



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Tom Lindsey
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

Thursday, October 9, 2025

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): On House business. Could you please canvass the House for leave to recess for 10 minutes, including one—[interjection]

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: So prior to routine proceedings, there are a few guests in the gallery that—I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today representatives from the following organizations and communities who served our province by fighting wildfires this year.

From Manitoba: Anishiativ, SPIRIT; Anishinew Okimawin; Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs; Bell MTS; Canadian Armed Forces; Canadian Red Cross; CancerCare Manitoba; City of Brandon; City of Flin Flon; City of Thompson; City of Winnipeg; Cormorant; Cross Lake; Department of Agriculture; Department of Education and Early Childhood Learning; Department of Environment and Climate Change; Department of Families; Department of Finance; Department of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care; Department of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness; Department of Justice; Department of Natural Resources and Indigenous Futures; Department of Transportation and Infrastructure; Fox Lake; Garden Hill community; Genuis; Indigenous Services Canada; Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority; Keewatin Tribal Council, SKY Nations; Manitoba Emergency Management Organization; Manitoba fire service; Manitoba Hydro; Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak; Manitoba Métis Federation; Manitoba Wildfire Service; Marcel Colomb First Nation; Mathias Colomb Cree Nation; northern regional health authority; Norway House Cree Nation; Office of the Fire Commissioner; Pimicikamak Cree Nation; Prairie Mountain Health; Public Health nurses; Public Safety Canada; Public Service Commission; RBC Convention Centre; Red Response Team; Red River College; Red Sucker Lake; RM of Alexander; RM of Brokenhead; RM of Lac du Bonnet; RM of Pinawa; RM of Reynolds; RM of St. Clements; RM of Whitemouth; Search and Rescue Manitoba Volunteer Association; Shared Health; Sherridon; South Indian Lake;

Southern Chiefs' Organization; Southern Health-Santé Sud; St. Theresa Point First Nation community; St. John's [phonetic] Ambulance; Tataskweyak; Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Town of Bissett; Town of Gillam; Town of Lac du Bonnet; Town of Lynn Lake; Town of The Pas; Turtle Team; University College of the North; University of Manitoba; University of Winnipeg; Wasagamack community; Western Australia government, Department of Fire and Emergency Services; Winnipeg Regional Health Authority; Winnipeg Soccer Federation; York Factory First Nation.

From across Canada: Alberta; British Columbia; New Brunswick; Newfoundland and Labrador; Nova Scotia; Ontario; Prince Edward Island; Quebec.

From around the world: Australia; Costa Rica; France; Mexico; New Zealand; United States of America.

These folks are here as guests of the honourable First Minister.

And on half of all honourable members, we welcome you here today.

And on a personal note, being the MLA for Flin Flon, I wish to thank each and every one that had a part in doing above and beyond what is ever expected to save communities throughout the North.

Thank you.

Please join me in welcoming.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Could you please canvass the House for leave to recess for 10 minutes, including one minute of bells, to call back members to allow the guests in the public gallery to depart and to allow the guests invited for routine proceedings to take their seats.

The Speaker: Is there leave for a 10 minute recess with one minute of bells to allow the public gallery guests to depart and allow the normal gallery guests to return—and us to return to normal business? Is there leave? [Agreed]

We are now in recess for 10 minutes.

The House recessed at 1:36 p.m.

The House resumed at 1:46 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Good afternoon again, everyone. Back to routine proceedings.

House Business

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):

I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet Thursday, October 9, 2025, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: bill 10, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

The Speaker: It has been announced that Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Tuesday, October 9, 2025, at 6 p.m. to consider the following: Bill 210, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)—on Thursday, October 9, 2025.

Routine proceedings. Introduction of bills?

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development Fifth Report

MLA David Pankratz (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the fifth report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on October 8, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 208)** – *The Manitoba Small Business Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended) / Loi sur le Mois de la petite entreprise au Manitoba (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs)*
- **Bill (No. 225)** – *The Public Schools Amendment Act (Universal Screening for Learning Disabilities) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (dépistage systématique des troubles d'apprentissage)*

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

Committee Membership

- Mr. BLASHKO
- Mrs. COOK
- MLA CROSS
- MLA DELA CRUZ
- MLA LAGASSÉ
- MLA PANKRATZ

Your Committee elected MLA PANKRATZ as the Chairperson.

Your Committee elected MLA DELA CRUZ as the Vice-Chairperson.

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- Mr. KING
- MLA LAMOUREUX
- Hon. Min. SCHMIDT

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following presentation on Bill (No. 208) – The Manitoba Small Business Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended) / Loi sur le Mois de la petite entreprise au Manitoba (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs):

Fernanda Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Inc.

Your Committee heard the following 21 presentations on Bill (No. 225) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Universal Screening for Learning Disabilities) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (dépistage systématique des troubles d'apprentissage):

*Jacob Dyck, Private citizen
Laura Jones, Private citizen
Natalie Riediger, Private citizen
Ellen Gorter, Manitoba Literacy Alliance
Lois Cormier, Private citizen
Kim Van Nieuw Amerongen, Private citizen
Chris deBoer, Private citizen
Karen Sharma, Manitoba Human Rights Commission
Carrie Wood, Private citizen
Jina Pagura, Private citizen
Tianna Voort, Private citizen
Andrea Richardson, Ears for Life Audiology
Ron Cadez, Louis Riel School Division*

Michelle Depner, Private citizen
 Michelle Ward, Private citizen
 Valdine Bjornson, Manitoba Teachers for Students
 with Learning Disabilities
 Allison Guercio, Private citizen
 Fernanda Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Inc.
 Melissa McIntosh, Private citizen
 Andy Depner, Private citizen
 Collette Pancoe, Private citizen

Your Committee heard the following three presentations on **Bill (No. 234) – The Pride Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended) / Loi sur le Mois de la fierté (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs)**:

Chris deBoer, Private citizen
 Dieth de Leon, Bahaghari Pride Manitoba
 Nora Wilson, Brandon Pride

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following 12 written submissions on **Bill (No. 225) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Universal Screening for Learning Disabilities) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (dépistage systématique des troubles d'apprentissage)**:

Jodianna Paterson, Private citizen
 Cyndi Miles, Private citizen
 Joanne Seiff, Private citizen
 Carol Nixon-Pauls, Private citizen
 John Mearon, Private citizen
 Virginia Acuna Hernandez, Private citizen
 Ryan Wakshinski, Private citizen
 Ilana Schulz, Private citizen
 Ginny Lees, Private citizen
 Holly Cebrij, Private citizen
 Rosana Montebruno, Private citizen
 Suzy Martins, Private citizen

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 208) – The Manitoba Small Business Month Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended) / Loi sur le Mois de la petite entreprise au Manitoba (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 225) – The Public Schools Amendment Act (Universal Screening for Learning Disabilities) / Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (dépistage systématique des troubles d'apprentissage)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

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

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

MLA Pankratz: Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Justice Third Report

MLA Shannon Corbett (Chairperson): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the third report of the Standing Committee on Justice.

Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Justice—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Justice presents the following as its Third Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on October 8, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 8) – The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis**
- **Bill (No. 12) – The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'habitation et de rénovation**
- **Bill (No. 23) – The Public Interest Expression Defence Act / Loi visant à défendre l'expression sur des questions d'intérêt public**

- **Bill (No. 30)** – *The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi électorale*
- **Bill (No. 40)** – *An Act respecting “O Canada” and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended) / Loi sur les activités scolaires soulignant notamment l’« Ô Canada » et la reconnaissance des territoires et des traités (modification de la Loi sur l’administration scolaire et de la Loi sur les écoles publiques)*

Committee Membership

- Mr. BALCAEN
- Hon. Min. CABLE
- MLA CORBETT
- Mr. EWASKO
- Mr. OXENHAM
- Hon. Ms. SMITH

Your Committee elected MLA CORBETT as the Chairperson.

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

Substitutions received during Committee proceedings:

- Hon. Min. SCHMIDT for Hon. Min. CABLE
- Hon. Mr. WIEBE for Hon. Min. SCHMIDT
- MLA BEREZA for Mr. EWASKO

Non-Committee Members Speaking on Record

- Mrs. ROBBINS

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following two presentations on **Bill (No. 8)** – *The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis*:

David Grant, Private Citizen

Sara MacIntyre, Convenience Industry Council of Canada

Your Committee heard the following four presentations on **Bill (No. 12)** – *The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d’habitation et de rénovation*:

Fernanda Vallejo, Latinas Manitoba Inc.

Erika Wiebe, Private Citizen

Lynne Fernandez, Private Citizen

Tom Simms, Private Citizen

Your Committee heard the following nine presentations on **Bill (No. 23)** – *The Public Interest Expression Defence Act / Loi visant à défendre l’expression sur des questions d’intérêt public*:

David Grant, Private Citizen

Shannon Hancock, Private Citizen

Heather Fast, Manitoba Eco-Network

M. J. McCarron, Camp Morningstar

James Beddome, Private Citizen

Tangi Bell, Private Citizen

Louise May, Private Citizen

Diane Bousquet, Private Citizen

Eric Reder, Wilderness Committee

Your Committee heard the following one presentation on **Bill (No. 30)** – *The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi électorale*:

David Grant, Private Citizen

Your Committee heard the following one presentation on **Bill (No. 40)** – *An Act respecting “O Canada” and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended) / Loi sur les activités scolaires soulignant notamment l’« Ô Canada » et la reconnaissance des territoires et des traités (modification de la Loi sur l’administration scolaire et de la Loi sur les écoles publiques)*:

David Grant, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following one written submission on **Bill (No. 8)** – *The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis*:

Kevin Rebeck, Manitoba Federation of Labour

Your Committee received the following one written submission on **Bill (No. 12)** – *The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d’habitation et de rénovation*:

Kirsten Bernas, Right to Housing Coalition

Your Committee received the following four written submissions on **Bill (No. 23)** – *The Public Interest Expression Defence Act / Loi visant à défendre l’expression sur des questions d’intérêt public*:

Erna Buffie, Private Citizen

Brent Bjorklund, Manitoba Green Party

Cat M. Gauthier, Private Citizen

James Wilt, Private Citizen

*Your Committee received the following one written submission on **Bill (No. 40)** – An Act respecting "O Canada" and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended) / Loi sur les activités scolaires soulignant notamment l'« Ô Canada » et la reconnaissance des territoires et des traités (modification de la Loi sur l'administration scolaire et de la Loi sur les écoles publiques):*

Ben McGillivray, Private Citizen

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 8)** – *The Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Control Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la réglementation des alcools, des jeux et du cannabis*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 12)** – *The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'habitation et de rénovation*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 23)** – *The Public Interest Expression Defence Act / Loi visant à défendre l'expression sur des questions d'intérêt public*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill with the following amendment:

THAT Clause 4(2) of the Bill be struck out.

- **Bill (No. 30)** – *The Election Financing Amendment and Elections Amendment Act / Loi modifiant la Loi sur le financement des élections et la Loi électorale*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

- **Bill (No. 40)** – *An Act respecting "O Canada" and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended) / Loi sur les activités scolaires soulignant notamment l'« Ô Canada » et la reconnaissance des territoires et des traités (modification de la Loi sur l'administration scolaire et de la Loi sur les écoles publiques)*

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill with the following amendment:

THAT Clause 13 of the Bill be replaced with the following:

Coming into force – royal assent

13(1) Subject to subsection (2), this Act comes into force on the day it receives royal assent.

Coming into force – September 1, 2026

13(2) Section 7 comes into force on September 1, 2026.

MLA Corbett: Honourable Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

The Speaker: No further committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Betty and Norm Brown

Hon. Nellie Kennedy (Minister of Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Honourable Speaker, today I rise in the House to recognize two extraordinary members of the Assiniboia community, Betty and Norm Brown, who have dedicated a combined total of 57 years of volunteering at the Grace Hospice.

** (13:50)*

For Betty and Norm, volunteerism is more than an act of service; it's a way of life. They learned early on that giving enhances living and they have lived by that belief for decades. As non-medical professionals, they approach their work as a vital humanitarian link to health and healing, offering comfort and dignity to those in palliative care.

Their contributions go far beyond the ordinary. During the holiday season, you'll find them at St. Vital Centre greeting folks at the Palliative Manitoba memory tree, building snowmen at the Grace Hospice entrance, serving as Mr. and Mrs. Claus at the holiday dinner and delivering gifts to every hospice resident on Christmas morning. These small but meaningful gestures bring joy and warmth to patients and their families during some of life's most difficult moments.

On Wonderful Wednesdays, Betty fills the bird feeders outside the 12 hospice rooms, creating a peaceful environment for patients and their loved ones, while Norm spends the day at bedsides, offering a compassionate ear and a hopeful presence. Norm has

also volunteered for 26 years with Palliative Manitoba, extending his impact across the province.

After 66 years of marriage, Betty and Norm remain staunch supporters of their country, province, city and community. Their unwavering commitment reminds us all of the power of kindness and the difference we can all make when we think of others.

Honourable Speaker, it is my privilege to recognize Betty and Norm Brown for their decades of service, and to thank them for the love and hope they bring to so many lives. I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating these remarkable people on their incredible achievements.

Order of the Buffalo Hunt Recipients–2025 Wildfires

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): Members of the Order of the Buffalo Hunt, firefighters, first responders, community leaders and guests.

Today we honour the courage that met a crisis felt across all of Manitoba. This forest fire season was unlike any in our province's history. Flames consumed more land than ever before and tested every measure of preparedness, endurance and resolve. You answered that test with skill, sacrifice and an unshakable commitment to protect people, homes and the landscapes we cherish.

In and around the Lac du Bonnet constituency, where over 600 homes in the Cape Coppermine and Granite Hills area were at risk, the potential for devastation looming large. Tragically, the lives of local residents Richard and Sue Nowell were lost, as well as the 28 properties that were devastated, casting a long shadow that lingers to today.

To firefighters and support personnel across the north, east, south and west, and to every community in between, your actions kept families safe and preserved livelihoods. You worked long nights and exhausting days. You made difficult decisions under extreme conditions, carried out rescues, stood sentry against advancing fire lines and steadied neighbours when panic might have been easier.

Your teamwork saved lives and your bravery sustained hope.

This Order of the Buffalo Hunt recognizes more than individual acts of heroism. Each of you played an essential role in a response that was national in scope and local in heart.

Accept this honour as a symbol of a province's pride and gratitude. Manitoba owes you a profound debt of thanks. Congratulations and thank you for your service.

Marion and Mike Segal

MLA Shannon Corbett (Transcona): I would like to take a moment to recognize my constituents, Marion and Mike Segal, for their many contributions to minor hockey in Transcona and across Manitoba.

Mike and Marion have been volunteering for the past two decades. Mike first started volunteering in his mid-20s as a coach and has never stopped.

After the birth of their three children—Brock, Rebecca and Braden—Mike joined the Transcona Minor Hockey Association board as house league director roughly 18 years ago, later becoming the AA director.

He went on to serve as president of the association for 12 years, volunteering in every aspect of the game, from tryouts and playoffs to officiating and community events.

Mike later joined the Hockey Winnipeg board, serving as vice-president of novice hockey for two years, and since 2021, as vice-president of AA for Hockey Winnipeg. He is also a strong advocate for affordability and inclusion in the sport, always working to make hockey accessible and welcoming for families across the community.

When Mike first became president of Transcona Minor Hockey Association, there was an opening for ice director, and he asked—or some may say told—Marion that she would be perfect for the role.

Fourteen years later, Marion continues to dedicate countless hours scheduling, selling and allocating ice times. She currently serves as ice director and treasurer for the Manitoba–Transcona Minor Hockey Association, and for the past five years, has also been the ice director for the Winnipeg East Female Hockey program.

Marion also serves as director of ice allocation and the U15 division director for AA Hockey Winnipeg.

She works directly with coaches, managers and staff to keep the season running smoothly. Her organization, professionalism and dedication have strengthened programs not only in Transcona, but across Winnipeg's hockey community.

Transcona is proud and fortunate to have two individuals whose commitment has strengthened hockey programs and supported young athletes in our community.

I ask my colleagues to please rise and recognize Marion and Mike for their outstanding service and dedication.

Borderland Constituency Summer Events

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): This summer provided an opportunity to visit some of the great attractions, festivals and events that the constituency of Borderland has to offer.

It was a pleasure to meet with the volunteers at Fort Dufferin in Emerson, as well as the Tolstoi Heritage Centre committee in Tolstoi, to learn more about the great work they're doing to preserve the places and tell the stories of our local past.

The villages of Schoenwiese, Chortitz and Reinland celebrated their 150th this year with parades, storytelling, music and community meals.

The Manitoba Sunflower Festival in Altona marked its 60th year, a significant milestone for a festival that brings people together each year and has truly put the town on the map.

Plum Coulee's Plum Fest, the Gretna Hot Spot Festival and the Montcalm Heritage Festival in St. Joseph were just some of the events eagerly anticipated and enjoyed by so many.

I enjoyed connecting with constituents and seeing so many folks out and having a great time together. These celebrations reinforced a sense of gratitude and pride in our area, its history and people.

I came away with a renewed sense of admiration for all those who volunteer in our communities, demonstrating a kind of selflessness and community vision that is increasingly rare.

We are tremendously blessed by those who give of their time and resources to embark on a community project or put together a local event, and I want to take this opportunity to thank all those involved in these events that help make southern Manitoba a great place to live, work and raise a family.

Thank you.

National Coming Out Day

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): I rise today to recognize National Coming Out Day. First marked on October 11, 1988, this is a day to support anyone seeking to live their life more fully as a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Many people in the community can attest to coming out in small and big ways throughout their lifetime, whether at home, work, school or in community.

Two decades ago, this day helped me in my journey, and today, I share my life with my husband

in Lagimodière. I know the privilege of being able to live authentically in a community that embraces us. I know this isn't a universal experience; many still face fear, rejection and violence simply for being who they are. That reality is why this day continues to matter.

Anyone who's paying attention will see that it can be unsafe for queer and trans communities. Governments are abandoning their citizens or actively harming them through denying gender affirming care, enacting book bans, scapegoating trans folks and erasing histories. Political parties run transphobic campaigns and community celebrations are threatened with violence, like what happened in Steinbach just weeks ago.

To those people lucky enough to have someone come out to you, you've been given a gift. Folks in the queer and trans community are constantly looking for signals of danger and threat. Through your words, your actions and the choices you've made, you have been deemed a safe person.

* (14:00)

To those people thinking about coming out, you are loved and your life holds so much possibility. There's no one right time to come out and that—there's no one right time to come out that makes sense for everyone equally. Your context is yours alone, and you know best what makes sense for you.

Whether you are a student or a senior, an athlete, you live in a small town, you're new to Canada or your family has been here for time immemorial, know that there are loving communities ready to receive you, organizations ready to support you, and if you're in Manitoba, you have an NDP government full of queers and allies working to build a better and safer province.

The Speaker: Time has expired.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Provincial Judges Premier's Comments

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want to be clear: when we bring up examples of violent crime and the granting of bail, we are not criticizing the judges but the legal system that they operate within, created under this NDP government. The Premier is responsible for the system the judges operate within. The Premier is the one that promised bail reform within his first 100 days of office.

He has no one to be mad at but himself and his failed Justice Minister.

Will the Premier take this opportunity now to withdraw his remarks that he made at judges and refocus his frustration and anger at the system that this Justice Minister is failing?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Well, I want to acknowledge the frustration, the deep frustration, that the member opposite who follows my colleagues from Union Station and St. Johns feels on day-to-day basis. But the sun is shining, the economy is growing, you got a great Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) who is working hard with law enforcement and the federal government to do good things, including on bail.

Now, the members opposite, if they want to advance public safety in Manitoba, should pass our protective detention and care of intoxicated people act. Let's do it today. Wants to extend a helping hand, let's get this thing to committee, let's have the public weigh in. This is a significant change to the legislative framework in Manitoba. The public deserves to have a right to have their opinions heard on the record. We will certainly take them into consideration.

But the bottom line is this: meth is a crisis. We want to take action. The opposition shouldn't stand in the way.

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

Crime and Public Safety Timeline for Bail Reform

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Nothing the Premier has said right there is remotely close to the question I asked. I asked about the 100-day promise he falsely made about reforming bail and the anger he took out at judges when he should be taking it out at this failed Minister of Justice.

This Premier wants to talk about economy. Under his watch, Manitoba has the worse economy in Canada at 1.1 per cent. I'll quote from the Premier: There's no need to wait for other levels of government to take action. We can implement bail reform at the provincial level. End quote.

If the Premier said that, why isn't he doing it today?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): We did it. Years ago. The National Police Federation said other provinces should follow the lead started by our Minister of Justice. The member opposite wouldn't know that,

perhaps, because he was hiding under a rock—what he called the leadership race—surely before he hid under a rock in the Spruce Woods by-election.

But here's the thing he can't hide from: we have a piece of legislation we're calling for debate this afternoon that he and his caucus need to be absolutely clear whether they're going to pass today. It's a simple yes or no type of situation.

This will make our streets safer. This will allow police not to be pinned down babysitting somebody in the Health Sciences Centre emergency room. It'll allow them to get back on the streets and keep you safe. At the same time, if somebody's in a meth psychosis type of crisis, it will prevent them from harming themselves and others.

This is something that is urgently needed in our communities. I urge the member opposite to cut to the chase and tell us right now if he's going to pass it today so we can hear from—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Manitobans, you should be very concerned when the Premier falsely stands up and thinks crime is better in this province. It's worse. People are being killed, attacked by machetes—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Khan: —running through stop signs and killing—murdering people—released on bail under this failed Minister of Justice. Crime is worse and he thinks, mission accomplished. It's terrible what the Premier is saying.

If the Premier believes—and he's said it and I quoted earlier—that he will reform the bail system in 100 days, why has he not done so, and why is crime more rampant today than it was two years ago before he took office?

Mr. Kinew: Oh, we did reform bail: leaders in the country, according to the National Police Federation. So, you know, the member for doom and gloom over there—and I'll take my chastising from you on that—

The Speaker: Order, please.

We must call members by their constituency name or ministerial title.

Mr. Kinew: Yes, well earned; thank you for the correction. But the member opposite there—it's just nothing to do with the facts, okay? We took action on bail

reform. Look at the crime stat numbers in Winnipeg: they are better.

But here's the thing: there's no mission-accomplished banner going up, because of how you feel out there, in Manitoba. And one of the things that I've heard over and over again, that people feel, is that we need to take stronger action on the meth crisis, where the PCs did absolutely nothing during two terms in government. Because they don't want to solve crime, they want to campaign on crime.

We're different. We want to take action to keep you safe. We're bringing this bill in to take people who are in meth crisis off the streets to keep you safe—keep them safe, by the way. What are they going to do? Play games all afternoon? Or are we going to work together and make the streets better?

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

Washington Trade Office Impact on Trade in Manitoba

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): The Premier thinks it's a joke to call me names in here, then get called to order by the Speaker and say, well earned. As if he's proud to be a bully in this Chamber. The proof is right there for you, Manitoba, to see.

A year ago, the Premier falsely announced that he was going to open a trade office in Washington, D.C.; almost a year later, no physical office, and the hire, Richard Madan, a former CBC journalist and CBC friend—pal—of the Premier was hired.

Manitoba's economy is ranked worst in Canada at 1.1 per cent—the worst—under this NDP government.

Will the Premier admit today that he's done nothing, absolutely nothing, and his work-from-home Washington trade office has done nothing to increase trade in Manitoba?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey. Richard Madan worked for CTV, okay?

And, you know, it's not my fault that the member opposite chose to lose the leadership of popular vote to Wally Daudrich, instead of running for Pierre Poilievre's federal party. But he shouldn't come in here with his CBC-bashing agenda, right?

And why is he trying to pick a fight with the CBC anyways? Is it because he had his big prime-time interview on Information Radio a few weeks back and they put him on the spot, asking why was he calling

for the head of my colleague the same week that her office was lit on fire?

Well, I'll just read what he said in response to the CBC questioning. He goes, and I quote, verbatim: Yes, the timing is unfortunate. End quote. Listen, just because a member is mad at CBC doesn't mean they mean should drag Richard Madan into it.

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Provincial Deficit Balanced Budget Timeline

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): This is your Premier: more jokes, more insults, more bullying. That's who he is. When he ask him to account for his failed minister, he makes more jokes, he makes more insults, he deflects, he accuses the opposition of violence and racism when we're asking real questions on accountability—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Khan: This is your Premier right here.

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would ask the government bench to come to order and calm down.

Mr. Khan: This is your Premier who resorts to bullying, and now he has a failed Finance Minister who has led Manitoba to have the worst GDP in the entire country. Under the NDP, Manitoba will have a staggering deficit of \$4 billion at the end of this fiscal year, a far cry from the \$350-million surplus left to him by the PCs.

Simple question: Will the Premier balance the budget like he promised he would?

*(14:10)

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): You know, it's no surprise the PCs left Manitobans with the biggest deficit outside of COVID. When you hear their leader right now, he can't even use the economic terms properly. The grammatical construction, the statistical inference, it's all wrong.

And no wonder they ran up such a deficit, because they were all acolytes of Heather Stefanson. What was the significance of Heather Stefanson this week? Of course, I would remind folks in the House, first premier ever fined for breaking the law, conflict of interest law, ignoring your right to vote.

Who else was fined? Well, Cliff Cullen, member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton). Their current House leader was implicated in the same report. Does he take action to stamp out that corruption? No. In fact, he's probably going to FaceTime Heather in the Cayman Islands right as soon we're done question period here today, and let her—don't worry, I didn't say anything bad about you today again.

But here's the thing: Why are they hiding Heather? Why are they hiding Cliff? What have the members opposite got to hide?

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Economic Growth Request for Government Plan

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): I have asked the Premier numerous times a simple question, is if he will balance the budget like he falsely promised he would, and he's not giving an answer. So no answer must mean no. It's no surprise. They are running a \$1-billion-plus deficit every single year they've been in office.

Public Accounts—maybe the Premier should read that. Audited statements had \$373-million surplus was left to this NDP government. Manitobans are feeling the pinch every day. Grocery prices, gas prices, at the dinner table, and yet this Premier has done nothing to grow Manitoba's economy.

What is the Premier doing to grow Manitoba's economy, and will he balance the budget like he promised he would?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I feel a lot of compassion for the member opposite. Each and every day he trudges in here, the leader of a demoralized caucus, and he asks us: When are you going to do the great things the NDP government is doing faster and more quickly?

Well, I've got news for him: we're working very hard. We're fixing the mess they made in health care with 3,400 new workers. We're fixing the cuts they made to education with 1,200 new educators in schools. He raised gas prices; gas prices are lower now than when they were in office because we cut the gas tax.

We're fixing the huge deficit that they launched, under the leadership of our Minister of Finance (MLA Sala), and here's the other thing: this team over

here, we're defending democracy. Because where they tried to violate your vote and they tried to push through that project even after they lost office, we've been holding them to account. We're calling on them to accept responsibility and quit hiding their colleagues—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Education Property Tax Relief Apartment Block Owners

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): Homeowners in the Pembina Trails School Division saw double-digit education property tax hikes this year thanks to the NDP. But the owners of single-family homes weren't the only ones hit. Owners of apartment blocks saw their property taxes go through the roof this year.

The NDP has completely left them out of any property tax relief and left them with no choice but to request above-guideline rent increases to cover these shortfalls.

Over a year ago, the NDP Finance Minister promised to fix this mistake. Why did he break that promise?

Hon. Adrien Sala (Minister of Finance): Honourable Speaker, the member stands up and asks a question about impacts on renters when she herself is part of a party that raised taxes on renters by \$175. What are we doing? We're returning that renters tax credit to make life more affordable for renters.

And not only that; we cut the gas tax permanently. We brought in, of course, a hydro rate freeze, the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit, a broad middle-class tax credit. I know yesterday we were very proud to announce, once again, a security rebate for Manitobans so they can save money while they make their homes safer. We're doing the work to make life more affordable.

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

Mrs. Cook: None of what the minister just talked about has anything to do with the owners of apartment blocks.

Four years ago, one of my constituents, Alan Roberts, built a brand-new, 18-unit apartment block in the West End of Winnipeg. Under the NDP, he is now paying 130 times the property taxes—130 per cent more. He's now paying over \$43,000 in taxes on a single building in the West End. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cook: So he has two choices: raise the rent or get out of the housing market.

Why is the NDP forcing landlords to raise the rent on Manitobans?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, on this side of the House, we're proud to worry about renters, I don't know what to say.

Again, members opposite raised taxes on renters by \$175. I'll remind the member opposite who renters are. These are often seniors, people on fixed incomes. What did we do? We're doing the work of restoring a tax credit that they reduced on those in our province who need help.

We're getting that fixed while we're doing a lot of other important work—by making life more affordable by cutting the gas tax permanently, bringing in hydro rate freezes, along with a whole other suite: 25 ways to save.

We're doing the work. The members opposite made life more expensive for Manitobans for years, whether it was jacking up hydro rates, new taxes on renters, Crown land increases on farmers, they can trust that—

The Speaker: Time has expired.

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

Mrs. Cook: The renters tax credit the minister keeps talking about amounts to about \$4 a month, let's be clear about that. No one is going to build new rental units in this province under—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Cook: —a government that treats them like a property tax cash cow. And if they do build a new apartment block, they're going to have to set higher rents just to cover the property taxes.

Under the NDP, Manitoba will have fewer new builds, higher rents and fewer rental units.

Why is the NDP making Manitoba's housing crisis worse?

MLA Sala: Honourable Speaker, the member opposite belongs to a party that sold off—are you ready for it—385 social housing units on 185 Smith. That is shameful. That's making life harder for Manitobans who need those housing supports.

What are we doing? We're making life more affordable across the board while we make life more

affordable for renters because we're focused on ensuring that everyday Manitobans get the support they need.

We're proud to be accountable to the commitment we made to Manitobans around doing that work. We're going to keep doing that work each and every day.

Funding Cut for Jordan's Principle Services Impact on Children and Families

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, family reunification organizations are struggling to access Jordan [phonetic] principle funds due to changes at the federal level. The backlog is starting to clear but some organizations may not be able to operate until the federal government comes to the table.

We have learned in this House that the children's advocate does not always have oversight.

What safeguards are in place for the kids and families that may see these programs suddenly shuttered?

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): We know that Jordan's Principle dollars have played a significant role, and rightly so, in the lives of First Nation children and families at ensuring that children and families have the resources that they need to thrive, that they need to be able to be safe and to have all of the supports that they need, again, to thrive in—here in Manitoba and across the country.

We also know that Canada has stepped back from that responsibility. To date, I have sent, I think, about three letters to the minister federally responsible to get back to the table and to reinstate those programs that they've cut the dollars from.

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

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, the minister needs to give Manitobans assurances that while the feds and the Province disagree, funding cuts will not result in program cuts for vulnerable children and families.

Honourable Speaker, can the minister offer those assurances today?

MLA Fontaine: Again, Jordan's Principle provides a significant amount of resources and support to Manitoba families and to First Nation children. And we know that there are significant amount of organizations that work with children and families.

I encourage Canada to get back to the table. I encourage Canada to reinstate the dollars that they've pulled back on.

* (14:20)

I also encourage Canada to pay their bills. We've got organizations that are owed significant amount of money; that is putting additional pressures on them.

I ask Canada to get back to the table and to honour their commitments that they made in the spirit and name of Jordan.

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

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, yesterday, the minister said that the oversight was race baiting, the children's advocate was a colonial system; and the minister reaffirmed she had no interest in prioritizing the needs of children over her own agenda.

I give her an option again today to re-evaluate her position.

Will she or will she not empower the children's advocate to protect all Manitoba children?

MLA Fontaine: To be absolutely clear, I said that members opposite (a) don't have a hot clue what they're talking about, and (b) are leaning in to colonial, racist narratives about asserting jurisdiction of child welfare.

So basically, what members opposite are putting on the official record is that we've got to be more concerned that First Nations and Indigenous peoples are reasserting control over their children in care because now they're more at risk. That's what members are doing. Where have they been for the last 30, 40, 50 years? In the same colonial system that children have been harmed. For generations, where have they been?

So let me be clear: it's the members opposite that are leaning in to racist tropes about Indigenous families and our leadership that are asserting control.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Students Walking to School in Rural Manitoba Request for Traffic Safety Infrastructure

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): In Lorette, families are being denied a safe way to get their kids to school. Students have to walk along a busy highway just to get to class.

With all the talk of active transportation, when is the minister going to provide a safe way for these kids to get to school?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Thank you to the member opposite for the question.

I can assure the member and Manitobans that the health and safety of our students when they're in school and how they get to school and home from school is of the utmost importance for our government.

And I can assure him that we are doing everything we can to make sure that all students have safe, accessible modes of transportation to school, whether that be via a mode of public transportation, whether that be through their school bus, whether that be through an active transportation route.

We, of course, encourage students to take advantage of active transportation. We've seen many great examples of that. My friend, the MLA for Lagimodière himself, has helped establish a walking school bus that one of the schools in his community—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Dawson Trail, on a supplementary question.

MLA Lagassé: With all due respect to the minister, a walking school bus isn't the solution when you're walking along the highway. The people in my rural communities don't have the option of stoplights and crossing guards.

So I'd like to know what exactly they're going to do to prevent these kids from getting struck as they're walking along the highway.

MLA Schmidt: You know, in delivering education in our province and ensuring how kids get to and from school, we work in partnership very closely with school divisions. So I—the school divisions are ultimately responsible for helping their students get to and from school.

So to be quite frank, Honourable Speaker, I'm not exactly sure of the issue that the member raises. The member has not raised the issue to me directly, so I very much encourage him, whether it be right now in question period or perhaps after question period, later this evening, tomorrow.

I'd be more than happy to get the details from him and make sure that as—the department is working very closely with the school division to solve whatever problem it is that the member is speaking of.

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

MLA Lagassé: So the member may not be aware because it actually belongs in the Department of Infrastructure, not in her department. Just like the students walking to school, this member is in the ditch.

Every time a car comes down the highway, their life is at risk. This is a chance to work together and improve the lives of people in Lorette.

Will the minister give us a timeline as to when these kids can expect to walk safely to school?

MLA Schmidt: Do you know what put kids at risk? What put kids at risk is year after year after year of cuts to our public education system. That is the record of the party across the way to which the member for Dawson Trail belongs.

Do you know what else put kids at risk, Honourable Speaker? The disgusting, failed 2023 election campaign of the members opposite, where they attacked not only the family members of murder victims, they also attacked trans youth in our community.

On this side of the House, we will never attack any child in Manitoba. On this side of the House, our utmost concern is the health and safety of each and every child in Manitoba, whether they be trans, whether they be cis—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MPI's Vehicle-Owner Insurance Model Impact on Rates and Low-Risk Owners

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, the minister's been asked time and time again by media and by Manitobans to provide even a single number showing how much money this Bill 49 will actually save. Each time, he's been unable to answer. Now, if the government claims this change will benefit drivers, why can't the minister tell Manitobans how much those savings will be?

Does the minister have any concrete evidence that enshrining the owner-based driver safety readings-rating system will lower rates?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation): Manitobans know that we've been hard at work stabilizing the mess that's been left at MPI by the previous government. Of course, we know, when we came into office, we were in the midst of a 10-week strike that was perpetrated by members opposite who wanted to play politics with one of our most important Crown corporations.

One of our first priorities was to get folks back to work, to start rebuilding MPI, to put in place a solid board and a good CEO that can start to refocus on that affordability question that members opposite continued to ignore, year after year.

We've got MPI back on track and we're going to keep rates affordable by focusing on you, Manitoba drivers.

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

Mr. King: Honourable Speaker, the question was simple: What is the savings going to be?

Under this legislation, insurance rates and discounts will be based on a vehicle's owner rather than the person who is actually driving it. That means safe drivers could end up subsidizing higher risk owners through no fault of their own.

How is it fair that responsible Manitobans will now be footing the bill for those with poor driving records, under this government's plan?

Mr. Wiebe: Again, Honourable Speaker, we're clearly focused on affordability. And when we're talking about affordability, that means affordability for everyone.

Right now, Manitoba Public Insurance has some of the most affordable rates in all of Canada, and the reason that is, is because we're able to share the risk amongst each other and also share the rewards.

Manitoba Public Insurance, when properly administered and when properly focused on affordability, can deliver great things for Manitobans. That's what our government is doing.

Members opposite threw the corporation into chaos; they risked all of that affordability advantage. We're clearly focused on affordability.

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

Impact on PUB Oversight

Mr. King: Honourable Speaker, this government is plowing ahead with a policy that the Manitoba Court of Appeal has already ruled against, and it is doing so by overruling the very body that exists to protect the public, the Public Utilities Board.

Is the minister really saying it's acceptable to bypass the independent oversight of the PUB, ignore the Court of Appeal's decision and start setting insurance rates at the Cabinet table?

Mr. Wiebe: That's rich coming from members opposite. Of course, the member opposite ran under a party that disrespected and disregarded the will of the PUB every single year.

* (14:30)

What we've done is we've taken the advice of the PUB: we've gone to Manitobans, we've listened to them. And survey after survey shows that Manitobans appreciate the affordability advantage that MPI offers them.

Now of course, that's puts in jeopardy when members opposite fired—or, ran a number of CEOs. They started a strike that was unnecessary. They had a terrible board that was hand-picked by members opposite.

We've set MPI back on track, and we're clearly focused on that affordability advantage for all Manitobans.

Universal Screening for Learning Disabilities Request to Call Bill 225 for Third Reading

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I want to begin by thanking everyone who came out to committee last night for staying so late into the evening, showing such support for one another and sharing such important and personal experiences and stories.

Honourable Speaker, everyone seems to be on the same page and wanting to have universal screening for learning disabilities, which is why the minister's closing comments were exceptionally confusing.

So I need to ask: Does this government intend to call Bill 225 for third reading and a vote before the deadline on November 6?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): It was such a privilege to be at committee last night. We heard from so many passionate parents and advocates, educators, even some students themselves. A shout-out to Mr. Jacob Dyck, who really wowed us all: a grade 5 student, a 10-year-old, who spoke at committee. What a fantastic young person.

And as is the case, Honourable Speaker, when a Manitobans get together and talk with each other, we find that we agree on much more than we disagree on, and we saw that last night at committee. We agreed that every child matters and has the right to read and learn. We agree that the implementation of an evidence-based universal early reading screening tool is critical to improving literacy outcomes and experiences for our kids.

That's exactly what our government announced in April. That is exactly what we began rolling out this school year, what we'll continue to expand next—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Request for Amendments to Legislation

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, the government appears to be arguing that the universal screening does not need to be legislated. However, the presenters at committee last night were able to clearly indicate that it does need to be legislated.

The reason it is legislated in other provinces is because it ensures a long-term commitment that cannot be easily overturned, unlike a government directive or press release. Children in Manitoba deserve the same. They deserve a commitment from this government, not just some grandstanding, Honourable Speaker.

MLAs have until the end of the day today to bring forward report stage amendments. Do any of the government members have amendments they wish to bring forward, as I will happily work with them to ensure that this bill can pass and become legislation?

MLA Schmidt: Dyslexia Canada has applauded our government's decision to move forward in mandating that school divisions across province implement universal early reading screening. I table that for the House.

We thank Dyslexia Canada for their advocacy and the support that they provide to kids and families and adults. But we know that there are barriers beyond specific learning disorders like dyslexia that keep kids from learning.

Kids need more one-on-one time with their educators. That's why we've hired 1,600 of them since joining office. We're investing in smaller class sizes. It's why we're building new schools in every corner of the province so kids have the space they need to learn, and that's why we've introduced Nello's universal nutrition program so that no child has to learn to read on an empty stomach.

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

MLAs Voting in Favour of Legislation

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, last night, in front of the minister, representatives from Dyslexia Canada said on record that we need this legislation. Through conversations with other government MLAs, opposition MLAs and presenters last night, it was shared with me that some of the government MLAs shared with their constituents that they will be voting in favour of Bill 225.

So will this government do the democratic thing, the right thing, and allow MLAs who represent constituencies here in the province of Manitoba vote on Bill 225 before November 6?

MLA Schmidt: I appreciate the member's question and her passion, I really do. But the truth of the matter is, Honourable Speaker, if the committee is going to be honest with this House, there was not consensus that the bill last—the bill—committee bill hearing last night.

The committee heard different voices. We did hear concerns, and we heard that balances need to be struck. Presenters discussed potential amendments, as the member mentioned. Nothing was moved. There clearly is a need for further dialogue on this issue, Honourable Speaker. As minister, I am committed to doing that with every member of this House and with the sector; my door is always open.

One thing was unanimous, Honourable Speaker: the need to implement an evidence-based universal early reading screening tool. That's what our government announced in April, that's what we're piloting this year, and full implementation across the province next 'fiall'. This has nothing to do with—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Ethics Report—Caretaker Convention Breach Contact Request—Former Premier Stefanson

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Earlier this week, former PC premier Heather Stefanson became the first premier to be fined for breaking the law and violating our Constitution.

Manitobans have many questions for Heather Stefanson. Why did she break the law? Who was she working for? What private interest did she have in the Sio Silica project?

But Heather is nowhere to be found. The media can't find her at any of her comfy board appointments; she's not at the Maple Leaf plant; we haven't seen her on a WestJet flight and we can't reach her at her beach house in the Cayman Islands.

Can the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning please tell the House who might be able to reach Heather?

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): What a good question. Why don't we ask the PC Leader right now: Will he FaceTime Heather Stefanson wherever she may be—

whether that's the Cayman Islands, maybe her buddy's place in Costa Rica—so Manitobans can finally get some answers?

He says he hasn't seen her in months, but Manitobans know that she recently helped on his leadership campaign this spring; he certainly knew where her reach her for her donation.

Heather Stefanson refuses to respond and take accountability, despite the many, many fair questions that the media has asked and everyday Manitobans have asked about why she, Cliff Cullen, the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton), the member for Interlake-Gimli (Mr. Johnson) broke the law and violated the Constitution.

So since he can't take accountability, will the PC Leader call his friend, his mentor, his donor Heather Stefanson today so Manitobans can finally get some answers from somebody?

The Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Temporary Detention of Intoxicated Individuals Safe Injection Site Concerns in Bill 48

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Honourable Speaker, Bill 48 raises more questions than answers. Manitobans have watched this government fail on health care. We can't afford another debacle like this.

I will table an advertisement from health-care workers. Bill 48 says temporary detention provides a safe place to recover and connect with supports and services. Does that include supervised injection sites? Yes or no?

Honourable Speaker, will Bill 48 open the door to injection sites across Manitoba?

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): You know, I wish that member would get on board and provide some safety and security to our community. That's what this bill is going to do. We're asking for members opposite to get out of the way, get on board, support Bill 48.

What Bill 48 does is it expands the powers of policing, the powers of—24 hours to 48 hours from alcohol to substance use.

So someone is on meth and they are, you know, a risk to themselves or a risk to others: this gives the authority to the police or maybe a community resource officer to take them somewhere to get supports, to get them off the street. And this is what the community has been asking for, and this member—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Location of Protective-Care Centres

MLA Bereza: Manitobans deserve to hear the plan, not another health-care mess like we've seen across this province.

Can the minister look Manitobans in the eye today and tell them: Where will these protective-care centres be, other than the one that was announced this morning that the community didn't know about; how many will there be; who will run them; and where will the staff come from?

Ms. Smith: I know the failed PC bench on the other side liked to ignore the issue of people with substance use for years and years and years, but we're not taking that approach.

* (14:40)

We're listening to you Manitobans who sent us here to help and support Manitobans, to create a safer community. And this is exactly what this is going to do.

It's going to have 20 rooms where the—we're going to be able to connect people with services, to get people the supports that they so desperately needed for so long that they were knocking on the failed PC government's door to ask for this. Health-care workers were asking for this. Police were asking for this.

What's happening now is—it's overloading the health-care system. People are being—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Safe Injection Site Concerns in Bill 48

MLA Bereza: Honourable Speaker, we did not hear from this minister whether this will be drug injection sites. Manitobans deserve to know.

Will this be drug injection—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Bereza: —sites in these centres, yes or no?

Ms. Smith: I don't—you know, this member came to the bill briefing. He had a chance to ask questions in this House.

This is different than a supervised consumption site; this is about connecting people to care that are on

the street, that are a danger to themselves and a danger to others. This is a place for them to come that is not going to overload the health-care system, that is going to free up policing, that is going to free up the emergency rooms and is going to connect people to care. They're going to build relationships there, and we're going to get them into treatment and recovery if they so please.

I invite members to get on board and quit blocking this bill. This is what Manitobans are asking for and it'll make safer communities.

The Speaker: The time for oral question has expired, and I have a ruling for the House—*[interjection]*

As I said, the time for oral questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

The Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

Following oral questions on October 8, 2025, the honourable Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care (MLA Asagwara) raised a point of order alleging that the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Khan) made a very disturbing gesture in the House during oral questions that day. The minister suggested that this gesture could be very harmful and very triggering to anybody in this space or certainly children in the gallery.

Later in the same sitting day, the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition rose on a separate point of order and offered an apology in the House. At that time, I stated that as I'd already started investigating the matter, I would continue that investigation and report back to the House if necessary.

I have investigated this matter further and I have reviewed footage from our broadcast cameras in the Chamber. I discovered that the gestures complained about were of such 'egregious' and offensive—and while I hesitate to reference them specifically, I feel that it is necessary to be clear.

The footage shows the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition making a gesture depicting gun violence and acts of self-harm. I believe this was an inappropriate gesture for a member to be making in this Chamber, and I find myself not satisfied with the Leader of the Official Opposition's apology yesterday.

So I'm now giving the Leader of the Official Opposition another opportunity to address this matter right now by providing an unequivocal and unconditional apology for his behaviour in the House.

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition):

As I did yesterday, I stand again today and I apologize. I apologize unequivocally for the gestures that were made. And to anyone that I offended in the Chamber, I apologize.

I apologize, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: As that apology, I do accept that he's made it unequivocally, so therefore that should bring this matter to a close.

* * *

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): Honourable Speaker, could you please canvass the House to see if there is leave to refer Bill 226, The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Reporting When Timely Care Not Available), to the previously announced Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development meeting on Thursday, October 9, at 6 p.m., 2025.

The Speaker: Is there leave to canvass the House to see if there could be leave to refer Bill 226, The Health System Governance and Accountability Amendment Act (Reporting When Timely Care Not Available), to the previously announced Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development on Thursday, October 9 at 6 p.m.? Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Now we will proceed to petitions. Grievances?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):

Could you resume debate—second reading debate on Bill 48.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

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

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now resume second reading debate on Bill 48, The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act. The debate stands in the name of the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen), who has 13 minutes remaining.

Is there leave for it to remain standing in the name of the member for Brandon West—sorry, I was just checking the screen.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no, so the floor is open for debate.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): As with all legislation that comes in front of this legislative Chamber, it's important to debate it. It's important to listen to other members' ideas and suggestions and that's why it's good that it gets a fulsome debate in the Chamber and then it goes to a committee where then the public has the opportunity to weigh in on legislation.

And I, too, wish to put some debating points on the record. I would like to point out that there are 57 members of this legislature who drive the cities and the communities and towns and highways and do so on a regular basis. It's a very busy life, and many of us will often or, from time to time, encounter individuals who are struggling.

And I speak from experience here, where I have driven on Henderson Highway and Main Street and then up to Broadway and other streets and major thoroughfares in this city. And I have seen individuals who are struggling in life. They are struggling with addiction and are in often incredibly poor and—in a condition that they need help.

About a year ago, I was driving down Henderson Highway and there was an individual who had disrobed, basically completely, and was in the middle of Henderson Highway and was repeatedly getting up and then throwing herself onto the road. And I did call 9-1-1 and indicated where this was taking place and indicated that this individual did need assistance.

* (14:50)

And it is very shocking to see something like that. It's very troubling to come across an individual that has gotten to a point in life where they are no longer in any kind of control of themselves or their actions. In fact, we had a day of lobbying by the paramedics, and they spoke to a group of us in the PC caucus, and it was—two women paramedics were telling us a very sad and tragic story, that they had come up to a scene where someone like the case that I was suggesting. The individual was in terrible need. Anyway, they came across an individual, and the individual—they were trying to help this individual who was harming themselves.

And the individual ended up becoming incredibly violent and taking them on. And they struck the one paramedic. I—memory serves me correctly, I think it was the individual, the paramedic was off for six months. It was the—very severe, what had taken place. The violent attack was bad. The second paramedic, she was also injured—not quite as severe.

And as part of restitution, they had the opportunity to sit down with that individual. And it was in a very secure facility, and there were individuals there. There was a table between them. And the paramedics explained to this individual what had actually happened, explained how they had driven up and they had started to approach this individual, and very gently had said, you know, we're here, you're harming yourself, you're doing yourself a great harm, and we're here to help you. And explained then what happened, how there was a very violent attack. They tried to defend themselves, and others came to the assistance.

And the individual sat across from them, then had already been through a program, like—different than what's being proposed in this piece of legislation in Bill 48, but not really that much dissimilar. It was more of a treatment kind of a program.

And they said the individual looked at them and listened to what they were saying, and wept, cried and said, I have no recollection; I have no idea that I had done this; I have no memory of it; I have no idea whether that happened or not; I accept it as something that took place, that you're telling me the truth, and got very emotional. Wept and cried about it and said, at the end of the conversation, if they could forgive her for what she had done to these two paramedics.

And it tells you that there are a lot of individuals, as we travel the roads and the highways and the byways, who are in need. And I would suggest that they often don't know that they're in need. They have no control over what's taking place, and we know that meth—and there's now some, I think they call them super meth; they're very, very powerful, that are coming in. Often these are manufactured in China, and they are shipped into Canada and then elsewhere.

And you lose all control of yourself. You have no memory, you have no indication afterwards that—of what you've done, or the kind of violence you may have shown to others.

And the new medications are—not medications, the new drugs that are coming—illicit drugs, are so powerful that we are going to see a lot more individuals on our streets walking in traffic. We see that

an awful lot. As we drive through our inner city, you see a lot of it, and it's also out in the suburbs. Individuals simply walking amongst traffic, have—completely oblivious that this is a high-speed corridor, have no idea, and vehicles either stop or they avoid these individuals.

So I think there is an incredible need for some kind of action to be taken to help individuals who are in such dire need.

So the government brought forward Bill 48. We've had a chance to look at it, and like with a lot of legislation, the devil's in the details. I suspect there will still be some regulation writing.

My colleague from Portage la Prairie who asked some very serious questions today about what would be included and what wouldn't be included in Bill 48. I think it's important because I know throughout this Chamber there's a lot of discomfort with involuntary treatment and how far does one go with that. How long should involuntary treatment be, what does that actually look like or what does that actually mean? Like how should we go about this?

So I—this is not quite going into involuntary treatment. I would suggest it's starting that process. So to have a good healthy and fulsome debate on this is necessary. We heard the Premier (Mr. Kinew) today ram all legislation through. I would point out to him there is nothing worse in a legislative body than passing poor legislation. So we have to make sure we debate it. It has to have the opportunity to have a fulsome discussion, which is what we're having today.

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And there are some areas that we do have questions about. A colleague, the member from Portage la Prairie, who like all communities across this province, has its struggles; and he has, over the last two years, brought forward some very serious questions in regards to some housing projects where people are living in government housing and aren't safe. They aren't being protected. The measures in place aren't working. So we know that there are difficulties throughout the province and it's not just centered in our major city here in Winnipeg.

So when the member for Portage la Prairie (MLA Bereza) today got up and asked how is this going to work with harm injection sites? Like, how is that going to—how is that going to work? How do the two of them work on?

On the one hand, and we're not too sure what this—*[interjection]* And there's members opposite—I think it's the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) shouting relevance. You know, maybe she should take this serious—like, that—we're talking about human beings.

And I always say to my family when we drive and we see individuals that are described in Bill 48: it's somebody's child, it's somebody's sister, it could be somebody's mom, it could—it's somebody's loved one. It's a friend. And for members of the NDP to shout relevance and cheap, cheap, cheap political words that are said. It degenerates what Bill 48 is trying to do because it is a serious bill. And it is a hand-in-hand piece to harm injection sites. How do the two work with each other?

And that was actually the question today. My colleague from Portage la Prairie: how would the two work? One talks about drug use and this one talks about getting people off of intoxication. And, again, it's not—this isn't just about drugs, though I suspect that would be one of the main targets is, but there's also alcoholism.

How do we get people off of the streets? In this case they would be basically incarcerated. They'd be given some time to allow the substance to work through their bodies. How does that work with harm injection sites? Should there be a substantial distance between the two of them?

That was a question that the Conservative-Progressive Conservative opposition was putting forward today in question period. And I think that's one of the things that Bill 48—hopefully individuals will address when the bill goes to committee. And these are legitimate questions. This isn't an attack on NDP ministers. This is a bill that is trying to react to a reality that's out on the streets.

* (15:00)

And, again, I said in the beginning, it's a reality we all see, especially those, you know, elected officials—the 57 of us in this room—who do a lot of driving. We see a lot. Yesterday evening, there were a lot of things going on in this building and elsewhere, and as we drove through the city, we would have seen a lot of the individuals who are struggling with addictions.

So this is a bill that is important; it does address a reality that's out there. So it's becoming of a legislature to then talk about how does this work with harm injection sites. Like, how are those two going to work when one seems to be pulling in one direction and the other one pulling in the other direction?

The Premier (Mr. Kinew) today also went out and he announced that there would be approximately 20 beds for what happens here under Bill 48. And one of the questions that we would like to ask him—I think it's important—is: are 20 beds going to be enough? What happens when you fill the 20 beds and now, by this legislation, individuals, for their own protection, are picked up and then they are taken somewhere? If this one somewhere, the beds are already all taken, where do those individuals then go? What is the plan B? Because members of this Chamber will know that as they drive around, it's more than one individual.

I have driven home late at night from a function or from committee here, and my path takes me down Main Street, and I have seen large groups of people on the streets. I would suggest, there's a term, it's called playing chicken with traffic, it's to see how close you can get to moving vehicles. That one evening would have more than filled up the 20 beds that would be needed under Bill 48. What happens then when those bills—when those beds are filled? Do then—does then law enforcement not pick up any more individuals? Do they go somewhere else?

And these are important things that have to be asked, and there should be an answer—and the minister responsible for this legislation will have a very good department of civil servants who will be able to look at a lot of these questions, and frankly, that's where a committee is very important. You get to committee and there are often very good questions that come forward. Department can then do research, can look into a lot of the questions and issues that are raised and they will provide the minister with answers so that there can be a really good discussion from the questions that were raised, whether here during debate or from the bill going in front of the public at committee.

So, again, a lot of this is about the devil's in the details, and it is important that a lot of these questions then be asked. And, again, I think all of us recognize the reality that putting somebody in—incarcerating somebody who is, for instance, high on meth, will need more than 24 hours or often less than 24 hours. And so 72 hours, is that the right time? Is it longer than that? Is it a little less than that? It is important that we get it correct.

And I guess another question that would—will come up, I'm sure, at committee, and we would ask the minister and the government on—in regards to Bill 48 is that what happens with rural areas? And we know that there are individuals not just in downtown Winnipeg where the centre is now being planned.

What if there's an hour, hour-and-a-half drive? The individual in question would have to be restrained somehow, and we do know that meth seems to give individuals a lot of added strength; they are very strong and so they don't hurt themselves in the back of the vehicle that's transporting them. They do have to be restrained. How far of a distance is fair to drive someone to one of the facilities being—the facility being proposed by the government due to the Bill 48?

How long is reasonable to transport somebody? What happens if it's a northern or a remote community? It's not reasonable to fly somebody in—how would they get here? How do—like, what are the answers to that? And again, the minister's department will have probably thought of a lot of these, and there should be some good answers coming forward, and at committee hopefully these questions are asked.

And the minister should lean on her department, I'm sure they will brief her well on these various topics and come forward with a good answer on what happens to areas outside of Winnipeg and facility that is—was announced this morning by the Premier (Mr. Kinew) is going to be right smack dab in the city downtown, the city of Winnipeg.

So, again, that would be one of those. Already discussed about occupancy. You know, what happens if it's a particular bad evening or bad weekend? We—those of us who do retail know that a full moon tends to make life way weirder in the city of Winnipeg, and anybody who's done retail knows that it's Friday the 13th, full moon, is a troubling day in the city. And what happens if, on that day, the facility fills up? And then they are transporting individuals, maybe, when they started to transport, the facility wasn't full, they get into the city and the facility's full and they can't take them. They can't just dump them off. Do they drive them back to their community? Like, what happens with that?

And, again, the minister will have a department that will work on those answers, and I'm sure there is some kind of a thought process that's gone in, that what's going to happen with that.

And the other thing is, is would this legislation allow or would it disallow individuals who perhaps want to self-admit? Would you be allowed to do that? But how would you do that if the facility was full? For anybody who has perhaps taken one of the active transportation corridors, and discussion about that today in question period, and as someone who is an avid cyclist, the camps along the rivers are full in the summer. I would say it's hundreds and hundreds of

people; 20 beds would be insufficient to handle if there was a particularly bad drug that got onto the city streets—20 beds would hardly put a dent in if you got a particular severe drug hitting the streets. Again, 20 is still better than nothing, but what happens if you get over that amount?

The other thing that I think we would like to hear from the government, and I'm sure committee will have some of these questions raised, and perhaps the minister can task her department, you know, to make sure that these facilities—how far away should they be from schools and other group homes or other facilities where there are vulnerable individuals. You want to ensure that there is no connectivity happening between vulnerable individuals and a facility like this.

The other thing, I think, would be of interest to the committee and certainly to the Legislature is how would there be security around a facility like this, (a) for individuals trying to get in, or individuals trying to get out? If somebody was in the facility and demanded that they leave or tried to leave on their own volition, what would be the mechanism by which they would be kept in? Are these now locked cells? Are they—you know, how secure are they? How do you keep individuals locked in, and what kind of training would you need by the staff to make sure that individuals, first of all, don't hurt themselves?

* (15:10)

A lot of these individuals—and I've, again, I spoke from experience having driven a lot on our streets—and all 57 of us will—is that often these individuals are doing great, great harm to themselves, and it's troubling, and it's—it hurts you as an individual to watch another human being not knowing what they're doing to themselves, hurting themselves in this fashion.

So how would staff be able to prevent someone from doing this if they were incarcerated and they wanted to get out and they were—would they be restrained? Would they—you know, obviously the cell would have to be built in such a way that they couldn't harm their way—theirself in any way, shape or form.

Again, these are the details that would be beneficial if the government would be forthcoming with when this goes to committee, because the devil's always in the details. Like, how is this going to work? How are we going to ensure that these individuals are protected from themselves and how others are protected from them?

Because I've mentioned the case of the paramedics and these individuals can have amazing strength.

Often the narcotic will dull any sense of pain, and it's very, very difficult to subdue these individuals.

So those are some of the issues I think—would definitely like to know. The—is it the intent of Bill 48 that not just do you bring somebody in for involuntary treatment—involuntary, basically, incarceration—but are we looking at a longer term treatment option that individuals who, once they've come off their high, might want to choose to go into some kind of a treatment program?

There—this can't just be it. There has to be something behind this, because if this is all that's being offered up, it is not going to change much; it's going to get individuals off the streets for 48 or 72 hours and it's going to put them back out again. Is there a track to get people into treatment?

We know the Oake centre, which—the Oake family has done so much good work and they've done such a good job. And anybody who's heard—Mrs. Oake has since passed away—but the parents talking about the journey they took with their son and his slide into dangerous narcotics and his eventual demise. They've done a great job. There's a facility there that—you know, is there a track of some kind into a longer term treatment? Because that's what's going to help us in the long run, is getting individuals into long-term treatment.

And I know—we've all heard it: the 'recivism'—'recidivism' rate is very high, and some have said it's as high as 95 per cent—and that means backsliding back into their life. Some—I would say it's probably 80, 80-plus rate where people go back to that.

But we have to do something. We can't just walk away from all these individuals. And even if you have a 15 to 20 per cent success rate, that would be phenomenal if we could actually get people to get off of these horrendous drugs and get them off of the streets where they're harming themselves, where they're living just terrible lives. And as nice as today is outside—and it is a beautiful day—we know that the cold, bitter winds of winter are coming and how tough and how ugly that is on individuals.

So, you know, is Bill 48 laying out a path towards long-term treatment?

In the few minutes I have left, I do want to thank organizations beyond this: Union Gospel Mission, Siloam Mission, Salvation Army, to mention a few. And I've—I had the opportunity to sit at Siloam Mission, and an individual came in, very, very high. And there were cinnamon buns out. This individual would take

the cinnamon buns, would lick the icing off and throw the cinnamon bun away.

And I said to the individual running it at that time, I said, so what do you make of that? Like, what do you say to that? And the individual said, you know, at least they're getting something into them. At least they're getting some sustenance. And it's not quite what we want, but you know what, if we can get some food into them, get some clothing onto them, help the basic needs and then get them into this kind of a system where they—they're out—off of the streets for 48 or 72 hours and then possibly get them into long-term treatment, that's what they need.

And there's also the spiritual component. These people are often spiritually very broken because of something that happened in their past. To give them spiritual care to help not just their bodies, which does need a lot of care; you know, they're often very broken and need a lot of physical care, but also spiritual care. That's also a very big component of this.

So this is an important piece of legislation. It's important for us to be discussing it, for us to be debating it. None of this should ever—and the Premier (Mr. Kinew) today encouraged everybody, just ram it through. Just push it through as fast as possible. I don't agree with that. I think it's important to have a fulsome, good, solid healthy debate. This is not a political issue; this is a very troubling issue. And I would say, there by the grace of God go us. You know, we hope that it's not us or our families or our loved one.

So whatever we can do to help these individuals, let's do it, and certainly we look forward to a healthy and fulsome debate here today, and then it moving on to committee.

Thank you.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): Wanted to put some words on the record about this legislation that I'm deeply troubled by and deeply concerned.

You know, it's more than just disagreeing with the government. The government has brought in a number of policies that I can say with deep conviction that I'm actually embarrassed as a New Democrat that they've brought these policies forward, that they are cynical, unprincipled, pandering to the worst elements of Manitoba society, whether it's a gas tax holiday, whether it's a flip-flop for being opposed to a gas pipeline to Churchill to now being an enthusiastic proponent to that, to keeping the tax cuts for the rich from the previous government, to now attacking our human rights in Manitoba.

And I will be very clear, this legislation is racist legislation. It is deeply problematic that an NDP government would be pursuing this type of legislation. It just shows you how much the NDP have lost their way and are no longer a party of principle and now one of opportunity and cynicism.

Only a 'shew'—a few short years, there are members on the other side, proud anti-racist activists, who had dedicated their life to fighting this type of racist legislation, who are now going to cynically stand up and vote for legislation that will harm Manitobans. *[interjection]* That will harm—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order. Order.

I'd like to remind all speakers to make sure we're keeping comments directly relevant to The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act, and give a general caution to all members to be not hollering across.

Mr. Wasyliw: So let's just recap what is so problematic about this legislation. Under the current Intoxicated Persons Detention Act, the government can hold somebody for 24 hours. Now, it doesn't say what they can hold them for, it's just somebody is intoxicated. Doesn't have to be meth or alcohol, it could be whatever substance that a police officer deems the person to be intoxicated for.

* (15:20)

Now, 24 hours is a magic number, because in Canada, when you get arrested by the police, where they suspect you of a crime, you can only be held for 24 hours before you have the right to go before a magistrate or a judge and apply for bail. There is a reason why The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act as it currently stands uses that magic 24-hour number: because afterwards it becomes unconstitutional. You can't hold somebody legally for 72 hours.

And keep in mind, these people have committed no crime; they have done nothing wrong. In Canada, you can be intoxicated; that is not a crime; it is not illegal. We are holding people who are not criminals, who have done nothing wrong other than scare a police officer or get on the 'rader' of a police officer—and we'll talk a little bit more of that in a minute.

The chief judge of Manitoba has said—and there is wide consensus in our community—that our criminal justice system is systemically racist. And what do they mean when they say that? It's not me saying it; it's the chief judge of Manitoba and it is a number of provincial reports and commissions that have come to that

conclusion: is that our justice system is not neutral, it doesn't apply equally to everyone, that there are certain members of our community who are disproportionately, punitively affected by our justice system.

We have, for example, 20 per cent population who is Indigenous. Our jails are 80 per cent Indigenous. Our child-welfare system is 90 per cent Indigenous. We know the homeless population is overwhelmingly Indigenous. And that's what this law targets; that's who this law targets. It is targeting Indigenous Manitobans; it is targeting people who are poor, who are marginalized, who are vulnerable, who are at the lowest point in their lives and the most vulnerable.

And instead of this government reaching out and providing assistance, they are criminalizing, they're demonizing and they're demeaning them. They are taking them away from, you know, whatever life they have, forcefully holding them—taken by force and arrest and then held against their will in a locked facility that they cannot leave.

They have committed no crime. Now, 24 hours of that is bad enough; 72 hours is ridiculous. And there's a provision in this law that allows them to even hold them longer if they're then taken to a hospital and admitted under The Mental Health Act, where there are no time limits.

And it doesn't say in this law that it's just for meth. So somebody could come in intoxicated by alcohol and be held for 72 hours, and there's nothing in this law that would prevent that abuse from happening. You have, in this law, no right to a lawyer. So the police can scoop you off the street, they can take you to a locked facility and hold you and you cannot call anybody. You can't call anybody to get you out.

And there's—one of the provisions in this act is that if you are intoxicated, if somebody who's a sober adult can come to the facility and sort of check you out and say, I'll take care of you, you can get out earlier. But if you're not allowed even a phone call, who do you call? If you live alone and you're homeless and your home is the riverbank, who do you call?

Middle-class people, when they get high and intoxicated, it's at a home; it's in private. This law will never touch them. This will never, ever affect them. It is designed to go after the people who don't have those type of middle-class privileges and protections, the people that have to get high in public, that don't have the luxury of doing it behind closed doors where, you know, nobody sees it.

And, again, this law: it doesn't centre the patient; any suggestion otherwise is gaslighting. This centres the police, it centres a government who hasn't really done anything on addictions and mental health and this centres a very scared public that wants government to do something. So they do, but not this.

This is going to create more harm than it will actually solve. This is going to be directed at our most vulnerable, our weakest members. And they will be overwhelmingly BIPOC. And keep in mind, this is all about unchecked discretion.

So a police officer thinks you're intoxicated and they pick you up. You're not tested, they're no—they have no medical training. How do they know if you're intoxicated? And they can hold you for 72 hours. And somebody in a detention facility—again, maybe is a paramedic but has very little training—they're not going to test you, they don't take a blood sample.

And they hold you until they say you can go. And there's no review. So if you're wrongfully picked up, if you're wrongfully held for 72 hours, you have no legal means to go before a judge and say they made a mistake. And if they do abuse your rights and illegally hold you or pick you up to begin with, this law prevents you from suing the government and getting a remedy and redress from the government.

This is so chillingly Orwellian. This is something you would see in, you know, an authoritarian country elsewhere that we would roll our eyes about, that wouldn't call themselves a democracy. And it's not like other Canadian jurisdictions haven't done this kind of thing before; they have.

And when they did, it went to court. And what do you think happened when it went to court? These laws were struck down. They are unconstitutional. Now, the government says, well, the reason why we have to do this is that we have to get care to these people.

Now, that's an interesting argument because it is completely disingenuous. To begin with, I'll use the example of the safe consumption site, because they've argued the exact opposite for the safe consumption site. My friends on the PC benches say, hey, we can't have safe consumption site because you're promoting drug use. Why don't you use those resources and put them into treatment?

Well, my friends on the NDP benches will say, hey, wait a minute. That's not realistic. You can't force treatment on people. They may not be ready. And 500 people a year die from preventable overdoses in Manitoba. And we have to keep these people alive

long enough that they get to the conclusion that they want help. And when they get there, we're ready for them and we'll help them.

And that's a solid argument. And that makes a lot of sense. And then the government who makes that argument turns around and brings Bill 48, which does the exact opposite. It says, we are going to force treatment on you when you haven't consented and you haven't asked.

Well, that's illegal. We don't do that in Canada; that's against the constitutional. You cannot force somebody to have treatment against their consent.

And again, the premise is that everybody who's going to get arrested on this is an addict. Well, they're not. Oftentimes when police go to a situation and something's happening and nobody's actually committed a crime but there's been a disturbance, the way they keep the peace is just round people up and take them to what used to be called the drunk tank.

And this used to be called—sorry, drunk tank legislation. And you may have some, you know, college student who's having a bad night, who is not an addict and is going to be held for hours on hours in detention for whenever somebody in a position of power—which they have no ability to challenge or question—decides it's time for them to go home.

That's a problem. Because there's a lot of assumptions made here that aren't backed up: that police are going to use their discretion responsibly. I'll tell you, 26 years doing this kind of work, they don't. There are police officers who will abuse this section, who have abused this section and will hold people for other reasons, other than that they're intoxicated.

And, again, there are no safeguards, there's no protections, there's no way to prevent an abuse of people's civil rights under this section. And no remedy when they do. Then you're going to have problems with the people that actually staff these facilities by them using their discretion.

When is somebody sober enough? If somebody starts protesting and is upset at being held, are they still drunk or they're just upset for being held against their will? And if they protest, are they going to be kept longer than if they're just placid and passive and just accept their fate?

* (15:30)

Those type abuses will happen. They do happen every day in Winnipeg and they will continue to happen. And what this legislation does, it will make it worse.

You know, my friends on the other side, they have another disingenuous argument that this is somehow going to free up police resources because they say, well, we're waiting 10 hours at the hospital.

Well, you have legislation right now that allows you to take somebody to—The Intoxicated Persons Detention Act facility for 24 hours. So they're not using the laws that currently stand. So if they're not using the laws that currently stands, why do you need to expand it to 72 hours? That makes absolutely no sense and it just shows you how abused this law will be.

And the fact of the matter is, it won't be all Manitobans who experience that abuse; it will be our most vulnerable, it will be our most marginalized, it will be Indigenous and BIPOC members of our community. And there are no safeguards in place for any of this.

The other issue, of course, is rural Manitoba. It is dangerous to hold people in custody. In every single custodial facility, people die. It is not a safe nor healthy environment. In fact, CBC did a report in 2021. They found there was 250 deaths in police custody in Canada over 10 years. Of those 250 deaths, 61 were so-called drunk-tank deaths. These are not safe places to put people.

The safest place for people are to be at home with their loved ones. The Pas RCMP—that doesn't have one of these fancy protective cell centres—they used to hold 16 people in one cell. That was their facility—16 people lying on the floor next to each other, many of them wouldn't even have a mat or a blanket. And that was the facility that The Pas had open to it. And that's what they used to hold people for 24 hours. Imagine being there for 72.

Well, the government said: Well, hold on; you know, we need these special centres, and if the special centre doesn't exist then you can't hold them for 72. Well, wait a minute. I thought you said this was the meth crisis and that we needed this to solve the meth crisis. You're telling me there's only a meth crisis in downtown Winnipeg?

Many small communities are dealing with meth-amphetamine and other serious drugs. Many small First Nations have pretty significant drug problems. They will not have the money, the resources to have one of these fancy centres. So does that mean that those people aren't getting protected by 72 hours of forced treatment? And that we're only going to hold them for 24 hours? Why are you treating them differently than those in downtown Winnipeg?

Well, the answer is, because this really isn't about helping people. Because there's so many contradictions with this legislation that this is really about political theatre. This is really about a government that has done very little to support people with addictions and mental health issues.

And this is a cover to basically go out in the world and say, yes, you know what, we've been really bad on this and we made a lot of promises and we're not going to keep them, but look, we're—you won't have to actually see, as the Premier (Mr. Kinew) would say, the person fighting with themselves walking down the street.

And that's what this is about. This is about disappearing embarrassing Manitobans so that other Manitobans who vote don't have to be bothered by poverty and, you know, all the problems that go with it. A progressive government, an NDP government would say, hey, wait a minute, we don't have to draw the curtains. We don't have to hide the problems of Manitoba society. What we do have is we have an obligation to fix them. We have an obligation to invest in Manitobans and put the policies in so that these individuals actually get help, actually are supported and that we don't use the police to basically take people off the streets for 72 hours because we don't like the look of them.

And, you know, it's quite ironic that this government says that they're compassionate towards homeless Manitobans and they want to do something for homeless Manitobans. That's who's going to get targeted by this bill. That's who's going to get disappeared off the streets and put into these facilities. And what little stability they had, when they get out, their—whatever tent city they're living in, whatever personal effects they have, they're gone, they've been stolen. And these desperate people are going to have to start from scratch again.

But this government isn't concerned about that, because this is not about actually helping people. It's not about treating Manitobans who are struggling. It is about political optics.

So, again, I can't reiterate enough that there's nothing in the current law that would prevent this government from doing what they claim they want to do. There's nothing in the current law that is going to prevent the police from sitting in a hospital for 10 hours with somebody. That is a huge red herring. They're choosing to do that right now. This law's not going to change any of that.

And there's nothing in the current law that isn't—that needs to be tweaked or fixed. And the fact of the matter is this law isn't about methamphetamine. And that 72 hours will be for anything, anything the police say that you are intoxicated on and they do not have to prove it. They do not have to support what they say. It's their word, which is unchallenged, which you can't go to a judge and say, hey, this guy was wrong. And you can't have any sort of remedy at all if they have illegally detained you and kept you for 72 hours.

But, again, I said middle-class people will not get affected by this, middle-class people will never, ever see the effects of this law. This is targeting our most poor and vulnerable and marginal people. This is a Kinew government punching down on Manitobans. And each and everyone on that side should be absolutely ashamed. You have lost your way. This is a racist piece of legislation and it cannot pass.

Thank you.

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): Honourable deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to rise and speak to Bill 48, The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act.

At its heart, this bill speaks as something every one of us can agree on: the need to keep Manitobans safe, safe from harm, safe from exploitation and safe from being left behind by a system that has too often run out of options.

The goal—providing care instead of punishment for intoxicated individuals—is the right one. We all recognize that addiction and public intoxication are not simply law and order problems; they are public health challenges that require compassion, consistency and capacity. I commend the intent.

The Speaker in the Chair

But good intent cannot substitute for good design. If this legislation is going to protect the people it claims to protect, it must do so in a way that works for the entire province, not just in theory and not just for those who live close to Winnipeg.

Every member in this Chamber understands that addiction, mental health challenges and public intoxication are complex issues that touch every community, from Winnipeg to The Pas. When someone is intoxicated, agitated and vulnerable in a public place, police officers are often the first on the scene. For decades, those officers had very—had limited tools under a law that was never designed for today's realities.

Bill 48 is an attempt to modernize the system, and I recognize the good intent behind it. But as with so many laws, the 'intent' only matters if the 'implementation' works. What looks compassionate on paper must also operate compassionately on the ground.

* (15:40)

The mean of—the measure of success will not be the press release on the day it passes. It'll be what happens six months later when an officer, a nurse or a vulnerable person faces the real-world consequences on how this bill functions. This bill allows police or designated officers to detain intoxicated individuals who pose a danger to themselves or others for up to 24 hours in a regular facility, or up to 72 hours in a protective-care centre. The idea is to protect people until they are sober and safe, but the reality is far more complicated than words on the page.

The first concern is capacity. Protective-care centres can only provide protection if there are beds available. What happens when they are none? Imagine a Friday night in Winnipeg when every bed is full. Police respond to another call for someone that is intoxicated and disorientated. They have the authority to detain that person, but nowhere to bring them. Do officers hold them in a cell for 24 hours, then release them even if they are still impaired and unsafe? This is not care. This is a gap in the system waiting to become a tragedy.

This bill assumes that capacity will always exist, but this is not the reality. Protective-care centres can only protect people when they have space, staff and proper oversight. Without those, the system is only shifting the problem rather than solving it. Officers already face difficult choices in the field. They should not be forced to choose between keeping someone too long in custody or releasing them into an unsafe condition because no facility is available.

For rural and northern communities, the problem is even more serious. Many regions do not have detox facilities, mental health stabilization units or safe sobering spaces. If a person is found intoxicated in a small town or a northern community, where are they supposed to go? Will police be expected to drive that person hundreds of kilometres to a city facility, pulling officers away from their post for hours at a time? Or will they be held in a local detachment cell with no medical supervision until their time is up? If that happens, then this law changes nothing except the paperwork.

If this government wants equality of care, it must ensure that people outside of Winnipeg have access to protective care as well. Otherwise, we are creating a system where geography determines safety.

Another concern is what happens after detention. Bill 48 allows an individual to be held up to 72 hours, but it says nothing about what happens once they're released. If that person is from the local community, they may be able to return home or reach family.

But what about with someone who is just visiting, who has no transportation, no identification, no money and no one waiting for them? Imagine that person, newly released from protective-care centre, standing alone outside a building, in an unfamiliar city, disorientated and unsure of what to do next. They may have missed a flight or a bus; their phone may be dead or missing; they may not even remember where they were staying. They are now in a vulnerable and potentially dangerous situation. They could be taken advantage of, robbed or assaulted before the night is over.

If this law is truly about protection, the protection cannot end the moment a person is released. There needs to be a clear plan for what happens next. There should be a transportation option, safe shelters or contact with family or community supports. Leaving someone alone at the door of a facility with no plan or system is not care; it is neglect.

These situations will not be rare. In fact, they will happen often, because public intoxication is not limited to local residents. People travel for work, for family, for medical appointments, for school. Many people, vulnerable people in crisis, are transient and they will end up detained under the law far from home.

The legislation offers no guidance on how they will be supported afterward or how they will get home. These are not small details. They are matters of dignity and safety.

We must also be honest about the risk of over-reliance on regulations to fill in these gaps. Too much of this legislation depends on details that are not written in law. We are told that what the regulations will determine—how the centres are designated, how they will be staffed, where they'll be located, and how people will be transported. But those regulations do not exist yet. They're written behind closed doors, not debated in this Chamber.

When government asks us to pass the law first and trust them to handle the details later, it means giving up the very oversight this Assembly was created to

provide. Once the regulations are set, there is no public debate, no committee process and no accountability until something goes wrong.

The people of Manitoba expect their elected representatives to scrutinize not just the intent of a bill, but its practical impact. That cannot be done if most important parts of the law are left for later.

This approach also creates uncertainty for the people expected to enforce it. Police, paramedics, care workers, they need clarity now. They cannot wait months or years for regulations before knowing how to act when someone is intoxicated and in danger. Waiting for the fine print is not leadership; it is avoidance.

Beyond implementation, we also need transparency. Manitobans deserve to know whether this system is working—excuse me. The government should be required to report how many people are detained, how many are turned away because no space was available, and how many are connected to safe supports once released.

Without that data, no one can tell whether the system is protecting people or failing them. We also need insurance that protective-care centres will be located responsibly. Manitobans want compassion, but they also want common sense. These facilities should not be built beside schools, playgrounds or daycares. Local leaders and residents deserve a say before any site is approved.

There also—there are also financial questions that remain unanswered. Establishing and staffing protective-care centres will provide—will require new funding. Rural and northern regions may face additional costs for transportation or emergency transfers. If those expenses are not clearly planned for, they will fall on local governments and police services that are already stretched thin. This is not sustainable.

We must also learn from other provinces. Saskatchewan and Alberta have tried similar systems. When those systems were properly funded and tied into health care and recovery supports, they eased the burden on police and improved public safety. When they were underfunded they failed to deliver meaningful results.

Manitoba can learn from those experiences if it is willing to plan and consult before acting.

* (15:50)

Speaker, I want to return to the human element because that is what this bill is ultimately about. It's about people who are vulnerable, disorientated and

often alone. The person being detained may be someone's child, someone's spouse or someone's parents. They are a still human being deserving of care and respect.

When the person is released, they are still vulnerable. The risk does not end when the doors open. If we do not have a system in place to ensure that they are safe, that they can get home, that someone will help them reconnect with support, then we have failed to protect them. We must ensure that every protective-care centre is more than a—just a place to hold people until the time runs out. It must be a place where safety is extended beyond the walls of this facility and where persons leave with guidance, transportation and support. That is the difference between care and containment.

I believe this government means well, but meaning well is not enough. The legislation before us must be strengthened with clear standards, clear oversight and clear compassion. The details cannot be left for future regulations; too much is at stake. The people we are talking about do not have advocates waiting in this Chamber. They do not have lobbyists or organizations putting forward their cause. Many of them are alone, struggling and voiceless. It falls to us to make sure that when we pass laws that affect them, we do so carefully and with foresight.

Manitobans deserve a system that protects people in moments of crisis. No matter who they are or where they live, they deserve a law that is fair, transparent and accountable, and they deserve a government that does not ask for trust without proof.

Compassion in policy means thinking about what happens after the cameras are gone, after the press release is issued. After the individual walks out that door, that is when the real test begins. If this bill can meet that test, if it can keep people truly safe, if it can turn detention into genuine protection, then it will have served its purpose. But it leaves the most vulnerable standing alone in the cold and nowhere to turn. Then if—it will have failed the very people it claims to protect.

Thank you.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Today I rise to speak with caution on Bill 48, The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act.

This is not a bill about punishment, it is a bill about public safety, compassion and the hard trade-offs between liberty and protection. Above all, if we legislate for all Manitobans, successful implementation must not leave rural or remote communities at risk. Let us be clear:

the goal should be not to 'incarcerate' people under intoxication, but to provide pathways to care and prevent harm to individuals, to their communities and to those called to respond in crisis.

Intoxification, particularly from substances beyond alcohol, has changed our reality. The days when 24 hours was sufficient to wait out impairment are largely behind us. With meth, stimulants, synthetic substances and poly drug use, individuals may remain impaired, disoriented or dangerous far beyond a day.

Under the current statute, police can detain an intoxicated person for up to 24 hours only. Yet officers, paramedics or clinicians frequently face people who, at 23, 24 or 25 hours in are still in crisis, still unsafe to release. The law forces a release or an ad hoc workaround. That is a recipe for repeated harm, liability risk and public disorder.

Bill 48 seeks to evolve the law to the realities of 2025. It allows detention up to 72 hours in a designated protective-care centre, with medical oversight and periodic assessment. It does not presume everyone detained must receive forced treatment. It provides a structured window for assessment, stabilization and referral.

It is precisely this structure that gives first responders, health staff and communities breathing room, room to respond deliberately, safely and without panic. As the minister in charge put it when introducing the bill, the aim is to, and I quote: keep Manitobans safe, free up police officers, take pressure off our emergency rooms and connect people to care.

And as police have testified, these extended holds are desperately needed. Chief Bowers of Winnipeg notes that the check-the-well-being calls are among the most frequent calls and tie up officers for hours.

But speaking of intent alone is insufficient. The litmus test is in the delivery, especially in rural and northern Manitoba. Many rural communities lack stable or consistent health infrastructure. Many ERs are operating erratically or intermittently. Many paramedic positions are vacant. Travel distances are vast. Residences have—residents have fewer mental health, addiction or housing supports nearby. These are not abstract constraints; they are lived realities for thousands of Manitobans.

Doctors Manitoba reports that, over time, rural and northern ERs have had to reduce hours or suspend service, some temporarily, many permanently. In Prairie Mountain Health alone, out of 33 hospitals, only seven maintain reliably open 24-7 ERs.

In many others, patients must check schedules or even assume the ER might be closed. Temporary or partial closures have been documented in communities like Boissevain, Carberry, Glenboro, Treherne and others.

Given that Bill 48 requires medical assessments every 24 hours for intoxicated individuals, and potentially movement to a protective-care centre, these unstable E hours pose a real barrier. The paramedic workforce is stretched thin. MAHCP reports that across rural Manitoba, approximately 28 per cent of paramedic positions remain vacant. Rural ambulances are out of service tens of thousands of hours monthly because of lacking crew coverage. Some rural regions now record response times exceeding 50 minutes, far longer than the target thresholds.

In effect, even to move someone from a rural community to a care centre may take hours, time during which risk of crews and safety is uncertain. Rural and northern hospitals also suffer staff shortages. Many operate with skeleton physician coverage. One or two doctors may cover an entire facility.

The risk of unplanned closures because one doctor is sick or on leave is real. In some rural areas, only 25 per cent of hospitals reliably maintain 24-7 ER coverage. All these vulnerabilities mean that expecting immediate medical assessments or facility transfers under Bill 48 becomes complicated in practice.

Honourable Speaker, imagine a person in crisis in my riding or yours, intoxicated, unpredictable, a threat to self or others. The nearest protective-care centre may be hours away. The local ER may be closed tonight. Ambulance crews may be already engaged or out of service. Staff across multiple services may be at minimal levels.

Without rural adjustments, Bill 48 risks leaving these individuals in limbo, or worse, forcing first responders to release them prematurely or pursue criminal routes. We must not legislate safety for—only for where infrastructure exists. We must legislate with rural constraints in mind and provide fallback options, funding, safeguards and equity.

* (16:00)

To make Bill 48 effective, fair and defensible across Manitoba, especially in rural areas, I propose the following enhancements and safeguards: statutory definition of what constitutes a 'protective'-care centre; minimum staffing with nurses, physicians, mental health professionals; security; observation capacity; medical protocols and safety standards; mandate that at least one centre be accessible within each region or

a reasonable travel distance, or establish mobile or modular centres in remote zones; ensure centres are physically safe; trauma informed; accessible to persons with disabilities; and culturally appropriate for Indigenous or remote communities.

When a protective-care centre is not available or accessible within a reasonable time frame, the law should authorize local facilities such as small hospitals, clinics, health centres or even police detachments to serve temporarily under equivalent care standards until transfer or release.

Any legislation should clarify the detention for up to 72 hours may occur in local settings if the system is not yet fully functional.

There should be explicit provisions and funding for transport for ambulances, paramedics and medical staff to move individuals safely to care centres. There needs to be safe protocols for long trips, including monitoring, access to emergency care en route and contingency for delays; provincial funding to ensure rural communities are not financially burdened for transport.

Upon release, individuals must be provided with information, referral and warm hand-off to addiction, mental health, housing or social supports.

Protective-care centres should have formal agreements or partnerships with community service to receive referrals and follow-through. Without these links, detentions risk being pointless.

Anyone detained should have the statutory right to access legal counsel, and in some cases, there should be duty counsel for detained persons. A detained person have—should have the right to appeal or independent review within a set time frame. Clear, objective criteria and statute for detention, movement, release—again, there has to be reasonable cause, risk to self or others, incapacity to care for self, or they should be released.

Documentation requirements: every decision to detain, move or release must be recorded with reasons. Honourable Speaker, there needs to be annual public reporting with the number of detentions, regional breakdowns, urban versus rural, lengths of stay, release outcomes, complaints and demographic data.

There needs to be legislative or external oversight—Ombudsman, mental health commission—to review systematic concerns, abuses or inequities.

When protective-care centres are full or inaccessible, there must be alternate paths: mobile units, alternate host facilities, expanded local care. Any legislation should allow for temporary expansion or scaling during high-demand periods such as festivals, for example—emergencies under safe conditions. Back-stop funding and legal authority must be provided for this surge capacity.

Honourable Speaker, Bill 48 has the potential to transform how Manitoba responds to intoxication, making it safer for individuals, safer for communities and more humane in its approach. But the difference between an idea and a good law lies in execution and ensuring rural Manitobans are not shortchanged.

I will support this bill moving to committee provided we commit, right now, to substantial amendments that embed rural equity, legal safeguards, clear definitions, transport funding, fallback care, oversight and transparent evaluation. Let us pass a law that works for everyone, whether that person lives in St. Boniface, Swan River, Thompson or my constituency of Riding Mountain. Let this measure be a statement of fairness, safety and respect.

As we proceed, I urge my colleagues from rural regions to bring their voices, local realities and hard truths to the table. When committee sits, let us demand concrete timelines, funding commitments and accountability that leave no one behind. The safety and dignity of our constituents and, indeed, our collective public safety depend on it. Let us not settle for half a solution but strive for a law that truly protects every Manitoban.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): I just want to take a moment to show support for this piece of legislation.

I think it's particularly important for us as government to stand up for what we're doing. Bill 48, the intoxicated persons act, allows us to ensure that we're doing our part to show safety and show responsibility.

Our government knows that there's a lot of challenges out there, and we not only take responsibility for having a broad vision, a vision of one Manitoba that shows a path of where we want to get to as a

province, make sure that people have a safe life and the ability to live in communities and feel safe.

Also, at the same time, we want to provide a vision for people who are going through challenges in their life, whether that's through intoxication, challenges with addiction of any sort to make sure they have the safety and the ability to get on a path of healing and improvement through their own lives.

Through Bill 48, it provides us with the tools as a province, as communities, as law enforcement to provide people with the right ability to actually take care of themselves, provide safe space for community and for community members and for people who are dealing with these challenges like meth addiction.

So I want to just say briefly to my constituents, to Manitobans, that Bill 48 is a great path for us to be on and one that actually allows us to provide safer communities and supports for people going through addiction challenges.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Any further speakers to the bill?

Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act. Is it the pleasure of the—Bill 48.

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

The motion is accordingly passed.

Recorded Vote

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I'd like to request a recorded vote.

The Speaker: Recorded vote has been requested. Please call in the members.

* (17:00)

The Speaker: Order, please.

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 48, The Protective Detention and Care of Intoxicated Persons Act.

Division

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

Ayes

Asagwara, Balcaen, Bereza, Blashko, Brar, Bushie, Byram, Chen, Compton, Cook, Corbett, Cross, Dela Cruz, Devgan, Ewasko, Fontaine, Guenter, Johnson, Kennedy, Kinew, King, Kostyshyn, Lagassé, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Loiselle, Maloway, Marcelino,

Moroz, Moses, Moyes, Naylor, Nesbitt, Oxenham, Pankratz, Perchotte, Piwniuk, Robbins, Sala, Sandhu, Schmidt, Schott, Schuler, Simard, Smith, Stone, Wiebe.

Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Ayes 47, Nays 0.

The Speaker: I declare the vote passed.

* * *

The Speaker: The hour being past 5 o'clock, the House stands adjourned until Tuesday at 10 a.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 9, 2025

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