



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*



Vol. LXXIX No. 77B - 1:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 28, 2025

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

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

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports?

TABLING OF REPORTS

The Speaker: And I have a report to table. In accordance with section 29(3) and 30(6), The Advocate for Children and Youth Act, I am tabling the annual report and service plan of the Manitoba Advocate and children and youth—for Children and Youth for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

Hon. Mike Moroz (Minister of Innovation and New Technology): I am pleased to table the annual report for MERLIN for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

The Speaker: Ministerial statements?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am pleased to table for Manitoba Justice the '24-25 annual report for the Liquor, Gaming and Cannabis Authority of Manitoba.

The Speaker: Now ministerial statements.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Child Abuse Awareness Month

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): On behalf of the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine), I am pleased to announce October has been proclaimed child abuse awareness month in Manitoba.

Child abuse can affect any community, regardless of geography, culture or socioeconomic status. There are more than 200,000 investigations of child abuse and neglect in Canada annually. In Manitoba, approximately 4,000 cases of child abuse are investigated each year, and we know that many more go unreported. One in three Canadians have experienced some form of abuse before the age of 15.

Part of preventing abuse is knowing the signs of abuse and the steps that can be taken to intervene to prevent harm. We all need to know the signs of abuse. We all need to know what to do if a child discloses

abuse. And we all need to know what to do when—how to take action and report this abuse.

Every citizen of Manitoba has a duty to report if we have information that leads to reasonably believe a child might be in need of protection. This information needs to be reported to a parent, a guardian, a caregiver, to Child and Family Services or to—even to law enforcement, if appropriate.

One of the incredible organizations that is doing work to support children and families experiencing abuse is the Toba Centre for Children & Youth, who are joining us here in the gallery today. The team at the Toba Centre uses a child-centred, trauma-informed approach, integrating a multidisciplinary team to provide co-ordinated community responses to child abuse across Manitoba.

The Toba Centre has been hosting events throughout October to promote awareness and raise funds that will continue to support child abuse prevention and best practice responses in Manitoba. You may have seen the Toba team and their helping hounds of Duke and Booster at the Winnipeg Jets game on October 18, encouraging Manitobans to think more about how we can work together to prevent child abuse.

The #GoBlueToba campaign has encouraged Manitobans to wear blue and to light their homes and businesses in blue this October to show solidarity with abuse survivors, to spread awareness and to spark conversation.

Every child should grow up in a loved, cared for and safe from abuse environment. As a government, we are committed to protecting children and by strengthening our systems, supporting families and standing with survivors, not just in October, but every day. Together, and with the support of dedicated organizations like the Toba Centre, we can build a Manitoba where every child is protected and every future is safe.

I would like to request the names of my—our guests from Toba Centre be added to Hansard. And I ask all my colleagues to rise to welcome and show your appreciation to the Toba Centre.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Karen Chymy, DWW Duke, Christy Dzikowicz, Kathryn Graham, Kristin Henry, Emily Livingston, Brynne Marnoch, Sergeant Kelly McLure, Elder Billie Schibler, Sergeant Colin Smith.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): This October, child abuse awareness month is when we pause to confront a reality that is deeply painful, but one that we must not ignore. Every child deserves to grow up safe, loved and free from harm. And yet, too many children in our province continue to experience abuse, neglect and exploitation, often in silence and often without the protection or support that they deserve.

Honourable Speaker, child abuse takes many forms and its effects can last a lifetime. Survivors tell us that healing is not a straight path. It takes years of support, compassion and the assurance that their pain is heard and, most importantly, believed. It takes a community that refuses to look away.

This month is about raising awareness, yes, but it's also about accountability. Because awareness without action is not enough. Every time a child falls through the cracks of our systems, every time a report is ignored or a family's cry for help goes unanswered, we're reminded that we have a duty to do better.

Across Manitoba, front-line workers, educators, social workers, law enforcement officers and child advocates continue to do extraordinary work, often under extraordinary pressure.

We thank them for their compassion and for their professionalism. Their work is often quiet, unseen and emotionally difficult. They are the ones who step in when no one else will. But they are also telling us that they are stretched thin, that their resources are scarce and that too often support only comes after tragedy.

Honourable Speaker, we cannot keep asking front-line workers to do more with less. When case-workers carry impossible caseloads, when community organizations wait months for funding or when families can't access supports, we put children at risk.

As legislatures, we must ensure that the systems designed to protect children are working effectively, efficiently and compassionately. That means clear accountability, timely follow-up and removal of barriers that prevent front-line workers from doing their jobs.

It also means supporting community-based solutions. The best outcomes for children often come from strong partnerships.

I was proud to work closely with Toba Centre for Children and Youth and their chief executive officer in my time as chief of police, and I've seen the violence first-hand. With partnerships such as Toba Centre, experience in training investigators, we must ensure law enforcement have the tools needed to succeed.

The Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth continues to do the vital work of identifying gaps and making recommendations to improve services. Those recommendations must not sit idle. Government has an obligation to act—

The Speaker: Honourable member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

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

Mr. Balcaen: Those recommendations must not sit idle. Government has an obligation to act on them with transparency and urgency because every delay means another child might not get the protection they need.

Child abuse awareness month is a reminder that there is always more work to be done and that real progress happens when Manitobans come together with compassion, commitment and common purpose.

Let's all remember that the purpose is by listening, believing and acting in the best interests of children. Every child in Manitoba deserves not only to be safe but to thrive.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Austin Street Festival

Hon. Bernadette Smith (Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness): Honourable Speaker, today I rise to recognize and celebrate the 14th annual Austin Street Festival, a wonderful community event hosted by the North Point Douglas Women's Centre in partnership with neighbours, local organizations and volunteers across the community.

* (13:40)

The Austin Street Festival is a completely free celebration, a day where the people of Point Douglas come together for music, laughter, good food and connection. This year's festival was no exception. From the scent of the barbecue drifting down the street, to the sounds of live entertainment and the joy of families playing giant yard games provided

by Niña Waste Events, the spirit of Point Douglas was truly alive.

What makes this festival so special is that it's more than just a celebration—it's also a bridge; a place where non-profits and community groups connect directly with residents, share resources and meet people where they're at. This year, 30 organizations, including Harvest Manitoba, the Women's Health Clinic, CRA, MHRN and Mount Carmel Clinic, among others, joined.

Many of these groups return year after year because they see the value of being part of something rooted in trust, inclusion and belonging. Each organization brought something meaningful, from games and snacks to vital information and on-site services—groups like Street Connections and Aboriginal Health and Wellness, who brought their vans and offered HIV testing and medical supports right at the festival, meeting people with care and compassion right in the heart of the community.

Honourable Speaker, I want to extend my sincere thanks to the North Point Douglas Women's Centre for leading this incredible initiative, and to every volunteer and organization that helped make the day possible. You have shown us what community looks like: neighbours lifting each other up, celebrating together and building a stronger, healthier, more inclusive, connected Point Douglas.

I ask that all members join me in saying *miigwech* to the members who have joined us today in the gallery from Austin Street Festival.

Your efforts make Point Douglas a place—

The Speaker: Honourable member's time has expired.

Chief Tréchelle Bunn

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, today I rise in this House to recognize and celebrate a truly historic achievement. Tréchelle Bunn has been elected as the new chief of the Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation, making her both the youngest and the first female chief in the nation's history. At just 25 years old, Chief Bunn has already become a symbol of strength, progress and inspiration, not only for her community but for all Manitobans and Canadians.

Her story is one of leadership in action. A former university-level hockey player, Chief Bunn has represented Manitoba on the national stage and used her voice to create meaningful change. She is the founder of the Reconciliation Run, the first half-marathon in

Canada to mark the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. Now in its third year, the run funds a scholarship for Indigenous student-athletes, turning sport into a tool for healing, equity and education.

Her leadership extends beyond our borders. As youth chief for the Southern Chiefs' Organization, she has represented 34 Indigenous communities and spoken at the United Nations on the rights of Indigenous peoples. She is currently pursuing a law degree at the University of Manitoba and working with the province's first prison law clinic, showing her deep commitment to justice, advocacy and systemic change.

Chief Bunn's swearing-in this past July marked more than just the beginning of a new chapter for Birdtail Sioux Dakota Nation; it also signalled a generational shift, a hopeful vision of inclusive leadership, reconciliation and the empowerment of youth Indigenous women.

Honourable Speaker, let us congratulate Chief Tréchelle Bunn for breaking barriers, lifting others and leading by example. May her journey inspire all of us in this House to continue working toward a province rooted in equality, opportunity and respect for all nations.

Thank you.

Carter Willson

Hon. Mike Moyes (Minister of Environment and Climate Change): Honourable Speaker, today I rise with a heavy heart and a deep sense of honour to pay tribute to a remarkable young Riel constituent and Manitoban, Carter Willson.

Carter was born in Winnipeg on June 7, 2006, just months after his family moved here from Thunder Bay. From the start, Carter was full of energy, the kind of kid who would light up a room and outskate you on the ice. Like so many other Canadian kids, he found his passion early in hockey, starting in the Timbits program and spending countless hours at the Greendell Community Centre outdoor rink with his buddies.

But Carter's story is not just about hockey; it's about courage. At just nine years old, his mom Lori was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer. To help him cope, Carter joined the Starbuck Hockey Academy, and later Churchill High School's program, where he built lifelong friendships. When Lori passed away, Carter was only 13, yet he carried himself with grace, compassion and a quiet strength that inspired everyone around him.

Honourable Speaker, I had the privilege of teaching Carter at Glenlawn Collegiate. He was a kind, inclusive and always thinking of others. This made Carter liked by everyone—classmates, teachers and coaches alike—and someone everyone wanted to be around. He gave back to his community by coaching young hockey players, sharing his love of the game and mentoring the next generation with patience and heart.

Even this spring, when he began experiencing symptoms that led to a devastating diagnosis of an aggressive brain cancer, Carter faced it with maturity far beyond his 19 years. He never stopped checking in on his friends. He never stopped caring for others. And when he passed away on August 28, the outpouring of love was overwhelming.

His teammates from his junior hockey team, the St. Vital Victorias, along with his friends, and his community, honoured him with fireworks, tributes and jerseys worn in his memory. His legacy will live on in every rink, every locker room and every heart he touched.

Honourable Speaker, Carter was the kind of young person who made Manitoba better just by being here.

To his father Dave, sister Emily, Josh Bracken and aunt Shannon Goodwin, and to all who loved him: We thank you for sharing Carter with us. His memory will never be forgotten.

Honourable Speaker, I ask for leave to observe a moment of silence in honour of Carter Willson.

Josh Bracken, Shannon Goodwin, Neil Prakash, Dave Willson, Emily Willson.

The Speaker: Is there leave for a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

A moment of silence was observed.

Marcel Nabess

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Honourable Speaker, I rise today to shine light on one of my constituents, Marcel Nabess.

Marcel moved to Swan Valley in 1978 and was placed with a family, in his words, raised him as a child should be raised.

Marcel faced challenges early in life due to his disabilities. Though learning was a hurdle for Marcel, he was placed in a classroom with teacher Fred McKim, who gave him extra support and guidance,

helping set him on the path to reaching his full educational potential.

Marcel enrolled in the occupational entrance program in high school, graduated and became—began working at Swan Valley personal-care home, where he proudly remained part of the environmental support team ever since.

Marcel has strong ties to the community and volunteers for many local projects. He's a social butterfly, known by all.

Marcel's positivity and friendly spirit has opened doors to great opportunities throughout his life. He was recently honoured as a lifetime member of the Kinsmen Club of Swan River, a recognition of his commitment to the community.

One of the proudest moments came during the 2004 Summer Olympics Torch Relay, when he had the unforgettable opportunity to run with one of world's most iconic symbols: the Olympic torch.

Marcel attributes his success in life to the support he received from his family, school teachers and educational assistants, as well as the continued guidance provided by the Association for Community Living.

One unforgettable memory is Marcel's admiration for the legendary Hall of Famer, Grey Cup winner, multiple all-star Winnipeg Blue Bomber, Chris Walby. Sorry, Leader, that's not you. A true highlight was when he met Chris during a visit to the Swan River speaking—or sparking a friendship that continues to this day.

Marcel, keep being you. You're a beacon of light in the community and a friend to all.

Colleagues, please join me in recognizing Marcel, who is watching virtually today.

Recognizing St. Vital Small Businesses

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, last week was Small Business Week, and I would like to celebrate the many incredible small businesses throughout St. Vital.

Small businesses are an important part of St. Vital, which is why we're so fortunate to have Old St. Vital BIZ and executive director Mandy Pepe that champions the small-business community, including 170 local businesses.

* (13:50)

This includes incredible family-owned and -operated Dolce Bake Shop, known for its beautiful cakes and pastries, that recently reopened its doors. And they're not alone; St. Vital is also home to talented bakers such as Ben and the team at The Crusty Bun, who craft fresh, European-style artisan breads including my favourite, the pumpkin seed bun.

Restaurants like Maxime's, Jolly Mug, Tapp's Neighbourhood Pub, Georges Burgers & Subs are where good food, good friends and good times always come together.

Manitoba's only MICHELIN-recognized restaurant is in St. Vital: Chica's Chicken, with their high-quality ingredients, are an example of excellence in our neighbourhood.

Woven into the fabric of our community are businesses like Art's Flowers who have been providing the best floral arrangements, poinsettias, for 55 years; like Les Filles Cuisine catering business, which employs Manitobans facing barriers; and like African Foodways Market and Bharat Grocery, which bring food from around the world right here to St. Vital.

And right next door to my constituency office, we're lucky to have great group of local businesses: A-Eleven convenience and grocery store, Quality Pizza, Apex Mobile phone repair shop and SWISH Barbershop, all contributing to the energy of our community.

Thank you to the people who work to support small and local businesses throughout St. Vital. Let's support them not just during Small Business Week, but every week.

Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have with us today from North Point Douglas Women's Centre, Chloe Deleurme, Isabelle Friesen, Anna Baumi and Angela Sanderson, who are guests of the honourable Minister of Housing, Addictions and Homelessness (Ms. Smith).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Megaprojects for Manitoba Disclosure Inquiry

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Honourable Speaker, this NDP government has broken every promise they made over two years ago: health care is worse under this NDP; the economy is worse under this NDP; and homelessness has reached historic levels, at 2,500 people—double since when the NDP took office.

The Premier wants you to put aside all of these NDP failures and believe him and trust him when he says there's three megaprojects out there, but he won't tell you what they are. He don't tell you how they're going to be financed. He doesn't tell you when they're going to be completed. So how can Manitobans trust someone who's broken every single promise that they made to you?

So if is—if this isn't fantasy that this Premier is living in, will he tell Manitobans today what those three megaprojects are?

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Honourable Speaker, waking up every morning and serving the great people of Manitoba is the honour of my life, and the team that we're surrounded with is absolutely committed to coming through on promise after promise.

The first thing we did after we were elected is that we came through on our promise to cut the gas tax, saving you money each and every day. Then we hired 3,400 new front-line health-care staff, keeping another promise so that we could keep a third category of promises, which is reopening emergency rooms that were closed by the previous PC government.

Now, of course, you know that the members opposite, instead of talking about health care, instead of talking about your cost of living, they tried to drive a wedge through the people of Manitoba and they raised an issue that we also kept our promise for, which is a very solemn promise to search the Prairie Green landfill.

So here we are today, united as a province against Donald Trump. We're going to build, build, build our province, megaprojects—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Nowhere in there did he mention anything of the three megaprojects. The question was simple: What are the three megaprojects?

Instead, he doubled down on all of his broken promises: health care is worse, economy is worse, crime's at record highs. This Premier cannot answer a simple question. He pivoted off his 2040 prosperity plan for Manitoba because Manitoba wants answers today.

So then what did he do? He made up a fantasy three megaprojects where he won't tell Manitobans any of the details. And he says they'll get them done in five years. Well, under this NDP's red tape increase, it might take five years to just get a permit done in this province.

So will the Premier come clean today and tell Manitobans: What are those three megaprojects? Simply answer the question.

Mr. Kinew: We promised to create tons of economic opportunity: 17,000 more jobs created in Manitoba. We promised to make it easier to join a union and to join the middle class.

Well, guess what? There's anti-scab legislation, which they have no idea what that even is. None of them have ever learned to swing a hammer, none of them ever wore steel toes, none of them ever put a hard hat on their heads.

On the other side, on this side, we're cutting through red tape so that we can approve projects faster. Within 18 months of taking office, a new gold mine, Honourable Speaker, under construction in this province. We're signing MOUs with all the premiers. We're signing MOUs to cut through red tape and to get big things built.

Of course, you know, my friend Doug Ford and I, we signed an MOU together. He's nothing like the members opposite. He wins, he hates Donald Trump and he stands up for Canada. Unlike the members opposite who suck up to Donald Trump, who never—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Instead of this Premier sucking up to Doug Ford, maybe he should stand up for Manitobans. Let's fact check some things here: 1,300 net-lost jobs last month under this NDP. The economy is ranked the worst in Canada with a 1.1 per cent GDP growth. Those are the facts.

Talking about megaprojects under the NDP: the last project they did, they were years late and \$5 billion over budget. Now this Premier says he can magically handle three megaprojects in five years, but he won't tell you what they are, when they're going to be completed and who's even going to pay for them.

So will the Premier answer the question today: What are the three megaprojects, or are you just going to plant some magic beans and hope that it grows into prosperity?

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'd just remind members to make sure they direct their comments and questions through the Chair.

Mr. Kinew: It's really something to come to question period every day and have the Leader of the Opposition stand up and say, please tell me what's happening in our province. Members here, they know exactly what's happening. They're in their communities, they're canvassing, they're in their communities canvassing more than the members opposite ever did, and you know what Manitobans want us to do?

They don't want us to argue about fringe issues, they don't want us to practise law on the side. They want us to build—*[interjection]*—up the province of Manitoba. Sorry, keep people on our toes on this side of the House.

The members opposite, however, need to get with it. People don't want the keel-over-and-play-dead-in-front-of-Donald-Trump approach that each one of them had been taking. They want to see government with integrity.

And, of course, I'll table for the members opposite a little article that will be in the paper tomorrow, just reminding Manitobans that without an apology, Stefanson's political legacy is tarnished forever.

Question for them in question period: Why did they support Heather?

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

Food Bank Usage and Grocery Prices Request for Affordability Measures

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): Members opposite want to heckle. They want to laugh. They want to say, why are you being so emotional on that side? Because we're asking real questions. You can see it with your eyes and you can hear it at home.

A sad reality is that Manitobans are now living in food insecurity at record levels under this NDP government. National food bank usage, gone up over 5 per cent, but Manitoba, sadly, is three times greater than the national average under this NDP government.

What's even more sad is that Manitoba—in Manitoba, this Premier has done nothing. When he promised—another broken promise—to reduce prices of groceries, to make life more affordable. He hasn't done any of that and now Manitobans are visiting food banks three times greater than the national average.

So what is the Premier doing to make life more affordable for Manitobans?

* (14:00)

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): In a rich country like Canada, nobody should go hungry. So you know what we did, Honourable Speaker, on the question of people being hungry? We gave every single child in this province food—every single child, with our universal school nutrition program.

The members opposite, we brought this forward time and time again when we were in opposition. We brought forward bills, resolutions, questions in question period.

What did the PCs say about feeding hungry children then? Bad idea. That was the former MLA that they were just clapping for in the loge, at last gathering of this esteemed Assembly. What did their former premier say? Said, no, you've got to think about the unintended consequences. The unintended consequences of children eating food at school? Like higher graduation rates? Like lower crime rates in the future? Like a more prosperous Manitoba?

Hey, bring on those unintended consequences. We're investing in our future together.

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: Honourable Speaker, Manitobans can see; everyone on this side of the House in this Chamber agrees no child should ever go to school hungry. So I was happy to support the universal food program.

That's not what we're talking about here; you can do two things at the same time. Going—feeding kids at school and record number of Manitobans visiting food banks are two different things.

This Premier promised he was going to lower food costs. He promised he was going to make life more affordable. It's more broken promises under this NDP.

I'm going to table a report from Manitoba consumer price—sorry—Manitoba Bureau of Statistics—showing that the Manitoba consumer price index has accelerated by 3 per cent in September. Food costs have the largest increase at 3.8 per cent under this NDP government.

So I'll ask the Premier again: what is he doing to promise the cost—that he promised to lower the cost of groceries in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Kinew: Well, we promised in the election to bring in a universal school nutrition program, and we delivered on a universal school nutrition program.

We know that it's not just about the child showing up at school who needs that food. It's also about you and your family who needs help getting by. That's why the first thing that we did in government was we cut the provincial gas tax to put more money into your pocket.

Not only did the members opposite never ever feed kids in school; they also refused to cut gas prices when inflation was going up to 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 per cent under their watch. They were fine with it. Let Manitobans eat cake, Stefanson and the leader of the opposition used to say.

We took a different approach: let's put money back in your pocket, let's you make decisions on the future, let's give financial freedom to all Manitobans. That's what we deliver—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Khan: I will say it now again, so maybe the Premier can actually listen this time: we support the universal food program, we support feeding kids at school.

This question is about Manitoba at three times the national average of people visiting food banks under this Premier. He touts a 1.5 penny—one and a half pennies Manitobans are saving at the pump now. He thinks that's a huge win. Sixty cents the average Manitoba is saving at the gas tank right now—60 cents. And yet Manitobans are visiting food banks at record numbers.

This Premier promised he was going to lower the cost of groceries. He promised he was going to make life more affordable.

Will he simply answer the question? What is he doing to make life more affordable in Manitoba?

Mr. Kinew: We're freezing hydro rates, we cut income-tax rates, we cut the payroll tax, we cut corporate tax, we cut property taxes and, yes, we cut the gas tax.

When they were in office, gas was near \$2 a litre. What is it now? Dollar twenty, dollar thirty, depending on where you go. Life is much more affordable.

When they were in office: 8 per cent inflation. Since we cut the gas tax, Manitoba's inflation rate has been within the target range of the Bank of Canada every single month.

You want to ask what our Finance Minister is doing to make life more affordable? What isn't he doing, Honourable Speaker?

But when it comes to the members opposite who debase themselves on a moral level each and every time they do a scrum, who never showed an ounce of ethical courage during their time in office, who continue to stand behind the fine-paying, degenerate, former premier, the question for them is: What are you doing—not on affordability, but generally?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Once again I would remind members to address their questions through the Chair, and I would remind members that when the Speaker is standing, he should be heard in silence.

Change to Apprenticeship Ratio Call to Reverse Decision

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, new data from this government shows a clear decline in apprenticeship participation. According to Apprenticeship Manitoba's published statistics, for the first time in six years, outside of the pandemic, the number of new apprentice registrations and active apprenticeships have dropped, and they've dropped significantly.

These declines are a direct result of this NDP government's decision last year to impose a one-to-one journey person-to-apprentice ratio.

Will this NDP government recognize their failure and reverse course immediately?

Hon. Jamie Moses (Minister of Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation): Honourable Speaker, I appreciate the question from members opposite.

We took the approach of, first of all, listening to workers, listening to workers in Manitoba who do the hard work of going out on the job site, putting on the high-vis gear, this—the hard hats and steel toes, and prioritizing and making sure that they have good jobs, more good jobs, here in Manitoba.

As we review the apprenticeship program, we want to make sure that those people, in entering the skilled trades, have high-quality, one-to-one training to allow them to succeed through their program, with the best quality training and the safest training possible so that people who go onto the job site can return home safely.

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

Mr. Guenter: Well, clearly, the minister isn't listening. Clearly, this NDP government isn't listening because Manitoba's construction industry today is calling on the provincial government to immediately reverse the apprenticeship ratio change.

And I table today's press release by the Winnipeg Construction Association. Ron Hambley, WCA president, says: The numbers don't lie. This policy, this NDP policy, is reducing opportunity for Manitobans who want to work in the skilled trades. Employers are being forced to turn away apprentices at a time when our industry desperately needs to grow the workforce.

Why is this NDP government choking our economy?

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, very clearly our government is growing our economy by the addition of adding 5,300 new jobs last month, and many of those are in manufacturing.

We know that in our apprenticeship system, we've got over 11,000 active apprentices, and we've graduated over 1,100 of those and making sure that we've added over 2,700 new apprentices into our system. That is continued growth. And what it also is, Honourable Speaker, is ensuring that we have high-quality and safe training for those apprentices learning skills on the job.

Our job is to make sure we grow our economy with good, high-quality skilled workers and make sure that when they get on the job site to learn, they'll learn and do so safely.

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

Mr. Guenter: Yes, this minister is playing fast and loose with the numbers. This NDP government's talk doesn't match the reality on the ground. There are fewer—400 fewer—registered apprentices today this year than last year. For the first time in six years, the numbers are down, and as far as the employment numbers, there was a net loss of 1,300 jobs in Manitoba.

Shawn Wood, president of the Construction Association of Rural Manitoba says, and I quote: There's no evidence—there's no evidence—that the two-to-one ratio compromises safety or training quality, but there is clear evidence that now—that a one-to-one ratio is limiting opportunity. It's time to correct course.

I ask again: Will this NDP government listen to the experts in the construction industry and reverse their disastrous decision—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

*(14:10)

Mr. Moses: Honourable Speaker, there is clear evidence that the former, failed PC government did nothing to protect workers or keep them safe or make sure that they had more good jobs to go to.

Our government is squarely focused on growing our economy by putting more Manitobans to work with good jobs and safety at the job site. That means that we're going to prioritize making sure that when you put on high-vis gear and go on to the job site, you can do so with high-quality education and a safe work environment. That's what our team is all about.

Along the way, growing new jobs means we put 5,300 new workers to work just last month, and many of those in the manufacturing sector. This is how we grow economy that supports workers with good jobs and grows our GDP right across the province.

Health Sciences Centre ER Nurse Concerns—Wait Times

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): The situation in Winnipeg's ERs is getting worse under this NDP government, not better. We know that HSC's ER was at more than 200 per cent capacity last week, and it's not even flu season yet.

Yet yesterday, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) tried to discredit front-line nurses who were sounding the alarm, telling media, quote: We check the numbers each and every day. What I'm giving you is up to the

minute, and it's pretty consistent with what we've been seeing. Those are relatively good numbers, unquote.

The current wait time at HSC's ER is over 12 hours.

Does the Premier still think he knows better than front-line nurses what the situation is in Manitoba's ERs?

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Minister of Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care): Honourable Speaker, the member opposite is wrong. That is not a surprise. She stands up in this House and frequently, you know, talks about health care through the lens that she had while she was advising Heather Stefanson to cut health care and close emergency rooms—a harmful lens.

On this side of the House, we are listening to nurses. We're working with front-line health-care workers, and we're going to continue to take that approach. We recognize that there are challenges in our health-care system. That is the legacy of the chaos of the previous PC government.

Our priority is making sure that we are adding capacity, that we are working with the front lines and we're moving our health-care system in the right direction. A lot more work to do; we're committed to doing that work.

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

Mrs. Cook: Manitoba Nurses Union president, Darlene Jackson, told the Winnipeg Free Press yesterday, quote, "I actually talked to a nurse this morning who said that last week was probably five of the worst shifts that she's ever worked in that department, and she's been there for 10 years," unquote.

We already know that the Premier showed up 40 minutes late to his last meeting with MNU and stayed for a grand total of 12 minutes.

Why is the Premier now going out of his way to publicly discredit front-line ER nurses and their concerns?

MLA Asagwara: The Premier and I have been across the province, on the front lines, listening to nurses, including nurses at Health Sciences Centre. I speak with nurses who work in the ER there, and at that site each and every day. I spoke to nurses this morning. I spoke to their CMO this morning.

We speak with those folks on a regular and consistent basis to make sure that not only we're hearing their concerns, we're taking the necessary action to address them.

And you know what I also continue to hear? I continue to hear from folks very regularly that the previous PC government's damage to the health-care system is going to take us time to fix. That is an understanding across the province. It's an understanding across the system.

What I have not heard in all my listening, Honourable Speaker, is an apology from the member opposite for her role—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mrs. Cook: Well, the minister wants to talk about things that they've been hearing, which is good, because I'd actually like to ask a question about things that I've been hearing.

Can the minister explain to Manitobans why they tried to push through a protocol called Reducing Access Block at Triage at HSC, without allocating any new resources or funding, to make ER wait times look lower than they are, and why this plan was soundly rejected by physicians at HSC?

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, our government has been working not only at HSC but across the province to address capacity challenges created by the previous government.

What's interesting is that the ideas that are being brought forward that our government has actioned come directly from the front lines. It's also interesting that these are ideas and actions that could've been taken over seven and a half years by the previous PC government.

What's also interesting, lastly, is that the member opposite, who advised Heather Stefanson to close our three largest emergency rooms, fire hundreds of nurses and forced the same nurses at Health Sciences Centre to fight with each other for their jobs, has never apologized for her role in that. And you know what, Honourable Speaker, she never will.

Don't worry, on this side of the House we're going to keep doing the work of cleaning up her mess and the mess of members on that side of the House.

Selkirk Bridge Safety Concerns Timeline to Address

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Honourable Speaker, over the last two years, I've rose in this Chamber several times, talking about the Selkirk bridge, a narrow, dangerous bridge with a deck rotting and now guardrails missing.

These people of Selkirk want to know: When will we have some action and protect the safety of the people in the area?

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I'm always very pleased to stand in the House to talk about all of the infrastructure work that we are doing across the province, spending millions and millions more dollars than the previous government ever did.

We have multiple bridge projects under way right now. The bridge project that the member references has temporary supports in place because of the damage that was recently done to the bridge; it is safe to travel on, and we will continue to keep our infrastructure safe for Manitobans across the province.

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

Mr. Perchotte: Well, Selkirk, you heard it here. You get temporary measures but no safety addresses for the future.

The bridge is narrow and dangerous—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Perchotte: It is beyond the scope of this minister to make sure that the people in Selkirk are taken care of. Every day, there's accidents that happen across that bridge; some of them minor, some of them major.

When will the people get the attention they need to make sure they are safe in the area?

MLA Naylor: I'm sure that the folks in Selkirk, as well as many people living across Manitoba, are actually thrilled with the investments being made in infrastructure across this province, not just in the transportation department.

But, you know, we're investing \$2.5 billion in infrastructure investment over five years. We have increased municipality gravel maintenance agreements by 22 per cent, and we have made hundreds of dollars of investments in strategic infrastructure, such as twinning Highway 1 east—

An Honourable Member: Hundreds of dollars?

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Naylor: Hundreds of millions of dollars, if I misspoke.

We are investing millions of dollars in the Port of Churchill, something—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

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

Mr. Perchotte: Honourable Speaker, I see a pattern developing here with this minister. I stood in this House talking about the intersection of No. 67 and No. 8 Highway, and it took until a tragedy for something to happen.

What will it take for the people of Selkirk to get some real action from this government to make their bridge safe?

MLA Naylor: You know, that member stands in his place, time after time over the last couple of years, to complain about things that his side of the House never did.

He continually identifies projects that we are taking care of across the province, but when they were in government, Honourable Speaker, they underspent their transportation budget year after year. They cut positions. They left the northern transportation department staff at a 40 per cent vacancy rate; they definitely didn't care about the North. They left the entire department at a 27 per cent vacancy rate. They cut millions and millions—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Paraclete Transport Company in Portage Request to Address Yard Damage

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): Norm Thiessen, the owner of the property seen in the article that I will table from PortageOnline, continues to wait for a response from this failed Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure.

* (14:20)

I will also quote the headline: Portage business owner frustrated by yard damage, slow government response. He has had to resort to going to local media in order to get some response from this failed minister and the Premier (Mr. Kinew) as well.

Honourable Speaker, when will this failed government finally work out a solution with this

businessperson that gives so much back throughout the community?

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I would invite that member, if he has a specific casework issue that he'd like to bring to my attention, that he's free to do so.

And I will reiterate what I was saying in my last questions, which is that the previous government, under the leadership of Heather Stefanson, cut millions and millions of dollars from the Transportation budget year after year after year after year. For the first six years that they were in government, they underspent every single year. They also cut staffing in the department. They made dramatic cuts to the maintenance budget, to the maintenance staff across the province.

So when new members of their side of the House stand here and—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Bereza: Can the minister explain, or the Premier—because they say that we're—that they haven't received anything from us, I have sent more and more emails—explain why the damage was done two years ago, and they have been emailing you for two years, to the property of Paraclete Transport in Portage la Prairie has not been settled, even after—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Bereza: —numerous emails from myself as well from the president of Paraclete Transport?

MLA Naylor: Well, I've already invited that member to reach out directly, speak to me in the House if he'd like to bring up a specific casework issue—sounds like something that's been going on since his party was in government, but I would be more than happy to talk about a resolution.

But since I have the chance to stand here again, you know, I want to point to some of the exciting work that we've been doing in my department, not only in the build, build, build capacity, but we have really been enhancing road safety across the province.

We committed to creating a new road safety unit. That is fully staffed. We now have a team that goes out to the site of any fatality across—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Bereza: We have reached out many, many times.

Honourable Speaker, I will table the following email that was sent to the Premier, as well to the

Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. I will read it to all Manitobans, and I quote: This is the third time I am writing to you, as you have not responded to any email requests.

Honourable Speaker, can this Premier (Mr. Kinew) or minister please explain why the president of Paraclete Transport can't get an answer from this government for over two years? *[interjection]*

The Speaker: The—*[interjection]*

Order.

MLA Naylor: I love a day in question period when the opposition just has a laundry list of complaints about their own government and what they didn't do. It makes my job so much easier.

But it would be kind of easy anyway because we're investing so much in Transportation and Infrastructure across the province. Pretty proud of the work of our government and the work of this department.

So I was starting to talk a little bit about some of the new changes that we've done in our time in government to make our highways safer. Not only the fatal collision reviews and the network screening, we reinstated a program cut by the previous government working with the University of Manitoba to help analyze—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Manitoba's Crown Attorneys Request for Resources for Support

MLA Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Honourable Speaker, there was an article, which I table now, from Winnipeg Free Press today indicating that an alarm needs to be sounded for anyone concerned about public safety.

The article explains how prosecutors are burning out, trials are being delayed and victims, survivors and often innocent Manitobans are often the ones paying the price.

With recidivism rates continuing to rise under this government, can the minister share with the House why Crown attorneys are still having to fight for resources?

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Thanks to the member for the question. And I know she's asking this question today because, of course, we were just with the federal Justice minister announcing some important changes to the federal Criminal Code, including important changes

that will protect our first responders and ensure that their safety is first and foremost when they're out on the job protecting all of us. And I know that's important work that we've advocated for.

As part of that suite of changes, there's several provisions which we have directly advocated for here in Manitoba, including around those prolific repeat offenders, important work on bail that the previous government never did—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Workforce Retention Incentives

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, in the same article I tabled, it is highlighted that many working in our justice system are now leaving Manitoba for other jurisdictions. We know that the government loves to refer to and point fingers at the federal government, the former government here in Manitoba, literally anyone rather than take responsibility themselves.

However, maintaining the workforce in Manitoba is the responsibility of this—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Lamoureux: —provincial government.

Now, Honourable Speaker, we really can't blame anyone for wanting to leave Manitoba due to such unfair working conditions.

So what is this government tangibly doing today to maintain and incentivize those working in our justice system to stay here in Manitoba?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, Honourable Speaker, the member opposite may not have heard, but in fact, we were with the federal government today. We were working in partnership with them. We were there along with the mayor of Winnipeg. We were there with other first responders because this government understands that it's important to work together.

In terms of building up our capacity in Manitoba, we've never shied away from that task. In fact, that was the first thing that we did in our five-point bail plan, was to add resources to our Crown attorneys. And the results of that are telling.

We've brought down the vacancy rate. Under the PCs, it was 20 per cent; we brought that down to a three-and-a-half per cent vacancy rate.

That means there's 42 new Crowns that are now practicing here in the province of Manitoba, and of course, we've committed to 35 more—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

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

Case Preparation Time—Public Safety Concerns

MLA Lamoureux: Honourable Speaker, the article that I tabled also highlights how prosecutors are routinely handed bail cases with little notice and inadequate time to prepare. This means that crimes are not being processed effectively.

This is terrifying, especially considering the horrific stories we have been hearing recently and on a regular basis of violent repeat offenders and weapons-related crimes. Just yesterday for example, another transit driver was assaulted.

The safety of Manitobans needs to be a priority for this government. And if this is being considered, a sounded alarm for safety—public safety here in Manitoba, what does this Justice Minister advise Manitobans do to remain safe?

Mr. Wiebe: Again, Honourable Speaker, we're working with law enforcement. Here in the city of Winnipeg, we have 36 new officers that are on the streets today. That's after a net loss of 55 under the previous government.

But let's be clear. We're working with our Crown attorneys. We're at the table and we're making sure that we're listening to their concerns.

Of course, this grievance that is before us right now started under the previous government—in fact, in April 2023. And at that time, it was the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), who was the minister of Justice.

And what did the headlines say at the time? Minister of Justice has refused to meet with MACA. Well, we're taking a different approach. We sit with our partners, we listen to their concerns, we offer resources and we continue to build on real success—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

* (14:30)

Former Deputy Premier of Manitoba Caretaker Convention Breach

MLA Eric Redhead (Thompson): Honourable Speaker, it has now been 161 days since the Ethics Commissioner released his report into how former PC premier

Heather Stefanson and former deputy premier Cliff Cullen and the member from Red River North broke the law and violated our Constitution.

Not only that, there's now been 22 days since Heather Stefanson, Cliff Cullen, made history as the first premier, deputy premier, to be fined under the act. Manitobans still have many questions. Are they still—and still waiting for Cliff Cullen to pay his fine.

Can the minister tell the House where we might find former deputy premier Cliff Cullen?

Hon. Tracy Schmidt (Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning): Thank you to my esteemed colleague for that question. It has, in fact, been 22 days since the corrupt PCs were fined and, Honourable Speaker, Cliff Cullen is still refusing to pay. We believe he's hiding out in Spruce Woods, waiting, hoping for this all to blow over.

But if the Spruce Woods by-election was any indication, Spruce Woods voters are fed up with PC corruption. We know that the PC Leader—Honourable Speaker, the PC Leader cannot even find his way to Spruce Woods.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Schmidt: At the Spruce Woods campaign kickoff, the PC Leader said, and I quote: It took me 10 hours to get here from Winnipeg. I got lost coming all the way out here.

So, Honourable Speaker, if the PC Leader cannot find his way to Spruce Woods, will anybody, somebody in that caucus drive out to Spruce Woods, find Cliff Cullen and make sure that those—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order.

Provincial Road 220 in Lakeside Timeline for Repairs

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): Honourable Speaker, for well over a year now, I've raised concerns about the worsening state of PR 220, along with many other PR roads 'arout'—throughout the province. Now, after even a moderate rainfall, it becomes nearly impassable. Yet the minister has taken no action.

Will the minister admit to the awareness of the state of this road in Lakeside and start the repairs immediately?

Hon. Lisa Naylor (Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure): I love a good theme day. So I'm happy to stand here again and talk about some of the great work that's happening in the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, whether it's repairs to Brunkild bridge, whether it's the—all the infrastructure that we're doing in Spruce Woods.

I know—you know, actually, that's a good thing I'd like to talk about today. I haven't really—didn't get to finish my list of all the projects that we've been doing—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

MLA Naylor: —in Spruce Woods and in the Westman area in general. There's so much work that's been happening in that part of the province and it's something that we all want to talk about and celebrate here in the House. I'll—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

The time for question period has also expired.

PETITIONS

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Obby Khan (Leader of the Official Opposition): I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated 'radio' waves—radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues in the human body—thank you—medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnoses and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher service and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie and the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

Located in close—sorry—(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight hours—*[interjection]*—sorry, six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie.

Honourable Speaker, this petition has been signed by Kris Bowman, Ken Bowman, Duanne Taylor and many, many, many other Manitobans.

Green Valley School Expansion

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) Residents of La Vérendrye and other areas around Manitoba are extremely frustrated and concerned by the provincial government's decision to cancel the school expansion project for Green Valley School in Grunthal.

(2) In 2021, the PC provincial government committed funding to expand Green Valley School for a new gymnasium and classrooms.

* (14:40)

(3) The school is so crowded that three mobile classrooms were added to alleviate overcrowding in the classrooms.

(4) In order for construction to begin, the school removed all three portable classrooms, leaving Green Valley in a further critical state of overcrowding.

(5) As a result of overcrowding, parents are choosing to home-school their children due to safety concerns and challenges associated with overcrowding.

(6) The current Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning have said they are committed to investing in education.

(7) The concerns of residents of La Vérendrye and the surrounding area are being ignored by provincial government.

(8) The lack of space in the school is affecting the quality of education and extracurricular activities for students.

The minister and Premier have a duty—sorry—
(9) The minister and Premier have a duty to respond to the educational needs of children and youth identified by rural communities.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to immediately bring back the three portable classrooms to help alleviate the stress and overcrowding of classrooms; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to reinstate the expansion project for Green Valley equipment.

This petition has been signed by Dasgrismar Pajepi [*phonetic*], Birden [*phonetic*] Patel and Jitena [*phonetic*] Patel and many other—many, many other Manitobans.

Thank you.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all available tools to address this issue effectively.

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that repeat violent offenders are not released into our communities without proper safeguards.

(6) Immediate action is required to close gaps in the justice system that allow dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts innocent Manitobans at risk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, including bail supervision and opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

Honourable Speaker, this petition was signed by Doris Esplin, Marilyn Thompson, Gail Tayler and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all of the available tools to address this issue effectively.

* (14:50)

(5) Provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that repeat violent offenders are not released into our communities without proper safeguards.

(6) Immediate action is required to close gaps in the justice system that allow dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts innocent Manitobans at risk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increasing bail supervision and opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

This petition has been signed by Adam Trudeau, Ken Hillman, Trevor Shaver and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Teaching Certification

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Ensuring that teachers have a robust background in the subjects they teach is essential for maintaining high-quality education and fostering well-rounded learning experiences for all Manitoba students.

(2) The recent amendments by the Province of Manitoba to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation under The Education Administration Act have significantly lowered the standards for subject-area expertise required for teacher certification.

(3) These amendments eliminated all subject-area requirements for teacher certification, including major and minor teachable subjects and subject-specific requirements for early/middle years streams.

(4) Specifically, the amendments removed: senior years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor; early/middle years credit requirements in an approved teachable major and minor; and early/middle years credit requirements for specific subjects, including: math; physical or biological science; English or French; and history and/or geography.

(5) Key stakeholders, such as parents, post-secondary educators outside the faculties of education and business partners were not consulted about the changes.

(6) The removal of subject-specific requirements undermines the educational quality in Manitoba schools by permitting teachers to enter the classroom without sufficient training in core academic areas, thereby compromising the education that Manitoba students receive.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to reverse recent amendments to the Teaching Certificates and Qualifications Regulation that weaken subject-area requirements for teacher certification and to reinstate teachable majors and minors and early/middle years requirements which are essential for ensuring teachers have strong knowledge in core subject areas.

(2) To urge the provincial government to address teacher shortages through alternative measures that uphold rigorous subject-area standards, which are critical for providing quality education to all Manitoba students.

Honourable Speaker, this petition is signed by Robert Grant, Debasish Mukherjee, Tanusred Mukherje and many, many more fine Manitobans.

Thank you.

Green Valley School Expansion

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The residents of La Vérendrye and other areas around Manitoba are extremely frustrated and concerned by the provincial government's decision to cancel the school expansion project for Green Valley School in Grunthal.

(2) In 2021, the PC provincial government committed funding to expand Green Valley School for a new gymnasium and classrooms.

(3) The school is so crowded that three mobile classrooms were added to alleviate overcrowding in classrooms.

(4) In order for construction to begin, the school removed all three portable classrooms, leaving Green Valley in a further critical state of overcrowding.

(5) As a result of overcrowding, parents are choosing to home-school their children due to safety concerns and the challenges associated with overcrowding.

(6) The current Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning have said they are committed to investing in education.

(7) The concerns of residents of La Vérendrye and the surrounding area are being ignored by the provincial government.

(8) The lack of space in the school is affecting the quality of education and extracurricular activities for students.

(9) The minister and Premier have a duty to respond to the educational needs of children and youth identified by rural communities.

* (15:00)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning to immediately bring back the three portable classrooms to help alleviate the stress and overcrowding classrooms; and

(2) To urge the provincial government to reinstate the expansion project for Green Valley School.

This petition has been signed by Ron Friesen, Rick Fast, Katina [phonetic] McDougal and many, many other Manitobans.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction of a new Portage regional health facility was under way. The facility and the surrounding community would greatly benefit from the added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of a MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that is used to—a magnet—magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues in human body. It is used to—for diagnosis, detection—diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on highway—No. 1 Highway in Southern Health—Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher services and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada 'disproportionally' face barriers in access to service and medical care. An MRI machine located in Portage la Prairie health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnosis testing.

(6) Located is close 'proxmilimy' to the regional health facility is the Southport airport. The aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by their perform—more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait times for Manitobas to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having the MRI machine in Portage regional health facility will help reduce the wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and replace an MRI machine in the—or placement of an MRI machine in Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This has been signed by Chance Horn, Dwight Barre, Dion Mitchalchuk [*phonetic*] and many, many other Manitobans.

Rural Community Policing Services

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I wish to present the following petition.

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

(1) All Manitobans deserve to feel safe in their homes and communities.

(2) Throughout Manitoba, rural communities are seeing dramatic increases in criminal activities targeting individuals and property, which has eroded their sense of safety.

(3) Though communities pay taxes for RCMP coverage, many have lost local policing as RCMP detachments consolidate. This situation is unacceptable to communities who expect a level of service and police protection.

(4) The lack of community policing has led to many Manitobans losing faith in the rule of law and the availability of emergency services when they are needed.

(5) The provincial government has a responsibility to act and ensure that communities receive adequate service and coverage from police resources.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately work with the RCMP to restore rural community policing and provide adequate resources to protect Manitoba communities.

This petition has been signed by Scott Emerson, Rory Gabor, Taylor Gabor and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

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

(1) Thanks to the investments made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative service plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher services and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada 'dispropiately' face barriers in access to service and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

* (15:10)

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This petition has been signed by Suzanne Donley, Paula Murin [*phonetic*] and Robyn Dillbough [*phonetic*], and many, many other Manitobans.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the—

The Speaker: The honourable member for Midland, we can't hear you.

Mrs. Stone: Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher service and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce those wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This is signed by Don Wiebe, Cor Lodder, Ken Rutter and many, many more Manitobans.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): I wish to present the following petition to the Manitoba—Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction of the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and a computer-generated radio waves to create detailed images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba and is on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher services and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous peoples in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in close proximity to the new regional health-care facility in—is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait times for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and provide better care sooner.

Honourable Speaker, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This petition is signed by Susan Doulix, Susanne Moen [*phonetic*] and Dave Moran and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

* (15:20)

Provincial Road 247—Request for Pave Upgrade

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) La Salle is the largest urban centre in the RM of Macdonald, with a population of over 2,600. The community members are active in establishing facilities and infrastructure that will meet the needs of a rapidly growing urban centre.

(2) La Salle is one of Manitoba's fastest growing communities, having grown over 60 per cent since 2016 and is an attractive place for commuters who work within the Winnipeg city limits.

(3) Provincial Road 247 is frequently used by buses, parents and new drivers, at it—as it is the fastest and most direct route to Sanford Collegiate students from La Salle to get to and from school.

(4) La Salle and Provincial Road 247 can be dangerous to travel as it is located in a well-developed agricultural area leading semi-trucks, large farm equipment and machinery to use the narrow roadway.

(5) Most recently, in 2020, 17-year-old Chloe Boyle lost her life travelling down the road to school, tragically losing control on the gravel road. Previously, there were several collisions that occurred on Provincial Road 247 causing damages and non-fatal injuries.

(6) Due to the active nature of this roadway it is needing more maintenance to deal with loose gravel and large potholes caused by the daily wear and tear by drivers and equipment, leading to dangerous driving conditions, especially in winter time.

(7) They are local online groups with over 2,000 members dedicated to inquiring about the roadway conditions of Provincial Road 247 and Provincial Road 330, posting consistently and asking for updates or sharing issue that are happening that may effect family and their young drivers.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to assist in paving Provincial Road 247 to La Salle from Highway No. 3.

(2) To urge the provincial government to ensure the safety of local residents as young drivers do use

Provincial Road 247 from La Salle so that they have a safe way to access education year round.

Honourable Speaker, this petition has been signed by Rick Rivers, Marcel Lemire, Luke Lovenjak and many more fine Manitobans.

Headingley–Highway 1 Pedestrian Upgrades

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Highway 1 through the RM of Headingley is increasingly busy with vehicular traffic. As a major truck and transportation route that runs through both commercial and residential areas, safety is of paramount importance.

(2) There are many local businesses and homes in this area, meaning that motorists must safely share the roadway with cyclists and pedestrians.

(3) The stretch of Highway 1 westbound from Dodds Road to Bobiche Street does not have a service road, nor does it have a shoulder. Instead, Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure has recently installed a curb on this stretch, which is unique compared to the rest of Highway 1 through Headingley.

(4) The department's decision to forgo a shoulder or turning lane forces cyclists and pedestrians onto the actual lane of traffic, presenting a serious safety hazard.

(5) Residents have reported challenges safely navigating this stretch of highway while cycling or walking to nearby homes and businesses. Some residents fear that it is only a matter of time until a pedestrian or cyclist is seriously injured or killed.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to install a sidewalk or a shoulder with a turning lane to facilitate safe pedestrian and cyclist traffic along Highway 1 westbound from Dodds Road to Bobiche Street.

And this petition is signed by Devan Cleland, Harpreet Kooner, Inderjit Dhillon and many, many other Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 45

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, these are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Upgrading Provincial Trunk Highway 45 will accelerate economic development as it will enhance connectivity, facilitate efficient transportation and promote economic growth in the region.

(2) Economic development will be further enhanced as improved road infrastructure attracts business, encourages investment and creates job opportunities.

(3) Roads meeting the Roads and Transportation Association of Canada, RTAC, standards improve both safety and efficiency, as they can handle heavier loads, reducing the number of trips required for goods transportation.

(4) Safer roads further benefit both commuters and commercial vehicles, minimizing accidents and damage.

(5) Upgrading to RTAC standards ensures resilience to challenges caused by climate change, such as thawing and flooding, which negatively impact road conditions.

(6) Efficient transportation networks contribute to Manitoba's economic competitiveness, as upgraded roads support interprovincial and international goods movement, benefiting both trade and commerce.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

* (15:30)

To urge the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure to take the necessary steps to upgrade Provincial Trunk Highway 45 from Russell to Provincial Trunk Highway 10 to meet RTAC standards.

This petition signed by Reegan Woychyshyn, Jody Gerrard, Darren Rozdeso and many, many, many other Manitobans.

Removal of Federal Carbon Tax

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The federal government has mandated a consumption-based carbon tax, with the stated goal of financially pressuring Canadians to make decisions to reduce their carbon emissions.

(2) Manitoba Hydro estimates that, even with a high-efficiency furnace, the carbon tax is costing the average family over \$200 annually, even more for those with older furnaces.

(3) Home heating in Manitoba is not a choice or a decision for Manitobans to make; it is a necessity of life, with an average of almost 200 days below 0°C annually.

(4) The federal government has selectively removed the carbon tax off of home heating oil in the Atlantic provinces of Canada, but has indicated they have no intention to provide the same relief to Manitobans heating their homes; and

(5) Manitoba Hydro indicates that natural gas heating is one of the most affordable options available to Manitobans, and it can be cost prohibitive for households to replace their heating source.

(6) Premiers across Canada, including in the Atlantic provinces that benefit from this decision, have collectively sent a letter to the federal government, calling on it to extend the carbon tax exemption to all forms of home heating, with the exception of Manitoba.

(7) Manitoba is one of the only provincial jurisdictions to have not agreed with the stance that all Canadians' home heating bills should be exempt from the carbon tax.

(8) Provincial leadership in other jurisdictions have already committed to removing the federal carbon tax from home heating bills.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to remove the federal carbon tax on home heating bills for all Manitobans to provide them much-needed relief.

This petition has been signed by Lisa Penner, Barb Adair, Sarah Bueckert and many, many, many Manitobans.

Provincial Trunk Highway 34

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Provincial Trunk Highway 34 (PTH 34) is a two-lane provincial primary highway that runs from the US border where it meets the ND 20 to the PTH 16 at the town of Gladstone.

(2) PTH 34 runs north-south in the south-central region of the province. It is the main highway for the towns of Crystal City, Pilot Mound and Holland,

serving as a main corridor for the semi-trailers, farm equipment, daily drivers and local school buses.

(3) A new bridge is currently being constructed over the Assiniboine River at PTH 34, north of Holland, in the RM of Victoria. The bridge serves as an important north-south link over the Assiniboine River between the Trans-Canada Highway and PTH 2.

(4) The deterioration of PTH 34 has raised major concerns due to its narrow shoulders and numerous deep potholes that pose serious safety risks considering farmers often need to use the highway to transport heavy equipment.

(5) Construction of a new bridge in accords current designs—codes and the RTAC standard, located on PTH 34 crossing the Assiniboine River, will support trade and commerce and import—prove—improve public safety in the area, and also accommodate flood events on the Assiniboine River.

We petition the legislation Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to address the conditions of Provincial Trunk Highway 34, making the necessary upgrades to RTAC standard and to resurface the road once the new bridge has been completed.

This has been signed by Connie Rondeau, Brad Sawatsky, Marcus Boros and many, many more Manitobans.

Opposition to Releasing Repeat Offenders

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Honourable Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) Kellie Verwey, a beloved young woman from Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, was tragically killed in a car crash caused by a repeat violent offender with a long criminal history.

(2) Despite repeated violations of his bail conditions, the offender was free to roam the streets and to ultimately claim Kellie's life. This tragedy was entirely preventable.

(3) While the Criminal Code falls under federal jurisdiction, provinces have been given the responsibility for the administration of justice, allowing for meaningful provincial action on bail reform to ensure public safety.

(4) Other provinces have taken proactive steps to strengthen bail enforcement, but Manitoba has not used all the available tools to address this issue effectively.

(5) The provincial government has the ability and the responsibility to advocate for and implement measures that protect its citizens by ensuring that repeat violent offenders are not released into our communities without proper safeguards.

(6) Immediate action is required to close gaps in the justice system that allow dangerous criminals to remain free, which puts innocent Manitobans at risk.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to take immediate and decisive action on bail reform to address serious deficits in enforcement by utilizing all available provincial mechanisms to strengthen warrant enforcement, increasing bail supervision and opposing release of offenders, thus ensuring that repeat violent offenders are held accountable and that public safety is prioritized over leniency; and

* (15:40)

(2) To urge the provincial government to lobby the federal government to immediately repeal provisions of the Criminal Code that allow for the continued victimization of law-abiding Manitobans while granting repeat offenders additional rights.

Honourable Speaker, this petition has been signed by Dustin Sharp, Sabrina Byers, Chance Cebry and many, many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

MRI Machine for Portage Regional Health Facility

MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie): I wish to present the following petition.

The background of this petition is as follows:

(1) Thanks to the investment made under the previous PC provincial government as part of the clinical and preventative services plan, construction for the new Portage regional health facility is well under way. The facility and surrounding community would greatly benefit from added diagnostic machinery and equipment, but specifically the addition of an MRI machine.

(2) An MRI machine is a non-invasive medical imaging technique that uses a magnetic field and computer-generated radio waves to create detailed

images of organs and tissues in the human body. It is used for disease detection, diagnosis and treatment monitoring.

(3) Portage la Prairie is centrally located in Manitoba. It's on the No. 1 Highway in the Southern Health/Santé Sud Health Authority. Currently there is only one MRI machine in the RHA.

(4) An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will reduce transportation costs for patients as well as reduce the burden on stretcher service and ambulance use. It will bring care closer to home and reduce wait times for MRI scans across the province.

(5) Located around Portage la Prairie are the Dakota Tipi, Dakota Plains, Sandy Bay and Long Plain First Nations reserves. Indigenous people in Canada disproportionately face barriers in access to services and medical care. An MRI machine located in the Portage regional health facility will bring care closer to their home communities and provide greater access to diagnostic testing.

(6) Located in the close proximity to the new Portage regional health facility is the Southport airport. This aerodrome has a runway length that is more than adequate to support medical air ambulance services. This would provide the opportunity to transport patients by air from more remote communities to access MRI imaging services.

(7) The average wait time for Manitobans to receive an MRI scan is currently six to eight months. Having an MRI machine in the Portage regional health facility will help reduce these wait times for patients and providing better care sooner.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to support the investment and placement of an MRI machine in Portage—in the Portage regional health facility in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

This is signed by Lil Figgins, Gary Figgins, Gerry Maksymyk and many, many more Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Are there no more grievances, then—or, sorry. No more petitions.

GRIEVANCES

The Speaker: We'll move on to grievances.

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): Today I'm going to speak on Spruce Woods, the ones who elected me to be here today even though they say I wasn't.

I've been very busy, and last week I had many meetings with many different people that are very concerned. Some of them are based as development—multiple housing developments. They have been taken away their property tax because of their—the NDP's new rebate system, and the increase is over 30 per cent, some as high as 38 per cent increase.

Spruce Woods housing corporation, which just celebrated their 40th anniversary on the weekend, has an increase of just under 16—or just under 17 thousand dollars this year, and will be more next year.

All these developers said they have to put an increase to the renters. We are living in a time where affordability has been very, very high. It is—young people can no longer hardly afford a home. They're living in apartments, and now this government is put—taken these rebates off, and they've been taking these rebates off, and so for this reason their rent is going to go up. These are people that can't afford a home. They're living in there because of that: seniors, immigrants and young students going to university and to college.

Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Also, the infrastructure projects that were promised during my by-election: No. 2 Highway is still a mess. My daughter had her wedding in June, and my mother was out from—92-year-old mother was out from BC, and we were driving down the highway to our place on No. 2, and she said: I honestly think something needs to be done to your highways. This is ridiculous, Colleen. I am—my back's sore. I feel nauseated. I feel like—it's horrible. My three-year-old granddaughter said: Mom, this road makes me get a headache.

They decided they were going to fix the holes on election day. Well, what end up happening was they didn't sink in, and now they're like speed bumps. So when you're driving down No. 2 Highway, you got to be careful. Now, in the dark it really worries me because this highway's very, very busy in our riding, and you hit that bump in the middle of the night, you're going somewhere and not down No. 2 Highway.

We have No. 5 Highway, right with a provincial park. I've gotten calls from people that visit this park

in the summer, all the way from Dauphin; love Spruce Woods provincial program—or, campground. Love it, but will not go on it because they've had damage over and over from their campers on this highway.

I took that highway during the election to go from Brandon over to Glenboro, and it is a mess, and this is a very busy tourism highway and a highway to get from Highway No. 2 over to No. 1.

** (15:50)*

Then we've got to talk about 34; 34 is an absolute mess, and I'm getting calls from farmers, the potato farmers that need to get on an RTAC-standard highway and have to drive all the way around, out of the way, to get to—get their potatoes to where they—their storage.

And these highways are absolute mess; they—we had a five-year program—this government, when they were in office—to get these started and done. And they would have been completed if it wasn't for these delays. And the people remember it. They were not fooled by the reannouncements during my election.

Now the farmers, that's another story. Last week, when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) was away, we had the Minister of Municipal and Northern—

The Deputy Speaker: Order.

I'd just remind the member that we can't comment on people's absence from the Chamber.

Mrs. Robbins: Last week, the acting Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations (Mr. Simard) made a joke when was asked an agriculture question. I got, actually, a few emails and I got a phone call from a farmer in Spruce Woods saying, if they think this is so funny, maybe they should try farming instead of sitting in the city and thinking it's a joke.

They have put many, many dollars into these crops and it takes many, many—[interjection]—many, many dollars to take it off, and we have no markets. We are waiting and waiting for some markets. This is what—there—it's coming from the farmers. [interjection]

Yes. So, anyway, they're very disappointed in the jokes that they find from the opposition in making jokes, instead of doing something for them.

The Speaker in the Chair

Jobs agreement: your new jobs agreement. I have talked to a few companies in Brandon and themselves

and rural farm—or, rural tradespeople. They're very concerned, as they have no union and they feel that they're going to be left out of many, many of these jobs. And they are concerned. *[interjection]*

Well, they're listening to me, anyway. I'm glad you're listening and paying attention.

Crime: crime is up—unbelievable. They like to say they've got it under control, but this is not what's happening in the—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Robbins: —rural areas. If you look on social media, it's almost daily: somebody's got people driving in their yards at night on their cameras. Farmers never even used to have cameras on their land. Now they have to have it because of their safety.

We never, ever in rural Manitoba, when I was young, locked our doors. I—when I went to sell my acreage a few years ago, I couldn't even find my keys to sell to the people. But now, today, we lock our doors, we have cameras, we are scared to be alone in our own homes. The seniors are scared to be in their own homes.

It is—*[interjection]* Health care: agency nursing, they want to take it away. I have an ER that told me—in the rural area—when this decrease comes down, they will be closing their ER. They will not be able to have the number—have staff—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Robbins: —to staff it. We need—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

I would ask both sides to come to order because I need to be able to hear what the member's saying.

Mrs. Robbins: So without these—*[interjection]*

Without filling the positions before they decrease the agency nurses, they will have major closures. And if they think this is funny, you live in rural Manitoba where we're already having unbelievable wait times to have an ambulance or to see an ER—we're travelling miles and miles and miles, not across the city.

An Honourable Member: And on bumpy roads.

Mrs. Robbins: So—yes, on bumpy roads. The ambulance drivers have even made comments to me on some of these roads.

So let's do the promises that we have made during your election and all these issues would have been taken care of. But instead, we have been ignored in

Spruce Woods until this by-election came along. And once it—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

No further grievances. We'll move on to orders of the day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Acting Government House Leader): Can you please call the start of second reading of Bill 50, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act; followed by calling the start of third reading of Bill 40, An Act respecting "O Canada" and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools, Education Administration Act and public schools amendment act.

The Speaker: It has been announced that we will now do second reading of Bill 50, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act; followed by concurrence and third reading of Bill 40, An Act respecting "O Canada" and Other Observances and Land and Treaty Acknowledgements in Schools (Education Administration Act and Public Schools Act Amended).

SECOND READINGS

Bill 50—The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act

The Speaker: So now, Bill 50, the constitutional amendment act.

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): I move, seconded by the Attorney General of Manitoba (Mr. Wiebe), that Bill 50, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les questions constitutionnelles, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, I'm very happy to rise today and to bring Bill 50 to second reading.

The question at the heart of this bill is whether or not your government should respect the Canadian Constitution. We know the snivelling, sellout Progressive Conservatives hate our freedom, hate our rights, hate our constitution and bow down to Donald Trump.

We'll never do that. We love the Constitution. We love Canada. We love your freedoms, and Bill 50 is all about defending that.

Section 33 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms allows for a parliament or a legislature to effectively suspend human rights. We think that's wrong. And that's why we've committed that we will never use the notwithstanding clause during our time in government.

But what happens many, many generations from now if the members opposite's great-great-great-great-great grandchildren manage to form government in the future and they want to take a run at, let's say, religious minorities or LGBT people, or if they want to go after various cultural groups for the purposes of wedge—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: —politics, just like they face planted on during the last election—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) will come to order. The honourable member for Red River North will come to order.

* (16:00)

Mr. Kinew: I'd be mad, too, if I was 10 grand poorer today.

And that's exactly the kind of thing we're trying to prevent. We're trying to prevent unethical conduct in government, like that member was just fined for. He's 10 grand poorer today because he broke the conflict of interest law and he violated the what?

Some Honourable Members: The Constitution.

Mr. Kinew: The Canadian Constitution. He was a—very same Constitution that we are setting out to defend here.

Again, section 33 right now is being used by—let's just say it's being used by conservative politicians out there. Conservative politicians, I would say, who don't have the wherewithal to actually go out and say something anti-LGBT. They want to blow the dog whistle just loud enough to activate a conversation in the doorstep that is very anti-LGBT.

We saw the Leader of the Opposition being a poster child for that. Every one of these current PC MLAs supported that sort of divisive rhetoric. And make no mistake, that if they were ever permitted anywhere near power again, they would probably use

the notwithstanding clause to advance not just an anti-trans agenda, but fundamentally an anti-LGBT agenda, which is completely, one hundred per cent absolutely wrong, just as wrong as the member for Red River North was for his actions that led to him paying a \$10,000 fine.

And, you know, it's the entitlement that you see from people like Heather Stefanson, the entitlement—

An Honourable Member: What did you pay for that flight to BC again? How much? Twice?

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Kinew: Oh, I think we voted on my ethics complaint, and what was the outcome of that? Clear, all good. All good in the 'hood.

What was the outcome of his ethics complaint, Honourable Speaker? One thousand, \$2,000, \$3,000, \$4,000, \$5,000, six—oh, I'm going to have to go lie down for a little while. I'm going to go have to talk to my financial planner. I'm going to go have to call Grandma. Grandma, sell the farm. Six thousand, \$7,000—okay, Cousin, Uncle down in Florida, I need you to wire me something Western Union. Oh—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable First Minister has gotten pretty far afield, so I would ask him to please keep his comments relevant to the bill.

Mr. Kinew: Bill 50, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act, would prevent a future rule breaker like the current Red River North MLA, who is paying that \$9,000, \$10,000 fine for violating the very same Constitution, by saying this simple premise: If any future right-wing disgrace of a government, just like the Progressive Conservatives, ever gets up and tries to use section 33, that they'd immediately have to refer section 33 to a court of law so that a judge, a j-u-d-g-e, judge—something that they've never heard of on that side, because they say any time that they break the rules, I was just doing my job, I was just doing my job, and now I got \$10,000 less money because I was doing my job in such an unethical, poor, morally bankrupt fashion that I was fined by the Ethics Commissioner—we'd have a judge rule that people's rights are being violated.

And then what happens? It's up to you. It's up to you, the people of Manitoba, to render your verdict,

just like you did to the members opposite when they tried to divide Manitobans on racial lines and on gender lines and, of course, were rejected, were rejected and relegated to the very weak, weak opposition stature that they have today, and sent a very clear message that that's not who Manitobans are.

You might think you got a zinger for the comments section on Instagram, but guess what? Manitobans want decency. Manitobans want unity. Manitobans want people who aren't going to be fined for violating the Constitution, like the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) or Heather Stefanson or Cliff Cullen.

That's not what Manitobans want. Manitobans want good government, fair decision making. They want the ability for their children to succeed based on their own merits, not on whose family shares the same last name as somebody else's, which is, by the way, the running motto of the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba.

And now what's happening as we debate this bill here? Well, they're already working up their platform, and like, how can we ram through more projects next time? Again, 170 years from now when they lose government after taking it maybe six months prior, how will we ram through more unethical behaviour?

Well, guess what. A step like this Bill 50 is important.

On a more realistic level, listen; what we're talking about here is the right for a Hutterite person to be able to maintain their identity in this province without having the heavy hand of government tell them who they are. What we're talking about here is the freedom of a Muslim person or a Christian or a Sikh to be able to pray in the way that they see fit without having the heavy hand of government tell them what to do.

What we are talking about are the fundamental freedoms defined in the Charter being protected, not just by this government's guarantee that we will not use section 33, but of ensuring that any future government—any future government, such as the descendant of the members opposite—would be bound to get an opinion from a court of law to tell us whether people's rights are being trampled on. That way you, the people, will know next time you vote whether rights were in a fact being violated.

And so this is a common-sense law that all members should support, that should be part of the redemption tour of the biweekly apologies that their

leader gives, that the monthly apologies that their backbenchers deliver. They should really, really get behind this thing. This is about principle. This is about the decision making that we are in a democracy and it's not a dictatorship.

What happens when we start to use this section 33? Well, it's a slippery slope. It might begin by targeting a vulnerable minority. It might begin as it did with the Leader of the Opposition in the recent campaign trying to target trans kids. The next thing you know, what's going on in Alberta right now as we speak? Notwithstanding clause section 33 is used to impose a contract on striking workers—teachers. Okay?

Now, when we think about that, what's going on here? What pretense is there to negotiate? What expectation is there to actually bargain in good faith, if all of a sudden you can just slap section 33 down and get whatever you want?

That's not what this country's based on. This country's based on one person, one vote. This country is based on equal treatment before the law. This country is based on fair dealing from your government, something that all those PCs forgot about seven and a half years they were here in government. They only ever got elected because of Brian Pallister. Let's remember, their party hasn't won an election without him in more than three decades. None of them can mention his name again.

But that sense of entitlement, even though none of them actually earned their spots around the Cabinet table, that sense of entitlement just wrapped itself so tightly around them even after they were shown the door by the people of Manitoba, they tried to continue to make consequential decisions.

And then they show up and have the temerity to say, I was just doing my job. No. Wrong. You lost your job. You were fired by the people of Manitoba, and that's why you're being fined, and that's why, if you had any sense of decency whatsoever, Heather Stefanson, you would get on the phone and call the PCs right now and tell them to support Bill 50.

Questions

The Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister or the Premier (Mr. Kinew) by any opposition or independent member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from another recognized opposition party;

subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): After listening to that diatribe, I'm wondering if the First Minister or the Justice Minister—whoever decides to answer these questions—can explain what Charter rights cannot be overwritten by section 33.

* (16:10)

Hon. Wab Kinew (Premier): Well, the most relevant thing is which Charter rights can be overridden by section 33, and importantly, the parental rights campaign that was spearheaded by the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) does include those rights.

We're bringing Bill 50 forward to tie the hands of a future Progressive Conservative government that would seek to undo marriage equality, that would seek to target transgender children who are just trying to grow up and articulate who they are through the choices that they make to live out their own truth. That's what is at stake.

What you can't legislate away with section 33 are the rights to bilingualism in this country and the rights to equality between men and women. But there's a whole lot of other things that the PCs would probably try to legislate out of existence—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Balcaen: Honourable Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to ask a number of questions. I see the Premier's going to be answering these, rather than the Justice Minister, which is great to hear.

Do any other provinces have a similar law, and if no, what is the necessity for Manitoba to have one?

Mr. Kinew: See, unlike the members opposite, who are, like, always trying to drive Manitoba into last place, and who their two terms in government made everyone in Manitoba ashamed of not just one premier, but back-to-back premiers in the form of Brian Pallister and Heather Stefanson, we want Manitoba to be No. 1. We want Manitoba to be a leader.

And so Bill 50 will make us a leader in defending your rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We will tie the hands of any future government to ensure that they have to deliver a clear message to you before you vote on handing them another term as to whether or not they violated your rights.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'd like to ask the First Minister, judicial review already occurs whenever a Charter violation arises whether or not section 33 is revoked—is invoked.

What practical purpose does an automatic Court of Appeal reference serve if the law in question has already been litigated and ruled upon possibly to the Supreme Court?

Mr. Kinew: The premise of the question shows a complete lack of understanding of Bill 50, so I'm glad he asked it so that we can explain. We're talking about prior to litigation. We're talking about not having to wait for your rights to be trampled on.

The member himself targeted trans children during his brief and embarrassing time as interim Leader of the Opposition. He had his one interview with the national newspaper of record and he used it to target LGBT kids in this province. It was an absolute abomination, a total shame.

Bill 50 is to prevent trash like those ideas from being passed into law here in Manitoba.

Mr. Balcaen: I'm wondering how the Premier will prevent this process from politicizing the judiciary by forcing the courts to comment on legislation before it is even applied?

Mr. Kinew: This member politicizes the judiciary every single day when he rises in this Chamber and he criticizes the actions of judges, and then he tries to attribute them to my colleague from Concordia.

The temerity, the nerve, to come forward and ask that question just shows the complete lack of integrity and disingenuous nature of the members opposite.

We have a system of balancing arms of government. The legislative and executive arms are balanced by the judicial branch of government. There will be no cross-pollination or interference.

This Bill 50 will do exactly what is designed to ensure that the judiciary branch can rule on—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: So it's interesting, Honourable Speaker, that the First Minister stands up today, the member for Fort Rouge, and once again is far more showman than statesman, as his whole diatribe introducing the second reading to this bill.

So I'm asking the Premier (Mr. Kinew): Has the judiciary or the bar been consulted on Bill 50? And instead of slandering anybody else in this Chamber,

how about stand up and ask—answer a question for a change?

Mr. Kinew: It's not slander; it's The Globe and Mail. This is The Globe and Mail, the national newspaper of record.

The member was right there on the Grand Staircase popping his little toes in front of their camera: Yep, that's the direction we got to go in. Attack LGBT children in this province. I mean, you could've gone out there and you could've said, hey, I'm against tariffs. You could've gone out there and said, hey, I want health care to be better. You could've gone out there and said, hey, we should focus on the economy.

The national newspaper of record: your one shot as interim leader to communicate something to the people of Canada, what does he do? He swings down at LGBT children. Of course, I'm going to call that out, because that's the exact kind of behaviour Bill 50—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Mr. Ewasko: It sounds like the Minister for Housing wants to stand up and apologize for her Premier (Mr. Kinew) getting out of hand once again in the Chamber, Honourable Speaker.

So just ask a—just answer the question, Premier. I'm going to ask you again: Has the judiciary—

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

I would ask members to make sure they address their questions and answers through the Chair.

Mr. Ewasko: So again, through you, Honourable Chairperson, unless you're the one who's going to answer the question—because obviously we're not getting any answers from the Premier—through you to the Premier, can he answer the question, whether the judiciary or the bar has been consulted on Bill 50?

Mr. Kinew: Honourable Speaker, I know that you and the Chair should never be politicized in this Chamber.

We actually have consulted a court. It happens to be the Supreme Court, the highest court in the land. We have intervened against bill 21. We've done so with the same principle in mind here in Bill 50 that a court, even though they can't strike down section 33 or a law passed under it, should still be able to rule whether somebody's rights are being trampled on.

Time was the PCs used to oppose bill 21 as well. Brian Pallister took out ads in Quebec against it. And now look at them today. How—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Mr. Balcaen: Would the Premier agree that Bill 50 risks creating constitutional uncertainty rather than clarity by inviting redundant and potentially conflicting judicial opinions?

Mr. Kinew: There you have it: asking a court to rule whether your human rights are being respected by a government in this province, the member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen) says is redundant. That's the entitlement that leads members opposite to break the law and to say that they were only doing their job.

Do you know what is different about people on this side of the House? The entitlement isn't there because we had to fight for what we have. It was never given to people on this side of the House. In living memory, people couldn't vote.

An Honourable Member: Waah, waah.

Mr. Kinew: People—oh, we just heard the one who just—okay, I'll return to this in the next set of questions because I know that my time is drawing short.

Mr. Ewasko: So it's interesting, Honourable Speaker, that the Premier stands up, the MLA for Fort Rouge, the one who, if we're looking around this Chamber—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Ewasko: —the one who actually has a record. So once again, we would uphold our record compared to his each and every day.

So I ask the Premier: How will he prevent this process from politicizing the judiciary by forcing the courts to comment on legislation before it is even applied?

* (16:20)

Mr. Kinew: I want the permanent record of this Assembly to show that when I was talking about the fact that my father was not allowed to vote in this country, the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) said in a sarcastic voice: waah, waah.

The man has debased himself already, being a history maker in breaking the ethics law for the first time in Manitoba. He debased his bank account by paying a fine for the first time in Manitoba history, and now he shows his complete lack of respect for the common history that we all share as Canadians.

It is that sort of lack of self-awareness and understanding of our legal framework that is exactly the reason we need Bill 50, to ensure that future governments are going to be kept in check by the judiciary—

The Speaker: Time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: I see the Premier (Mr. Kinew) is a little rattled over there, and he's the only premier, the MLA for Fort Rouge, who will go down in history of the only premier being charged with domestic violence.

So let the record show today, Honourable Speaker—
[interjection]

The Speaker: Order, please. Order. *[interjection]*
Order.

We'll need to calm down. There's no need to holler back and forth.

Mr. Ewasko: So it gives me great pleasure to then finish my question, Honourable Speaker. So will this bill create a chilling effect on future legislatures, discouraging them from using section 33, even in cases where there's a demonstrable necessity and democratically supported—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Order, please. The honourable Minister of Health—
or, Education and Early Childhood Learning
(MLA Schmidt) needs to come to order.

Mr. Kinew: Say what you want about me. The Ethics Commissioner has said that their premier, their leader, broke the law and violated the Constitution as was fined by \$18,000. What an embarrassment. What a shame. What an abomination.

And they don't say that there's anything wrong with that. That's why Bill 50 is important. It's clear they don't respect our Constitution now; they were just found to have violated it, and they don't acknowledge that reality. Bill 50 will keep that entitlement in check.

Mr. Balcaen: After reading through this bill I've had a number of questions, but this one here is, can the minister—or the Premier clarify who would prepare the reference questions to the Court of Appeal, and whether that process would be transparent to the public or controlled by Cabinet?

Mr. Kinew: Yes, that process will be transparent. It will be the complete opposite of what the member for Red River North and Heather Stefanson and their current House leader and Cliff Cullen all did, which was, after you voted them out of office, they tried to

rush through a controversial sand mine that was ultimately rejected.

I want to thank the civil servants who blocked them from their unethical behaviour. I want to thank the Ethics Commissioner for shining a light on this. This is not partisan, what I'm talking about here. These are all facts, agreed-upon facts, agreed upon by every single member of the PCs, who unanimously voted to fine the member for Red River North.

The thing that no one understands—

The Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Mr. Ewasko: If a law includes a section 33 declaration, but no one challenges it, I'd like to ask the Premier: Is there any constitutional or democratic necessity for judicial involvement at all? And it'd be great if the Premier would actually answer a question in these 15 minutes of Q & A time, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Kinew: Yes, because you have to do the right thing even when no one is looking.

And when you're out in The Globe and Mail, you shouldn't be mean to trans kids. When you're given the opportunity to sit in the front bench, you shouldn't attack vulnerable kids. I would be ashamed if I did something like that during my political career.

Perhaps the member would like to apologize to everybody.

The Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Jeff Wharton (Red River North): On a point of order.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable member for Red River North, on a point of order.

Mr. Wharton: During the Premier's comments and answers to a question that he didn't answer, he had mentioned that I was making sounds towards his father not being able to vote. I disagree with that comment and I—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Wharton: —would ask the Premier at his earliest convenience to table that—those comments in Hansard.

I'd also like to, if I may, Honourable Speaker—if I may comment on another comment that the—this point of order—that the Premier had made to the grandchildren of every sitting member in this House. He essentially threatened every single member of this House: for over a hundred years, they'll never sit in here—particularly the PC grandchildren, who I am a grandfather of five. I take offence to that. I know everybody on this side of the House took offence to that.

And I hope—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wharton: —to heck that everybody on that side that has grandkids took offence to that as well.

Honourable Speaker, that is not parliamentary—

The Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (MLA Schmidt) needs to quit hollering across the way when the member's talking about a point of order. I need to hear what he's saying.

Mr. Wharton: Thank you, Honourable Speaker, for your guidance there.

Look, we are here to debate legislation. We're here to debate it for Manitobans, Honourable Speaker, and we're here to make the right decisions for Manitobans.

However, when it gets personal, like the First Minister did today, on grandchildren for next generations that may want to run for office one day, well, they'd better not be looking across the aisle at the Premier (Mr. Kinew) currently right now because the last thing they want to do—the last thing they want to do is ever put their name on a ballot and work as hard as every single member, by the way, sitting in this Legislature worked hard to get elected and got elected to apparently come here and simply ridicule and not understand the facts of the right we have to sit in this Legislative Assembly every single day on behalf of Manitobans.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Before recognizing any other member to speak on this point of order, I would ask members to please keep their comments relevant to this point of order.

Hon. Uzoma Asagwara (Deputy Premier): Honourable Speaker, the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) made a lot of comments in his point of

order. I'll start by saying that it is clearly not a valid or appropriate point of order that he's brought forward for your consideration.

I will also state that the reason the Premier put those remarks on the permanent record of this House is because it is so important that when a member who has been found not only in violation of the law and is being held accountable by the Ethics Commissioner and fined, you know, that's happened. That's for the record of the House and we know that.

But it's also important that when the Premier stands up and in his remarks—his debate about—at a really important bill, Bill 50, he's brought forward, references the fact that Indigenous people up until recent memory—including his father—did not have the legal right to vote in this country, that when a member of that caucus—the member for Red River North who has violated our Constitution and broken the law says openly in this House and makes the gesture of waah, waah, which was observed by everybody on this side of the House not one time, but twice, the Premier has the right—and I would argue perhaps even the responsibility to ensure the permanent record of this House reflects that behaviour.

* (16:30)

The Premier made clear statements about the fact that democracy needs to be protected not just for today, but for generations of Manitobans and Canadians to come. And that as elected people, we have an obligation, a duty, to uphold and protect democracy and, yes, our Constitution, which is why Bill 50 is being brought forward.

Now, the member for Red River North might not like when someone in this House puts remarks on the record that do not allow for him to hide his bad behaviour, the same way the member for Red River North did not like that the Ethics Commissioner found him guilty of breaking the law and that he had to pay a fine to Manitobans.

But the bottom line is this, Honourable Speaker: that the permanent record of this House should reflect the actions of members within it. So when the member for Red River North stands up and puts words on the record—and you'll notice in his remarks he didn't deny the gesture that he made and he didn't deny the comments that he made; he doubled down on it, in fact—it's really important that we reflect on the context of where that comes from.

And so, yes, we know it's not a point of order. I think that, Honourable Speaker, that's your decision to make, but I think that's very clear for this House.

But I do want to reinforce and reiterate what's happened here today: the member for Red River North rose on a point of order to double down on making comments and gestures that degraded and minimized the recent, in-living-memory history of Indigenous people being denied the right to vote in our country. And that is shameful.

And further, the member for Red River North (Mr. Wharton) minimized the importance of taking action today to protect and strengthen our democracy for generations to come, not just for their grandchildren—

The Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

The honourable member is using the point of order now for debate, not talking specifically about the point of order, so if they could keep their comments relevant to the point of order.

MLA Asagwara: Honourable Speaker, I'll heed your advice and say it is not a point of order.

We should all be very thankful that we have the first First Nations Premier (Mr. Knew) of this province who is courageous enough to share his own personal lived family experience as an example as to how we have to protect and strengthen democracy, and members on that side of the House are an example of what happens when you allow people with no ethics and no moral compass to bankrupt democracy.

The Speaker: If there are no more members wishing to comment on the point of order, points of order are serious matters. They're serious matters that I, as your Speaker, need to make sure I'm ruling the right way on. I have a sense of what my ruling would be at the moment, but I do need to talk it over with clerks and others and make sure that what I think I—our thinking is correct and that there is factual information to back up what I'm thinking.

So therefore, I'm going to take this matter under advisement.

* * *

The Speaker: And the floor is open for debate.

MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader): On House business.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Waverley, on House business.

MLA Pankratz: Earlier today the Minister of Environment and Climate Change (MLA Moyes) made a statement—member's statement and had some names that he would like included in Hansard.

Can we please ask for leave to have those included following his statement from earlier today in Hansard?

The Speaker: Is there leave to have the names the member for—or the Minister of climate and environment change—Environment and Climate Change wants to have included in Hansard.

Is there leave? [*interjection*] The leave needs to be to have those names included in Hansard at the end of his statement.

Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

Now, without further ado, the floor is open for debate.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): I look forward to putting some words on the record now in a little bit of a calmer state and have the opportunity to bring forward what I have to say today in the House.

I rise today to speak to Bill 50, The Constitutional Questions Amendment Act. At first hearing, one might think this bill represents some kind of thoughtful constitutional innovation. In truth, it does nothing of the sort. It is yet another example of this NDP government drafting legislation to chase a headline rather than to solve a problem. It neither strengthens rights, protections, nor improves accountability. It merely creates another procedural layer designed to look principled while accomplishing nothing that our existing constitutional framework does not already provide.

Honourable Speaker, this bill will compel the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council to refer any piece of legislation containing a section 33 declaration—the so-called notwithstanding clause—to the Manitoba Court of Appeal for an advisory opinion. The government presents that that is a safeguard for democracy, but it is really a showpiece.

There is no evidence of any constitutional deficiency in Manitoba that require this change and there has been no consultation with the judiciary, the bar or constitutional experts to justify it. Manitoba has never invoked section 33 and no government, NDP or Progressive Conservative, have ever come close. There is no imminent threat to anyone's rights, no pending use of this clause and no practical urgency.

What there is, Honourable Speaker, is a political opportunity for the Premier and his Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) to posture as defenders of democracy while the Supreme Court of Canada is already seized with that very question. This bill is not about constitutional clarity; it's about political theatre.

The notwithstanding clause is already one of the most transparent and 'democratically' contained provisions in the entire Charter. It can only be used through express language in legislation. It expires after five years and it must be renewed publicly if a government wants to extend it. That is real accountability: accountability to the electorate, not by the courts.

Bill 50, by contrast, replaces democratic accountability with judicial commentary. It would force the courts to spend time producing academic opinions on law that are already subject to normal Charter scrutiny. It is a solution in search of a problem.

Honourable Speaker, judicial review already occurs whenever a Charter question arises, regardless of whether section 33 is invoked. In fact, most governments that have ever considered invoking section 33 have done so only after years of litigation and exhaustive judicial analysis. By the time a legislature chooses to rely on section 33, the matter has typically been examined by multiple levels of court, sometimes even the Supreme Court of Canada.

What Bill 50 proposes is to compel our Court of Appeal to reconsider or comment on matters that the courts may already have ruled upon. That is not judicial review, Honourable Speaker; it is judicial repetition.

There are no practical purposes in enforcing an automatic Court of Appeal reference when the constitutional questions will inevitably have been addressed through the normal course of litigation. To ask the same court to consider again a question it has already decided undermines the principle of finality in judicial proceedings. Courts are not debating societies; they exist to decide disputes, not to rehearse conclusions already reached.

* (16:40)

Moreover, Honourable Speaker, no other jurisdiction in Canada has such a law. Not Alberta, not Saskatchewan, not Ontario and not British Columbia.

If Bill 50 were to pass, Manitoba would be the first and only province in the federation to require an automatic judicial reference every time section 33 is invoked. That fact alone should give this House pause.

When every other jurisdiction in the country has determined that existing judicial mechanisms are sufficient, one must ask what unique problem this government is trying to solve, or whether there is, in fact, any problem whatsoever.

The truth, Honourable Speaker, is that this bill is not born of constitutional need, but of political opportunity. It's an attempt by the NDP government to signal virtue rather than secure rights. It allows the Premier (Mr. Kinew) to posture as a defender of democracy and human rights while avoiding the hard, Constitutional reality that section 33 already contains its own democratic safeguards. It is, in short, symbolism masquerading as reform.

Let us recall that Manitoba has never invoked section 33. The NDP has said it never intends to, and our party has no record of using it, and has no plans to. There is no crisis of right in this province that necessitates this bill. The only thing that has changed is the political climate and the NDP's desire to see, on the national stage, as a progressive counterweight to governments in other provinces. It's hard to escape the impression that this bill was drafted not for Manitobans but for the headlines.

Honourable Speaker, we must also consider the broader constitutional context. As we speak, the Supreme Court of Canada is seized with two major cases from Quebec: *Hak v. Quebec*, and *English Montreal School Board v. Quebec*, that will determine the permissible scope of section 33 and whether legislatures can invoke it pre-emptively to insulate laws from judicial scrutiny. The outcome of those cases will have profound implications for every province, including Manitoba.

Yet the NDP government, instead of waiting for the Supreme Court's guidance, has chosen to introduce a provincial statute that may itself be rendered obsolete, or worse, unconstitutional, once that decision is released. This is not prudent governance. It is premature, and it risks putting Manitoba out of step with national constitutional developments.

Indeed, Honourable Speaker, Manitoba is the only intervenor in those Supreme Court cases that has chosen to side with the federal government rather than with Quebec or with the principle of provincial autonomy. The Premier's government has decided to align its—sorry, has decided to align itself with the federal Liberals rather than defend the constitutional discretion of provinces.

That position is troubling, not only for what it says about this government's view of federalism, but what it reveals about its willingness to politicize judicial processes to achieve a narrative advantage.

The Premier has made repeated public comments about the notwithstanding clause that blur the distinction between human rights, legal rights and democratic rights. In statements to the media, he has suggested that the use of section 33 amounts to suspending human rights. That assertion is simply inaccurate in constitutional law. Section 33 cannot be used to override democratic rights under sections 3 to 5, which guarantee the right to vote, to run for office and to ensure regular legislative sittings.

It cannot override mobility rights under section 6, it cannot override language rights or minority education rights under section 16 through 23, it cannot override gender equality under section 28 and it has no application whatsoever to Indigenous and treaty rights under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982.

These protections are absolute. They cannot be displaced by any legislature, no matter how bold its declaration. To conflate those immutable guarantees with the limited scope of section 33 is to mislead Manitobans about the nature of their constitutional protections. It is one thing for a premier to express philosophical objection to section 33; it is, rather, another entirely to misstate its legal effect in order to justify a piece of redundant legislation.

Honourable Speaker, the Charter already contains two mechanisms that ensure balance between courts and legislatures. Section 1 allows governments to limited—sorry, to limit rights when those limits are demonstratively justified in a free and democratic society. Section 33 allows legislatures in exceptional circumstances to assert democratic supremacy after that judicial analysis has occurred. Together, they form a constitutional dialogue, a conversation between the judiciary and the elected representatives of the people.

Bill 50 does not enrich that dialogue. It interprets it by—sorry, it interrupts it by inserting an unnecessary procedural step that achieves nothing substantial. The government argues that this bill promotes transparency, but transparency already exists. The use of section 33 requires explicit language and legislation. It must be declared openly, debated publicly and renewed after five years if a government wishes to continue its effect.

There is no secrecy in the notwithstanding clause. It is among the most visible and politically accountable tools in our constitutional framework. The only thing Bill 50 adds is costs, delay and confusion.

If the Court of Appeal is compelled to review every law containing a section 33 declaration, the judiciary will be drawn into hypothetical or academic exercises on legislation that never—may never be challenged in practice. That risks politicizing the courts by asking them to issue opinions detached from actual disputes. The independence of the judiciary depends on its restraint. Courts should not be used as advisory commentators for political theatre.

This bill, Honourable Speaker, is also troubling for what it implies about the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) attitude towards the court. The Premier has already demonstrated a willingness to wade into judicial matters for political effect. He has criticized court decisions; attempted to frame constitutional questions as moral tests; and now seeks a legislative, judicial involvement even when it is neither necessary nor constitutionally appropriate. This is not respect for the rule of law; it's an attempt to influence it.

* (16:50)

By compelling the Court of Appeal to pronounce on hypothetical uses of section 33, the government risks eroding the boundaries between the legislative and judicial branches. It is the role of the courts to interpret law, not pre-emptively pass judgment on legislation before it is ever taken effect. Bill 50 would invite the courts to do exactly that, thereby undermining the very separation of power that exists to sustain our constitutional democracy.

Honourable Speaker, it is worth noting that every government in Canada, regardless of political stripe, has treated section 33 with restraint. Even those provinces that have invoked it—Quebec, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Alberta—have done so sparingly and with clear democratic accountability. None has ever seen fit to bind itself with a mandatory judicial review mechanism. They have relied instead on the good sense of their legislatures and the judgment of their citizens. Manitoba should be no different.

Let us not forget the Charter itself was the product of compromise among democratically elected representatives. It was never intended to elevate the judiciary above the legislature but to create a dynamic balance between them. Section 33 was inserted to ensure that ultimate authority remains with the people through their elected assemblies. To now require that

every exercise of that authority be automatically second-guessed by the courts turns the principle of legislative supremacy on its head.

Honourable Speaker, one might also question the timing of this bill. It was introduced late in this legislative session without consultation with the judiciary, the legal profession or constitutional scholars. No advice from experts like Dwight Newman or reference to the late Peter Hogg extensive writings on the Charter has been presented. There is no record of consultation with the Manitoba Bar Association or with the Canadian Bar Association's constitutional law section. For a bill that purports to be about transparency and accountability, its own development has been anything but.

This government claims urgency, yet there is none. No invocation of section 33 is pending in Manitoba. No pressing public issue requires this reform. The only urgency appears to be political: the desire to react to events in Alberta, to posture against Premier Smith's comments and to seize a few sympathetic headlines from national media. In doing so, the NDP once again demonstrates that when faced with choices between good policy and poor politics, it will always choose the latter.

Honourable Speaker, even if one were to accept the stated purpose of the bill, its practical consequences are uncertain. Who will draft the questions to be referred to the Court of Appeal? Will Cabinet control the wording? Will the process be transparent to the public or confined to the executive? What if the court decides to hear the—or declines to hear the reference, as it is entitled to do? None of these questions have been answered. Yet we're asked to endorse a statutory process whose operation remains opaque.

There's also the question of cost. Court references are not free. They require preparation by government lawyers, scheduling by the judiciary and extensive submissions by counsel. To mandate such a process every time a legislature uses section 33, even hypothetically, is to impose an administrative and financial burden on both the executive and the judiciary for no discernable benefit.

The government says this bill will strengthen democracy; in truth, it weakens it. It transfers authority from elected legislators to unelected judges by making judicial commentary a compulsory step in what should be a democratic decision. It subverts the will of the electorate, it suggests that the elected representatives of Manitoba cannot be trusted to exercise

constitutional judgment without the courts looking over their shoulder.

This is not accountability; that is paternalism.

Honourable Speaker, it must be said that the NDP has a pattern of using legislation as a platform for self-promotion rather than governance. We've seen it multiple times with their approach to housing and addictions policy, we've seen it in the shoddy accounting practices. We've seen it with Bill 49 where they're in direct opposition of the PUB, an institution expressly tasked with protecting Manitobans' best interest.

We saw it with their outright fabrications in regards to agricultural tariff supports, and only an NDP government would think that crop insurance is tariff support. They prefer to chase the story rather than solve the issue. They legislate press releases rather than principles.

Bill 50 is another example: it creates the illusion of courage while avoiding the responsibility of substance. If the Premier (Mr. Kinew) truly believes in open debate about the notwithstanding clause, this Chamber is the—sorry, this Chamber is the proper forum, perhaps even at full constitutional conference if he's so inclined.

Then again, maybe not a constitutional conference is not to the Premier's tastes, as it would require him to make arguments in front of his peers rather than grandiose statements behind a podium where he can control the narrative.

The courts have their role but they are not substitutes for political courage. This government appears to want judges to do their talking for them. Honourary Speaker, let us also not overlook the constitutional irony. By mandating judicial involvement in legislative decisions, Bill 50 itself may invite constitutional challenge. It is conceivable that the Supreme Court, in its forthcoming ruling in Quebec cases, could find such automatic reference inconsistent with the separation of powers or with the nature of section 33.

In that event, Manitoba would have enacted a law that is unconstitutional in the very name of defending the Constitution. That would be a self-inflicted embarrassment of the highest order.

This government should have waited for the Supreme Court's guidance. That is what responsible governments do when complex constitutional issues are before the nation's highest court. Instead, they

rushed this bill forward to posture for the cameras. It is governance by headlines, not by principle.

Honourable Speaker, section 33 is not a weapon against rights; it is a recognition that rights exist within a democratic framework. It ensures that the Charter remains a living instrument, not a judicial straitjacket. By making its use automatically subjected to judicial commentary, Bill 50 distorts the balance and undermines the very dialogue that the Charter was designed to promote.

This bill adds nothing to the protection of Manitobans' rights. It confers no new remedy, creates no new safeguards and closes no existing gaps. It merely duplicates processes that already function

effectively under section 1 and through the courts. It is, to borrow a phrase, virtue signalling wrapped in legislative form.

Honourable Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Kinew) has spoken of wanting Manitoba to set an example for the rest of Canada. Unfortunately, this is not the example to set. Leadership is not measured by how loud one—

The Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have five minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 o'clock, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 28, 2025

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