



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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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

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

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

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

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

Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Speaker's Statement**

**The Speaker:** So just before we begin, I want to just talk about some things that happened a little bit yesterday.

Last week, I did say that I hope we could do better. Yesterday, we did not do better, myself included in that. There were things that I could have done better, should have done better. There are things that each one of us should do better. So I just want to make sure that everybody understands that I am not perfect either.

So I did intervene many times on relevance and heckling. Did I intervene every time? No, I didn't. Did I miss some things? Yes, yes, I did.

We need to make sure that we're using appropriate language, that we're not name-calling and that language isn't unparliamentary. And sometimes, we get creative in figuring out how to get around that and sometimes the creation is, at the end of the day, just as bad.

We had problems with relevance during debates. And we have a rule that talks about that, rule 42: speeches shall be directed to the question under consideration. And I gave members some latitude on both sides to make a point. Sometimes you've got to draw the picture, and I get that. But at some point in time, the picture has to focus on what the item that we're debating is, and sometimes it takes too long to get to that point. And so when I'm calling people for relevance, I would expect that they would very quickly then get to that point and not continue down the same path.

Sometimes, when I do call people for relevance, it's really disrespecting the Chair when you ignore what I've said and just continue speaking from where you left off. So I would expect us all to do better. I hope we can all do better. And there's all kinds of procedural things and history about debate and respecting the Chair and all of those things.

So while I want each of us to do better, I want myself to do better as well.

There's probably more that I could go on about, but I think you get the point. So I think that perhaps maybe I will leave it there for today and proceed to routine proceedings.

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Fort Garry—and just as a note to everyone, the honourable member for Fort Garry does not need a seconder for his selected bills.

**Bill 211—The Local Elections Voter Eligibility Act (Various Acts Amended)**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** I move that Bill 211, The Local Elections Voter Eligibility Act, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wasyliv:** I'm pleased to introduce The Local Elections Voter Eligibility Act, which would expand voting rights in municipal school board and community council elections to include 16- and 17-year-olds as well as permanent residents.

This bill recognizes that many young people and newcomers are already deeply involved in their communities. They study here, work here and raise families

here, yet they currently have no say in the local decisions that shape their everyday lives.

By expanding eligibility for local elections, this bill gives more people a voice where it matters most: right at the community level. It's a step towards a more inclusive and representative democracy, where students and permanent residents can help shape the schools, cities and neighbourhoods they call home.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

### **Bill 230—The Grocery Store Food Waste Prevention Act**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** I move that Bill 230, The Grocery Store Food Waste Prevention Act, be now read a first time.

#### ***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Wasyliv:** I'm pleased to introduce The Grocery Store Food Waste Prevention Act, a bill to fight food insecurity and reduce unnecessary food waste in Manitoba.

Every day, grocery stores across our province throw away perfectly edible food, while tens of thousands of Manitobans struggle to put meals on the table. This is food that's bruised, dented or slightly irregular, but still completely edible. This bill would change that. It would require large grocery stores to enter into donation agreements with food banks when asked and ensure unsold but usable food is redirected instead of tossed in the trash.

Food is a basic human right. No one should go hungry while fresh food sits in the landfills. This legislation builds stronger communities by connecting resources to need and holding corporations accountable to the people they serve.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

### **Introduction of Guests**

**The Speaker:** And just before we get to members' statements, there's some guests I'd like to take a moment to introduce.

\* (13:40)

We have seated in the public gallery, from École Julie-Riel, 23 grade 6 students under the direction of Stephanie Gagnon, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Riel (MLA Moyes).

We welcome you here today.

And I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the loge to my left, where we have seated with us today Myrna Phillips, who's the former MLA for Wolseley and also a former Speaker.

We welcome you here today.

### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

#### **Winnipeg Blues Cricket Club**

**MLA David Pankratz (Waverley):** Honourable Speaker, it is my honour to rise today to recognize a team that embodies community, perseverance and pride all across Manitoba: the Winnipeg Blues Cricket Club.

They began back in 2002 under the name India XI, a few friends with a shared love of cricket who wanted to bring people together through sport. And since then, the Blues have become one of Winnipeg's premier clubs. Many of their players live in Waverley, and they've built something special through friendship, hard work and a love of the game.

This season was one for the books; Elite champions; T20 champions. Thirty-seven wins, only five losses all season. The Blues showed what teamwork and commitment can achieve when everyone pulls in the same direction.

But the real measure of their success, in my opinion, can be seen in the community that they've built: the families who gather at the field; the veteran players who mentor the new ones; the kids who watch from the sidelines, dreaming of one day wearing that Blues jersey. Some of those kids are already making their mark, representing Manitoba in the U17 tournament, including one who's only 13 years old. That's the future of cricket in Manitoba.

And, Honourable Speaker, as our government continues the work of fixing health care—opening new emergency rooms, adding staff to the front lines, helping families get care closer to home—teams like the Blues are helping in their own way. They're strengthening the physical, emotional and psychological health of our communities, showing how sport can bring people together and build a stronger province.

So today we celebrate the Winnipeg Blues Cricket Club for their championships, their community spirit and the sense of pride they bring to Waverley and to Manitoba.

And I would ask that the names of all team members are included in Hansard, and that my colleagues please rise and congratulate members of the Winnipeg Blues, who join us in the gallery today.

*Winnipeg Blues Cricket Club, Manitoba Cricket Association T20 Summer League Squad, 2025: Adeel Abbas; Siddharth Bajaj; Jaspreet Brar; Keshav Dadhwal; Milan Dave; Dhruv Gadhav; Prayag Kumar; Akshit Malhotra; Manpreet Sachdeva; Jatin Sharma; Harkamal Singh; Janveet Singh; Simranpreet Singh, captain.*

*Manoj Chaudhari, manager; Hitesh Modha, coach; Jairaj Shroff, secretary.*

*Winnipeg Blues Cricket Club, Elite Division Squad, 2025: Siddharth Bajaj; Milan Dave; Kulwinder Johal; Milan Khunti; Prayag Kumar; Karan Kundan; Harpreet Manes; Pubudu Perera; Gurmandeep Singh; Sarbjot Singh; Plash Verma; Abhishek Visist, captain; Hirusha Weerasekara.*

*Manoj Chaudhari, manager; Hitesh Modha, coach; Jairaj Shroff, secretary.*

### **Corinne Schroeder**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** I'm pleased to rise in the House today to recognize Corinne Schroeder, goaltender in the Professional Women's Hockey League, who is joined today by her mother Karen.

Corinne is from the small town of Elm Creek where she grew up the middle of five children on her family's 2,000-acre farm. Her father, Robert, was her coach for many years. At the age of 12, Corinne switched to playing in net full-time. She has said she loves the technicality of the position and that there's always room for improvement.

Corinne made history in the Professional Women's Hockey League while playing for the New York Sirens when she recorded the league's first-ever shutout in 2024. She then finished last season with four shutouts. Teammates and fans have given her the nickname The Brick Wall due to her laser-sharp focus and her determination.

I am so impressed by Corinne's determination, drive for excellence and the example she is setting for young women in sport. Her ultimate goal is to play for Canada in the Olympics.

Congratulations on your success, and I wish you the best for this upcoming season.

### **McPhillips Community Events**

**MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips):** Honourable Speaker, this past summer, McPhillips was full of life and community spirit. One of the highlights of my summer was attending the Ashbury Bay block party. It brings together neighbours, and even folks who have moved away, over delicious multicultural food. I can't think of anything that captures friendly Manitoba better than that.

My community also came to together to celebrate Ukrainian Independence Day at the West St. Paul Access Centre. With music, dancing and food, it was a powerful way for us to show in McPhillips Ukrainian culture and independence.

I was also fortunate to join a strawberry tea gathering in celebration of West St. Paul's Anglican church's 200th birthday.

Another highlight was the grand opening of a newly paved and upgraded Mollard Road, something the community's been asking for for over 40 years.

Of course, sports were a big part of the summer too. I was thrilled to attend tournaments organized by the Chardikala Sports Club, West St. Paul group, and the West St. Paul United Sports Club, as well as tennis tournaments at the Garden City Collegiate and the big Winnipeg National Bank Challenger in West St. Paul.

As summer wrapped up and the new school year began, I toured the Aurora school, one of three schools our government is investing in in McPhillips. These schools are a major investment in our future, and it was exciting to see the progress first-hand.

I am proud of McPhillips and how it thrives during the summer time.

I invite all my colleagues to join me in recognizing the people and the organizations who make these celebrations possible.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

### **Hearts & Heroes Event**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Honourable Speaker, the afternoon and evening of September 20, 2025 marked a bittersweet occasion in the RM of Lac du Bonnet at the community—as the community gathered to reflect on the harrowing events that transpired earlier that year.

The Hearts & Heroes event, held at the Lac du Bonnet Community Centre, served as a solemn tribute to

the bravery and dedication displayed by countless individuals during a catastrophic fire that threatened the lives and homes of many.

On that fateful day, over 600 homes in the Cape Coppermine and Granite Hills areas were at risk with the potential for devastation looming large. Tragically, the lives of the local residents Richard and Sue Nowell were lost, and 28 properties devastated, casting a shadow over the day's remembrance. However, the community's spirit shone through, as the heroic efforts of firefighters, emergency personnel and volunteers saved numerous homes from destruction.

Reeve Loren Schinkel, who acted as the master of ceremonies, recounted the events that unfolded starting on May 13. His emotional retelling highlighted the collaborative efforts of various organizations, including the local fire departments, RCMP, emergency measures personnel and the many volunteers who provided shelter and sustenance for the evacuees. He emphasized the critical role played by Manitoba Hydro in the restoring power swiftly to the region, illustrating the importance of teamwork in times of crisis.

Among those honoured, Glenn Miller, director of Manitoba Wildfire Service, received a standing ovation. Lac du Bonnet fire chief Earl Simmons and his dedicated team were also recognized for their tireless work battling the flames. The heartfelt gratitude expressed by speakers resonated with the audience as many were moved to tears by the recounting of acts of heroism and selflessness.

Lac du Bonnet emergency co-ordinator John Fleming reflected on his years prepping for such emergencies, noting that leadership and calmness guided the community through this tragedy.

Honourable Speaker, the Hearts & Heroes event served not only as a remembrance of those lost and the challenges faced, but also as a celebration of the strength and resilience—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

The member's time has expired.

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**The Speaker:** Is there leave for the member to finish his statement? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Ewasko:** Honourable Speaker, it was a testament to the power of unity in overcoming adversity, ensuring that the legacy of those who fought bravely would not be forgotten.

We will remember them.

### Universal Screening for Learning Disabilities

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Honourable Speaker, I am thrilled to rise this afternoon and share that at 6 p.m. tonight, Bill 225, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Universal Screening for Learning Disabilities), will be brought to committee.

Seeing how today is International Dyslexia Awareness Day, I wanted to use this opportunity to remind the House that Bill 225 will improve Manitoba's literacy rates by further identifying students who may struggle with learning disabilities such as dyslexia.

This bill is very tangible and amends The Public Schools Act to ensure all Manitoba students from kindergarten to grade 3 are screened twice a year by an assessment tool approved by the minister.

It further ensures that parents and legal guardians will be informed of their child's screening results within 30 days.

\* (13:50)

And, lastly, school boards must use the screening results to guide further assessments and allocate specialized resources accordingly.

Honourable Speaker, currently, Manitoba's 37 school divisions do not have clear or consistent direction with respect to screening assessments for reading. This bill allows Manitoba to join the many other jurisdictions in Canada such as Ontario, Alberta, Saskatchewan and New Brunswick, who mandate universal screening for all students and have some of the highest literacy rates in the country.

In closing, I want to reiterate my appreciation for all of the pediatricians, teachers, school divisions, speech pathologists and others I was able to consult with. Your input will ensure every child, regardless of socioeconomic background, will receive the support they need to succeed.

I would also like to thank the government for calling Bill 225 to committee, and I look forward to hearing Manitobans speak to it this evening.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** Prior to proceeding to oral questions, one of the things I spoke about earlier was myself needing to do a better job and things that I'd missed, and I want to correct one of those things now.

Yesterday, during debate, the Premier did refer to two PC members as Muppets in the gallery, and as we

all know that we can only refer to members either by their constituency name or their ministerial title, so I would ask the Premier to withdraw that.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Sorry, can you repeat what you just said?

**The Speaker:** Honourable First Minister, yesterday, during debate, referred to two members of the PC's caucus as Muppets in the gallery.

So I would ask that—as pointed out, that we can refer to members by their constituency name or their ministerial title, what—we shouldn't be calling them other names. So I would ask the Premier to withdraw that comment.

**Mr. Kinew:** Withdrawn.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Allied Health-Care Professionals Government's Health-Care Record

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Honourable Speaker, this Premier, his ministers and caucus are in the habit of just saying things over and over and over again, even if they are not true.

But Manitobans are tiring of these empty promises and empty talking points and starting to push back. The president of Manitoba association of allied health-care professionals is pushing back, and I quote: Jason Lintlaker [*phonetic*], president of Manitoba association of allied health-care professionals noted the NDP promised to add 200 paramedics in rural areas during the 2023 election. Not only has that not happened, there are 90 vacancies in Prairie Mountain. End quote.

The union is clear: despite the Premier's spinoff of just saying things over and over again, they are not true.

Why does the Premier keep saying things that aren't true and undermine the message of health-care workers?

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I would remind members that suggesting that people are saying things that are not true is the same as saying they're lying. That's not allowed, so I would ask the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition to withdraw those comments.

**Mr. Khan:** Withdrawn.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Fixing health care is our top priority. Every single seat in Red River's paramedic training program is full as we speak right now.

And when we talk about Mr. Linklater's union, MAHCP, we've hired 400 new allied health-care workers serving you at the front line right now.

Now, it's curious that the member would want to raise this, because when he was sitting at the Cabinet table, they froze the wages of these very same health-care workers for more than five years. We're talking about more than a half decade during that inflationary period they presided over too, where gas prices and everything was going up by 8 per cent a year.

But when we talk about saying something over and over, I have to call attention to his scrum yesterday. He was asked repeatedly about Heather Stefanson and his current colleagues breaking the law and being fined. He was asked nine times by the media—

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

The member's time has expired.

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

**Mr. Khan:** See, Honourable Speaker, in order to sustain the ability to just keep saying things over and over again, you have to believe that everybody else is wrong in the province of Manitoba, just like this Premier and Health Minister are doing. They say the paramedics union must be wrong, the nurses must be wrong, the home-care workers must be wrong. They're all conspiring against them; they all must be wrong. That is the arrogance of this Premier.

The truth is much simpler. The Premier ran on fixing health care; it's worse than it's ever been. Over 20 hours wait times, long lists of surgical diagnostic wait times.

Will the Premier please let Manitobans know when they can expect health care to get better, or will it continue to get worse under his failed Health Minister?

**Mr. Kinew:** Honourable Speaker, we're fixing health care right now. For the first time ever, in rural Manitoba, advanced-care paramedics can work to the full scope of practice.

Also in rural Manitoba, we had a situation under the PCs where all the paramedics were leaving to the city because city paramedics were paid more. You know what we did with our first deal? Levelled the playing field. If you want to work rural you can earn

just as much as working in the city thanks to this, the best Health Minister in the country.

But I really, really do kind of crack up a little bit when I see the member opposite talking about everyone else is wrong over and over again. Let me just read the transcript of his scrum yesterday.

Question from reporter: Do you condemn the actions of the former premier, the former deputy premier and your current Red River North MLA?

Member opposite: I accept the findings of the report.

I'll spare you the details. Nine more times we hear, I accept the findings, I accept the findings—

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

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

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

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

**Mr. Khan:** You heard it here. The Premier said we accept the findings of the report. That's yesterday's news. Let's talk about today, that health care is failing under this Premier.

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

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:** Health care is worse than it's ever been. This Premier makes up a nice—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Khan:**—round number and pretends like it's true. This summer they claimed that 1,340 net-new nurses were hired, but the Manitoba Nurses Union did the math: 34 per cent of those were casual roles and only 27 per cent were hired full time. The nurses say that's a net loss of 14 nurses under this failed NDP government.

Manitobans are waking up to all of the failures by this Premier and failed Health Minister.

I simply ask you, Premier: Who should Manitobans trust and believe? The nurses union, or this failed Health Minister?

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Once again, I would ask the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition—he's made statements that basically imply someone is lying, and I would ask him to withdraw where he said it pretends like it's true—is akin to saying it's lying.

So would the Leader of the Official Opposition withdraw?

**Mr. Khan:** Withdrawn.

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, I'll trust this Health Minister every single day of the week over the PCs who made history in Manitoba yesterday. The first time ever a premier, a Cabinet minister, a sitting PC MLA were fined for what? For ignoring you, the people of Manitoba.

You elected a new government. After they left office, before we were sworn in, they tried to push through a controversial project that risks drinking water and water use for ag purposes in rural Manitoba. They don't care about rural; they just care about their rich friends.

Now they come in here literally the day after history has been made. Never mind the cover of the Free Press; we're talking about history books, they're going to have this thing.

\* (14:00)

They say yesterday's news. You couldn't talk about sweeping it under the rug more than what you just saw from the Leader of the Opposition here.

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

#### **Manitoba Nurses Union Meeting with Premier**

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** It's not just this failed Health Minister, it's also that they are failing Manitoba health-care workers. It's the Premier as well.

Darlene Jackson went public, and I quote: Unfortunately, the Premier was not willing to engage in that conversation. He arrived 40 minutes late and the meeting concluded after only 12 minutes. To me that speaks volume about the value this government currently places on Manitoba nurses. End quote.

The Premier showed such little respect to Manitoba nurses that he showed up 40 minutes late and left after only 12 minutes.

Will the Premier stand up today and apologize to Manitoba nurses for his pathetic attempt at pretending like he cares about the health-care system?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** Honourable Speaker, it's an interesting day here in question period when the leader of the PCs stands up and his lead-off questions



are: you've hired more nurses and you've been meeting with their union. Yes, that's right.

How about what's going on on the other side of the House here? Former premier: fined 18 grand. Current member of their caucus: fined. Their former deputy premier: fined. Their current House leader: implicated, a party to the whole thing. Only thing is, he didn't have the good sense to be able to pull off the heist the way that the others did, and so he was not fined.

Now these members want to come in here and ask questions of our government. Absolutely, go ahead. Let's keep talking about health care. Every single day we're talking about health care, we're a happy team because we're working hard to fix it.

But on the other side, they need to answer this simple question: why haven't they kicked out members of their caucus that were implicated in subverting democracy—

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

Order, please.

The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition was quoting from a document. Could I ask him if it was a public document; if not, could he table it?

**Mr. Khan:** Public document, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

### **Lions Personal Care Centre Long-Term-Care Beds—Funding Concerns**

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Honourable Speaker, you can see right here that this Premier is doing everything he can to not answer questions on health care. He thinks that a 12-minute meeting with Manitoba nurses is adequate. It's shameful, it's disgusting, it's disrespectful and it clearly shows his arrogance.

Manitobans are waiting over 20 hours in emergency rooms. Gilles Verrier at the team of Lions personal-care home had to stop admitting residents because this government failed to pay bills.

Manitobans have the right to be heard, and this Minister of Health is failing them. So will the Minister of Health finally meet with Mr. Verrier to discuss these funding concerns today for long-term-care beds at Lions Personal Care Centre?

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

Could the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition please tell me what public document he was quoting from?

**Mr. Khan:** Honourable Speaker, it's the Manitoba Nurses Union post.

**The Speaker:** Order. Order.

So my question is, where was it posted? Specifically what site?

**Mr. Khan:** As I mentioned, it was from the Manitoba Nurses Union post on the Internet. If the members opposite went to the Internet, they would see that it's posted on the Internet. Manitoba Nurses Union Instagram post. Very simple if they just did their work.

**The Speaker:** You still—*[interjection]*

Order, please.

You haven't answered my question. I asked specifically where it was posted.

Stop the clock, please.

The honourable Opposition House Leader, answer the question. Whereabouts—the Leader of the Opposition, answer where the post was. What site?

**Mr. Khan:** Honourable Speaker, I clearly answered that three times. With all the heckling, maybe you didn't hear it: The Manitoba Nurses Union Instagram.

**The Speaker:** Thank you.

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** While the leader of the PCs is spending his days scrolling Instagram, our Health Minister has shown results in health care: more nurses, more doctors, more allied health, more health-care aides.

The one thing that there's fewer of in Manitoba is fewer PC MLAs since the last election, and with good reason. After they were defeated in the election, they tried to push through a project that would've harmed rural residents.

Now, we know that this week, their former premier, their former deputy premier, their current MLA, their current House leader were all implicated in this report, and three of them were fined.

Why does the member opposite tolerate corruption in his caucus? Why do members of that caucus tolerate corruption in their ranks? There's too much corruption in the PC Party.

The member opposite is doing nothing to clean it up. It's disappointing, but it's not surprising.

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

**Mr. Khan:** Well, that is the pot calling the kettle black, talking about Instagram and TikTok. Maybe he should look to his Minister of Health, who's too busy dancing on Instagram and TikTok to fix health care, or the Minister of Families, too busy in a fashion show, where she's failing foster families and families across the entire province of Manitoba.

I'll quote the Manitoba Nurses Union to echo their 'sendiment'. Quote: He, Mr. Verrier, has exposed what others ignore: a government and regional leadership willing to sacrifice seniors' care rather than confront their own failures. His voice is not only for Lions, it's for every Manitoban who deserve dignity, safety and truth in care. End quote.

Why is the Premier willing to sacrifice seniors' care rather than confront his government and minister's of-Health own failure?

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, here's the thing that's really surprising about the PCs: we're fixing health care. We're building new personal-care-home beds; we're building new personal-care-home beds in their ridings, right? We're building them here in the city as well.

During their time in office? Not a single personal-care-home bed built anywhere in the province. In fact, we actually lost personal-care-home beds during two terms of the PCs.

And I'll say, I would appreciate the member for confirming that he loves social media, and it's really interesting that he clearly follows my colleague from Union Station and he clearly follows my colleague from St. Johns.

We'll let him do what he wants to on his own time, on his phone, in the privacy of his own home. We're going to keep fixing health care.

The one thing he should do while he's on the public dime: fire the two people who broke the law and were implicated in the ethics report—the MLA for Red River North and the MLA for Interlake-Gimli.

I rest my case.

#### **First Nation Jurisdiction of CFS Support During Transition**

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** You know who needs to be fired is the member of family—member from fort—St. Johns—Minister of Families; that's who needs to be fired, Honourable Speaker.

We've heard from Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth about the lack of oversight in the transition process of Child and Family Services to First Nation jurisdiction.

What specific measures is this failed Minister of Families implementing to ensure that First Nation communities have the resources and supports in place to oversee a safe, transparent transition of children and youth in care?

\* (14:10)

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families):** The first thing I would do is I would encourage that member to actually read bill C-92 and the legislative framework that it establishes here in Canada across every jurisdiction, for nations to reassert control and care of their children and their families.

And within that legislation, nations, First Nations and Métis have the ability to create oversight processes and mechanisms in their laws. They don't need—certainly, the member opposite, who doesn't even understand the bill or the need for reasserting jurisdiction, and they don't need outside influences—

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

The honourable member for Agassiz, on a supplementary question.

**Ms. Byram:** In light of the recent feedback that we heard from MACY and we've heard from the member from The Pas-Kameesak during committee, and we've now recently heard from Peguis First Nation, the concerns that they have with the transition process.

Can the Minister of Families tell Manitobans what is being done to assess and mitigate the risk that children and youth face during the transition from CFS to First Nation jurisdiction?

**MLA Fontaine:** I take great exception to what the member is getting up in the Chamber to assert. She is using colonial language that necessarily ensures that folks will distrust First Nations and Métis leadership from reasserting control over child welfare.

It is a ploy to undermine what I—what is a historic moment across Canada, and that every jurisdiction is navigating right now. I support First Nations and Métis in reasserting jurisdiction over child welfare and families. We are going to be doing—we're going to be seeing transformative change here in Manitoba and across the country.

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

**Ms. Byram:** There's no metric or mechanism in place for families in First Nations to provide feedback and have oversight of these vulnerable children during transition process. This is something that should be a concern for this failed Families Minister.

We heard these concerns at committee, like I've mentioned, and we've heard from Peguis First Nation, we've heard these concerns from MACY.

So I'm asking here today: Who has oversight of these vulnerable children, and who can they turn to when in distress?

**MLA Fontaine:** The member for Agassiz has not a hot clue what she's talking about. In the construction and establishment of Indigenous laws, there is consultation with youth, with elders, with matriarchs, with those that are on the front lines, with all citizens within that nation.

There is consultation and partnership with Canada, there is consultation and partnership with Manitoba, there is consultation and partnership with those that have been on the front lines of child welfare, in the establishment of Indigenous law.

It's so unfortunate and tragic that members opposite are so desperate to cling on to a colonial system. We on this side are stepping in partnership to decolonize—

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

#### **Condition of PTH 323 and 220 Timeline for Completion of Repairs**

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** Honourable Speaker, PR roads 323 and 220 are vital for farmers, businesses and families in Lakeside. After even a light rain, they become impassable and trucks need towing just to get through. These conditions are so bad that even teachers can't reach Hutterite colonies just to provide education for local students, and it's dangerous for our emergency vehicles. I take pictures from residents just from this weekend's past rain.

Honourable Speaker, why has this failing minister allowed these critical provincial roads to fall apart throughout Lakeside and the rest of the province?

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** I am so grateful for the opportunity to stand here today and answer some questions on the amount of building and growth that is taking place in this province.

Our government is fully focused on infrastructure and on building up Manitoba in a way that was not seen for seven and half years under the previous

government. There were so many dollars left on the table in previous budgets, so much underinvestment in transportation.

And I am so excited about the amount of work that's happening, particularly in rural Manitoba. The amount of investments we've announced in rural Manitoba this summer are—

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

The honourable member for Lakeside, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. King:** Well, Honourable Speaker, the residents of Lakeside certainly aren't excited when they have to start up their tractors to pull out their neighbours to get them through the road.

The residents of Lakeside have been raising the alarm about PR 323 and 220 for months and months. These roads are key routes for hauling grain, developing supplies and getting kids to school. Yet they remain in such poor shape that even basic travel is becoming dangerous.

Honourable Speaker, with freeze-up fast approaching, will this failed minister commit to completing the repairs on PR 323 and 220 before winter sets in, so that families, farmers and businesses aren't cut off yet again this fall and next spring?

**MLA Naylor:** You know, Honourable Speaker, there are only two failed transportation ministers in this room, and they're sitting on that side of the House.

One of them was recently made my critic, and yet he has yet to ask a question. And I am not surprised.

You know why I'm not surprised? Because he didn't do anything for almost two years in a row. If members opposite think that these roads have fallen into disrepair over one year or two years, they are—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Naylor:** —sorely mistaken. This is the result of years of neglect by 'members' opposite.

#### **Municipal Projects Request for Update**

**Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods):** Honourable Speaker, Manitobans have grown used to empty promises from this NDP. We saw that in Spruce Woods. Now those bills have come due and the NDP are nowhere to be seen.

When can the municipal leaders expect an update on the roadside schedules?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** Honourable Speaker, one thing we're really proud of is that, after seven and a half years of the former government giving zeroes to municipalities, this team, this government, is finally ensuring municipalities have what they need to serve their constituents.

We're proud to have committed 2 per cent a year, escalator. We know AMM is very happy with the work this government is doing, led by our Premier (Mr. Kinew), led by our minister responsible for municipal relations. We're getting it done in support—in partnership with municipalities.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Spruce Woods, on a supplementary question.

**Mrs. Robbins:** The people of Spruce Woods soundly rejected the NDP, and this minister is in hiding.

But those projects—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Robbins:** —aren't the minister's to hand out as she pleases, or the Premier's to make new announcements mid-election.

Would she table an update on these projects today?

**Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier):** You know, I've been waiting to talk about the Spruce Woods by-election, in which Ray Berthelette almost made history in a safe PC seat, almost as safe as Steinbach. Ray Berthelette just about pulled off the upset of the century.

You know what was rejected in Spruce Woods? The PCs rejected their leader. You couldn't see their leader anywhere in Spruce Woods all summer long. Oh no, they hit him so hard, he was on the back of milk cartons in the Spruce Woods constituency during the by-election.

But here's the question each and every one of them need to think about: What are they going to do in the general election when they can't hide their leader?

\* (14:20)

### **Selkirk Bridge Timeline for Repairs**

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** Honourable Speaker, Selkirk deserves so much better than the failing NDP government and this minister are proposing for Selkirk constituents.

The Selkirk bridge, built over 70 years ago, has done its job and desperately needs to be replaced. Offering

only repairs does nothing to address the safety issues of this bridge.

Why does this failed minister continually ignore the safety of Selkirk constituents?

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** I do want to assure the residents of Selkirk, and of all of Manitoba, that safety is the No. 1 priority of our government and particularly when it comes to our provincial infrastructure, our provincial roadways.

In terms of bridges and bridge repair in this province, there is a regular cycle of inspection that takes place. Structural engineers make those assessments and make those decisions and the plans accordingly—according to those assessments.

If you drive around the province right now, you'll see all kinds of bridges being repaired and under construction. And things are on the plan, moving ahead as they need to, according to those assessments.

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

**Mr. Perchotte:** So what I understand, she is saying that Selkirk doesn't need any repairs. With a crumbling deck and extremely dangerous narrow lanes, accidents are—[interjection]

**The Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Perchotte:** —almost a weekly occurrence. A major accident occurred three weeks ago with a vehicle plowing into the bridge, destroying a huge section of the guardrails. Safety delineators now stand in place of that safety rail.

What will it take for this failed minister to take the lives of Selkirk constituents seriously?

**MLA Naylor:** I'm very aware of the incident that happened on the Selkirk bridge and of the repairs that are required because of the guardrail that was hurt or injured during that collision.

So as the member indicated, there are temporary measures in place. The repairs will happen to that guardrail to keep everyone safe using the bridge. And in the meantime, I would just love to point out to members opposite how much more we could be doing, in terms of repairing things at a faster rate, if they had not cut the infrastructure budget year after year after year for their first six years in government, and then underspent their budget—

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

### **Sustainable Public Transportation Transportation Needs for Smaller Communities**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Honourable Speaker, concerns have been raised about the newly released Path to Net Zero plan announced by this government, with the understanding that transportation is the second highest source of emissions in Manitoba.

With no figures being publicly shared and no concrete goals for public transportation, smaller cities in our province continue to struggle to keep their buses operating.

What specific goals does this government have to support sustainable public transportation in Manitoba?

### **Introduction of Guests**

**The Speaker:** Stop the clock, please. Just before we move on, there's some guests in the gallery that have to leave before we're done here.

So we have seated in the public gallery from Vincent Massey High School, 45 students under the direction of Stephan Reid, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen).

We welcome you all here today.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** Thank you to the member for Tyndall Park for bringing up our fantastic Path to Net Zero plan.

Here in government, we recognize that transportation is a major contributor to our emissions. It's 31 per cent, you know, a third of our emissions, and we're going to work diligently, which is why we created this document and those action plans are in development where we get to release all of those fantastic plans, in terms of how we're going to reach net zero by 2050.

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

### **City of Winnipeg Transit System Remodel Impact of Changes on Manitobans**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Over the summer, the City of Winnipeg elected to remodel its transit system as a response to increasing demands. Advocacy groups, students, seniors, labourers, health-care workers—they've all clearly indicated how these

changes have negatively impacted their ability to get to work and school on time, and safely.

The U of M student union released a report as a response to this new system, and 91 per cent of responses were negative. Someone even missed the birth of their own child. I table this information for the House.

I am sure other MLAs are hearing from their constituents on these issues as well.

How is this provincial government advocating for these Manitobans?

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** I concur. It's—it is an issue that we're—I'm sure all members are hearing about, especially the ones that are here—or, in the city of Winnipeg.

We recognize that—how important transit is. And we want to partner with the City of Winnipeg to make sure that people can get around, and with—those talks are ongoing, as well as really trying to get to the heart of ensuring that we have a better, improved transportation system as a whole.

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

### **Sustainable Public Transportation Request for Government Investment**

**MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Honourable Speaker, provinces across our country, including Ontario and Alberta, are making huge investments in public transportation through new, sustainable bus fleets, metro and rail.

Manitoba holds a unique advantage for hosting industrial leaders in public transportation, such as New Flyer. We have a great opportunity to be more environmental and progressive in public transportation over all of the province.

Does the minister have any tangible plans to make this happen while they're in government?

**Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change):** Yes, absolutely. That's exactly what our Path to Net Zero is all about. It's about creating those plans so that we can move to net zero.

We are putting those action plans in place as we speak. The department has been doing phenomenal work. We're reaching out to all the different sectors, including New Flyer, as you mentioned. We do have that advantage, and we are going to move to that next generation of economy as we speak.

### **PC Party Leader–Ethics Report Request to Address Report Findings**

**MLA JD Devgan (McPhillips):** Honourable Speaker, yesterday we gave the PC leader every opportunity to condemn his mentor, Heather Stefanson, Cliff Cullen, the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) and the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) for breaking Manitoba's law and violating Canada's Constitution.

Both inside and outside the Chamber, the PC leader was asked to address the corruption that runs rampant—rampant—in his caucus. How does he respond? With absolutely nothing. Instead, he made excuses for his former boss and hero, Heather Stefanson, and complained about House procedures.

Can the minister please tell the House about how the PC leader's silence—about corruption in his own party?

**Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning):** Thank you for that critically important question from my friend.

During his media scrum, the PC leader was asked nine times if he would condemn the corruption in the PC Party. The Canadian Press asked why there's been no criticism from the Tory ranks from—about Ms. Stefanson. The Free Press asked: Would you at least say those actions were regrettable? The CBC asked: So—with respect, here's your chance—what did you think of what they did? But the PC leader, Honourable Speaker, refused to answer every single time.

Today, Honourable Speaker, he has a chance to come clean.

So will the PC leader stand in his place right now and condemn his colleagues for breaking the law, or will he carry on the corruption and continue on with the PC corruption, business as usual?

### **Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Comments During Wildfire Briefing**

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** Honourable Speaker, the Education Minister's going to have a chance to ask questions in two short years.

Honourable Speaker, June 16, 2025, a Globe and Mail reporter had asked the minister of transportation during a wildfire briefing, and I quote: Specifically, I'm looking for things that you weren't maybe necessarily aware of or that you had to become aware of. End quote. Question mark.

The minister had decided to answer and said everything that has taken place was predictable and

was things they were prepared for and ready to address. Predictable and prepared for, Honourable Speaker.

What did the minister of transportation mean by that statement?

\* (14:30)

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** I am actually really grateful to have the opportunity to stand in this House and say a few words about this summer's devastating wildfire season. As that member rightfully pointed out earlier today, there was—we started out with a devastating fire in the Lac du Bonnet area where there was a loss of life, and that continued with fires to the north and west and east and all across the province, really, all at the same time.

So first and foremost, I'm going to take this moment to thank the department of emergency management, certainly the department of wildfires and departments across government: Families, Housing, Health—I'm sure I'm going to forget someone—municipalities. It was an all-of-government response. I am happy to answer the member's question—

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

### **Morris Bridge Closure on Highway 3 Timeline for Repairs**

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** Honourable Speaker, weeks ago, I reached out to this minister regarding the Morris bridge closure on the No. 3 Highway, a major truck and trade transport corridor. Response from this minister and the department has been less than adequate. In fact, rural municipalities have been so frustrated by the lack of response, I table letters from the RM of Macdonald, the RM of Stanley, the RM of Grey, the RM of Roland, the City of Winkler, the Town of Carman and the RM of Dufferin.

As of today, the detour route has been closed down because the rail crossing has not been able to handle the excess traffic. There have been reports of accidents at the barricades, including one just last night. So can the minister please stand up and explain to my constituents what her plan is and timelines—

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

**Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure):** I have responded to this member both verbally and with a letter from my department. But I'm happy to let constituents in the area know as well that we acted very quickly to protect public safety when there were concerns with this bridge.

There were structural issues raised. It was urgent, and we acted immediately to respond.

So I don't know what this—these folks want. On one hand, we're not acting fast enough; on one hand, we're taking action way too soon when they're—they perceive a problem that needs to be fixed.

When we are alerted of worsening conditions, we do take action. We had to close the bridge. We are proactively implementing a detour route until we can build a temporary crossing—

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

The honourable member for Midland, on a supplementary question.

**Mrs. Stone:** Honourable Speaker, I'd like to table the letter sent to me, which indicates that communication will improve, yet as of today, rural municipalities and my constituents still do not know the plan.

Can she please state what the plan is to get this bridge repaired?

**MLA Naylor:** My department is co-ordinating closely with local municipalities, with emergency services and initiating planning for the repairs and for the temporary crossing.

We are taking action, unlike the PCs, the members opposite, who cut their budget for years, who, if they had taken action on this bridge, which is over 60 years old, their communities would not be suffering at this moment with this issue that we have responded to.

So when, you know, I want to say that we take infrastructure issues seriously. We are a responsive government, and unlike the PCs we are in rural Manitoba—

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

#### **Cost-of-Living Challenges Minimum Wage Increase**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** Manitoba's minimum wage went up 20 cents to \$16 an hour. There's over 170,000 Manitobans who earn less than a living wage. That's one in four Manitoba workers who directly impacted.

Manitoba is now tied as the eighth worst jurisdiction in Canada for having one of the lowest minimum wages in the country, and I'll table that information. Only Alberta and Saskatchewan are worse than Manitoba. Manitoba leads Canada with the fastest growing rents and grocery store prices.

We are in a cost-of-living crisis. A 1.1 per cent increase to minimum wage isn't keeping pace with inflation.

Would this Premier (Mr. Kinew) be able to live on \$16 an hour, and if he can't, why is he asking Manitobans to?

**Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance):** Honourable Speaker, for years Manitobans had a government that wasn't focused on responding to their affordability challenges. In fact, not only did they not respond to them, they had a government that was actively making life harder and more expensive.

I think about the fact that they raised taxes on renters by \$175, that they jacked up hydro rates.

Finally, Manitobans have a government that's focused on making life more affordable. We cut the gas tax permanently. We froze hydro rates. We brought a new education property tax cut. We brought in a broad middle class tax cut.

We are working to make life more affordable. Manitobans can count on us for delivering to them every single day.

**The Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired—

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

#### **Point of Order**

**Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care):** I just want to draw attention, and I won't describe in detail because it was very disturbing, and I'm raising this because you've really emphasized the importance of decorum in the Chamber.

When our colleague, the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt) was giving a response, the Leader of the Opposition turned himself in his chair and made a very, very disturbing gesture. I will not describe it because it is very disturbing.

He knows what I'm talking about, and all I'm going to say here, Honourable Speaker, is that I hope the Leader of the Opposition doesn't repeat that gesture in this House. I would note that there are kids in the gallery on that side of the Chamber who could've observed that. I hope that they did not.

I'd be happy to speak with the Speaker later on about what I observed, but I'm just making a point of order. I think that we should all be mindful of any gestures while we're heckling that could be very harmful and very triggering to anybody in this space or certainly children in the gallery.

**The Speaker:** The honourable Opposition House Leader, and I would remind people to keep their comments very specific about the point of order.

**Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, obviously, decorum in this House has been an issue, obviously from the government side benches. I guess it's prudent to point out that the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) has been called out the most out of all of these decorum issues—13 times—and decorum is very important—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

I just asked you to keep your comments relevant to the point of order. Please do so.

**Mr. Johnson:** Absolutely. I think decorum is important, and that's what I was talking about, but there's obviously no point of order.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The point raised is quite important. I'm going to actually take it under advisement and see if we see exactly what's been referred to before I give an answer on it.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** As I said earlier, the time for questions had expired.

Petitions?

### GRIEVANCES

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** I thank you for the opportunity to stand here and present my grievance here this afternoon.

Honourable Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the people of Lakeside and every Manitoban who depends on our network of secondary provincial roads. These roads are the veins of rural Manitoba. They carry our grain, our cattle, our building materials, our workers and our school buses.

Yet, despite how important they are, these roads are falling apart while this government looks the other way. I'm talking about roads like PR 323 and PR 220 especially. But I can't help but mention PR 321, PR 424, PR 334, PR 332, PR 322, PR 518, PR 427, PR 227 and PR 241, Honourable Speaker, which is most of the secondary PR roads in constituency of Lakeside.

These are not back lanes or side roads, Honourable Speaker. They are vital connectors between communities, farms and businesses. They are the roads

that keep the Interlake and western Manitoba moving. And right now they're in rough shape. You do not need to take my word for it. Drive them yourself after a light or moderate or mostly a heavy rain. You'll see the deep ruts, the soft shoulders, the standing water, the washouts that appear faster than they can be repaired.

\* (14:40)

PR 220 is barely holding together in sections. PR 321 and 322 are so rough that farmers are forced to detour their equipment in trucks. PR 518 and PR 427 shake vehicles so hard, it's a wonder they still qualify as provincial routes. Honourable Speaker, I want to table once again some pictures submitted to me by residents of Lakeside.

Now let me be clear, Honourable Speaker. When the work gets done, it's done well by the local MTI crews. They're hard-working people who take pride in their jobs. They know how—they know the roads and they know the—they do the best they can with what little material, direction and support that they get from the top.

The problem is not with the people who maintain the roads. It is with the priorities and leaderships at the ministerial level. All of these roads lack material to maintain them properly, to withstand any amount of rain or spring thaw.

Getting someone in the department to respond is almost impossible. Municipalities make requests. They send photos, they write letters and they rarely get answers. My office makes calls, sends emails, follows up again and again and still it's like shouting into the wind. The lack of communication and accountability is staggering.

And that, Honourable Speaker, brings me to the core of this grievance. The NDP took the 2023 Manitoba transportation infrastructure five-year plan and they gutted it. They called it in their own, they've stripped out projects, reduced commitments and worst of all, they removed the timelines. Those timelines were not just lines on a chart; they were the one piece of information Manitobans could use to hold the government accountable.

People could see when a project was supposed to start, when it was supposed to finish and they could plan around it. RMs could schedule their own local work to line up with provincial projects. Businesses could plan shipments, developers could plan builds, and everyone knew that if the government missed a date, that they could be called out on it.



Now that accountability is gone. The NDP plan is a list without a schedule, it's a promise without a deadline, no one knows when a project will start or how long it will take.

Honourable Speaker, that's not planning, it's hiding. This is a government that wants credit for taking—talking about projects without ever committing to delivering on them. This removal of accountability is not just a transportation issue; it is part of a larger pattern that has become endemic to this government.

Whether it's roads, health care or housing, they are quick to make announcements and slow to provide any measurable results. They manage by press release instead of by performance. You see it most clearly in rural Manitoba. Here in the Interlake, we have roads like PR 323, 424, 220 that are critical to our manufacturers, our truckers and our farmers. Every day those roads are left to deteriorate is another day of lost productivity. It costs businesses money, and it costs families time.

And yet, when we ask when the next ground work is scheduled, no one can say because there's no timelines, because the government deliberately removed them.

Honourable Speaker, this lack of transparency has real economic consequences. In Lakeside, we have manufacturers who rely on these roads to ship product. We have heavy equipment dealers, building suppliers, trucking companies that need predictable access to their markets. They cannot operate efficiently if they never know when the next repair will happen or if their main route will even be open after the next rain.

Notwithstanding the fact that this year was one of the driest in recent memory, every downpour reveals just how fragile these secondary PR roads have become. Poor drainage and soft basins mean that a few inches of rain could undo months of maintenance.

The same sections fail again and again. Instead of rebuilding them properly, the department just patches them up until the next storm.

This reactive short-term approach is no way to manage a transportation network, Honourable Speaker. It is costly, it's inefficient, and unfair to the people who depend on these roads. Local rural municipalities and ratepayers have been doing their best fill the gap. They contribute gravel, they maintain approaches and they even help direct traffic when it's needed, but they cannot replace the provincial responsibility that has been abandoned.

It does not have to be this way, Honourable Speaker. It is entirely possible for the minister of the department to engage with local stakeholders and create a maintenance plan that reflects real community needs. Municipalities know which culverts are failing and which stretches flood every year. Businesses know which roads are vital to their operations. The solutions are there if anyone at the top is willing to listen.

What we need is leadership that values results over headlines. We need a department that answers the phone, meets with municipalities and publishes a transparent plan that includes start dates, completion dates and progress updates. We need to bring back the timelines that hold the government accountable to the people who pay for these roads.

Until that happens, Manitobans in places like Lakeside will continue to live with deteriorating roads, uncertain schedules and empty promises. We will continue to see businesses slowed down, equipment rerouted and farmers forced to drive miles out of their way just to get to market.

Honourable Speaker, the people of Lakeside deserve better. The people of Manitoba deserve better. It's time for government to stop erasing accountability and start delivering the infrastructure that rural Manitobans have been waiting for.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### House Business

**MLA Jim Maloway (Vice-Chairperson, Standing Committee on Public Accounts):** I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. to consider the following: (1) Auditor General report, Physicians' Billings, dated January 2021; Auditor General report, Automatic Vehicle Location Management Systems, dated June 2021; (3) Auditor General report, Follow Up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated February 2024, regarding Physicians' Billings and Automatic Vehicle Location Management Systems; and Auditor General report, Follow Up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated February 2025, Physicians' Billings.

And I have a second announcement. Would like to announce the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet in camera on Monday, November 17, at 1 p.m. to consider the following: the Auditor General strategic audit planning session.

Thank you. *[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

It's been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Tuesday, October 28, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. to consider the following: Auditor General's report, physicians billings, dated January 2021; Auditor General's report, Automatic Vehicle Location Management Systems, dated June 2021; Auditor General's report, Follow Up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated February 2024, Physicians' Billings, Automatic Vehicle Location Management Systems; and Auditor General's report, Follow Up of Previously Issued Recommendations, dated February 2025, Physicians' Billings.

It's also been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet in camera on Monday, November 17, 2025, at 1 o'clock p.m. to consider the following: Auditor General's strategic audit planning session.

The honourable Government House Leader—*[interjection]* Orders of the day.

#### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** Honourable Speaker, can you please call the government resolution on the appointment of the seniors' advocate, followed by second reading of Bill 48, The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act.

**The Speaker:** It has been announced that we will now call the government resolution appointment of the seniors' advocate for debate, followed by second reading of Bill 48, the protection—The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act.

So the floor is now open for debate on the government motion.

\* (14:50)

#### GOVERNMENT RESOLUTION

##### Appointment of the Seniors' Advocate

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** I'd like to read the—I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe),

WHEREAS a subcommittee of the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs was struck to manage the hiring process for a seniors' advocate; and

WHEREAS the subcommittee, following an open competition and consideration of applicants, recommended to the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs that Leigh Anne Caron be appointed seniors' advocate; and

WHEREAS the Standing Committee on Legislative Affairs recommends the same to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to section 2 of The Seniors' Advocate Act, Leigh Anne Caron be appointed as seniors' advocate, effective November 12, 2025.

**The Speaker:** It's been moved by the honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice, that—

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**The Speaker:** Dispense.

The floor is now open for debate.

If there's no—the honourable member for Agassiz.

**Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz):** I had the privilege of being part of the subcommittee, the committee responsible for hiring, and it's a privilege to stand in this Chamber today to speak on the senior advocate office.

For all of us involved in the hiring process, I think it was a first-time experience and a learning one for all of us, so we got to see what that process looked like from a different perspective. We all took this approach with great care and consideration.

I sincerely hope that this new office will effectively provide the vital services and supports for our seniors here in Manitoba. They deserve assistance, respect and supports and resources as our population ages here in the province. It's essential that we offer these resources and services and guidance to those who need it.

The interview was—the interview process was very thorough, and I want to take a moment to acknowledge everyone who took the time to consider the opportunity. It was a very in-depth process through the interview as well as the application, and their contributions to that effort was greatly appreciated, so thank you to those that took part in that process.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the senior advocate office and the recent appointment of Leigh Anne Caron to that office. Congratulations, and I wish her all the very best as she, you know, looks forward to starting her new role in that responsibility.

It is very crucial that we remain steadfast to our commitment to support the seniors in the province of Manitoba, and like I said, I do look forward to seeing

the outcomes and the successes of that and the supports and resources and guidance that this office is able to provide to the seniors here in Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**MLA Fontaine:** I just want to take a couple of minutes just on behalf of our government caucus on this side of the Chamber to just say miigwech to everybody that was on the subcommittee. I know I've sat on a couple of subcommittees myself in respect of hiring independent legislative roles, and thank them for their work that they did. And on behalf of our government caucus, I want to just welcome Leigh Anne Caron to her new position. We look forward to the work that she will be doing on behalf of all Manitobans, on behalf of all seniors.

And then, finally, I actually just want to acknowledge all of the folks in community that have been advocating for a seniors' advocate for many years. And I want to acknowledge, actually, the member for Tyndall Park (MLA Lamoureux), as well, who has also advocated for a seniors' advocate.

But it really is—I think today's motion is a testament to everybody working together on this really important role, but really centring that work in community, and seniors who have really advocated for many years. Certainly, you know, the seven and a half years that the PCs were in government, they were repeatedly advocated for by members of the community for a seniors' advocate.

So today is a good day. I'm proud of our government to finally put in legislation that established the seniors' advocate. And we know and we have faith in this new role and in the new advocate in being able to do her job and serve Manitobans.

Miigwech.

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** It's an honour to be here today as someone who had the privilege of serving on the hiring committee for Manitoba's new senior advocate, and I want to thank all the rest of the members that were on the panel as well.

Our seniors built this province. They worked hard, raised families, volunteered their communities and helped shape Manitoba we're proud of today. I'm proud that it was our former Progressive Conservative government that recognized this need and created a stand-alone department of seniors and long-term care, the first of its kind in Manitoba's history, that ensured seniors' issues wouldn't get lost in the shuffle, and it

laid the groundwork for the advocate's position we're celebrating today.

To all Manitoba seniors: thank you. You've given so much, and you continue to inspire us every day. We're committed to ensuring your voices are heard and respected, not just today but every day in the work we do.

Thank you very much.

**The Speaker:** There are no further speakers? Then is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Speaker:** The question before the House is the government resolution calling for the creation—or the appointment of the seniors' advocate.

All those in—is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

## SECOND READINGS

### Bill 48—The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act

**The Speaker:** So now we'll move on to second reading of Bill 48, The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act.

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), that Bill 48, The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act, now be read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of this bill, and I table the message.

**The Speaker:** Been moved by the honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness, seconded by the honourable Minister of Families, that Bill 48, The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of this bill.

**Ms. Smith:** Manitobans, like other provinces and territories, is facing a serious substance use and addiction crisis. The existing legislation, The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act, was drafted decades ago, and its intent was to provide an alternative to detention and the justice system for people intoxicated by alcohol.

While alcohol is still a significant addiction for many people, the landscape of substance use has

dramatically changed, and the current legislation is not sufficient to serve people intoxicated by substances other than alcohol who are a danger to themselves or others.

Repealing The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act and replacing it with The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act would enable an individual who are under the influence of substances other than alcohol to also be detained in a protective-care centre.

We have heard the concerns of community regarding Manitobans who use meth and other substances and the need to provide a secure and safe place to recover from the effects of acute intoxication.

\* (15:00)

The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act provides a definition of intoxication—intoxicated, which enables individuals who are intoxicated by alcohol and/or other substances, including meth, to be taken to a protective-care facility. This act will broaden the care that can be provided to people who are under the influence.

While individuals can still be taken to a detention centre for up to 24 hours, there is an option to take individuals to a protective-care facility for up to 72 hours. As people who are under the influence of methamphetamine can remain intoxicated and at risk to themselves or others for a longer period, they can remain at the protective-care facility for up to 72 hours to stabilize and potentially access supports and services to lead to a healthier life.

Protective-care facilities are staffed by health-care and social services professionals and are guided by a public health approach. We want to ensure that Manitobans who are under the influence of substances are protected and cared for and not criminalized. They deserve to be provided with oversight by health-care professionals and to have the opportunity to access addiction supports and services if they so choose, to pursue recovery.

The proposed bill will allow peace officers to remove individuals from the community who are potentially a danger to themselves or others without criminalizing them or tying up law enforcement resources in hospitals.

So I invite all members of this House to stand in support, Honourable Speaker. This bill will help to keep our communities safe while ensuring that Manitobans are protected and cared for and are pro-

vided with health care and access to addiction supports and services while they are recovering from intoxicification by alcohol and other substances.

I look forward to quick passage of this bill and unanimous support from this House so that we can keep Manitobans safe, free up our police officers, take the pressure off of our emergency rooms, connect people with the care that they so desperately need.

So let's send this to committee, hear from Manitobans and get this legislative change so that Manitobans can get the services that they so desperately need in this province.

Miigwech.

### Questions

**The Speaker:** So a question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any opposition or independent member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions may be asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition member. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Thank you to the minister for giving me a briefing on this yesterday.

My question is, what is the projected increase in detentions if 72 hours is allowed region by region in Manitoba?

**Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness):** I want to thank that member for the question.

So right now, it's a 24-hour period that folks are held under alcohol. This is just increasing the amount of time to 72 hours. So we'll be collecting that data as that time increases. And, again, it's about keeping people safe, providing access to the supports and care that they need.

And, you know, I thank the member for coming to the briefing and asking some great questions, and I look forward to working collaboratively and making sure that Manitobans have access to care, but, more importantly, that we keep our communities safe.

**Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland):** I'd like to ask the minister what evidence or experiences from other

provinces or other jurisdictions exist for supporting this kind of care.

**Ms. Smith:** So I thank that member for that question.

So this is really about diversion. Other provinces have diversion from hospitals, from criminalizing folks from jail. This is really about supporting people, meeting where they're—meeting them where they're at.

So it's—Ottawa does this. They have a diversion program where if someone's under intoxication—it doesn't take away if someone is doing a crime; they still, you know, will be criminalized for that. If they need medical support, they will still go to the hospital. This is more about supporting people, meeting them where they're at, keeping our communities safe and getting them the supports that they need. And expanding it from 24 hours to 72 hours, and making sure that they have resources and pathways into recovery.

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

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** Honourable Speaker, as you know, I represent a rural constituency, and I'm wondering if the minister can tell the House if there's any plans to construct new protective-care centres in rural or northern communities to meet the requirements of Bill 48?

**Ms. Smith:** So I want to thank that member for that question, and certainly we have—we're looking at Winnipeg right now, but certainly Brandon, Thompson, and we are having discussions with other jurisdictions.

This is something that's right across the province. We have had discussions with municipalities, because certainly we've seen substance use right across our province, and everyone wants to make sure that folks have pathways to folks getting the supports that they need. We know that we've put more police officers on the streets to help folks, but even expanding those officers to make sure that they're freed up to do the services that they need, as well as hospitals.

So, again, diversion, expanding and making sure that people are getting the supports that they need to get into recovery—

**The Speaker:** Time has expired.

**MLA Bereza:** The bill mentions protective-care centres, but does not define them. Will they be new builds, will they be repurposed buildings, or what is the—what will a protective-care centre be?

Thank you.

**Ms. Smith:** I want to thank that member for that question. So right now, when we look at 'detentchive'-care centres, we look at Main Street Project as an example. So they have a detention-care—or a centre where they take folks for up to 24 hours. So it would be similar to that; a locked facility where people would be under, you know, the care of medical supervision.

They would be detained up to 72 hours, and again, looking at expanding that outside of Manitoba, Thompson, Brandon. But right now we're looking at Winnipeg, and Main Street Project is a good example of that. So I'd invite that member to go for a visit and look at their centre.

**Mrs. Stone:** So under this legislation, do currently designated detox facilities automatically become protective-care facilities?

**Ms. Smith:** So this isn't a detox centre. This is a detention protective-care centre, so this is making sure that people are connected and supported as they are coming down from intoxicification for up to 72 hours under medical supervision.

So it's just expanding from 24 hours to 72 hours, because we see that folks are under intoxicification for longer than 24 hours, and under the influence of more than just alcohol.

This legislation hasn't been changed for years and years and years, and we see the use of drugs expanded well beyond alcohol. And this is a call from medical experts, from policing, from—

**The Speaker:** Time is expired.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** If no protective-care centre exists in a rural community, what options will be available to police and local authorities?

**Ms. Smith:** So, I want to thank that member for that question. And, again, as we are building out this legislation we are in talks with municipalities, with First Nations. What the—what that looks like, and again looking at Main Street Project as an example, right now organizations will use—like, in First Nations they will use their facilities as a detention centre.

But we want to ensure that we are supporting folks when they are coming down from intoxicins. So we will be building out that model as we are changing this legislation to ensure that we are supporting.

What's most important about this legislation that it is changing from 24 hours to 72 hours—

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

\* (15:10)

**MLA Bereza:** Speaking of the Main Street Project, so building or retrofitting protective-care centres will cost money. Operating them will cost money.

You had mentioned you had spoken—the minister had mentioned that they had spoken to municipalities, so who pays: the Province, the health regions or the municipalities, or a combination of all?

**Ms. Smith:** So, again, I want to thank that member for that question, and as we're building out this legislation, again, it's about expanding this from 24 to 72 hours. And this is a call from policing, Winnipeg fire paramedics, from municipalities who are seeing an increase in folks using substances other than alcohol. And how do we keep our communities safe? And what tools do we have to hold folks beyond 24 hours?

So we're going to be working with communities to figure out what that infrastructure is and how we can support those communities.

**Mrs. Stone:** So if the minister could please explain if there will be any requirements or buffer zones preventing either the detention facilities or the protective-care facilities from being near schools, playgrounds, daycares, parks, anywhere that children might be close to or ordinarily go to.

**Ms. Smith:** Again, if you look at where Main Street Project is situated, this is about, you know, protecting folks who are under intoxicification. These folks are brought there by a police officer. They are detained there until they are so deemed to be not intoxicated and released on their own free will or released to someone that is in control to be able to take care of them.

And this will be no different than what the legislation is now except expanding those hours of detaining someone from 24 to 72 hours, and under what intoxicins, so from alcohol—

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

**Mr. Nesbitt:** Honourable Speaker, I'm curious what happens when a person is released who is not ordinarily a resident of the community where the protective-care centre is located.

Will they be provided with transportation to their home community?

**Ms. Smith:** I know the member, my—when they were asking questions on this bill, they had asked that very question, and we had let them know that that was something that we would be talking to the municipalities and the communities about. Often, folks will

be living in those communities, so it's something that we will definitely be discussing with communities.

And, again, we are talking about the bill and expanding the authority from 24 to 72 hours and what protection looks like in a protective-care centre: who will be providing services in the protective care—in the protective units, and how—who—alcohol and the substances that are outside of that.

**MLA Bereza:** Honourable Speaker, we've been talking about going from 24 to 72 hours, so these facilities will need, likely, more staff including doctors, psych nurses, addiction counsellors, security.

Does the province currently have enough qualified professionals to do this, or what is the plan for this?

Thank you.

**Ms. Smith:** Yes, I want to thank the member for that question, and we've been working on expanding.

As the member knows, we just announced 800 new treatment spaces here in our province. We're ensuring that we are making sure that there's pathways into treatment as people are so wishing to go that route. And, again, it will be staffed by medical personnel to ensure that folks that are there, that are coming down from intoxicins, that they are—you know, get the medical support that they need.

We will also have mental health workers there. We will have folks that will provide housing so that they're stable, if someone doesn't have access to housing that we will have resources and pathways for them to get—

**The Speaker:** Time has expired.

**Mrs. Stone:** When speaking about protective-care facilities, where—will individuals be allowed or able to voluntarily admit themselves, or families members who wish to come to a protective facility and admit one of their family members or close friends? Will that be allowed through this legislation?

**Ms. Smith:** So thank you for that question.

So what a family member can do is they could call the police and they could do a well-being check, and the police could send someone to go and check on them, and if they're deemed to be someone that needs to go to the protective-care centre, they would be brought there by an officer, under the new legislation. And if that person, after 72 hours, if there is room and they so choose to stay there voluntarily, they can stay for an extended period of time to get extra supports. That is there, if there is room.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** How does the minister envision that staff at protective-care centres will connect individuals to treatment and recovery services once they're released from the 72-hour hold?

**Ms. Smith:** Thank you for that question.

And, again, we just announced 800 new treatment spaces in the province, and we're continuing to add more spaces. I look forward to announcing the 400 other spaces that we're going to be announcing in the province. We're going to continue to work on creating pathways for folks to get into treatment.

It's all about leading people into the supports that they need. We know that folks that are using substances, often it's because of trauma that they've experienced, so we're ensuring that we are having those supports. We're going to have referral so people can get referrals to the supports that they need.

Again, we're going to have mental health workers there—

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

**MLA Bereza:** How will smaller rural communities, such as Swan River, Portage, Thompson, that are being served with the RCMP—how will this affect the amount of time that it takes for them to transport a person that is intoxicated? Will it take away—if they've got to go a number of miles for this, will it take away from the amount of RCMPs that are in the community? Or what is the plan for that?

**The Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care (MLA Asagwara)—*[interjection]* The honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness.

**Ms. Smith:** That is a great question. I've met with a lot of RCMP officers across the province who, you know, have been asking for this kind of legislation to come forward and for there be—for there to be authority for other than officers—RCMP officers to be doing this kind of work, because they often get tied up transporting. And that is why we are looking at Thompson as one of the designated spots to have a detention and care centre.

So I thank the member for that question. We are going to do this work to support and make sure that we have safe communities where people can get access to the supports they need, and I look forward to members opposite supporting sending this community—sending this to committee because this is what Manitobans have been asking for, and we need something like this in our province.

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

### Debate

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

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** Again, thank you to the minister for providing me with a briefing update on this bill yesterday.

It is not—it's not work—sorry.

\* (15:20)

Honourable Speaker, I rise today to speak to Bill 48, The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act. This legislation carries an important intent: to keep Manitobans safe. It aims to ensure individuals who are intoxicated and at risk, whether to themselves or others or the public, receive care instead of punishment. It also gives police and first responders the legal clarity and practical authority they need to manage these situations safely and humanely.

Every member in this Chamber understands that addiction, mental health issues and public intoxication are complex issues that touch every community from Winnipeg to The Pas to Thompson to Portage la Prairie.

*Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

When someone is intoxicated, incoherent and vulnerable in a public place, police officers are often first on the scene. For decades, those officers had limited tools under an outdated law that was never designed for today's realities.

Bill 48 is an attempt to modernize that system, and I recognize the good intent behind it. But with so many laws, the intent only matters if the implementation works. What looks compassionate on paper must also operate compassionately on the ground. The measure of success will not be the press release on the day it passes; it will be what happens six months later when an officer, a nurse or a vulnerable person faces the real-world consequences of how this bill functions.

The existed Intoxicated Persons Detention Act is more than 40 years old. It allows police to hold a person for up to 24 hours and then requires release even if the individual is still impaired or unsafe. Officers have told us that the same individuals cycle through the system repeatedly. They sober up for a few hours, are released, and by next night, they're back on the street, often injured, victimized or re-intoxicated. It's not working for anyone. Police are frustrated, communities are strained and vulnerable Manitobans are not being helped.

Reform is necessary. The goal of giving people a place to recover safely, away from danger, is the right one. The idea of a protective-care centre could be an important step forward. But the questions that arise are practical and unavoidable. What happens when the protective-care centre is full? What happens in communities that don't have one? What happens to the person who does not live in the community where they're detained? If we can't answer those questions, we risk repeating the same mistakes under—only under a new name.

The most pressing concern is capacity. Protective-care centres can only provide protection if there's beds available.

What happens when there are none? Imagine an evening where every protective-care bed is full. Police respond to another call: someone found intoxicated and in danger to themselves. Under this act, police may have the authority to detain the person but nowhere to bring them to.

Do officers hold them in a cell for 24 hours and then release them, even if they're still impaired and vulnerable? This is not care. That is paperwork followed by more risk. We all know the story too well: someone released because the clock ran out, only to end up in a worse situation hours later.

This legislation assumes that capacity will always exist, but that's not the reality. Protective-care centres can only protect people when they have space, staff and proper oversight. Without those, we risk simply moving the problem from one facility to another facility. Front-line officers are stretched thin. They should not have to choose between violating a law by holding someone too long or endangering them by releasing them too early.

The legislation needs clear written protocols for overflow situations. We need to know whether police can transfer individuals between regions, whether temporary emergency beds can be used and who pays for those transfers. Without that clarity, the burden falls unfairly on individual officers and communities to improvise.

As someone who represents a rural constituency, I also have to raise the issue of equity. The experience of addiction and intoxication is not limited to Winnipeg, but most of the resources are. Most rural and northern communities do not have facilities, mental health stabilization units or safe sobering spaces.

So when a person is found intoxicated in a place like Ashern, Grand Rapids or Zhoda, what happens?

Will police be expected to drive that person hundreds of kilometres to a city facility that would tie up police officers for hours on end, leaving entire regions without coverage? It would also create risk during transport. An intoxicated unstable person in the back of a vehicle for several hours is not in a safe situation for anyone.

Or will the person be kept overnight in a small detachment cell, monitored by officers, who have no medical training, until the 24 hours are up? If that's the case, this bill changes nothing for rural Manitoba except the name on the paperwork. It is true—if this government truly wants equality of care, it must commit to funding protective-care centres in rural regions or creating mobile stabilization units that can provide the same service locally. Anything less leaves rural Manitobans behind once again.

Another serious concern is what happens after detention. Bill 48 allows an individual to be held up to 72 hours in protective—in a protective-care centre, but at the end of that time, they must be released. This bill is silent on what happens next. If that person is a local resident, they may be able to return home to connect with family, but what about the person who is from out of town or from another province entirely? What about someone who came to Winnipeg for a visit, a medical appointment or temporary work and is detained under this law? When are they released?

When they are released, they may have missed their bus or their flight home. They may have no phone, no wallet, no ID and no idea how to get home. They may be disorientated, still unwell and standing outside the centre with no transportation and no supports, and we know the type of weather conditions that we can have in Manitoba. That person is now, and even more, in a more precarious situation than ever before. They could be targeted by predators, traffickers, especially if they're young or if they're alone. They could wander into unsafe environments and end up right back in danger once again.

If this law is about protection, protection cannot stop at the door. There must be a release plan in process. There must be transportation options, referrals to safe shelters or co-ordination with family or community services. Otherwise we are setting people up to fail the moment they walk out.

\* (15:30)

We also need clarity on what happens when someone is released but is not ordinarily a resident in that community. Does the government provide trans-



portation home? Will municipalities be reimbursed for assisting?

We know that there is community safety officers in some communities across Manitoba, but we also know that they may not have the proper transportation in order to get these people home safely.

These are not small logistical questions. They're fundamental to making the system work and be more humane. Detention by itself does not solve addiction. Keeping someone safe for 72 hours may prevent one tragedy, but will not change their life unless there is a bridge to recovery.

Protective-care centres should be that bridge. When an individual sobers up and is stable, staff should have the ability to connect them immediately with treatment, housing support or social workers. But, again, that is going to take more people.

Yet the bill provides no guarantee of that. It describes detention and release but no transition. If we want this to be more than a revolving door, we must ensure that every protective-care centre has formal agreements with treatment centres, RAAM clinics and community organizations. Individuals leaving care should leave with a plan, not just a pamphlet. Otherwise, we risk repeating the same cycle again—intoxication, detention, release and relapse.

Another issue that deserves careful attention is where these facilities will be located. Manitobans support the goal of care but they also expect common sense. Protective-care centres should never be placed beside schools, playgrounds or daycares or where people gather. Parents should not have to worry about their children walking past these facilities on their way to class.

The government should consult with municipalities before approving sites. Local leaders understand their communities and can help identify suitable locations that balance accessibility with public safety.

The same principle applies to staffing. These centres must be secured, must be medically equipped and must be professionally staffed. Many of the individuals brought in will be in crisis. They could be violent, they could be unpredictable or suffering from medical complications.

Front-line staff members must have proper training, protective equipment and ability to call for assistance when needed. Anything less than that puts both the staff and the clients at risk.

Transparency is also essential. Manitobans deserve to know whether this policy is working. That means regular reporting on how many protective-care centres exist—my apologies, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Transparency is also essential. Manitobans deserve to know where the policy is working. That means regular public reporting, metrics to know how many people this is working for, if we need more staff, if we need more transportation. It's critical that there's metrics that go along with this.

That means public reporting on how many protective-care centres exist, where they are located, how many individuals are admitted and released, how many are turned away because no bed was available and how many are connected to treatment or follow-up supports. Without those numbers, the government could claim success without evidence.

Transparent reporting would allow legislators, communities and service providers to see whether the program is achieving its goals or whether adjustments need to be happening. Success should be measured by outcomes, fewer repeat detentions, fewer intoxication-related injuries, fewer police hours spent on these calls and more people entering recovery.

There are also financial realities that can't be ignored. Establishing and staffing protective-care centres will cost money. Rural and northern regions without such facilities will face added expenses for transportation, policing or emergency medical transfers. If the government does not clearly outline who pays those costs, they will fall on municipal budgets and local police services that are already stretched razor-thin.

Similar, if there are no overflow protocols and police must hold individuals longer because facilities are full, liability and overtime costs will rise. We must not put officers or local governments in those kinds of positions.

Other jurisdictions have attempted similar systems. In Saskatchewan and Alberta, sobering and assessment centres have shown mixed results. Where they are well funded and linked to treatment, they reduce pressure on police and hospitals. Where they are underfunded or isolated from health services, they simply become holding cells under another name. None of us want that. We want something that will work.

Manitoba has the opportunity to design a model that integrates policing, health care and community support, but that will only happen if regulations accompany this bill, are thorough, transparent and

publicly debated. And here lies another critical point: an overreliance on waiting for the regulations to iron out the details is risky because it removes the oversight of this Chamber and to the public.

The most consequential parts of this law—how people are detained, where are they sent, how long can they be held and how are they released—will be decided behind closed doors if they are left entirely to regulation.

Regulations are not debated here. They are not subject to amendment in committee. They are drafted by departments, approved by Cabinet and only made public after the fact. By that time, it is too late for people's representation to intervene.

When government says: we're working on the details, they will come later—it is often the details that matter the most. Those details determine whether someone is safely cared for or left stranded, whether rural communities receive funding or not, whether a facility—excuse me; sorry, honourable Deputy Speaker—whether a facility opens next to a school or in an appropriate location.

Leaving that all to regulation means trusting that it will be done right without the benefit of legislative scrutiny. Manitobans deserve better than faith-based governance. The role of this Assembly is to examine, debate and refine laws before they are enacted. If we allow government after government to pass broad, enabling legislation and then fill in the substance later, we risk reducing this House to a ceremonial role only.

\* (15:40)

We are here to safeguard transparency and accountability. That responsibility cannot be outsourced to regulation writers or bureaucratic discretion.

To maintain the public confidence there must be independent oversight. Protective-care centres should be subject to regular inspections, clear standards of care and complaint mechanisms for both clients and staff. Annual reports should be tabled to this Assembly.

Addiction and mental health policy evolve quickly. What works today may not work in five years, as we have seen this drug situation become bigger and bigger over the last number of years.

The legislation should include a built-in review clause requiring the minister to report on outcomes within three years of implementation.

Honourable Speaker—honourable Deputy Speaker—I believe in the goal of this bill. Addictions and public

intoxication are not crimes, but they are communities' crisis. People deserve safety and dignity. Officers deserve clarity and support. Families deserve to know that their loved ones are not left to fend for themselves in the street or a jail cell.

But compassion cannot be selective. It cannot depend on where you live or whether there happens to be an empty bed that night. It must be built into the structure of the law itself.

Bill 48 cannot succeed if the government listens to police, health-care providers, municipality and families for their—sorry—if the government does not listen to police, health-care providers, municipalities and families and incorporates their feedback.

If it ignores those voices, the same gaps that exist today will still exist tomorrow and only under a different name. We cannot claim to protect vulnerable people if we release them into danger the moment their time runs out. We cannot promise if only some communities have access to care and we cannot call it protective detention if there is no safe place to detain someone when they need it most.

Manitobans want practical, humane solutions. They want a system that works on the ground, not just in theory. They want a government that measures outcomes, admits that there's been mistakes made and learn from those mistakes, adjust the course when necessary. That is the standard that this legislation must meet, and if it does, it will certainly receive the support from every side of this House.

And I have a few more comments, honourable Deputy Speaker.

Some of the concerns that I've heard, again, just over the last 24 to 48 hours because this has been something that's been new to me, is, you know, some of the questions that have been posed to me by some people out there is the bill mentions protective-care centres but doesn't define them.

Again, I think that's an important piece that we must get. Will they be new buildings or will they be things like repurposed hospital wings? Where will they be located? In Portage? In Winnipeg? In Brandon? What about communities like Thompson and Swan River? If rural Manitobans have to be transported long distances, we introduce risks of cost, delay and the person's condition may deteriorate in transit.

These facilities cannot operate without capable staff, from doctors to psychiatric nurses, to addictions counsellors to security. Does the province currently

have enough qualified professionals? What kind of training and recruitment and retention plans exist? Without such planning, a 72-hour hold becomes a waiting room without care.

Costs, funding and sustainability: building or retrofitting protective-care centres will cost money. Operating them will cost money. Who pays? Will it all be on the Province? Will it be part of the health regions' budgets? Will it be on the municipalities? We need to know, and Manitobans need to know the operating budget and who is liable if that cost overruns.

Winnipeg may see easier access, but what about remote and northern communities? The model must adapt to Manitoba's geography, not force Manitobans to adapt to a centralized model.

Detention is only one step; what's the downstream plan? If, after 72 hours, someone is still unstable, what is the next step? Are there enough treatment beds, long-term services, mental health support to accept these individuals? Without that, people may be released prematurely or stay in limbo.

We must protect civil liberties. People under detention must have rights to legal counsel, appeal, independent review and treatment. For individuals with mental illness, brain injuries, psychosis, cognitive impairment, the risk of misuse is high.

I just want to talk about a hypothetical situation here. Imagine that we're in Swan River. Someone is taken into a 72-hour protective care. The nearest facility is in Brandon, a three-hour ambulance ride away. The person arrives in a psychotic, drug-intoxicated state. There's minimal psychiatric staff available, no specialist, addiction assessment and no bed in the outpatient treatment program to transition them to.

After two nights, they stay there—after two nights, staff say they're technically sober but unstable. The law requires medical assessment, but no review board or appeal process exists. The individual is released to the street with no follow-up. The community is left to deal with the fallout. Ultimately, it will be the taxpayer, the person and society that bears the cost.

Is that compassionate? Is that good law?

But before moving forward with this bill, the government must publish a detailed 'implementation' plan—including maps, capacities, budgets, staffing models—commit transparency and accountability, guarantee right protections, ensure continuum of care—treatment

and mental health services must be ready to receive—secure long-term funding and cost sharing, so that these programs are sustainable.

I support the principle: the individual suffering from substance intoxication deserves safety, dignity and care, not simply abandonment or criminalization. But principles without structure are empty. We cannot pass a law that detains people for up to—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

The member's time has expired.

**Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record here this afternoon with regards to Bill 48.

\* (15:50)

I wanted to just begin by commending and thanking my colleague, the member for Point Douglas, the Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith), on this important and groundbreaking legislation that she is bringing forward here today in the Legislature. It is incredibly important from the perspective of the Department of Justice, I think from a larger kind of public safety lens, and I'm going to talk a little bit about that today.

But I also just wanted to point out that really this is an incredible piece of work for all Manitobans to ensure that they have access to resources that I know her department works very hard to stand up every day. And this is an important way to get those folks the access to those resources that they need. And it's just incredible work.

We know that the department—speaking of the Department of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness—is really rebuilding a series of supports and resources for people who are suffering with addictions, who are suffering with mental health issues.

And they're putting their money where their mouth is, so to speak, honourable Speaker. They're working with community, they're working with the sector; and they're doing all of this, you know, to establish and re-establish some of the supports that were cut under the previous government. It's tough work. It's complicated work. But I want to emphasize that this piece of the puzzle that the minister has brought forward here today is such a critical element to making sure that that plan is successful.

So, again, I just wanted to commend her. This is an incredible amount of work that she's done, that her

team has done in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, ensuring that we have the partners with us as we're moving forward on this important work.

With regards to my perspective as the Minister of Justice, I've got to say, this was one of, if not the first thing, that I heard from law enforcement, first when I was—when we were in opposition, when I was critic and when I became the minister. They said—they told me how their resources were being tied up dealing with an ever-growing issue of addictions and of public safety concerns around those addictions.

And, you know, again, I heard about this in opposition. This was a straightforward thing. This was something that government could take action on. But of course, there was no action. There was no action by the previous government.

And so, as I said, when I became minister, one of the first things I did is I reached back out to some of those folks in law enforcement and I said, what can we do to make this a reality for you? What tools can we give you to make sure that you have what you need to be effective in keeping our communities safe and ultimately getting people the help that they need?

And so that's where the work really began. And it began by understanding that for the—you know, your average officer on the street who is absolutely swamped with the amount of work that is being asked of them every single day, they need to make decisions. They need to make decisions about how much support and how much help they can give. They need to make decisions about resources and about where to deploy.

And if their resources are being tied up, essentially bringing people who have serious addictions and mental health issues to the wrong place, to a place where they cannot be helped or they won't—they don't have the resources or the ability to help them, then that's a complete waste of those resources.

And we heard, you know, for the average officer, you pick somebody up who's causing an issue out in community, they'll be taken to, oftentimes, to an emergency room, and—an emergency room in one of our hospitals, where now this officer has to stay with that person, they have to ensure that there's safety of the public and safety of that individual. They have to wait in that waiting room like everyone else. And then when they get seen, maybe they have an ability to access some of the supports, or maybe they don't because it's that specific medical facility.

And so we recognized that this wasn't the model; this wasn't working. This was tying up not only the

resources of law enforcement who have to spend the time to transport and wait with the patient, wait with them while they're, you know, waiting to get access to services; or it's not sustainable when it comes to the resources in the emergency rooms. Our doctors, they don't have the ability to deal with people who are suffering from a meth-induced psychosis.

So we needed to come up with a new strategy, and that's what really this bill is all about. It's about giving the tools to law enforcement, to our medical—medically trained staff, to ensure they have that up to 72-hour window to begin to understand what are the needs, make sure that that person be—you know, stops becoming a danger to themselves or to the public, and then to offer them supports on the back end.

We know that right now our current legislation is restrictive. It's a 24-hour period. And, you know, it's no wonder, because this was created decades ago. This was the legislation that was created, The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act, to talk about people who are intoxicated by alcohol.

And it's a different scenario when you're talking about somebody who's intoxicated by alcohol. You know, right now they're sent off to the Martha Street detention centre; they have a few hours, maybe up to 24 hours, but certainly a sort of a shorter time period; they sober up and then they're able to be, to be let back out.

This is the kind of model that makes sense when it comes to alcohol, right? Somebody has a shorter time of recovery and then they're back out and able to access supports if they can, but ultimately they're free to go.

When it comes to meth, we know that it's a much more complex high, and it's a much more complex situation about how that recovery would look. And, quite frankly, 24 hours just wasn't enough. And so law enforcement's hands were tied. Again, they didn't have the ability under the previous IPDA act to bring those folks to a facility like over on Martha Street.

So that's where they access the hospital. In some cases they would, you know, be forced to criminalize somebody, find a charge that would allow them to be brought into a holding cell at—within law enforcement. These are all the kinds of options that ultimately don't serve the public because they tie up more resources than are necessary, and ultimately they don't give the person the kind of supports that they need.

And so by bringing forward Bill 48, we're really bringing ourselves into the modern reality of the

challenge that we face. We're really, you know, meeting that challenge head on, and we're giving law enforcement the tools that they need to be able to keep our streets safe.

You know, if somebody's out on the street corner, they're having a conversation, to put it nicely, with themselves or with others in a threatening way; if they're acting violently out on our streets, if they're intoxicated in a way that, as the average person, you drive by and you see them and you don't know if they're safe or not, if they have the medical attention that they need, we want to give law enforcement, we want to give our first responders the tools to bring that person in, not have to criminalize them, but to ultimately give them a safe place to sober up.

And what we've heard from not only, as I said, first responders, our law enforcement, but from those with lived experience, that this is something that they appreciate, that there's a place that they could go where they can sober up and then start thinking about what's next and maybe take that positive path, make a better choice in life and do better for themselves and for their families.

That's the kind of options we want to be able to give, and ultimately the existing system just doesn't allow for that kind of flexibility.

Now I know that the member opposite has received a bill briefing, so he's pretty well briefed up. He does have a number of questions, and I've got to say, I think most of those questions have been answered by our minister here in the House, and certainly in the bill briefing.

What I will say is, is that if he needs further assurance, I'd be happy to share that with him, make sure he understands some of the dynamics. I know some of the questions he was asking about is the, you know, the equity and the rural settings, making sure that they have the resources that they need. Again, just to be clear, these are additional tools that will be offered to law enforcement. This is in addition to the current IPDA regulations, so in other words there is still an ability to take somebody if they—you know, alcohol intoxication, there's still an ability to treat them in that way. But this just gives more flexibility to law enforcement.

And that's not just in the city of Winnipeg. We're talking about other places. You know, he talked about Grand Rapids or Zhoda. Well, listen, we're working with those communities as well, because in many cases they have community safety officers, they have

other law enforcement or designated authority that could be given to make sure that there is support for law enforcement.

\* (16:00)

But it gives those folks the additional tools to be able to bring somebody in, give them the supports that they need, make sure that they're safe both to themselves and then to the community before they're let back out. It gives them more flexibility. It gives them more assurances. It just really gives those additional tools that law enforcement, not just in the city of Winnipeg but across the province, have been asking for.

And so—you know, I know that there's, again, there's that sort of a fine line between asking questions—I think that's an important part of the debate—but what I heard from the member opposite, I do hope that he's coming to this in an honest way, that he wants these questions answered. We're going to make sure we get those questions answered so that he's got the confidence.

But then that we just move forward on this because it's coming from a broad range of stakeholders. You know, we had the chief of the Winnipeg police here standing with us, supporting this legislation. We had several doctors who've written to the minister supporting this legislation. We have the sector who are working around issues of homelessness, around addictions and around mental health issues who are supporting this legislation. Like, this is—this has got broad support.

And what I want to be clear about is that we have done the consultations outside of the city of Winnipeg as well, and we know that we have broad support as well from rural areas because we're just expanding the number of tools that they have. We're giving them more ability to make a difference in their communities. And, you know, you go to a place like Swan River. I know that they're asking for more ability to keep their communities safe, for instance.

You know, the member opposite, again, I'm going to take his words at face value. And in the past, I—it's just been a different story from the PCs. There's a different attitude, and I hope that he's making a very clear distinction between what happened before and what happened—what's happening now.

I know in the past I watched the former premier grab a report on addictions and throw it on the ground like he didn't care. I saw a report that was released under the former minister that said a supervised consumption site was an important part of the overall strategy here in Manitoba, and then, oh, all of a

sudden, we got a new version of the report and that was taken out, you know, with no explanation given.

That's the kind of disrespect that we saw to this issue under the previous government. They put their heads in the sand. And, again, when what I'm talking about this—these changes to intoxicated persons, we asked for this. We said this was the path forward. We heard it from law enforcement. We heard it from the sector. We understood that this was a winner, so to speak. A path forward for all of us to be on that would reduce resources for law enforcement, reduce resources in the health-care department and get people the supports that they needed—and it was ignored by the previous government.

So while, you know, I hope today is a new day, I hope that the member opposite is just—is listening to those folks, he's listening to those folks that were here as validators and standing with us in support of this bill. I hope that he's listening to community who's saying that this is just another important tool in the tool belt to make sure that we have supports for those who are suffering with addictions, and that he's going to make a clear distinction between what was done before and what their party is going to do now.

You know, I think there are a number of questions that the member opposite raised that I think are, again, I think were answered by the minister, have been answered in bill briefings. But he's talking about co-ordination with other services. He's talking about safe shelters. He's talking about, do folks leave with a plan?

This is the kind of work that we are eager to get into and get everybody on board. Again, under the previous government, there was no supports whatsoever for these folks, and we're taking a different path.

So I think it is—it's certainly an issue that we all can come together on. You know, this is a piece of legislation that's brought forward as quickly as it's developed because we know that it's a priority and we know that if we pass it, it's going to save lives and it's going to make our communities safer.

And that's going to happen quickly. The more that it's delayed—the longer that it's delayed by this House, the chances for those to slip through the cracks, for our communities to be less safe, that just goes up.

And so, look, there's plenty of time for politics on a lot of issues. I hope this is one that we can all come together on. We can vote on it. We can support it. We can move it to committee, and then we can move it on to a third reading and pass it.

This is an important piece of legislation. It has broad support. Let's get everybody in this Chamber on board with it, and let's move it forward.

Thank you, honourable Speaker.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** I'm very happy to stand up and get some words on the record on Bill 48.

We had very open dialogue earlier, starting off, and I appreciate the comments from the minister. It seems the minister is bringing very open answers back, and I appreciate the questions that were done on this side of the House asking very direct questions.

I do need to say before I go any further that I really want to thank all the people who put their lives on the line, the front-line workers who protect us every single day, who protect us from the people that can do harm, from the people that have addictions, people who are not behaving in a way that they should be in our communities. And that goes from our police officers, our safety officers, our front-line staff that work diligently at the hospitals to security officers at those hospitals trying to keep our medical staff safe, to the doctors, to everybody involved on a daily basis; and it could be everywhere from home-care staff that has to knock on a house and then not know what to expect behind that door some days.

So to those people, I appreciate you and I appreciate everything you do.

And from what I've understood in my short period of time to read the information on Bill 48, it looks to replace the Intoxicated Persons Detention Act with Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act, essentially changing the whole period from 24 hours to 72 hours.

I think that everybody, or at least I would hope that every member in this Chamber understands that addiction, mental health challenges, public intoxication are complex issues that touch every community from coast to coast. I've had the extreme privilege of travelling all across North America, and this is not an exclusive problem to Manitoba. The issue of alcoholism and addictions goes throughout the areas I have travelled in North America.

And early on in my career, I was extremely naive. I happened to be in Ottawa at the RCMP Technical and Protective Operations Facility. I was there working with several officers to do an installation of a building. And as I was working on that building, we had an opportunity and we broke for lunch.

And as we all travelled off for lunch, one of the other members had said, how is your son doing? Were you able to get him into a facility? And I was curious, and I asked: I'm not—is your son okay? Is something going on? He says, my son is a drug addict. And I was so naive, I didn't understand how somebody in charge of protecting the rest of Canada could have a son that was a drug addict.

And then I learnt very quickly that addictions does not discriminate. They happen in every socio-economic level, every race, every gender. Every part of our world is faced with these problems. It was a sobering reality for me to see that this happens everywhere, and if you haven't been affected by somebody who has an addictions problem, whether alcoholism or drugs, you are very, very fortunate.

\* (16:10)

I've had my personal struggles with alcohol. I've seen family members have extreme struggles with drug addictions. I've seen it ruin families, families of my aunt and uncle, and I have lost my cousin to a drug overdose.

I have seen families struggle year after year, day after day, minute by minute, with people with addictions. It is a horrible, debilitating disease that has taken way too many of the people we love in our province and our country, and we need to find a way to keep people protected.

I can appreciate on face value Bill 48 would attempt to do that, to take people that are intoxicated and take them into protective custody, instead of having a 24-hour hold, have the ability to keep our streets safe for 72 hours.

But in reading of the bill and listening to the answers given, the idea is fantastic, but it's very similar to trying to design and engineer an airplane in flight. It won't succeed.

I've said many times in this Chamber that if you fail to plan, then you just simply plan to fail. I hope wholeheartedly that the planning will be done on Bill 48 to give every member of law enforcement the tools that they need to give every person who is suffering from drug addictions the opportunities that they can attain, that are deserved, for them to live their best life.

I would love to see a path forward that gives an opportunity, upon being put in a 24-to-72-hour hold, to give them an opportunity to have a path to recovery, to have the ability to speak to counsellors, to speak to

people who have suffered from addictions, to have somebody there on their behalf and tell them the journey is worth the pain. The ability to get sober is incredibly difficult, but once you do it, the rewards are endless.

I like using the phrase when someone talks about addictions, and I tell them being an addict is choosing one thing over everything else. And the road to recovery is very simple. It's taking the ability to give up one thing to get everything you want in life.

And many people head down this path and, unfortunately, a lot of people have to hit rock bottom; they have to lose everything. For the families that have been torn apart, for the families that stood by for years hoping for recovery, hoping there was a pathway forward, hoping that their loved one would come back to them clean and sober, to you—my heart bleeds for you.

I understand your struggles; I've seen it with my aunt and uncle and my cousins. And my cousin that died of a drug overdose was probably one of the sweetest people you could ever meet. He was a poet, he was a musician. He loved art; he created. He loved adventure, and when he was employed he had many different jobs, including being a window cleaner on a skyscraper. Just an incredible individual.

But when he was in the grips of an addiction, he was a monster. He destroyed everything in his path. He became a personality that nobody recognized and a danger to himself and to the people, the very people who loved him the most.

I look across this Chamber and I see a member across has probably seen more people that have had problems with addictions, being a former firefighter. My nephew—of a different family—my nephew is a firefighter, and he says the epidemic is getting worse, it's getting much worse out there.

And the firefighters are putting their lives on the line every single day, dealing with people of addictions, dealing with people that they bring back from Narcan who will blatantly say: No, no, they weren't dead; no, they weren't just about to die. They're okay, leave us alone.

It is a shocking reality out there how, just in a few decades, from having a bill that was intended to protect our society from people who were intoxicated on alcohol, has become more of a grip on people who are intoxicated on illicit drugs.

I spoke in this Chamber before on domestic violence. A tremendous amount of domestic violence happens when persons are intoxicated. And we need to find a way to stop that. We need to find a path to recovery that can find people living and loving in households instead of turning to violence to solve their differences.

I have witnessed first-hand the devastation of people being attacked by people with addictions. I've seen the fear, where people have to leave our province for the fear of stalking and retribution for calling the police on them.

So any opportunity that we can keep our streets safe, any opportunity we can take people from harming one another and we can place a hold on them and provide a path to recovery and tell them how wonderful life can be sober. When you are in the grips of a mental health struggle and you turn to addictions, you're not doing yourself any favours. You need support, you need guidance and you need to be clear-headed. With that, you can move forward in life, not only just for yourself, for your family members around you.

Anybody who has ever suffered from alcoholism or drug addiction and got yourself clean and sober: thank you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. You believed in yourself and you believed in your value for your family.

Anybody who has been in my situation, who would turn to alcohol to relieve stress and then come home and be snappy at your family, say the wrong things, be impatient: there's an opportunity to do better. Your children, your spouse, your family, all they want to do is love you. Take down the barriers that you put up yourself—and sometimes it takes a long time to get there, but sobriety is worth it.

And you will find, if you haven't destroyed those relationships yet, they will come back to you tenfold. The people in your life will genuinely love you the way you should be loved. They ask nothing from you other than for you to be sober.

\* (16:20)

Nobody deserves to feel threatened in their own house. Nobody on the street deserves to be attacked for whatever reason. We need to be in a free society where we can walk down the streets and know that we are safe, that the police have the tools at their disposal to keep us protected and other members of the community demand that from our government.

Addictions have taken way too many lives, and if there's an opportunity with Bill 48—once the bugs get worked out of it—have the opportunity to save a life, then it's worth supporting. But we must make sure we work the bugs out of it.

It's one thing to have a great idea. It's one thing to say, this is what we can do, this is the outcome we want; but I think we're asking for an answer without having a plan to get there. And the questions that were raised today deserve clear, concise answers. We need to know, and Manitobans deserve to know, what does this entail?

How does one determine if somebody is intoxicated? I understand there are different methods involved that the police have at their disposal. We want to make sure that it's standardized, for everybody use the same metrics across the province to—in determining whether somebody will be receiving a up to 72-hour hold.

Where are they going to be placed? We heard some different stories of where the people under hold will be put or housed as they sober up, as their drugs wear off. What about the extra resources that are needed? How do we combat somebody who is violent? What's going to happen in these detention centres when they are understaffed, when you get multiple people on a 72-hour hold? Are the resources going to be there?

Are we going to have the ability to keep our officers and front-line support people protected? Are these people going to be in their community? Are they going to have rapid access to the service they—services that they require to find a pathway forward for sobriety, for treatment? Is somebody going to work with them throughout this process to make sure that their mental well-being is being taken care of?

The number of people that slip—so-called slip—it's more than a slip; it's usually a dramatic fall back into drug addiction or turning to alcohol, happens because they are triggered by something mentally, whether it's stress related, family related, financially related, physically related.

I have seen a good friend of mine, a farmer, who doesn't drink, doesn't do any drugs, severely hurt himself in an accident. Well, I should rephrase that: he didn't hurt himself, but he was hurt in an accident. During the process—the healing process—he was prescribed pain medication and as he healed, his addiction to pain medication became 'increasantly' worse, to the point the doctor would not prescribe him any more pain meds.



He turned to illicit drugs to manage his pain. And as that pain got worse, he got stronger illicit drugs and stronger illicit drugs and stronger illicit drugs, to the point he could no longer afford these drugs.

Through family and friends, they intervened and they got him into a program. And I'm proud to say today that he's clean and sober. He does describe that as the darkest time of his entire life. He said he was out of control, his addictions were the devil that made him do everything on a daily basis.

We need supports for people. We need to make sure that we first protect everybody in society. I've talked about this many times in the Chamber, and it's not just about people that are on addictions, people that are intoxicated; it's from hatred, bigotry and every source of hate you can imagine.

We need to make sure that people are free to believe in the religion they choose or don't choose, free to marry or not marry who they please, free to express themselves as they believe their true self is and be free to walk up and down the streets without being attacked for who you are, where you are or the fact that somebody may be impaired and just wants to attack because they were seeing demons.

We have an obligation in this Chamber to come together and do what's right. And we have seen where the Speaker of this Chamber has admonished us several times for misbehaving. I've talked about our behaviour before and I'm quite disgusted. I would not think children would be permitted to behave the way we do in here, but we do it on a daily basis. We yell across the aisles; we make gestures; we say things that are said that we know in our hearts not to be true; we're called different names; we're putting titles on people, and that needs to stop.

We need to protect people. We need to make sure that, whether you're in this Chamber or on the streets in our beautiful province, that we have the right to exist independently, we have the right to be free of fear, we have a right not to be attacked.

#### *The Speaker in the Chair*

And we also have to make sure that we stand up for the less vulnerable. When people are vulnerable out there, they get preyed upon. And sometimes, that happens with people that are under drug addictions; sometimes it just happens because somebody is a really lousy person.

We can find ways to resolve all of these issues if we work together, but we have to get the details right.

We have to make sure that the centres that we're going to be putting people in have the accommodations. We need to have backup plans. When those centres get full, what do we do? Because we don't want to turn people away that can go harm somebody.

I've heard from many police officers over decades of speaking to them in my community how often their hands are tied or the resources aren't there. We need to ensure that we have those resources available.

We would be such a leading province to show how we can get people from drug addiction to recovery if we use a model that protects people but gives them the services—when people are sobering up and they realize how bad they are doing, when they've hit their lowest of lows, we can say: It only gets better from here. We are here to provide you the tools to lift you up and give you a sober and beautiful life ahead of you.

\* (16:30)

And for those who are struggling through addictions now, it is worth the journey. Look around to your family; look around to your friends. Look at your behaviours. I guarantee you, when you are sober, you would never tolerate anybody treating them the way you do when you are intoxicated.

Addictions can be a choice if you choose sobriety. If you choose to put your family first, you will definitely win the battle. When you face your demons and you reach out for services, and you talk to somebody and you work through your issues, you can be that loving parent, spouse, brother, sister, community member, cousin to your family.

You have an opportunity to choose sobriety. And if you don't choose sobriety, hopefully Bill 48 will create a path for you to get there. But we need to find the answers. We had several questions, and I made the comment how we're designing the airplane while it's in flight. It's extremely dangerous to do.

We have to have consultations with people at the addictions treatment centres, with law enforcement, with family members who have dealt with problems in their own families with people under the influence of drugs and alcohol. We need to have a full collaboration, speaking with doctors and nurses and find out the best way forward to get people off of drugs and actively participating in society, encouraging people to live their best lives.

We deserve that. Everybody in our province, everybody in our country, deserves it. We have allowed this epidemic to grow out of the control for too long.

We have to find the resources to make sure that we do what is right. When break-ins are occurring because people need drug money, sobriety will take care of that. When families are attacked and people are beat up or violently murdered, sobriety will take care of that.

My son grew up with two young men, two brothers. Those brothers were tormented with addictions at an early age. They were involved in many different things. They were known throughout the community: if you didn't lock it down, it would be gone and you'd know where to find it. The last murder we had in Selkirk was perpetrated by one of those boys.

The other boy chose a different path. He is a pillar of our community. He's a firefighter; he's a business owner; he's a property developer, and we could not be more proud of the path that he has chosen. His brother is currently incarcerated and undergoing several programs to get himself through the addictions that he's faced and get himself the mental health supports that he needs.

It's very tragic that it had to come to the point where a life was lost before this individual was incarcerated to protect the rest of the public.

We have an opportunity here to make sure that doesn't happen to anybody else, but the devil is in the details. We need to make sure we get this right, plan for all contingencies to make sure that nobody will fall through the cracks and that everything that happens is for the protection of the people that we are sent here to represent.

I want to thank everybody in the Chamber for listening to me today and the opportunity to speak on this.

Thank you very much.

**Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):** A point of order.

#### Point of Order

**The Speaker:** The honourable opposition leader, on a point of order.

**Mr. Khan:** Earlier today, the Minister of Health rose on a point of order related to hand gestures. I wanted to take this opportunity to offer my apology to the Minister of Health, to the Minister of Education, to members opposite, to anyone in the viewing gallery that may have taken offence.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** So, on—the honourable Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation, on the same point of order.

**Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation):** Can I respond to the point of order?

**The Speaker:** The honourable Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation.

**Mr. Moses:** I think the gesture that I think was referenced by the member opposite in his point of order, I think was very offensive and not the type of action we'd expect for the people who sit in this Chamber—I think it was right at the deputy leader. Call him out on his behaviour, and I want a show of support for the original comments made by our deputy leader, Minister of Health, as well as show support for our incredible Minister of Education.

I also want to show support for anyone who might be offended by those types of gestures and that type of action that, you know, I think we call on—Manitobans expect higher standard of actions by leaders in this position. I know our side of the House we hold ourselves to that standard and we call on all members to do the same.

And with respect, Honourable Speaker, I think you made a decision to review and call the previous point of order made by the Minister of Health that you would under-take that under advisement and review it, and I believe there's a standing tradition that once you take something under advisement, no other member can make comments on that, and so I just wanted to make that known based on the current point of order.

**The Speaker:** I thank the member.

\* (16:40)

So, a couple of things, just on the Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation—not quite correct in his assumption that the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition couldn't rise on a point of order. If a member has accused another member and that member stands up to make an apology; that is allowed to take place. So the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition would be allowed to stand up and offer an apology.

As to the Leader of the Official Opposition being—offering this apology, I was in the process of investigating further to determine exactly what the gestures were. While I accept that the Leader of the Official Opposition has proffered an apology, I plan to continue my investigation, and if I feel that something

more is warranted, I will come back to the House with something more on that.

For today's purposes, the member has apologized. I would hope that he may personally apologize to members that he has offended, but he's not under any obligation, I guess, to do that. But to me—and sometimes I get myself in trouble by going off-script and suggesting people do things that I think are the right thing—but in this case, I think that would be appropriate.

So that should resolve the matter and, like I say, if, when I'm done investigating I have more to say, I will certainly come back to this House and have that to say.

\* \* \*

**The Speaker:** So the debate is continuing. No one else wishing to debate? Is the House ready for the question?

**Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West):** Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and I'd like the opportunity to put a few words on the record here, particularly as it refers to that Bill 48 that we're discussing today.

And it's important to make sure that we look at this, Honourable Speaker, as Bill 48 aims to close a long-standing gap in how Manitobans respond to public intoxication and related safety concerns. And I can certainly speak to that for hours and hours, based on personal experience from both a professional and a personal relationship as it comes to family members that I have also had.

And I'm sure each and every one of us have that same story in here: somebody that has been impacted by addictions and how that can impact families, how it can impact communities and how it can certainly impact that individual. And too many people say that it's their choice, but oftentimes, once that first initial trial of a drug or an intoxicant happens, that person becomes addicted to that substance. And, obviously, the longer a person uses a substance, the more difficult it becomes.

And when I spoke on this at the beginning, I said I wanted to address some of the related safety concerns. And there's certainly a number of safety concerns that I can address. And—pardon me—having been in the law enforcement prior to this for over three decades, The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act was one of the areas that I relied on quite a bit during the course of my duties.

Generally speaking, there wasn't a day that went by where myself, when I was on patrol, or some of our officers had to make use of The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act. And that's simply because so many people have this addiction. And, unfortunately, police are often the only people that are working 24 hours, seven days a week, 365 days a year that are available to respond to these calls that have the legislative authority such as The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act, or otherwise known as IPDA. And so we certainly did, as police officers, and they continue to today, make use of that act.

And I was slightly discouraged today when I heard the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) saying criminalizing people, criminalizing people. So there's no crime in being addicted. And I think that's very important to bring forward.

And when a person is picked up under the intoxication—The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act, IPDA—that person is not a criminal. It is an act that allows for the safe detention of an individual for up to 24 hours and allows them to be held in a custodial setting so that the person is no longer a harm to themselves or a harm to anybody else.

And, Honourable Speaker, there is many, many times where people are, and I'll use the term grossly intoxicated, when police are called. They're unresponsive or passed out or doing gestures or acts that other people find frightening, that they find concerning to the community or to their children or, frankly, to any bystanders.

And we often, at the police service, got calls about that. And of course, we use The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act as a manner to ensure that that individual was safely held in a custodial setting because there actually is—or, for our police service at the Brandon Police Service and the regional area, no other place to bring them at the time other than a custodial setting.

And so that has implications in itself, is that a person who has an addictions issue, who has a substance-use issue, ends up in police custody, and that's just simply because of the laws that are in place.

I know that our government, at the time, several years ago, provided some funding to the City of Brandon—and it's under way—is the building of a sober centre, a place where people can be brought in a non-custodial setting. But, you know, that's still a little ways out. So the police are the ones that have to deal with this and bring people forward to this.

\* (16:50)

So one other thing that kind of caught me in the Minister of Justice's (Mr. Wiebe) discussion on this was that he said, under the previous government, there was no supports for these folks. But I think what he doesn't understand is that today, after two years under this government, there is still no supports and no resources in place because the capacity exceeds what is available for the individuals that are part of this system, and it's kind of like putting the cart before the horse when I look at this legislation.

And, again, I support legislation that is grounded and proven and has all of the resources in place, but I don't see that on first-blush look at this legislation. It talks about a lot of the regulations that will be put into place guiding this and—so it's kind of visionary at this point and not concrete, and certainly no concrete has been laid for the foundations of any of these centres in places in northern areas, rural areas and so the police have jurisdiction.

And generally, in these areas, it is the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the RCMP, or it is a First Nations police service. In Manitoba, it's the Manitoba First Nations police service.

So when we look at that, the infrastructure or the place of detention or, as they put it, the place of safety to bring the people to doesn't exist. And so, vaguely, it says in the act that it would be a place or a part of a place, and so that, again, is very vague of—to where it goes. Under The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act, the person is brought into a custodial setting and looked after.

And so I will also add that the previous PC government did add, through funding paramedics in the cells at Brandon Police Service, to look at addressing this problem so that it could be stepped up one step further so that an intoxicated person, whether it be on alcohol or drugs, can then be monitored and viewed 24-7 by a paramedic.

And having that medical expertise in the cells, that allows the members of the Brandon Police Service, specifically, to have the capability to bring an individual who has been brought in under the intoxicated detention—sorry, Intoxicated Persons Detention Act—or if it was, for example, a breach of peace and they were highly intoxicated, they're brought in—it allows them to be monitored and assessed on a regular basis and be able to be moved from the cells at the Brandon Police Service to a hospital or another area where they can gain medical attention should their situation deteriorate.

And so, again, that was provided by this Progressive Conservative government and worked through with the City of Brandon and the Brandon fire service—fire and paramedic service—so it's a great addition to allow that. And Winnipeg, I know, has very similar set-up in both their detention and at Main Street Project, from my understanding.

So that's the largest city in Manitoba and the second largest city, but so many other places within our province, so many other communities don't have this same privilege to be able to have that for their police officers or whoever is bringing people into custody. So it's important to note that this is impactful probably for the two biggest centres, but it leaves all of rural Manitoba in the limb and saying, where is the equity for them when it comes to this.

And so I agree that there needs to be some change. The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act was really legislated when alcohol was the most serious incident. And with the start of my career—as I said, we're talking at the beginning of the 1990s, late '89—there was very limited times where individuals were picked up intoxicated by a drug. Not saying that it didn't happen, but when it did, it was usually cannabis—marijuana—or some of the other drugs.

And it didn't have the long-lasting impact that we see now with some of the designer drugs and some of the drugs such as methamphetamine that can stay in a person's system for a very long time and causing psychosis beyond their intoxication.

So it is very important to have next steps, but again, we can't put the cart before the horse. We have to make sure that when legislation is brought forward that the capacity is there. And Manitobans are going to see this right away as: Well, we can hold somebody for 72 hours. But realistically, can we, if we don't have the people there to monitor, to facilitate this.

And we're already talking hospitals are over capacity, and wait times are increasing, and we don't have enough health-care workers. Well, for this, it's also going to need health-care workers to monitor people. It's going to need people that can check on their well-being, whether it be counsellors, psychologists, psychiatrists, that sort of area. There may be a need for medical intervention that has to be there and has to be in place.

And I think it can go without saying—and we've heard it many times in this Chamber and particularly brought forward by our very own Health critic, the MLA for Roblin, about the issues that we're facing in

our health-care system right now. And this could actually add that additional burden to it. Yes, it will relieve some areas like the police services in Winnipeg and Brandon. But a lot of the rural areas will be negatively impacted because now they will have to transport this individual to the—whatever location is picked.

And unless they're—the government, Honourable Speaker—is willing to have one of these protective facilities in every single RCMP or First Nations jurisdiction, it's going to add distance and time and take officers off of the street. And that's something I certainly do not want to see happen with police services. I want to make sure that there's always the capacity there. And we're seeing police officers have many, many issues that they need to deal with. And this has become one of the main issues, is dealing with people involved with either alcohol or drugs.

So, again, I support this idea, Honourable Speaker, but—the idea behind the bill is a good one. It gives law enforcement and communities the tools to protect people who are in danger because of intoxication while ensuring they receive short-term care rather than punishment. And, you know, that's a good thing for all Manitobans. It's a good thing for police. It's a good thing for the people that suffer from addictions. And it's a good thing for the public.

But we have to make sure that the facilities are there, and we have to make sure that—

**The Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is next before the House, the honourable member will have 14 minutes—13 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow.

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, October 8, 2025

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