rural. None of them own a gun; none of them can tie a clove hitch; none of them can drive with the trailer hitch.

They put on the rural flag at election time and then come here and do insider deals that the Ethics Commissioner just blew the cover off.

Shame on them. Rural Manitoba's too smart to fall for that one again.

### **Measles Outbreak in Manitoba Education on Spread Prevention**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** CBC has reported measles outbreaks across the province, notably in spaces such as emergency rooms and schools.

The Canadian Journal of Public Health has highlighted that vaccination rates for two-year-olds have noticeably lowered since 2019. This is very worrisome, as Manitoba has reported over 200 cases of measles since the beginning of the year.

What is this government doing to educate and encourage our population to prevent the further spread of measles?

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I want to thank the member for Tyndall Park for that really important question and timely question.

We are in a time of year where we're encouraging Manitobans to get vaccinated. We've been working really hard with our public health experts and our chief medical officer of public health, Dr. Roussin, to make sure that Manitobans have access to the information that they need to make the most informed health decisions, to keep themselves, their loved ones and communities protected, safe and healthy.

As a government, we've taken steps to make sure that the measles vaccine is more readily available in communities where we know that there are increased cases, and we have public health workers who are going out in community, meeting people, you know, face to face, hand by hand, to make sure they have the information to make the right choices to stay protected.

So go out; get vaccinated. Now is the time.

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

#### **Outbreak Tracking**

**MLA Lamoureux:** Measles is a highly infectious disease that spreads very easily and often results in high fevers, rashes and, in extreme cases, pneumonia, brain swelling or respiratory failure.

These are extremely dangerous for affected children, and we must remember that these are conditions that can reoccur into adulthood.

Can the minister share what steps they have made in tracking outbreaks and protecting the public?

**MLA Asagwara:** Really important question. I want to thank our public health experts and the public health nurses, several of which I actually just met with a few weeks ago, who do the work of contact tracing, going out in communities, making sure people have the information they need.

They follow up with families, they follow up with sites. They get the information out there by way of bulletin regularly where it's needed. We want to make sure that we're providing people the information that they need, but we're staying on top of measles and other communicable illnesses in our province to keep people safe.

I want to acknowledge that there was a tragic death of an infant in Alberta, measles-related. That is an absolute tragedy. Measles is preventable for so, so

many people if we are vaccinating at the rates that we need. It's part of the reason why, as a government, we've been very clear that we stand with science, we stand with experts and we advance their clinical expertise—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

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

#### **Access to Information Request**

**MLA Lamoureux:** Over the last several weeks there have been numerous articles about the measles outbreaks here in Manitoba, across Canada and around the world. The Government of Canada reports Manitoba to be the fourth highest measles outbreak source, and the World Health Organization shows Canada being the ninth highest in global cases.

Can the minister share with the House what information and details will be made public and when we will have access to this information?

**MLA Asagwara:** Honourable Speaker, we have been working very hard to make sure the information is readily available for the public. We're working with public health nurses and experts to make sure that we're taking a more modernized approach as a government so that the information is accessible.

You can go on our parenting Manitoba website to get the information in many, many, many different languages; it's—it can be translated in real time for those who need it. As a government, we know that information really is what we need to get in people's hands so they can make the best decisions to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

I'm asking people to go out and get vaccinated. Talk to your nurse practitioners, your pharmacist, your primary-care providers, doctors; get the information you need to make the best decisions for you and your families.

On this side of the House, we stand with science. We did not see that, unfortunately, from members opposite during COVID—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

#### **PC Party Leader—Ethics Report**

##### **Inquiry into Involvement with Sio Silica Project**

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** Honourable Speaker, Manitobans know that after the PC government lost the 2023 election, they broke the law and violated our constitution. And now, two years later,



the PC leader has doubled down on the PC Party's corruption.

He took thousands of dollars from those involved in the Sio Silica scandal and for his recent leadership campaign, helping him to become the No. 2—oh wait, no, sorry; he won PC leader despite coming in second at the ballot box.

You can't claim to be turning over a new leaf while relying on the same old power networks to drive the work.

Can the minister reveal more—the Minister of Environment and Climate Change—about the PC leader's ongoing involvement in the Sio Silica scandal and the ethics report?

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** During his leadership campaign, the current PC leader took thousands in donations from those implicated in the ethics report. We know that David Filmon, a prominent Sio Silica board member, was getting regular updates on the efforts of former PC deputy premier Cliff Cullen's effort to break the law and violate our Constitution—the same David Filmon who recently donated \$3,000 to the current PC leadership campaign.

We've also learned that despite the PC leader's insistence that he can't remember the last time he spoke with Heather Stefanson, Stefanson recently donated \$1,500 to his campaign; clearly, they're still close.

Will the new PC leader return the thousands he got from those at the centre of the ethics report rather than carrying on—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

#### **Access to Crown Lands Request for Minister Responsible**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Honourable Speaker, September 19, 2025, I wrote a very urgent letter to the ministers on behalf of my constituents and municipalities. I wrote the Premier—no reply. I wrote the Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures Minister—no reply.

Minister of Environment and Climate Change—got a reply. He said it was the Natural Resources and independent futures' job. Agriculture Minister and Crowns—no reply until October 2; said it's the Infrastructure Minister.

\* (14:40)

So I'm asking today: Which minister is responsible? And it's their duty to protect every Manitoban's right to access to Crown lands. Which one's going to answer?

**The Speaker:** The—

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** It's clear to everyone involved that no one in the PC benches had—has read the Ethics Commissioner's report. There was a series of transgressions—*[interjection]* Pay attention, because this one's going to be good.

There was a series of transgressions carried out by the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson), the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), Heather Stefanson, Cliff Cullen. Also implicated: the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) in the report. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** Now, what—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —did the Ethics Commissioner find? *[interjection]* He said—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

The honourable member for Steinbach will come to order.

**Mr. Kinew:** The Ethics Commissioner said that as premier, Heather Stefanson, quote: had a higher leadership responsibility that she failed to meet. End quote.

I've read the report carefully. I understand that ultimately all the decisions of government are my responsibility. I hold this team to a high standard, not least of all when it comes to ethics and when it comes to respecting our democracy.

No member on the opposite side can say the same, so long as—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —they tolerate sitting with the member for Red River North, so long as they accept donations from Heather Stefanson, so long—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

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

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

The time for oral questions has expired.

Petitions? Grievances?

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

*(Continued)*

**The Speaker:** House business.

## **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

### **Speaker's Statement**

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I have a statement for the House.

Today is the 10th sitting day since the tabling on May 21, 2025, of a report from the Ethics Commissioner.

The procedure for consideration of reports from the Ethics Commissioner by legislative—by the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba adopted by this House on October 2, 2024, and amended on March 11, 2025, includes the following provision: If the Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine) does not call the motion for debate by the 10th sitting day after the report was tabled, the Speaker shall call the motion for debate on that day.

Accordingly, following this statement, the House will begin consideration of the four ethics motions relating to the May 21, 2025, report from the Ethics Commissioner, which I will be calling for debate as listed on the Order Paper.

The May 21, 2025 report from the Ethics Commissioner addresses four complaints against four different respondents, with separate findings and recommendations made regarding each of the respondents. The four separate motions on the Order Paper relating to that report will allow the House to consider each of these recommendations individually, in accordance with the act.

The procedures for consideration of the ethics report agreed to by the House last year, which I noted a moment ago, did not contemplate a report structured in this way. To be clear on this point, as the report from May 21, '25 is structured differently than earlier reports, the procedures used to consider previous ethics motion—ethics report motions are not a perfect fit for these motions.

My preference would have been for the House to amend the previous agreement by leave to suit this report. I understand from consultations with the House leaders that they've been unable to agree on how to update these procedures. I have, however, considered their opinions on this matter when deter-

mining how the House should proceed with these motions.

As these four ethics report motions must now be called for debate, and in the absence of a revised agreement from the House, as your Speaker, I am obligated to interpret that agreement to enable the House to proceed with the debate.

For the reference of all members, our rule 9(1) states that: the Speaker shall preserve order and decorum and enforce the rules and decide questions of order without appeal.

Further, on page 318 of the third edition of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, Bosc and Gagnon note that: As the arbitrator of House proceedings, the Speaker's duty is to preserve order and decorum in the House and decide any matters of procedure that may arise. This duty carries with it a wide-ranging authority extending to the conduct of proceedings and the rules of debate.

It is on this basis that I am providing an interpretation on the question of order relating to the operation of the procedures and for the consideration of reports from the Ethics Commissioner. For context, I will remind members that the House agreement on this procedure includes the following provisions:

1. The statutory requirement that the Assembly must consider a report of the Ethics Commissioner within 10 sitting days after the report is tabled, in accordance with section 51(1) of The Conflict of Interest (Members and Ministers) Act, shall be met through the House's consideration of an ethics report motion, and

10. (d) Debate on an ethics report motion shall be limited to one sitting day. The House shall not adjourn until all members had an opportunity to speak to the motion. When there are no further speakers in debate, the Speaker shall put the question.

Note that the statutory obligation for House consideration within 10 days relates to the report as a whole, but the wording of the agreement specifies only that the debate on any motion must be concluded on the same day it is called.

Accordingly, I am ruling that the individual ethics report motions currently listed on the Order Paper are not required to be called for debate on the same sitting day and therefore may be considered by the House on separate sitting days.

Please note that until the House agrees on a different procedure for such a process—or adopts these

procedures as rules—this ruling shall serve as a precedent for consideration of future reports from the Ethics Commissioner with more than one respondent and more than one recommendation.

If the House wishes to make any changes to these procedures this session I would urge the House leaders to reconsider the terms of the agreement on this matter and come back to the House with a leave request.

Finally, I would remind all members that the agreement governing these procedures will remain in effect only until the end of the Second Session of the 43rd Legislature. It is therefore incumbent on the Standing Committee on Rules of the House to convene and consider adopting these procedures as part of our rules.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

### ETHICS REPORT MOTIONS

**The Speaker:** Now, as noted a few moments ago, the House will now begin consideration of the four ethics motions relating to the May 21, 2025, report from the Ethics Commissioner, which I shall be calling for debate as listed on the Order Paper.

I will remind members that the procedure—of the procedure for the consideration of these motions, as previously agreed by the House. These provisions will guide debate on all four motions to be considered by the House today:

- (1) The debate shall be limited to one sitting day.
- (2) The House shall not adjourn until all members have had an opportunity to speak to the motion.
- (3) An ethics report motion cannot be amended.
- (4) The Speaker shall read the motion to the House to open the debate.
- (5) During the debate no member shall speak longer than 10 minutes.
- (6) All members may speak to the motion in the following sequence: the—first, the subject of the complaint, or a member of their party; followed by the complainant, or a member of their party; followed by a rotation between speakers from each recognized party; followed by an independent member; followed by any members wishing to speak, repeating this rotation.

\* (14:50)

Before reading each motion to open the debates, I will read into the record the relevant recommendation

contained in the May 21, 2025, Ethics Commissioner's report for each respondent.

The first motion before the House relates to Heather Stefanson, the former member for Tuxedo. On page 100 of the May 21, 2025, report, the Ethics Commissioner wrote: For the reasons given above, I submit the following findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. Heather Stefanson breached the act and should be fined in the amount of \$18,000.

### Motion Presented

#### Heather Stefanson

**The Speaker:** The motion before the House, then, is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding Heather Stefanson, the former member for Tuxedo in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025, and order that the penalty recommended by the commissioner be imposed.

The floor is now open for debate.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** The Progressive Conservative caucus accepts the commissioner's report. We have been ready to vote on this matter since the spring sitting.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Honourable Speaker, today I want to speak to you and to all Manitobans as the Premier of Manitoba. The basic function of this Chamber is to see the exercise of your will, to see the exercise of our democracy and to honour that hallowed gift that we call the franchise in this beautiful country of Canada.

Your franchise is exercised on election day to choose your next government. The members opposite might envision a world in which the rich are all powerful. But on this side of the House, we think it's a beautiful thing that on election day, even though there might be differing degrees of power throughout the rest of time, on election day, everyone's vote counts for the exact same amount, because we are all equal.

This is what the members opposite violated. This is what they tolerate in their caucus today: an ignorance of that fundamental freedom. To be a member of the current Progressive Conservative caucus is to be a party of the violation of the democratic will of the people. For the first time in the history of our province, we have conclusive proof and a detailed reporting of Heather Stefanson and the Manitoba PCs violating your democratic will.

They were a defeated government, and today they are a sad opposition. For days they have tried any manner of stunts and delays and nonsensical arguments in the public sphere to try and hold off this moment when the leader that they all pledged fealty to will be fined for violating your vote, the fact that you showed up on election day, you lined up to vote, you chose who you wanted to be your government. And in their actions this week and today they continue to show contempt for our democracy, and they continue to show contempt for you, the people of Manitoba.

What does it mean to accept an Ethics Commissioner's report when no one on their side will accept responsibility? The current member of their caucus, their former leader, who they are soliciting donations from, they all refuse to accept responsibility; the aw, shucks it, all the way to: I was just doing my job. Wrong. You lost your job on October 3, 2023, when Manitobans voted in a new direction. You had no right to ram through the Sio Silica project.

The current House leader has no credibility for the opposition. Those are the words of the Ethics Commissioner himself. This report is very, very clear, Honourable Speaker. Heather Stefanson, along with two members of her Cabinet—one who continues to sit in this Chamber—broke the law. In the process, they breached the trust of the electorate and they violated a principle of our constitution. They lost the election; they still tried to push this controversial project through; they were being pressured by some of their rich friends all the while, and what do they do now? They continue to treat this like it's any other political issue.

This is not just any other political issue that you get to dodge and run away from. This is a complete failing of an institution in the form of the Manitoba PC Party, that was supposed to have integrity. It was supposed to stand for something.

All the Manitoba PC Party stands for today is turning around away from accountability and trying to protect their friends. What compounds that is that they then have the temerity to look at disadvantaged people in our society and judge them as being morally failing, when they themselves cannot accept the light of accountability.

The severity of Heather Stefanson's transgression cannot be understated. The Ethics Commissioner said Heather Stefanson, and I quote, had a higher leadership responsibility that she failed to meet. End quote.

For context, to—just to spell it out, that means amongst a crew of moral failing—moral failures, Heather Stefanson was the biggest moral failure of all. I wouldn't call that person for a donation. Shame on the Leader of the Opposition for doing so.

Let me be unequivocal: In our democracy, when the people speak, exercising their franchise that was fought for and defended by our veterans, political candidates have to listen.

What separates Canada from banana republics is the fact that we have orderly transitions of power. At the heart of this case is the ignorance of the responsibility to participate in the orderly transition of power. Thought of in another way, if the PCs were in charge, we would continue marching towards banana republic status.

When you govern without integrity, when you cover up for people without integrity, of course you deserve to lose the confidence of the people of Manitoba. But then, if you ever hope to have the ability to stand up in front of the people again, you should relinquish power gracefully. We never saw that from the PCs.

The commissioner sums it up, and I quote: The concept that a government must have legitimacy to govern the confidence of the people is not complicated. End quote.

The PCs were illegitimate. Their responsibility was to ensure the transfer of power. Instead, as the Ethics Commissioner states plainly, they broke our Constitutional rules and our laws to advance a private interest, inappropriately.

The ethics report says, and I quote: The efforts to have the project's licence approved by Ms. Stefanson, Mr. Cullen and the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) were taken despite their knowledge that voters had rejected the former government and had placed their trust in a new government. It was ignored.

Honourable Speaker, \$18,000 as a fine to a rich person? It's probably not enough. But that's what we have the opportunity to vote on today: \$18,000 of a fine to Heather Stefanson for ignoring your direction as the people of Manitoba.

Hopefully, the PCs and their party won't pay these fines for these members. We know they don't have the money to pay for their building, much less fines, but we'd better make sure, I would say, collectively, as the public sphere.

Beyond this—[interjection] I just want to point out the member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler) is heckling. He heckles because he has nothing to say. Given the opportunity to address this historic moment, he said two lines, scribbled onto a piece of paper he holds up now. [interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

\* (15:00)

**Mr. Kinew:** Too bad he didn't have the words, the letters N-O, to hold up to Heather Stefanson during the transition. Kevin Klein, Rochelle Squires, not that we hold them up to be any sort of moral vanguard on a given day, but they had the sense to say this is wrong, to their colleagues. Why didn't the member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler)? Why didn't any of them?

Why did they stand here and guffaw and clap enthusiastically for Heather Stefanson after this became public? Marching in here, following her into the Chamber as leader; good job, Heather. Wrong.

It's in moments like these that you discover what people are made of, and every single person on the PC bench has failed the test. And anyone who chooses to run for the PC Party now, under this iteration, fails the test, too. This is a morally and financially bankrupt political operation on the other side.

As my colleague for—the member for Riel (MLA Moyes) has outlined, there are still many questions to be answered here. He's outlined these publicly and in his complaint. But the biggest question of all—why did Heather Stefanson do it?—remains unresolved to this day.

I'll point out for the record that the conflict of interest commissioner, the Ethics Commissioner said that pretty much all the testimony of members of the PC Cabinet he received was contradicted by the facts.

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

**An Honourable Member:** Point of order.

#### Point of Order

**The Speaker:** The honourable First Minister, on a point of order.

**Mr. Kinew:** I just want to say one more quick thing: Let them be fined.

**The Speaker:** I'd just point out that the honourable First Minister did not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** It doesn't give me any good feelings to be speaking on such a serious manner today. What we're talking about is not just ideology. This isn't just a regular event. This isn't just a regular issue where we have a disagreement based on our upbringing, our background, how we see the world. This is, in fact, an affront to democracy.

What we're talking about, the caretaker convention, is a basic tenet of democracy. At its heart is that the will of the people must be respected. That's what it's about. On October 3, 2023, the people of Manitoba spoke overwhelmingly and they showed the PCs the door. And whether you voted for them or voted for us or voted for another party or spoiled your ballot, for that matter, it is incredibly important that we respect the will of the people. That's why we're sent here. That's what this is all about.

We can have disagreements about how do we measure certain things, how do we get to the right outcomes in health care, what should we do when it comes to addressing crime, what should we do on education, with the environment. We can talk about all of these things; that's part of our job. That was not done here. Instead, what we have are people that were show the door still trying to rule for the benefit of their friends.

This is the definition of corruption and it's outlined throughout the report. This is exactly what our veterans fought for. We saw some veterans earlier today that were watching over some of the proceedings, and I think that each and every one of them that have fought for our freedom would be embarrassed about what has taken place within the PC Party. We have people that remain in the PC Party that had key roles in this.

We have the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) that, while he's not charged in the same way that the other three members are, he's outlined 47 times. He knew about all of these things. It's clearly stated by the commissioner. And so, if nothing else, he is a party to this.

Likewise, the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) was the go-between of all the different ministers, the people that lost their job on October the 3rd. And he went and would try to come up with different solutions, come up with different options for them. That was wrong.

And it makes you wonder, and I'm sure there's Manitobans from all our corners of our great province

that are wondering: What else did people know? What else did the former Cabinet know? Who else was implicated in this?

I find it hard to believe that only four people knew about this. Usually, if that large of a number of people are talking, I would imagine that the team knew.

And yet, we look across the Chamber and we have the PC Party just completely disengaged, completely okay with what happened and it's an absolute shame. And you should feel shame. You should be ashamed that you're a part of a party that doesn't believe in democracy. You are literally marching towards some sort of totalitarian state. *[interjection]* Yes, snicker. Snicker and laugh, because that's showing your true character.

We will, on this side of the House, believe in democracy. The people of Manitoba believe in democracy. At the end of the day, we're all at the will of the people.

I represent the great constituency of Riel, and every four years, I will go and seek their approval. And if the day ever comes where they decide, you know what, it's time to see someone else in the chair, I will accept that graciously. But that's not what we had here. It's not at all. And that is absolutely shameful.

And so I look across the Chamber at these folks, and each and every one of you should feel that shame.

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I would just remind the member that, a couple of times now, he's directed his comments directly across the Chamber. All comments must go through the Chair.

**MLA Moyes:** Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for the reminder.

Now, in terms of Heather Stefanson, we know that she was directly involved. She was being updated all the time. The former deputy premier was updating her regularly. They spoke on a daily basis. But what did she say?

She went to the media when she was asked about it after this report, after the complaints went forward, and claimed she didn't know anything about Sio Silica—no, of course not; I don't know anything; I have no conflicts—even though other members, including the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), clearly implicated her and said that she did, that she couldn't direct it herself because that would look bad.

And at least my predecessor, Rochelle Squires, had the good sense—I don't agree with Rochelle Squires on a lot of different issues, but at least she had the good sense to say: No, I was not elected on October 3—I was not re-elected on October 3, and so I will not force through this controversial mining operation that the premier, that the deputy premier, that the member for Red River North, that the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) knew about.

At least the former minister, Kevin Klein, said no. He knew better. So it's not about ideology. It's not at all. It's about democracy.

Honourable Speaker, this is a dark day. Like, I cannot remember—I've been following politics a long time. I'm a politics geek and I, you know, like to nerd out on it and I'm sure that there's a lot of people in this Chamber that feel the same way. I cannot remember a time when something like this has taken place. I guess the 1995 vote-rigging scandal comes to mind, which was also a part of the PC Party. That's the only time that I can remember. That is a shameful display.

\* (15:10)

And I guess we've come full circle that—in 1995, you know, under Gary Filmon and his crew, that there was an absolutely shameful act; and then there's his son, David Filmon, who is now implicated in this, trying to get this—you know, board member of Sio Silica—trying to get that mining through, through back channels.

You know, we have different means to get projects through—and we can debate them, we can look at them, we can analyze them. And that's the proper way; there's proper channels to do that. You can advocate, you can do different things. But not when you've been shown the door. Because that is wrong. When the voters have spoken, it's incumbent on all of us to respect that.

Now, let's quote the Ethics Commissioner just to get that on the official record. This is a quote from the Ethics Commissioner's report: Ms. Stefanson dismisses the caretaker convention as merely a useful statement of general principles. I emphatically disagree, and find it disappointing that she would give it such little weight. As I've already discussed, and as the Supreme Court of Canada has made clear, the caretaker convention is a binding constitutional principle that is fundamental to the respect for the will of the voters that is the basis of our democracy.

I honestly don't know how any member on that side of the Chamber can make such a mockery of our democracy. I would hope that each and every one of them would reflect on what they knew and what they did during this dark chapter of Manitoba and our democracy.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** If there are no further members wishing to debate, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** The question before the House is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding Heather Stefanson, the former member for Tuxedo, in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025, and order that the penalty recommended by the commissioner be imposed.

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

The honourable member for Waverley. [interjection]  
The honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care.

### Recorded Vote

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Recorded vote, please.

**The Speaker:** A recorded vote has been asked for. Call in the members.

\* (16:10)

Order, please.

The one-hour time limit for the ringing of the bells has expired. Therefore, I'm asking that they be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

So the question before the House is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding Heather Stefanson, the former member for Tuxedo, in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025, and order that the penalty recommended by the commissioner be imposed.

### Division

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

### Ayes

Asagwara, Balcaen, Bereza, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Byram, Cable, Chen, Compton, Cook, Corbett, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Ewasko, Fontaine, Goertzen, Guenter, Johnson, Kennedy, Khan, Kinew, King, Kostyshyn, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Loiselle, Maloway, Marcelino, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Narth, Naylor, Nesbitt, Oxenham, Pankratz, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Redhead, Robbins, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Schuler, Simard, Smith, Wasyliv, Wharton, Wiebe, Wowchuk.

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Ayes 53, Nays 0.

**The Speaker:** The motion is accordingly passed.

### Motion Presented Cliff Cullen

**The Speaker:** We will now move on to the next one. The motion before the House now relates to Cliff Cullen, the former member for Spruce Woods.

On page 100 of the May 21, 2025, report, the Ethics Commissioner wrote: "For the reasons given above, I submit the following findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly . . . Cliff Cullen breached the Act and should be fined in the amount of \$12,000."

The motion before the House is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding Cliff Cullen, the former member for Spruce Woods, in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025, and order that the penalty recommended by the commissioner be imposed.

The floor is now open for debate.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** I'd like to thank the Ethics Commissioner for the hard work they have done in regard to this matter.

We accept the findings of the Ethics Commissioner and look forward to voting on this as soon as possible.

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Honourable Speaker, there is too much corruption in the PC Party of Manitoba, and as someone who played team sports—former athlete, lifelong team player—I can tell you the only thing worse than a sore loser is a corrupt one.

And what we've seen through the findings of the ethics report is that the former premier, Heather Stefanson, and former deputy premier, Cliff Cullen, the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), they broke the law, they violated the Constitution, and they embody what it means to be corrupt losers.

\* (16:20)

Honourable Speaker, we have been in this House now for days, attempting to bring forward debate that would have allowed members of the PC caucus to stand up and share their perspective on what is a historical shame in Manitoba, that for the first time ever a premier has been fined for breaking the law and violating our Constitution. But it's truly shameful to reflect on the fact that she did not make that decision alone, and that there are currently members in the PC caucus who supported that decision making, who enabled that decision making, and who continue to fail to do the bare minimum in condemning it and committing to never repeating that mistake.

It is, I think, for all of us on this side of the House, the highest of honours to be elected to represent Manitobans. I can tell you, Honourable Speaker, it is the highest honour of my life to be the MLA for Union Station, to be the Minister of Health, and to be the Deputy Premier of this province. If you had told me when I was a little kid that I would be in this Chamber today with those roles and responsibilities, I would have told you it was impossible and that you must be talking about someone else.

My parents came over from Nigeria in the late 1970s and chose to raise their family here in Manitoba. My parents taught me right from wrong. They taught me the importance of not only establishing a strong democracy—I come from a place where our nation in Nigeria has been independent and free for just 65 years this past October 1st. But I was raised to understand that democracy doesn't just exist on its own, that you must continue to protect it and strengthen it and uphold it.

We are in an incredibly fragile time politically and socially, democratically. And during a time where we see attacks on democracy the former PC premier made a decision to jeopardize the fabric and foundation of our democracy here in Manitoba. Manitobans cast their ballot. They made a decision and the deputy premier participated in that wholeheartedly.

Honourable Speaker, when you look at—when you look at some of the quotes from the Ethics Commissioner's report about Cliff Cullen's role in the violation

of our Constitution, it is so damaging, it is so disheartening, and it is clear as day. Direct quote from the report—from the Ethics Commissioner: I do not accept Mr. Cullen's evidence about the purpose of his text, communications with Mr. Filmon on October 5, 2023. The explanation he provided does not make sense.

Another quote: It is reasonable to conclude that Mr. Cullen was not merely working on understanding the status of the project he was working on, getting the project licence approved.

Honourable Speaker, Cliff Cullen knowingly broke the law. To be the deputy premier of Manitoba, to then be voted out, rightly, by the people of this province, and then to instead embrace and understand the sacred responsibility that we have as elected people to protect and preserve our democracy and uphold the rights of our citizens, to throw that out the window, to cast that aside for your own selfish interests because you are a sore loser, is shameful.

And, unfortunately, Honourable Speaker, what we've seen from members on that side of the House, including the current leader of the PC Party, is that they have learned nothing.

It doesn't matter what they say here today, Honourable Speaker. Manitobans cannot believe what they have to say because they have to only look at what they do to understand how corrupt that party is and that our province, our sacred and beloved and beautiful province of Manitoba, can never be trusted with such corrupt and morally bankrupt people again.

The Leader of the Opposition continues to accept donations from the former premier, Heather Stefanson, who broke the law. Cliff Cullen, fined \$12,000, engaging with Filmon in ways that we know was an affront, as my colleague from Riel has stated, an affront to our democracy.

The same person, Cliff Cullen, appears 276 times in the ethics report. And I haven't even talked about the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson), whose name appears hundreds of times, and the Ethics Commissioner has stated very plainly, lacks—wholly lacks—credibility.

But the folks who they were colluding with to break the law are actively donating to the Leader of the Opposition's political campaigns. They are investing in advancing him as the representative for the PC Party today. I would argue, Honourable Speaker, that not only has nothing changed in the PC Party of Manitoba, I would argue that things have actively gotten worse.



The PC Party in Manitoba has unfortunately given us as a province another historical embarrassment. These are the same people who had billboards standing firm against searching the landfill, terrorizing the families of murder victims. These are the same people who go after trans children.

None of that was enough for them. They had to break the law. And two of those members who participated in acts that will forever be a part of our historical record of Manitoba remain in that caucus.

Honourable Speaker, I don't think that the members of the PC caucus, quite frankly, either understand or quite frankly really care about the harm they've done to our province. But I can tell you that Manitobans are paying attention. Manitobans understand. Manitobans care deeply about protecting and upholding their democracy. Manitobans understand that Heather Stefanson, Cliff Cullen, the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) must be held accountable.

And I also believe that Manitobans understand that all of those folks, including those who remain in the PC caucus, including the Leader of the Opposition, who continues to benefit from the corrupt Heather Stefanson and the corrupt folks that they colluded with to violate our Constitution; Manitobans understand that they too must continue to be held accountable.

And so as much as they are hoping that after we vote this will go away, it won't. Manitobans will not forget. I hope they understand that the books their children read in school, their history books, are going to reflect this. I hope they understand that the most damaging and disgusting political campaign we have ever seen has their faces and their names attached to it.

That is what the kids of the next generation of this province should learn about as well, in addition to all of the good that is happening. They must understand that with great power as an elected official comes great responsibility; and when you fail to uphold that, you should be held accountable and you should not be able to hide.

And so I want to thank the Ethics Commissioner for his work in bringing forward this incredibly important report. I want to thank Manitobans for doing the right thing and kicking out—before they knew just how corrupt—kicking out a corrupt PC caucus.

And I would ask Manitobans to always, always remember that the way we strengthen and protect and advance democracy is with good people with strong

ethics, and that is always going to be the NDP of this province.

Thank you.

\* (16:30)

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** So I want to speak today from a place of respect for this institution, for what this Chamber represents, and each of us, regardless of our political affiliation, carries the responsibility of defending not only the interests of those who sent us here but the democratic principles that make this House possible.

The trust of Manitobans is a sacred honour and we have to carry that with some humility and it is earned or lost by choices that we make. We're living in a time when faith in public life can be fragile. You know, people see headlines about corruption, cynicism, self-interest; they wonder whether the system still belongs to them at all. And that doubt can begin with small betrayals of trust that go unanswered, but today we are speaking about a much larger betrayal, unfortunately, here in Manitoba; and it's why this discussion is so very important.

You know, democracy does not collapse all at once; it erodes, right? It weakens each time the people who are in power decide the rules no longer apply to them. It falters or it breaks when—you know, as we saw yesterday—when laughter replaces accountability, when cynicism replaces courage and when leaders mistake their own privilege for permission.

The Ethics Commissioner's report released is a warning, and it shows how quickly power can drift away from the people when those entrusted with it begin to believe that it belongs to them personally. And that is what was displayed by the members of the PC caucus, of Cabinet, the premier, the deputy premier. And it's laid out clearly in this report.

When a government loses an election, it's supposed to accept the will of the people. That seems pretty clear-cut to folks on this side of the Chamber, yet this report reveals a government that refused to do that. It was a group of ministers who believed that even after that defeat, their authority should remain untouched.

Heather Stefanson, Cliff Cullen, the MLA for Red River North, the Opposition House Leader; the report details how these former ministers, they ignored those warnings, they disregarded democratic convention and attempted to move forward on a major project after Manitobans had already voted them out. They

acted with intent, they understood the caretaker convention and they chose to violate it anyway—and there are multiple instances of this within the report.

That caretaker period exists to protect the integrity of a democracy in the moment it is most fragile. It's the space between governments, right, when power is shifting hands. It exists to remind every public servant that we are stewards; we're not owners. And that principle was broken.

And I hope that that is very, very clear because I know there have been a few short statements 'bade'—made by members opposite but mostly it's been silence and deflection when it comes to this report. You know, and when we raised this yesterday, as part of some of the ministerial statements, to speak about this a little bit more—evidence-based concerns, as laid out in this report—when we brought forward some of these concerns and findings, the opposition laughed. They were laughing and heckling and deflecting. The Leader of the Opposition at one point actually smirked, congratulated his team and then said, oh, that didn't go how you thought it would.

But guess what? It went exactly how I thought because that reaction—the laughter, the smugness—exposed something much deeper, even deeper than the arrogance it took to act in that way. It exposed a party that never recognizes the seriousness of its own wrongdoings. It exposes a culture where ethics are treated as some sort of theatre and accountability as some sort of inconvenience.

At a moment where, around the world, democracies are fraying, when faith in institutions has already worn thin, the opposition here still can't summon the humility to confront one of the most serious breaches of public trust in our province's history.

Honourable Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner's report goes into great detail about the conduct of Cliff Cullen, specifically, and Manitobans deserve to hear that plainly. You know, Mr. Cullen was the deputy premier of Manitoba, as our wonderful Deputy Premier pointed out just moments ago. It's one of the most senior decision makers in the province and he had been briefed on the caretaker convention, understood its limits, was warned explicitly not to make major decisions after the election. Yet, according to Commissioner Schnoor, Cliff Cullen took it upon himself to push forward a controversial industrial project, the Sio Silica licence, after the election had already been lost.

He directed senior public servants to contact the incoming government and asked whether they would be comfortable with the outgoing Cabinet proceeding anyway. Honourable Speaker, that request alone reveals everything we need to know about the mindset of this former government, and members of this current government for that matter.

You know, it shows a man who understood that power was no longer his to wield but could not bring himself to let it go. And the report found that Mr. Cullen acted with full knowledge of the rules he was breaking. He received warnings that proceeding could violate both the caretaker convention and the Conflict of Interest Act and yet, he pressed ahead anyway.

He wasn't safeguarding the public interest; he was testing the boundaries of democracy. Commissioner Schnoor noted that Cullen had no personal financial interest in Sio Silica, and that's true, but in some ways, it actually makes this even worse, not better, because it wasn't even just greed—that, I could maybe start to understand from some of the folks over there. It was entitlement. Entitlement. It was the quiet conviction that even after the people had spoken, those in power still knew better than everyone else in the province. And for this breach, the Ethics Commissioner recommended a \$12,000 fine.

Cliff Cullen's actions and those of his colleagues are a reminder that corruption does not always necessarily wear the face of that clear-cut bribery or theft. Sometimes it just looks like the corruption of arrogance, the belief that personal judgment outranks our democracy itself.

And perhaps part of the reason that they laughed and deflected, I'm not sure, and delayed yesterday, is because they don't all know where they stand either. They haven't made a decision; they've heard the rumours, right, that even within their caucus, there's no agreements on whether they should have defended or distanced themselves from this.

So the Leader of the Opposition finds himself stuck here between loyalty and leadership. He's taken donations, he's clearly still closely connected to the folks involved in this. So does he disavow the former premier from the party, admit that what she did was wrong and risk dividing the caucus even further? I don't know. Either way, Honourable Speaker, the one truth is clear: it's that they do not seem to have the moral fortitude to stand up for what is right for Manitobans. And when faced with a choice between

integrity and convenience, they again choose silence. And that silence is complicit.

You know, you can't claim to be a new kind of political entity, party leader, while relying on the same old power networks to decide what's acceptable. And this moment, again, should not be about partisanship, right? It's about principle. When an election is lost, power must be surrendered. When ministers act after people have spoken, they betray not only their opponents but the citizens they were supposed to serve. And at that point, elections become more of a performance, and exactly the opposite of what we need to be happening right now.

So yes, the opposition can laugh, they can deflect, they can treat this Chamber like a stage. But as the Minister of Health said, Manitobans are paying attention, and they see a party that refuses to acknowledge the weight of its own actions.

And they see clearly where that kind of politics can lead: to entitlement, to hypocrisy and to a deep contempt for the democracy that every single one of us here is sworn to defend.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** Honourable Speaker, famous author David Stevenson [*phonetic*] once wrote: a lie is a lie, even if everyone believes it, and the truth is the truth, even if no one believes it. And the truth is there's too much corruption in the PC Party of Manitoba.

\* (16:40)

In fact, the PC Party of Manitoba is as corrupt today as it was two years ago during the 2023 election and the month of corruption that followed. That's the truth.

And when corruption is at the basis of who you are as a party, then how can anyone trust you? How can any elector, family member, Manitoban—how can anyone trust you? Manitobans trusted the PC Party to hand over the reins of power to our government after they lost the election on October 3, 2023, and they breached that trust.

As a parent, as an educator, trust is a really difficult concept to teach; it's either you have it or you don't. How is it that Manitobans will now ever be able to trust, once again, the PC Party of Manitoba? And it doesn't matter whether you're newly elected or if you were part of the previous PC government, you're all guilty. You're all guilty of breaching that trust.

Another fundamental teaching that we teach in our schools is called the circle of courage, where we teach belonging, generosity amongst other things. And not only was the trust breached, the PC Party of Manitoba put ahead of everyone else their own self-interests. How could they ever be trusted again?

And as a student of history, I know that for many years to come, Manitobans will look back at this and always ask themselves: How do I trust the PC Party of Manitoba? It's going to be hard.

### ***French spoken***

Alors l'Honorable Président, c'est clair. Il existe trop de corruption dans le parti progressiste-conservateur du Manitoba—Corruption is corruption—La corruption, c'est la corruption.

L'ancienne première ministre PC Heather Stefanson, le vice-premier ministre Cliff Cullen et le député de Red River North (M. Wharton) ont enfreint la loi et violé notre constitution. Aidés par le leader parlementaire des Conservateurs, ils l'ont fait alors que le chef PC les encourageait depuis le cabinet des ministres.

Pour la première fois dans l'histoire du Manitoba, une ancienne premier ministre et ses ministres reçoivent des amendes en vertu de la loi : Heather Stefanson reçoit une amende de 18 000 \$, Cliff Cullen reçoit une amende de 12 000 \$, le député de Red River North reçoit une amende de 10 000 \$.

L'ancien gouvernement PC a violé le principe selon lequel, lorsque le Manitoba—lorsque les Manitobains votent, leurs votes comptent. Les Manitobains méritent des 'réponses'. Le parti PC doit dire la vérité et expliquer pourquoi il a violé la volonté des électeurs du Manitoba. Vont-ils enfin dire la vérité aujourd'hui, ou continuer leur corruption effrénée?

Depuis une semaine, le chef PC bloque le débat et joue des jeux politiques pour éviter de débattre le rapport d'éthique. Le chef PC ne travaille pas pour obtenir des réponses ni pour rendre des comptes aux Manitobains : il travaille pour protéger ses amis et leurs intérêts privés.

Nous savons que Cliff Cullen tenait le membre du conseil d'administration de Sio Silica, David Filmon, informé de ses efforts pour enfreindre la loi et violer la constitution.

C'est le même David Filmon qui a récemment fait un don de 3 000 \$ à la direction du député de Fort Whyte (M. Khan). Nous savons que, cet été, le député de Turtle Mountain (M. Piwniuk) a créé une entreprise

en fait, avec le lobbyiste de Sio Silica. Les Manitobains ont encore plus de questions que de réponses sur les raisons pour lesquelles les PC ont enfreint la loi et violé la constitution.

L'ancien vice-premier ministre Cliff Cullen apparaît 276 fois dans le rapport d'éthique. Il a enfreint la loi, violé notre constitution et a été condamné à une amende de 12 000 \$. Monsieur Cullen a travaillé pour faire approuver le permis du projet après que les PC ont perdu les élections en 2023, malgré le fait qu'il savait que c'était illégal et anticonstitutionnel.

Mais les Manitobains ont encore des questions : ils veulent savoir pourquoi Cliff Cullen était prêt à enfreindre la loi. C'est pourquoi nous demandons à l'ancien vice-premier ministre Cliff Cullen de témoigner devant l'Assemblée afin d'éclaircir la situation et de réparer les dommages qu'il a causés à notre démocratie.

Les Manitobains et les Manitobains méritent un gouvernement honnête, transparent et responsable. Ils méritent de savoir pourquoi leurs anciens dirigeants ont enfreint la loi et violé la constitution. Ils méritent de savoir pourquoi le chef actuel du PC refuse de demander des comptes à ses collègues. Ils méritent de savoir pourquoi des personnes reconnues coupables d'avoir violé la constitution siègent encore à l'Assemblée législative. Les Manitobains méritent mieux que la corruption, les manigances et le mépris de la loi. Ils méritent des dirigeants qui respectent la démocratie et la volonté du peuple.

Le rapport d'éthique est clair : Heather Stefanson, une amende de 18 000 \$; Cliff Cullen, une amende de 12 000 \$; le député de Red River North (M. Wharton), une amende de 10 000 \$. Ils ont tous violé la constitution et trahi la confiance des Manitobains. Le chef PC actuel qui faisait partie de ce gouvernement n'a rien fait – n'a rien fait – pour l'empêcher. Et aujourd'hui encore, il protège ceux qui ont commis ces actes. C'est une insulte à la démocratie manitobaine.

Le message des Manitobains est clair : assez. C'est bien assez. Il est temps pour le parti progressiste-conservateur du Manitoba d'admettre la vérité, de présenter des excuses et d'assumer ses responsabilités. La corruption a – n'a pas de place dans notre province.

Je veux revenir à la confiance que les Manitobains et Manitobains ont en nous en tant que députés. Nous avons tous prêté serment pour faire de notre mieux, pour dire la vérité, pour éviter la corruption. Mais à l'intérieur de cette Chambre, nous avons des députés

qui ont enfreint à la loi, qui ont manqué de considération pour les Manitobains et les Manitobaines, qui ont mis leurs intérêts privés à l'avant, et non celles des Manitobains et des Manitobaines. Et pour ce, les Manitobains et les Manitobaines vont se rappeler bien longtemps que dorénavant il est impossible de faire confiance aux Conservateurs du Manitoba.

Merci, l'Honorable Président.

### **Translation**

*Honourable Speaker, the situation is clear: there is too much corruption in Manitoba's Progressive Conservative Party. Corruption is corruption.*

*Former PC premier, Heather Stefanson, deputy premier, Cliff Cullen and the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) broke the law and violated our Constitution. With the help of the Conservative House Leader, they did so while the PC leader encouraged them from within the cabinet.*

*For the first time in Manitoba's history, a former premier and her ministers are being fined under the law: Heather Stefanson is being fined \$18,000, Cliff Cullen is being fined \$12,000 and the member for Red River North is being fined \$10,000.*

*The former PC government violated the principle that, when Manitobans vote, their votes count. Manitobans deserve answers. The PC Party must tell the truth and explain why it violated the will of Manitoba voters. Will they finally tell the truth today, or continue their rampant corruption?*

*For the past week, the PC leader has been blocking debate and playing political games to avoid debating the ethics report. The PC leader is not working to get answers or to be accountable to Manitobans: he is working to protect his friends and their private interests.*

*We know that Cliff Cullen kept Sio Silica board member David Filmon informed of his efforts to break the law and violate the constitution.*

*This is the same David Filmon who recently donated \$3,000 to the office of the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan).*

*We know that this summer, the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) did in fact set up a company with the Sio Silica lobbyist. Manitobans have more questions than answers as to why the PC Party broke the law and violated the constitution.*

*Former deputy premier, Cliff Cullen, is mentioned 276 times in the ethics report. He broke the law,*

*violated our constitution, and was fined \$12,000. Mr. Cullen worked to get the project permit approved after the PC Party lost the 2023 election, even though he knew it was illegal and unconstitutional.*

*But Manitobans still have questions: they want to know why Cliff Cullen was willing to break the law. That is why we are asking former deputy premier Cliff Cullen to testify before the Legislature to clarify the situation and repair the damage he has done to our democracy.*

*Manitobans deserve an honest, transparent and accountable government. They deserve to know why their former leaders broke the law and violated the constitution. They deserve to know why the current PC leader refuses to hold his colleagues accountable. They deserve to know why people convicted of violating the Constitution still sit in the Legislative Assembly. Manitobans deserve better than corruption, scheming and contempt for the law. They deserve leaders who respect democracy and the will of the people.*

*The ethics report is clear: Heather Stefanson, fined \$18,000; Cliff Cullen, fined \$12,000; the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), fined \$10,000. They all violated the constitution and betrayed the trust of Manitobans. The current PC leader, who was part of that government, did nothing—nothing—to prevent it. And even today, he continues to protect those who committed these acts. It is an insult to Manitoba democracy.*

*The message from Manitobans is clear: enough is enough. It is time for the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba to admit the truth, apologize, and take responsibility. Corruption has no place in our province.*

*I want to circle back to the trust that Manitobans have in us as Members of the Legislative Assembly. We have all sworn an oath to do our best, to tell the truth, and to avoid corruption. But within this Chamber, we have Members who have broken the law, who have shown a lack of consideration for Manitobans, who have put their own private interests ahead of those of Manitobans. And for that, Manitobans will remember for a long time to come that from now on, it is impossible to trust the Conservatives in Manitoba.*

*Thank you, Honourable Speaker.*

**Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training):** I usually start my comments by saying it's an honour and a privilege to rise in this Chamber. I will start my comments in the same way. It is always an honour and a privilege to rise in this Chamber.

\* (16:50)

For many of us, we are our ancestors' wildest dreams. We could never have imagined taking seats in this space where laws are decided, where our province comes to shape. And we honour that sacred responsibility with grace, humility and certainly with a deep respect for the law and for conventions that have come for years and years and years before we could ever have contemplated sitting in this space.

And in the world that we're in right now, there is a lot of excitement on social media. Every day, there's five seconds, 10 seconds, 15 seconds of what would be considered markedly unbelievable just one year ago. So it's easy to become desensitized to things that are actually incredibly important and moments that are pivotal in our historical consciousness. This is one of those moments.

Honourable Speaker, in politics we use a lot of words that don't mean things to people; we don't use plain language, we don't make this space accessible to allow people to understand exactly what happens here. And so in the plainest way possible, I hope that we're able to convey to the people of Manitoba that this is wrong, that the folks on the other side of the Chamber changed the rules halfway through the game and decided that they were writing their own rules, and that what we had all decided in how this space runs and the things that we do and ought to do here were suddenly not important because they couldn't swallow the loss.

And, Honourable Speaker, I feel sick at the thought that this behaviour would go unpunished, that people may believe that this is just the normal course of business and that in these roles—that of course we're all corrupt. This is not who we are; we are so much better than this.

And, Honourable Speaker, I'll tell you that every day that I'm entrusted with the will of the people, which is what—in my seat here, I was given the will of the people, from the constituents of Southdale—every day that I'm here, I take that seriously. And I work on their behalf, and I consider them, not my own pocket-book, not what deals that I can get done for me and my friends and my family. I'm not making backroom deals with people who don't deserve that honour and also who, frankly, are not in positions to be making those deals.

Honourable Speaker, there's a lot of things in this world that happen because they've always happened that way and certain people have always had a hand up or a leg up, and on this side of the House, we

believe strongly in equity and inclusion and fairness, the rule of law.

And it's—frankly, it's incredibly disappointing to look across the way and to see that there are members on the other side of the House that aren't as outraged as I am.

A number of us have young children. What is the example that we're setting here? What are we saying about the world that we live in now and the world that we want to live in if we don't stand up and say: this is wrong; we have rules here.

We see what's happening in other parts of the world right now where there's—governments unilaterally make decisions that upend legal systems, that run over democracy. We have kids being corralled up in trucks from their daycares, and if people think that that's a far reach from where this kind of behaviour leads, frankly it's not; it really isn't.

Ethics in politics now, in the world that we're living in, is as important as it ever was, and if you read the news over the last few weeks there is increased violence, a decrease in trust, greater scrutiny; and when we don't call out behaviour like this and we don't say unequivocally that this cannot happen in these institutions, we're giving fuel to the other side that says: why bother with all of this.

Honourable Speaker, I believe in this Legislature. I believe in the power of debate and coming together and deciding who we want to be as a society, but I can't let people who break the rules get away with it. I can't let somebody who changes the rules halfway through get away with it. And it's not—certainly it's not just about me and us and the folks who have the privilege of occupying these seats, but it really is about who are we as Manitobans? What do we stand for? Who are we as Canadians?

These long-standing institutions are long-standing for a reason, and Honourable Speaker, I would like to extend my gratitude for the Ethics Commissioner for taking such a thoughtful approach to this work and for considering the implications of not calling this out and how allowing this kind of behaviour to go unchecked, how damaging it is and could be to our democracy.

So I'm going to go back to my original point, which was we intentionally use language in this space to keep people out, to not let them know what's happening. We're moving motions, we're going to

second reading, third reading; it's a complicated rule book.

But what I want the people of Manitoba to know is that we all agreed to these rules, and we came in here to do this job knowing the expectations not only of one another in this Chamber, but of Manitobans. And folks on the other side of the House broke those rules and broke the trust of Manitobans, and they cannot be trusted again.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** If there are no other members wishing to debate, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** So the question before the House is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding Cliff Cullen, the former member for Spruce Woods, in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025, and order that the penalty recommended by the commissioner be imposed.

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

### Recorded Vote

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** Honourable Speaker, looking for a recorded vote, please.

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

\* (17:00)

Order, please.

The one hour provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm therefore directing that the bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

So the question before us is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding Cliff Cullen, the former member for Spruce Woods, in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025, and order that the penalty recommended by the commissioner be imposed.

\* (18:00)

**Division**

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

**Ayes**

*Asagwara, Balcaen, Bereza, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Byram, Cable, Chen, Compton, Cook, Corbett, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Ewasko, Fontaine, Goertzen, Guenter, Johnson, Kennedy, Khan, Kinew, King, Kostyshyn, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Loiselle, Maloway, Marcelino, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Narth, Naylor, Nesbitt, Oxenham, Pankratz, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Redhead, Robbins, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Schuler, Simard, Smith, Wasyliw, Wiebe, Wowchuk.*

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Ayes 52, Nays 0.

**The Speaker:** The motion is accordingly passed.

**Motion Presented**

**Mr. Wharton (Red River North)**

**The Speaker:** We will now move on to the next motion.

The next motion reads—the next motion before the House relates to the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton). On page 100 of the May 21, 2025, report, the Ethics Commissioner wrote: For the reasons given above, I submit the following findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. The member of Red River North breached the act and should be fined in the amount of \$10,000.

The motion before the House, then, is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding the honourable member for Red River North and the conclusion of the report date—of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025, and order that the penalty recommended by the commissioner be imposed.

The floor is now open for debate.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** We've made it very clear right from the start that we accept the Ethics Commissioner report, and we're ready to vote.

Thank you.

**Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** Here we are, two years in, and I would like to share with the House how I'm still in such great awe of what an honour it is to serve in this role. I'm every day in awe of the trust that Manitobans have given to us, those Manitobans, including the 49.9 per cent of Manitobans that voted for the NDP recently in Spruce Woods, they've also put their trust in us. It's really a great honour and a

great privilege to sit in these seats and shape the history of Manitoba.

And make no doubt, Honourable Speaker, we are making history here tonight. It's a sad and it's a dark history, but we are making history tonight.

We have seen a premier be fined \$18,000 for breaking the law. Not \$18, not \$1,800—\$18,000, honourable speaking—Honourable Speaker. This is unprecedented. Not just in Manitoba, but I would argue across legislatures across Canada and possibly around the world this is unprecedented, and Manitobans need to know the seriousness of what has happened here.

Honourable Speaker, \$18,000 for breaking the law. And, by the way, this is a very simple law: this law requires all of us to act only in the interests of Manitobans and never to act in our own interests in performing our roles. So that is not a hard law or rule to follow. It's actually really easy, and at least it's easy for New Democrats. So this is a dark day and it's been a heavy afternoon, and deservedly so.

That being said, I would like to take a brief moment to shine some positivity in this House and just talk briefly about how proud I am to be part of this team, how proud I am to be part of a government. Never have I ever, Honourable Speaker, had one of my team members come to me and question my judgment. Never have I ever had one of my colleagues or one of my Cabinet colleagues come to me and pressure me into making a decision that was against the law or against my own ethical compass. Never have I ever have our leader come to me and put undue pressure on me to break the law.

So I am very, very proud today. As dark as this day is, I am very proud. I am very proud of a team that never—we never ask each other how is this going to benefit me? How might this benefit my friend's company? How might this benefit my donors? We don't have that conversation on this side of the House, Honourable Speaker. We do not have those conversations on this side of the House. So as dark of a day as it is, it's also a very proud day to be a New Democrat.

It is a sacred trust, Honourable Speaker, which is why the findings in this report are so troubling. This report confirms what Manitobans knew to be true in October of 2023 when they voted the PCs out of office. They knew—Manitobans knew—that the PC Party of today has taken Manitobans for granted, they have undermined their trust and they are no longer fit to govern. And, Honourable Speaker, they would like to move on.

The members of the PC Party have absolutely nothing to say about the outrageous, historic, unprecedented findings in this report. They say they accept and they're ready to move on, but, Honourable Speaker, this is not true. Let's look at the words and actions of the member of Red River North, found in this report and in the media. The member from Red River North says, and I quote, it was never my intention to breach any convention or parliamentary tradition.

This is not accurate, Honourable Speaker, and the report finds that so. The report finds that all four respondents were present when a presentation was made to Cabinet in August 2023, about the caretaker convention. All four respondents confirmed in their interviews that they understood the requirements of the caretaker convention.

So Jeff Wharton is not accurate—I apologize.

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Once again, we're not allowed to use a member's name. Use their constituency.

**MLA Schmidt:** It's the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) that we're talking about today, and I will say his title over and over again: the member of Red River North. His intention was really to ram through the approval of a project that he was no longer morally or legally fit to approve.

So let's go back to the timeline, let's go back to the member for Red River North's words.

So in October of 2023, after losing the election, after being briefed on the caretaker convention, Mr. Wharton called first—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Once again, you're not allowed to use somebody's name.

**MLA Schmidt:** Thank you very much for your guidance.

The member for Red River North—the truth will be spoken, Honourable Speaker. The member for Red River North called first Mr. Klein and then Ms. Squires; he told them that they had the power to approve the project licence and asked them to do that. Both refused.

Later, about a month or two later, Kevin Klein comes forward to admit that the PCs tried to ram through the silica mining project, and accused Jeff—pardon me, Honourable Speaker—and accused the

member of Red River North of trying to pressure him into approving the project.

In response, the member for Red River North said, this claim is false, truly false; I am sure due process is followed.

\* (18:10)

The very next day, Rochelle Squires came forward to say she also received a call from Wharton and she called that call—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I realize the member's reading from the report, but we have to be careful and make sure we don't use somebody's name.

**MLA Schmidt:** Thank you very much for your guidance, Honourable Speaker. And I will note for the record that the members opposite continue to shout me down and heckling for making a really honest mistake, yet not one of them has stood up in this House and taken accountability or assign any responsibility for their corruption.

So I may misspeak, Honourable Speaker, but on this side of the House we are not corrupt; we have not found to be corrupt, and I urge the members opposite, rather than minding my Ps and Qs in every word that I speak, that they look internally and ask each other some very, very tough questions.

So, Kevin Klein has commented. Kevin Klein, a former member of the PC caucus that used to sit in this caucus, what Mr. Klein has said is this kind of conduct is exactly why people lose faith in their elected officials. The member for Red River North should take responsibility and resign. And I have to say this is maybe the first time ever I had ever agreed with Kevin Klein.

Shame on them, Honourable Speaker. They are—been acting in their and their rich friends' interests. They're 'aksing' outside of our constitution, and what they've been doing is really eroding our democracy.

And there is a real impact to this sort of corruption. It's not just theoretical. This has eroded the public trust; it has real consequences; it weakens our democracy; it discourages civic participation.

I want to speak about on the doorstep in 2023 and over this summer, and every time I talk with Manitobans, you know what I hear them say? And I know that every member opposite hears this, too: I can't vote for



any of you. I don't trust politicians anymore. You're all liars. You're all corrupt.

Well, Honourable Speaker, the Ethics Commissioner report found that this is true. This is what Manitobans are talking about on the other side of the bench, and that's why they voted them out of office in October of 2023. And that's because this is the type of politics, the PT—the PC type of politics is the type of politics that undermines the values that have always made Manitoba strong, that we agree about much more than we disagree about, and even when we disagree we can trust each other to be honest and play by the rules.

Honourable Speaker, if you cannot play by the rules, if you cannot even admit that you've broken the rules when it's been proven that you have broken the rules, and if you cannot accept that sometimes you might lose an election, maybe you don't have the moral authority to sit in this Chamber any longer.

Let us be clear, Honourable Speaker: what the Ethics Commissioner report outlines is not an isolated misjudgment nor a simple lapse in oversight. It reveals a culture within the PC Party that puts personal interests and political advantage before the good of Manitobans. This situation is so unprecedented, such a corruption scandal, the likes of which we've sometimes suspected of the PCs but have never been able to prove.

So, what else, Honourable Speaker? This time they had their hand caught in the cookie jar because of Kevin Klein and Rochelle Squires being willing to tell the truth—of course, only after they lost their seats. We wonder what they would do if they held on to power. But only because of their truth is why we know what's going on here.

So, what else? What else are they doing behind closed doors when they think Manitobans aren't looking? We know some of the things they've done. We know about the intimacy coach, we know about spending thousands of dollars on a fraudulent invoice. The member from Lac du Bonnet ordered an investigation; where is that investigation? We don't know.

We know about Boom Done Next, Honourable Speaker. We know that the auditor 'genator' is still investigating reports that Marni Larkin—her company received \$2.8 million meant for child care. Marni Larkin said she wasn't involved in those meetings. It's been proven now that that is not true.

This is a pattern. It's not just in the past. It festers in the Chamber today. Members of the Cabinet that

tried to illegally push through the controversial Sio Silica project remain in this Chamber and in the PC caucus today.

What did the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) know? He was a Cabinet minister when the PCs showed poor character and cruelty when they came up with the stand firm and the parental rights campaigns. We know that the PCs love to divide and attack. Just yesterday the member from Turtle Mountain attacked my intelligence. I attack his ethics, I question his ethics.

The member opposite, if he was so privileged to go and get a law degree, he could be a lawyer. One thing he'll never be is a postal worker. Never. Never—

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

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

**MLA Billie Cross (Seine River):** Honourable Speaker, I rise today not only as a member of this Assembly but as someone who has spoken to Manitobans at their doors, listened to their hopes and promised them a government that will always put the public good above political self-interest. It is in that spirit and with that responsibility that I speak to the deeply troubling findings of the Ethics Commissioner regarding the conduct of the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton).

This is not about partisan theatre. It is about the standards Manitobans expect from the people they elect. It is about the sanctity of our democratic process, the rule of law and the constitutional principles that give this Assembly legitimacy.

The ethics report is—sorry—the ethics report—it is so troubling to even talk about this; I am in shock. It is unambiguous. The member for red 'rither'—Red River North is named 221 times—221. It finds that the member for Red River North broke Manitoba's laws, violated the Canadian Constitution and was fined for those actions. It documents how in the caretaker period after the 2023 election, a time when the people of Manitoba joined the former—I'm trying to stay calm, Honourable Speaker. I just need a second because I just can't believe that we are standing in this Chamber today debating ethics when we all take an oath to be ethical. It is so disappointing to know that the people that ran our government for seven and a half years failed in that category.

Manitobans chose change in 2023. The member for Red River North joined the former premier, the deputy premier and the member from Interlake-Gimli

in trying to push through the Sio Silica project. Colleagues, the caretaker convention is not some obscure technicality; it is a binding constitutional principle that exists to protect the will of the people. It ensures that a government, which has been defeated, cannot tie the hands of the next one or abuse power it no longer holds. And yet, despite a Cabinet presentation on that very convention, despite confirming and understanding of its importance, the member for Red River North ignored it.

The member pressed colleagues to act. The member reached out to ministers to approve the project. The member tried to force a decision that should've been left to the newly entrusted Manitoba government. When challenged, the member for Red River North denied any wrongdoing, saying, and I quote, This claim is false, truly false. I ensure due process is followed.

But the Ethics Commissioner report tells us otherwise. The efforts to have the project licence approved by Ms. Stefanson, Mr. Cullen and the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) were taken despite their knowledge that voters had rejected the former government and had placed their trust in a new government.

This was not a misunderstanding. It was not a mistake. It was a deliberate decision to disregard the will of Manitobans. And when these actions were exposed, the member for Red River North doubled down instead of coming clean.

The member later claimed they felt within their right at the time, and, that my understanding was that I was not off base. But the Ethics Commissioner was crystal clear. Even if there was an error in judgment, there was no credible evidence that it was made in good faith. The member knew the law. The member understood their duty and they have chose to ignore both.

This was much more than a breach of protocol. It was a betrayal of public trust. The member for Red River North even asked a colleague, then-minister Rochelle Squires, to help break the law. She later described that request as unconscionable, and she was right, because in that moment the moral authority of the former government vanished, if it was ever there.

\* (18:20)

And where was the current PC leader in all of this? Well, he was sitting at the Cabinet table, watching, saying nothing, and that silence speaks volumes. It

tells Manitobans that this corruption was not an accident; it was tolerated, it was enabled and it was excused, and it continues today.

The member for Red River North's actions reveal a pattern: a pattern of denial, deflection and disrespect for democracy itself. Two years later, that pattern persists. It's the same story, the same culture of corruption that Manitobans rejected in 2023. They have not changed, they have not learned and they have not earned back a single ounce of trust that they betrayed.

So what should happen now? Manitobans deserve answers, and they deserve real accountability, not empty 'sorrys' or oops, I didn't mean to. That doesn't fly. That doesn't fix what they did.

The member for Red River North should stand in this Chamber today and explain why he broke the law, why he violated the constitution, why he chose private interest over public good, why his Cabinet, why his previous premier had total disregard for Manitobans. And why did he betray his constituents in Red River North? And why does he think he still deserves to sit in that seat and represent those Manitobans? Shame on him.

Colleagues, we must also take action to ensure this never happens again. That means stronger protections around caretaker periods, full transparency, mandatory disclosure of contracts and real consequences for those who defy the will of voters.

This is more than about one minister; it's about the principle that power flows from the people. And when the people withdraw that power, it ends. It's about ensuring that every Manitoban, regardless of party, can trust that elections matter, your votes matter, and that democracy will never be undermined behind closed doors.

To the member of Red River North, I say this: the time for denial is over. To the PC caucus: Manitobans know you're corrupt, the time for excuses is done. Stand in this House, take real responsibility and actually start working to repair the damage you have done to our democracy. Because in this Chamber and in this province, the will of the people must always outweigh the will of the powerful.

That is the foundation of our democracy. We must defend it without compromise. We cannot start behaving like the United States. We cannot be authoritarians. We need to respect the will of our voters.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips):** It is, as always, a privilege to rise. Not exactly a pleasure today given the subject of the discussion this afternoon, but there is indeed too much corruption in the PC Party.

I was listening to the Minister of Health speak about their background and their family's history, and I started thinking a little bit about the days after getting elected in 2023, and meeting people out in the public and how surprised some people would be to find out that I was an MLA.

And these are folks from—who hail from India, they're newcomers to Canada, and so they would say: this would never happen in India, this would never happen in Punjab. Their politicians there have 30 gunmen to the left, 30 gunmen to the right, and, you know, the notion that you'd be—you'd find an elected official that is accessible was something that they would never be familiar with. And here we are, going about our life.

And they talked about, you know, how much corruption is rampant in different parts of the world, particularly where some of these folks hailed from. And I thought, how lucky are we to live in a country like Canada. And we had that conversation. Like, Canada is the—as far as I'm concerned, the best country in the world, right? This country has given so many people new lives, made—changed the trajectory of so many people's lives for them, their family, their descendants, myself included. My parents immigrated here too.

But I think something that we often talk about and I often say to folks is, you know, we can't take things for granted. We see what's happening south of the border, and sometimes we're a little bit aghast, like is this really happening? These are our neighbours to the south, this is, you know, I refer to the United States as being the beacon of democracy in the world. But shocking to see what happens there. But it's a reminder that we got to fight for that every single day.

And I, personally, consider myself a student of politics and history, and I remember the days of the Duffy scandal, if anybody remembers that. When Stephen Harper was prime minister and Mike Duffy was a senator, and, you know, just to condense the entire story, basically there was a lot of untoward, unethical behaviour at that time. And we got to see that on TV day in and day out, and it was a reminder of when you feel like democracy is a granted and people in positions of power can take advantage of

their authority, that things can go sideways really fast. And I thought that was the worst that we've seen in our country.

There have been other scandals, but to see it happen in our own home province? This is the first time in history that a—that we're seeing these fines for a premier, a former deputy premier, Cabinet ministers, having zero regard.

And I'm thinking about the Manitobans watching. Do you have \$18,000 to pay off a fine today? Do you have \$12,000 to pay off a fine today? Do you have \$10,000 sitting around? No, of course not. The average Manitoban doesn't have that kind of money sitting around. You know who does? Heather Stefanson, Cliff Cullen, the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton).

Doesn't matter to them. What are the rules? You get caught, you pay a fine. There's a culture of corruption in the PC Party, and if you listen to the words of the Ethics Commissioner, who is a very fair-minded individual, quote: Ms. Stefanson dismisses the caretaker convention as merely a useful statement of general principles. I emphatically disagree and find it disappointing that she would give it such little weight. As I have already discussed and as the Supreme Court of Canada has made clear, the caretaker convention is a binding, constitutional principle that is fundamental to the respect for the will of the voters that is the base of our democracy.

He's saying that about a former premier, not somebody out on the street. You can go to any high school in this province, go to a world issues class, go to a law class, go to a Canadian history class, you will find students in there who understand what the caretaker convention is. It's a very basic concept; we're not talking about rocket science here. But this notion clearly, clearly evaded the former premier. Why? Because she clearly just did not care. No regard for fundamental, fundamental rules of our democracy that keep this whole boat above water. Because at the end of the day, \$18,000, who cares? I'll pull that out of my back pocket. I'll be fine. I'll be on the board of WestJet in a week. Not every other Manitoban has that privilege.

The commissioner also had some very damning things to say about the member for Red River North. Quote: Ms. Squires also told me that the member for Red River North said the project was of particular importance to Ms. Stefanson, but that it would not look right for her to issue a directive herself. This is

after Heather Stefanson said, I've got no conflict. In her mind, she's got no conflict.

She said, I was premier, I did my job. What job was she doing and who was she doing it for? Wasn't for Manitobans. It's for those rich buddies, those donors, right? Greasing the wheel a little bit on the way out, because who cares? You lost an election, you really didn't win your leadership, to be honest. But this is the culture that's permeated in the PC Party. And I think of my colleagues sitting across the way, and I wonder, how do they feel? They were in that party at that time, they were in government.

\* (18:30)

The member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt), nice guy. How does he feel knowing that some of his colleagues were greasing each others' hands, and he was trying to do the work of government? Like, I would encourage him to get up today and say: This is an abomination. I wholeheartedly condemn these folks that I sit next to. Kevin Klein did it; Rochelle Squires did it.

The Leader of the Opposition got up in question period today and full-throatedly said, I'll debate this now; bring it on. Lacks the fortitude to stand up right now. No guts to get up now and speak about it. I think that speaks a thousand words.

The Ethics Commissioner—I found her speaking of the former premier, Heather Stefanson: I found her repeated dismissal of the caretaker convention in her written representations to me—a convention that is central to the respect of the wish of voters—to be disheartening.

Apologies. There's a lot of pages in this report, a lot of damning content. And for any Manitoban, you're welcome to read this, because it is quite shocking to read.

But I think, Honourable Speaker, a lot has been spoken today about the foundation of our democracy, the trust that people have. And my colleague, the Minister of Education, spoke about the general impression people have about politicians. And it sucks. It really does. Because you try your best to show folks that, no, we're just like you. We're your neighbours. We're trying to make our community a little bit better, right? That we're not—you know, we're not shaking each other's hands behind the—in backroom deals and doing that sort of stuff. We're just trying to make our province a little better of a place.

And then someone comes along like Heather Stefanson and screws it up for everybody else. They're all guilty—guilty. This has never happened in Manitoba. This has never happened in our province. This is such an embarrassment for Manitobans.

And again, I would ask the Opposition Leader: show us some fortitude. Get up today. Say, yes, the person who hand-picked me, Heather Stefanson, I fully condemn her. Say it today. Say it about your other colleagues. Kick the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) out of caucus. Let's see some real action. Until then, we know they're guilty, guilty, guilty.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** If there is no further members wishing to debate, is—excuse me, is the House ready for the question?

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**The Speaker:** So the question before the House is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding the honourable member for Red River North in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025, and order that the penalty recommended by the commissioner be imposed.

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

### Recorded Vote

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):**  
A recorded vote, Honourable Speaker.

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

\* (19:30)

Order, please.

The one-hour time limit for the ringing of the division bells has expired. Therefore, I'm asking that the bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

So the question before the House is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding honourable—the honourable member for Red River North in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025, and order that the penalty recommended by the commissioner be imposed.

**Division**

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

**Ayes**

*Asagwara, Balcaen, Bereza, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Byram, Cable, Chen, Compton, Cook, Corbett, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Ewasko, Fontaine, Goertzen, Guenter, Johnson, Kennedy, Khan, Kinew, King, Kostyshyn, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Loiselle, Maloway, Marcelino, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Narth, Naylor, Nesbitt, Oxenham, Pankratz, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Redhead, Robbins, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Schuler, Simard, Smith, Wharton, Wiebe, Wowchuk.*

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Ayes 52, Nays 0.

**The Speaker:** I declare the motion accordingly passed.

**Motion Presented****Mr. Johnson (Interlake-Gimli)**

**The Speaker:** The last motion now before us, the House, relates to the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson).

On page 100 of the May 21, 2025, report, the Ethics Commissioner wrote: For the reasons given above, I submit the following findings and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. The member for Interlake-Gimli did not breach the act.

The motion before the House is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025.

The floor is now open for debate.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Honourable Speaker, our Progressive Conservative caucus accepts the findings of the Ethics Commissioner.

Honourable Speaker, we are prepared to vote on this matter.

**Hon. Glen Simard (Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations):** Honourable Speaker, I rise today to speak on a matter of importance to all Manitobans, a question of morality, ethical behaviour and a call to action.

As you all know, I was a teacher for close to 30 years. When you become a teacher you are bound to a professional code of conduct, not unlike us here in the Chamber. This code directs you to put your actions and directs your behaviours. Honesty, integrity and first duty to your students is paramount.

\* (19:40)

The scene has been set here in Manitoba, but as we set to vote on this motion, I invite you to listen to what a letter from a young Manitoban might sound like as they think about the actions of what took place. To the opposition: think about your party's ho-hum response, a collective shrug of the shoulders and whatever retort to the whole situation. Think about whether or not serious debate and accountability requires more than the same guilty look I saw when I caught a student cheating on a test or an assignment.

This is what I imagine a letter to your caucus would sound like if it were written by a young person: Dear PC caucus: I'm a young Manitoban who grew up believing that adults in charge of our province were supposed to set an example. I was taught that leadership meant integrity, honesty and courage; that when people do the wrong thing, or in this case suggest to do it, that those in powers make it right or stop it from happening. But watching how your caucus has handled the Sio Silica situation and the collective silence on the issue, I feel that that lesson has been broken in front of me.

I'm writing this not because I've been personally assaulted or robbed, but because of what happened has taken something from me too. It's taken a part of my trust in the transfer of power from one government to the next. It's teaching me that election results don't matter, that despite what the people decided, there was some backroom dealings, whispering and bullying that went on so that certain people who stood to gain personally could profit from a decision. It's taken my sense that ethics still matter in politics. It's taken the idea that you care less about the truth and more about protecting your own. I can't believe I'm the only one who feels this way.

I grew up in Manitoba surrounded by lakes and forests that are a part of who we are. When I heard that about the Sio Silica wanted to drill into our aquifer with unproven technology, the same underground water that we drink from, I had questions, not just for the environment but for our future.

We're told every day that we need to care about climate change, that water is sacred, that once it's contaminated, it's gone. But while we were trying to learn, your failed leadership and outgoing government tried to quietly approve things behind closed doors, bending rules, hiding relationships and crossing ethical lines.

Alone, this is bad, but what makes it even worse is that you had no right to do it. When I learned that members of your caucus were tied up in ethics breaches—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

Even though the member is reading from a hypothetical letter, he still needs to make sure that comments are addressed through the Chair and not directly across to members.

**Mr. Simard:** Mr. Speaker, when you share this with the caucus, I waited for anyone, someone from that party to say something, to admit it was wrong, to take responsibility. But 'instay'—instead, on the day that they had a chance to say something, there was silence, a wall of it. You all just moved on like nothing happened.

Their silence said everything. It told us that accountability is optional, that integrity can be ignored, that when their own people mess up, they look away. And that's what makes this an impact statement, because their silence doesn't just hurt democracy in theory; it hurt real people. It hurt the communities who depend on that aquifer for water. It would've hurt Indigenous nations who weren't respected in the process. It hurts scientists who worked hard to give honest warnings. And under their government, they were ignored.

And it hurt young people like me who are watching them and learning from their choices. What do you think young people are learning right now? They're learning that ethics don't matter until you get caught. That if you're powerful enough, you can just stay quiet until people forget. Young people won't forget; we can't. Because we would've been the ones living with the consequence of that silence, in the water we drink, the trust we lose and the future we inherit.

They call themselves Progressive Conservatives, but what's progressive about turning away from responsibility? What was conservative about risking the province's most precious natural resource? They talk about sacred institution of their job, but it also means care, not exploitation. They talk about family values, but families can't thrive without clean water. They talk about accountability, but where is it when your own caucus is being investigated?

I may be young, but I understand the difference between a mistake and a betrayal. A mistake is when you do something wrong and own up to it. A betrayal is when you know it's wrong, you do it anyway and then barely acknowledge that it happened. That's what this felt like: a betrayal of public trust, of environmental duty and the basic decency I thought politicians were supposed to have.

Do you know what it feels like to grow up believing your government is supposed to protect you?

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Once again, I have to remind the honourable minister that his hypothetical student needs to address his comments through the Chair.

**Mr. Simard:** This young person shouldn't have to write this letter; it should have been written by someone inside the PC Party, someone who still remembers what integrity means. But since no one else has it, I will.

You owe Manitobans—or this party owes Manitobans answers. They owe transparency about how their caucus members got entangled in this mess. They owe an explanation for what they—when they said nothing when ethics breaches were uncovered. And most of all, you owe the people of Manitoba an apology, not a political one full of vague phrases, but a real apology that admits harm and takes responsibility for it.

This party has told us over and over that they're the party of fiscal responsibility and strong leadership. But leadership isn't just about talking points and sound bites. It's about moral courage. It's about being the kind of people who can look a teenager in the eye and say, we did wrong and we'll do better. If they can't even do that, then what does your leadership mean?

This isn't just about Sio Silica, it's about the kind of province they wanted to leave behind. Did they want Manitoba to be known as a place where politicians protect their friends instead of their people? What short-term gain matters more than long-term sustainability? Where ethics are optional? Or did they want to prove that integrity still counts, that leadership isn't just about power, it's about conscience?

They actually had a chance to talk about this. They could have acknowledged what happened. They could have shown youth that accountability doesn't end when the cameras turn off. They can make it clear that ethics apply to everyone, even to people in your own caucus. But the first step is to say something, to break the silence, to stop pretending this isn't real.

Please look beyond politics and remember that the people you serve deserve honesty. Young people may not be old enough to vote yet, but they're old enough to see when the people in power are failing us, and I promise you all this: the young generation is paying attention, they see you, they remember who speaks up and who stays silent. And when it's their turn to choose who leads, they'll make the right choice.

Maybe that's what scares you, that young people like them won't just accept corruption as normal, that

they just won't shrug when ethics are broken, that they'll demand better. Because they've seen what silence does and they refuse to inherit that silence.

The opposition can keep pretending that this is politics as usual, or you can be the adults you told us you were, the ones who stand up for what's right even when it's hard. I hope they choose the second option and say that—more than whatever is written and put in front of you. They can call it out, they can talk responsibility, talk about how you would never allow this to happen in the future or simply speak from the heart, because the longer that they stay silent and quiet, the louder the rest of us will become.

This isn't a threat, it's a promise from the next generations of Manitobans who still believe that ethics should mean something, that water should mean something and that integrity should mean everything.

**The Speaker:** Just before I recognize the next speaker, I would remind all speakers to make sure they address their comments through the Chair and that the proper pronouns do matter. It's Honourable Speaker, not Mr. Speaker.

The—no more speakers?

\* (19:50)

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Let's start off with why we're here. We're here to accept the commissioner's report. We've said that from day one that we will accept this report.

Why are we here today, then? Because the NDP have been playing games for months and months and delaying this debate. We were ready to vote on it in May. We're ready on the first day back. We're ready on Thursday, like they said they wanted to vote on it, and they've delayed until the very last possible moment.

The PCs have all stood up and have accepted the report. We said that from day one, and here we are here, under this NDP and this Premier (Mr. Kinew) now, voting on it.

But the real answer, why is it today, is because this complete failure by this Families Minister, their Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine). And here they want—

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** Manitobans have seen this Families Minister fail time after time. It wasn't from blocking foster families. It wasn't from blocking—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —national news networks. If it wasn't from—

**The Speaker:** Would ask the member to keep his comments relevant to what we're speaking about, and I would caution the front bench to please contain themselves.

**Mr. Khan:** Honourable Speaker, I would say that the comments I just made about the minister were exactly why we heard tonight. It is relevant to the debate and the timing tonight, the failures by the minister of failure. I would love to seek some clarity from you as to why that was the question, but I will accept your ruling and move forward with this.

So as we are here talking about why we're here today, it's clear that the date of this is because the Minister of Families did not bring this forward; the Government House Leader did not bring this motion forward earlier.

Now, they'll say, well, you could've brought it forward. Well, I'll read for the House today, Honourable Speaker, May 26 Hansard. Honourable—and this is—I said this, and when I said I brought it forward—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** And I quote: Honourable Speaker, this Deputy Premier wants accountability. Well, we'll give it to them today. Why don't they bring the reports to the House today so we can vote on it today? If they want accountability, we are ready to do it. If they want accountability we are ready to do it, yet they are playing political games. You can see that for yourself right here. We are ready to vote on it today.

When was that, Honourable Speaker? May 26.

I'll read another quote for you, Honourable Speaker, why we're here today and the relevance of that. The relevance of speaking to the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) and the rulings by the Ethics Commissioner. Quote: Now, when it comes to accountability, we on this side of the House are ready to vote on that report today. They want accountability, Manitobans want accountability, we want accountability. Let's vote on that today. Why aren't they doing that? Because they're playing political games with Manitobans.

Honourable Speaker, it's clear. Said it over and over again: we're ready to vote on it. They're the ones playing games. They're the ones that can't walk and chew gum at the same time. They're the ones that are failing Manitobans when it comes to health care, when

it comes to crime, when it comes to our economy being ranked dead last in Canada. That—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The honourable minister of climate—Environment and Climate Change will come to order, and the entire bench will calm themselves.

**Mr. Khan:** The members opposite want to stand up and talk about accountability. I'm quoting numerous times about when it comes to accountability. I'll quote again: As I committed to the conversations with the commissioner, I apologized to the people of Manitoba for my conduct. As I previously stated, Honourable Speaker, I apologize for any of my conduct which was found to fall short of my parliamentary obligations or personal standard of ethics, without restitution, end quote. That is why I am ready to move forward today, and I encourage the Premier to call the vote on the commissioner's 'recommendeshin' today.

Who said that, Honourable Speaker? The member from Red River North. Who said that, Honourable Speaker? This side of the House has said that over and over again. And when was that? May 22, 2025—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** Months and months ago, we said to bring it forward. They refused to call it to the House. It is complete and utter failure and accountability by this failing Premier (Mr. Kinew), failing Minister of Health and that entire bench on that side. You heard them stand up one after one and talk nothing but nonsense and gibberish. When it came to really holding this debate, we wanted to bring it forward; they refused to do it.

Not only did they not bring it forward when we asked them to, time and time again, the members opposite shouldn't throw stones in glass houses. The NDP Minister of Natural Resources, when we want to talk about ethics, when you want to talk about integrity, is the first minister in this province, in the history of this province, to be ever found guilty of an ethics violation. That minister right there, of Natural Resources. And I'll table that report. Maybe the Premier hasn't read it.

I'll read a couple lines from it, Honourable Speaker. Quote: In my view—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** —therefore a minister did have a contract with the government of Manitoba under which he

received a benefit. He has contravened the provision of the act.

It further goes on to say, and I quote: He did contravene the act by having a contract with the government of Manitoba on and after April 1, 2024. He has also contravened the act by failing to include the contract in his disclosure statement of assets, liabilities and sources of income.

Another egregious violation by who? None other than this NDP. Maybe that's a prerequisite to sit on that side of the bench. Maybe you have to break the law. Maybe you have to have a criminal record. Maybe you have to have a conviction. Sounds like that's par for course.

Let's continue down the rabbit hole. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order. Government bench needs to come to order.

**Mr. Khan:** Let's continue down that rabbit hole of corruption under this NDP, under this failed NDP Premier.

The Minister of Public Service Delivery (MLA Sandhu), the member for Maples. Let's take a look at that. There's a lot of skeletons this member's closet. We have requested FIPPA's. Well over 100 days this minister has not released those FIPPA's to Manitobans. What were those FIPPA's going to show or what is he trying to hide, Honourable Speaker? Let's do a deep dive. On that minister's disclosure statement, and I'll table that for the House today, he says he owns two taxis. Would—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Khan) seems to have vectored off and is talking about the wrong ethics motion, so if he could direct his comments to the motion we're debating, that would be greatly appreciated.

**Mr. Khan:** This comment is directly a violation of ethics, which I'll tie into this report right after I get through this member's example.

In the member's disclosure he clearly says he owns two taxis with Duffy's, and I'll table that disclosure here. Section C2, as a minister what contract was issued by this government to Duffy's Taxi and a disclosure of contracts, public service delivery. On January 30, 2025, to Duffy's taxi, was \$1.781 million was awarded to Duffy's Taxi, a department directly controlled under this minister.



You want to talk about ethics violations; there is an ethics violation right there. I'll table that again for the House here today.

Honourable Speaker, members opposite should not throw stones in glass houses. The hypocrisy, the self-serving hypocrisy on that side, the cowardly behaviour, the moral corruption by their own leader. I think you get my point. I can go on and on and on. The proof is in the pudding when it comes to these members opposite.

On this side of the House we accept the report. On this side of the House we called for it numerous times to come forward, Honourable Speaker. The NDP are the ones that are delaying it. *[interjection]* The proof is in the pudding. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** Honourable Speaker, they are the ones that have delayed this. They are the ones where health care is worse, crime's out of control, our economy is failing. Arrogance: the quality of having an exaggerated sense of own self and abilities and importance. Synonyms for arrogance: presumption, hubris, pretension and vanity. These words describe an inflated self of self-importance often shown through behaviour that is—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

I've asked the honourable Leader of the Opposition to make his comments relevant to the motion we're 'discussing'—discussing. I've asked him a couple of times. I shouldn't have to ask again. In fact, I won't.

\* (20:00)

**Mr. Khan:** I'll end on this, and maybe it's fitting that we end on the Premier's quotes—sums it up himself, and I quote: My arrogance is a virtue; it keeps me controversial, end quote.

Only this NDP Premier would think his arrogance is a virtue when, in reality, his arrogance is not a virtue; his arrogance is his downfall.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** PCs made history today. For the first time ever, a former premier was fined for breaking a conflict of interest law; former deputy premier was fined for breaking the conflict of interest law; former minister of the Crown and current member of—the person who had trouble stringing a few words together just a minute ago—chooses to keep in caucus was also fined. And the only thing preventing their current House leader from being fined is the fact

that he was too incompetent to be able to properly pull off the heist.

It's well documented in the ethics report, on this ethics matter that we're currently debating here, that the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) was well engaged; the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) was implicated; the member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler) was implicated, and now they heckle because they have no defence.

Meanwhile, open up that report, launch the PDF, type in their names; Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing, Bing. And I'm not talking about a search engine that nobody uses; I'm talking about the two of them, Muppets in the gallery that they are—

**An Honourable Member:** Why don't you say it outside?

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** I did a scum on this outside, Honourable Speaker—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** I will happily engage, because this is all facts. This is documented. This is not aspersions; this is not opposition research; this isn't even partisanship—the member opposite there was a party to this former premier's scheme to try and cover up her tracks. The former premier texts the two current members of the PC Party who heckle me now and says, I don't know if we can trust the member for Interlake-Gimli. Can you imagine that? The former premier, who just made history being charged, said she didn't know if she could trust the member from Interlake-Gimli.

So, again, the Ethics Commissioner has done a great service to our democracy by documenting the tremendous moral and ethical failures of the PC Party of Manitoba, all of whom are still sitting, collecting the big cheques that Manitobans pay—for doing what? For doing what? Oh, we accept the Ethics Commissioner's report; please make it stop.

Get out of here. That's terrible. Have some heart. Have some heart; stick by your crookedness, why don't they? You know? There was the opportunity for them to say: we stand by the landfill search ads that we ran. Anybody talking about that now on the opposite benches? They said stand firm; she said stand firm. Do any of them have a thing to say about the landfill search now? It was an absolute travesty.

**An Honourable Member:** Relevance.

**Mr. Kinew:** It's very relevant when you talk about the moral failings of the PC Party, including the member

for Interlake-Gimli who has never commented on the landfill search, when you talk about the moral failings that was the attacks on transgender children in our province—[interjection]—Yes, exactly.

**An Honourable Member:** That's not relevant.

**Mr. Kinew:** It's very relevant because there is a consistent pattern of trying to divide Manitobans so that they can advance the sort of ethically bankrupt tactics documented in this report that were implicating the member for Interlake-Gimli.

And so, again, if the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) wants to come in here and yell around after all the media have gone home, so be it. Better you yell at me than at some trans child who is going to school in a very threatening situation. We see that in Interlake-Gimli, the constituency. We see that in the Steinbach constituency. We see that right here in the Union Station constituency.

And so this is why we need to show an example to kids out there from all backgrounds and all parts of the province that the PC Party, corrupt as it is, tolerating members like Interlake-Gimli, who are were a party to this thing, deserve to be chastised.

The fines that we voted on earlier this evening against Heather Stefanson—justified. Probably should have been a lot higher, but justified. The fines against the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton)—justified. The fines against their former deputy premier—also justified.

The member opposite from Interlake-Gimli was a party to all of these terrible attempts to subvert the democratic will of you, the people of Manitoba.

How is it, then, that he is the field general for their House strategy? They go into the caucus room and they caucus together. We got a strategy. It's called operation survive the day. We'll vote on the four ethics reports after the media goes home, and as long as everyone just sticks to that script, if we accept the report, guess what? We won't have to accept responsibility and we'll be able to let Interlake-Gimli continue collecting his six-figure cheque with this additional stipend for being the House Leader of the Opposition.

Yes; we'll just get through the day and then we can get back to making it up in question period tomorrow, and everybody'll forget.

No. This is different. This is not your typical run of the mill I got \$500,000 from the government in order to run for them type of controversy. This is not

your typical run of the mill I came in second place but the big city insiders still made me the leader anyways.

This is a subversion of the democratic will of the people. Everything here, all the gold, all the people from different cultures except North America here painted on a chamber, it's real nice, but what does it represent? You. You having a vote; you having a voice. It's real easy for rich people who never had to sacrifice anything to put the will of the people at ease. But you know what? My dad was not allowed to vote in this country when he was a young man—

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** Think about that. My dad was not allowed to vote in this country when he was a young man. That's why I don't play games with this. We had to sacrifice to be able to show up in the voting booth, and that is what the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) takes for granted.

We had to lobby—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I've asked members to refrain from hollering back and forth across and the members on both sides are doing it, so I would once again ask you to stop it.

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, there was a great, great thinker, maybe some that we'll see up in one of these paintings some day, I believe his name was Peter Parker, and his old uncle Ben used to tell him, with great power comes great responsibility. That's what you would expect from somebody who was elected to the role of premier. It is certainly something that I hold dear. I will never take this office for granted because I grew up with people who did not enjoy the right to vote.

We're not talking about something a long time ago. I'm talking about when I was a little boy in this country. I love that flag to your right, Honourable Speaker, but that is where we have been together in this country. And for these members opposite to come in here and heckle on this day when they should be showing humility tells you everything you need to know about the current leadership of the PC Party of Manitoba.

The fact that they tolerate the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) still standing in their midst in caucus tells you everything you need to know about the current leadership of the PC Party of Manitoba, and the fact that the member for Interlake-Gimli has been found to have no credibility, verbatim quote right there from the Ethics Commissioner, was found by

Heather Stefanson herself, the one we fined earlier this evening, to not be trustworthy. The fact that they elevate him to a House leadership position in their caucus tells you everything you need to know about this version of the PC Party of Manitoba.

\* (20:10)

On this part—on this side of the House—yes, we understand with great power comes great responsibility, but here's the way that we take it even further: we know that we don't have the power. You have the power. And when it comes to serving you, whose awesome power is exercised through the use of the franchise, we hold a great responsibility on ourselves to the highest ethical standard to be your servant each and every day.

The contrast with the members opposite, with great power, we saw no responsibility. Even after that had been taken away from them, even after they lost the election, they sought to still exercise power that was no longer legitimate. This is not a joke. This is something people have died for. This is something that each and every one of us is duty-bound to uphold.

And so the member for Interlake-Gimli could count his lucky stars that he was not fined today, though he deserves to be. But the PCs will wear this forever more.

**The Speaker:** If there are no more speakers, is the House ready for the question? The honourable minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation.

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation):** I am having the opportunity to speak on this motion today, and I want to be very clear that this is very clearly about credibility.

Now why the commissioner chose in the report to give a fine of \$18,000 to Heather Stefanson, \$12,000 to Cliff Cullen and \$10,000 to the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), while in this case, he chose to remark very clearly that the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) has no credibility.

And so I would submit that, very clearly, Honourable Speaker, that this vote that we're about to cast in a few minutes is an up-and-down vote on the credibility for the member for Interlake-Gimli. And so, to be very clear, what we're about to vote on is to uphold the assertion of the commissioner who said clearly the member for Interlake-Gimli lacks credibility. And so when we cast our ballot and vote on this, and

when members opposite vote on this issue, they're voting yes or no to the question of the credibility of the member for Interlake-Gimli.

So it's going to be very curious to see how he votes on this, to affirm whether or not he has credibility, or whether the Leader of the Opposition affirms whether he agrees that member for Interlake-Gimli has no credibility. And I think that's going to be very telling, about the member—the leader from the opposition's position as to whether he himself has credibility to keep members like the member for Red River North and the member for Interlake-Gimli in his caucus.

So I want to just reiterate that his name was mentioned in this report 47 times. It's an incredible amount. And I want to make sure that Manitobans fully understand what's going on, because I don't want them to get the impression that we're cherry-picking something. This is a very clear report, black and white, made from an independent source. But I think context is very important.

So for seven years, the failed PC government ran a cold and cruel and callous government where they cut health care, closed ERs, cut wages and made life more challenging, less affordable and less safe for Manitobans.

Then in the six months leading up to the 2023 election, what did the failed government do? With the current Leader of the Opposition in their Cabinet, what did they do? They ran up the debt. They made some of the most reckless financial decisions our province has ever seen, and left this government with nearly a \$2-billion deficit. Because of the decisions they made, reckless financial decisions they made.

And that was the context—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

Once again, I would ask the members to keep their comments relevant to the ethics motion we are discussing.

**Mr. Moses:** Honourable Speaker, I'm building a case on their record of poor decision making over seven and a half years, which led them to the point where their continued poor decision making led to this terrible report issued by the commissioner, which showed that they broke the law, that showed that they not only did this once, but they have a pattern of bad behaviour.

And, quite frankly, Honourable Speaker, it shows that the corruption is ingrained in the fabric of the PC Party. It was there seven years ago. It was there during the 2023 election, and it is certainly there today. That was never been more on display by what we saw in the, I would say, awful debate by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Khan), who brought nothing to the table to dissuade any of the substantial report and evidence brought by the commissioner.

It was a disgrace to hear that debate because Manitobans look for leadership, and he offered none of it. Manitobans are looking for accountability and he offered none of it. He can't even hold his own team accountable, not himself, and he can't be accountable to Manitobans.

Honourable Speaker, during that 2023 election the PCs put forward two campaign platforms: one was to attack the victims of a murderer, and the other one was to attack trans people. That is another mark on their bad judgment. How on earth can they think that that is a strategy to have success with Manitobans?

It was an atrocious approach, and that track record of poor behaviour, of misjudgment, of underestimating the intelligence of Manitobans goes directly to the credibility that is questioned in this very report that Manitobans are looking for accountability on, and for which the members opposite show none.

So after that 2023 election where they attacked the victims and their families of a serial killer and where they attacked trans people in our community, what did they do? They followed up the 2023 election by even more corruption by trying to push through the controversial activities of a mining operation, even though they lost the '23–2023 election and lost confidence, and Manitobans lost confidence in their ability to run the government, and that Manitobans no longer trusted them to be in charge of the decisions that are made here in this building.

So we are thankful to the people of Manitoba for making that wise choice and sending them packing to the penalty box, to the opposition benches, for many years.

And so when we look at the actions by the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) the report says very clearly, and I quote: that the member for Interlake 'glim'—Interlake-Gimli was clearly interested in the project licence being issued, and he was clearly kept well-informed by the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton). He knew of the member from

Red River North's plans to call Mr. Klein and Ms. Squires and took part in a call with a lobbyist for Sio Silica during the transition period. End quote.

Now, that is so significant because he knew everything that was going on but did nothing—did nothing to hold his team members accountable, did nothing to stop it, but in a way actively chose to continue breaking the law. And for—that's why we're trying to hold him accountable today, and that's why we're going to have a vote on his credibility in just a few minutes.

The commissioner also remarked at the end: that overall I find the inability of the member for Interlake-Gimli to recall what happened after the election when interviewed that it puts his credibility at issue. End quote.

Credibility is the question and the commissioner laid it out in black and white: the credibility of the member for Interlake-Gimli, and vis-à-vis the credibility of the entire PC Party and the credibility of its leader, that credibility to continue to receive political donations from people who are mentioned in this report even after—that when this report came to life, refusing to take proper accountability.

And even here today, in this very Chamber, on the day—the last opportunity we have to put words on the record with respect to this motion, members stand up and don't take an honest account for their actions. They don't take an honest account. They—in fact the member for Interlake-Gimli had an opportunity—he still actually has an opportunity to stand up in the Chamber and be accountable for his actions.

\* (20:20)

Now, if he took the opportunity, Honourable Speaker, to stand up in this Chamber and make some assertions with respect to his actions, that might actually show credibility. I don't think he will, because as this report shows, he lacks credibility, and that's what we're about to vote on.

It also shows that the Leader of the Opposition, by keeping him in caucus, and keeping the member of Red River North in caucus, also lacks credibility. And the leader himself, I think, lacks that credibility as well.

So it was through the seven years of poor decisions, the running up the deficit during the last six months of their time in office, the terrible and horrific 2023 campaign, led them to the point where they were

in position and had this entrenched ability to see no difference between right and wrong. And it made it perhaps easier for them to break the law, as was outlined in this report, showing no regard for ethics or morality, and led the commissioner to clearly describe the member for Interlake-Gimli as someone who lacks credibility and described by his own then-leader as someone who is untrustworthy.

And so as in—we will in a few minutes, cast a vote on this motion, I encourage members to think about, as they cast their ballots, whether or not the member for Interlake-Gimli has credibility and cast that vote to whether the PC Party has any—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** I just want to put a couple of words on the record in respect of what is truly just a deplorable, disheartening, disgraceful day in Manitoba history here in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

To sit for the first time in our history and talk about the fact that a former premier, a former deputy premier, two former ministers of the Crown, broke the conflict of interest laws and violated the constitutional principles by which we are all elected and that we have enormous privilege to be here in this Chamber.

And they did it intentionally; they did it knowingly. It is a pattern of corruption that we have seen for many years, but certainly with this cohort since 2016, since I've been elected; but certainly in the last many years, this pattern of corruption and just this absolute disregard for the Manitobans that elect us to be in this Chamber; or the Manitobans that elect them, which are very few, obviously. That's why they're on that side of the Chamber. It's a complete violation of the democracy that we should all be upholding and living for—living in respect of the work that we do.

But it is a pattern, and I want to go through some of the patterns that we've seen. First off, my colleagues have noted several times this evening about the fact that for the first time in Manitoba history in a provincial election, we saw a previous government want to stay in power so badly—so badly—that they would choose to construct their whole political campaign on the murders of Indigenous women, on the murders of Indigenous women that, while that campaign was going on, they lay in a landfill, that while that campaign was going on, their families were desperate to have anybody listen to bring them home, that the

country was desperate to have these women brought home.

And Heather Stefanson was the face behind that. She was the one that was on our billboards. She was the one that, on CBC, chose to make that her first question to what is now our Premier (Mr. Kinew), who obviously answered that question in the only way that that question should be answered.

I table for the House these articles that show that she defended that decision over and over and over again. The sheer callousness of Heather Stefanson to put that so badly that she wants to maintain to be the premier, that she would use the murders—the grotesque murders of Indigenous women—to try and stay in government and to try—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I would ask the honourable minister to keep her comments relevant to the motion we're discussing.

**MLA Fontaine:** It is the pattern of this PC caucus and PC Party, the absolute corruption in which they govern themselves and try to govern Manitoba. Manitobans rejected that.

Again, we saw campaigns and ad campaigns across Manitoba about standing firm, language that is firmly entrenched in a far alt-right language that we saw in Manitoba, that was—if you were an Indigenous person, if you were an Indigenous woman driving around and seeing that language, it was incredibly disheartening to see those billboards that were paid by the PC Party that essentially said, as Indigenous women, our lives don't matter, contributing to the savage levels of violence that are already perpetrated against our bodies, the same savage levels of violence that contributed to our second serial killer here in Manitoba. And that—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Once again, I would ask the honourable minister to please direct her comments towards the motion that we're here tonight to discuss.

**MLA Fontaine:** And I appreciate, Honourable Speaker.

Again, the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) was a part of those decision-making processes to ensure that campaign was borne—or a campaign was formulated on the bodies of Indigenous women. And he sits in this Chamber; he can't even get up and apologize for his role in what we're discussing today

but his role in the overall direction that the PC Party chose.

We also saw it with Heather Stefanson in respect of using a secret email addresses that I will table as well. We also saw it in Heather Stefanson's getting banned from Pride events after she again, once again, showed utter callousness to 2SLGBTQ2I folks, of which the member for Interlake-Gimli was never there as well. And all of them, again, were not welcome at Pride.

Again, it's also another show of corruption that Heather Stefanson failed to follow disclosure rules in respect of \$31 million in property sales. Again, at the time, the MLA for Interlake-Gimli sat in Cabinet with the premier—the former premier, Heather Stefanson—and didn't say anything, didn't hold her to account.

Again, I want to just point out, as well, that they have a current member that sits in their caucus right now with Swan River, and I just want to read a couple of things in the record, that the member for Interlake-Gimli has not demanded that the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) leave.

In the fall of 2016, the assistant and the—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Fontaine:** —the assistant of the member for Swan River—he asked his assistant if she wanted—

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

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

Again, I would ask the minister to keep her comments relevant to the motion we're here discussing, the Ethics Commissioner motion.

**MLA Fontaine:** And, again, the Ethics Commissioner report talks about, you know, the corruption of this PC caucus. And I do want to show that part of that corruption is the behaviours of members opposite.

And so the member asked his assistant—he said, do you want to see, and I quote, a picture of hard-working beavers on his cellphone—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

\* (20:30)

This debate is about the ethics motion. Please keep your comments relevant to that motion.

**MLA Fontaine:** It is a pattern of corruption that we see in this PC caucus, and including for members opposite not to take accountability. We know that the Leader of the Opposition has still not apologized for being the face of a targeted attack against trans children. He still hasn't met with parents; he certainly hasn't met with the children that he created so much fear in their lives. He's never apologized to them.

Heather Stefanson has never apologized to the families of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, the very ones that she attacked. She was wrong. She was wrong, and our government were able to bring those women home.

The member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) has not apologized. He has not stood up in this House, in his place, to apologize. In fact, he's been sitting in the loge all night on his cell, not having any accountability for what we are discussing here today. We are discussing something incredibly serious that's never been seen, and he sits on the loge and does not apologize.

The Leader of the Opposition doesn't apologize. The member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) does not apologize. None of those folks opposite apologize because they simply don't care about Manitobans, and it is the pattern of who they are. They are a corrupt party; they are incapable of doing their jobs; they're incapable of actually sharing—showing compassion and care for Manitobans because they simply don't care. And what this Ethics Commissioner's report has shown is that they only care about their friends.

And the fact that we've got the Leader of the Opposition still taking money from some of the same people that are in this ethics report tells you everything that you need to know about members opposite. I would encourage members opposite to take a deep, reflective look at—

**The Speaker:** Member's time has expired.

If there are no further speakers, is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** The question before the House is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner dated May 21, 2025.

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

**Recorded Vote**

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):**  
A recorded vote, Honourable Speaker.

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

\* (21:30)

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The one-hour time limit provided for the ringing of the division bells has expired. I'm directing that the bells be turned off and the House proceed to the vote.

All the members in the Chamber in favour of—all right.

The question before the House is that the Legislative Assembly accept the findings regarding the honourable member for Interlake-Gimli in the conclusion of the report of the Ethics Commissioner, dated May 21, 2025.

**Division**

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

**Ayes**

*Asagwara, Balcaen, Bereza, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Byram, Cable, Chen, Compton, Cook, Corbett, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Ewasko, Fontaine, Goertzen, Guenter, Johnson, Kennedy, Khan, Kinew, King, Kostyshyn, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Loiselle, Maloway, Marcelino, Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Narth, Naylor, Nesbitt, Oxenham, Pankratz, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Redhead, Robbins, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Schuler, Simard, Smith, Stone, Wharton, Wiebe, Wowchuk.*

**Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish):** Ayes 53, Nays 0.

**The Speaker:** The motion is accordingly passed.

And this House now stands adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

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