

Fourth Session – Forty-First Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Man.
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	Ind.
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen, Hon.	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Madam Speaker: Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): A quorum count, please.

Madam Speaker: A quorum count has been requested. The division bells will ring for one minute.

I would ask all members present to rise in their places, and ask the Clerk at the table to count out those present.

A QUORUM COUNT was taken, the result being as follows – Members present: 37.

Madam Speaker: A quorum is present.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Madam Speaker: Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports? Ministerial statements?

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Lorne Henry

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): On May 5th 2019, the community of Portage la Prairie lost a gentleman whose passion for life was always evident. The loss of Lorne Henry has been felt throughout our community. Madam Speaker, I rise today to remember and honour a man I had the good fortune of calling friend.

Lorne Henry was born on the family farm in—on February 5th, 1933. Farming was a life-long career for Lorne, who was still actively involved with the fifth-generation family farm. Lorne felt strongly about giving back to the agricultural industry and did so for many years as a founding board member for Keystone Agricultural Producers, with whom he was still active.

Serving also for 15 years on the Canadian Standards Association, bringing in farm safety standards and representing the Association of Irrigators on the Shellmouth Dam flood control committee, his knowledge of the Assiniboine River was such that he was asked to serve on the management board technical advisory committee.

Lorne was never one to sit idle and let things happen. He was always the first to roll up his sleeves.

Despite a busy schedule, Lorne was a very dedicated family man. He was always in attendance at events to support his children and grandchildren. In particular, he enjoyed sports and volunteering many hours coaching hockey.

The Portage la Prairie constituency and Manitoba are a better place today because of Lorne's determination, values and commitment to family, friendship, agriculture and the community.

He will be missed by many.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Wishart: Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to have the names of the guests in the gallery included in Hansard?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to include the names of the guests in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Family of Lorne Henry: Brian Case, Kyle Case, Patti Case, Dale Henry, Doug Henry, Gwynne Henry, Jordan Henry, Nick Henry, Ryan Henry, Sarah Henry, Shirleen Henry, Teresa Henry, Kayla Shewfelt.

TELUS Motorcycle Ride for Dad

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I am happy to rise this afternoon and share with the House a bit about TELUS Ride for Dad, an event that happened this past weekend here in Winnipeg.

Ride for Dad's mission is to raise funds to save men's lives through supporting prostate cancer research as well as raising public awareness of this disease.

This past weekend I was honoured to ride, for a third time, with my group, the Royal Riders Winnipeg, alongside a record-breaking 1,500 motorcyclists in the fight against prostate cancer at the 11th annual TELUS Manitoba Motorcycle Ride for Dad.

This year \$300,000 were raised and every cent will stay right here in Manitoba for prostate cancer research and education.

This brings the ten-year fundraising total to over \$2.4 million.

There is nothing more exciting, at least for fellow motorcyclist riders, than to be surrounded by the revving of thousands of engines for a good cause.

Motorcyclists are proud and very passionate about riding. My friend Derek, who is the owner of Adventure Power Products says that, and I quote: We feel, through our riders in the province, it gives us a great opportunity to promote and create awareness for some of the spectacular organizations that are helping Manitobans through direct care and research right here locally.

Madam Speaker, he is right and I would like to thank all of this year's riders, volunteers, donors and sponsors who made the Ride for Dad event this year such a success. I am proud to be part of such a caring community of riders.

Thank you.

Concordia and Seven Oaks ERs

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): The Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his Health Minister have consistently refused to listen to Manitobans about their health-care needs. Residents of northeast and northwest Winnipeg have been very clear: they want Concordia ER to remain as an ER. But instead the minister has decided to force staff to convert the ER into an urgent-care clinic in five short weeks.

Seven Oaks ER is next on the chopping block, and those that rely on the emergency room are worried about the future of their health care. People who relied on Seven Oaks will have to travel 20 minutes or more to reach the nearest ER, and fewer ERs means even higher wait times.

If the PCs ignore Manitobans again and close Seven Oaks ER, that will leave Winnipeg with only three emergency rooms.

In an emergency, time is of the essence. This government's health-care plan is putting patient health at risk.

A rally is being held tomorrow at Leila and McPhillips to protest the government's plan to shut down Seven Oaks and show support for nurses, patients and residents, and I fervently hope that this time the ministers will listen to Manitobans.

D-Day 75th Anniversary

Mr. Jon Reyes (St. Norbert): First of all, I want to thank members in advance who will be participating at services on June 6th to commemorate the 75th anniversary of D-Day. The 75th anniversary of D-Day commemorates the men and women who served, fought, and gave the ultimate sacrifice on D-Day, June 6th, 1944, on the Normandy beaches in France.

Winnipeggers were there with three military units: the Fort Garry Horse; the Royal Winnipeg Rifles; 402 Squadron, the Royal Canadian Air Force, RCAF. Thousands of other Manitobans served in many other units that directly supported the landings in what was to become the beginning of the Second World War.

On the 75th anniversary of D-Day, there will be several opportunities to commemorate, beginning at the Mynarski Statue in Vimy Ridge Memorial Park here in Winnipeg. A decade-long project to bring Andrew home culminated in 2015 when the Mynarski Statue was dedicated at Vimy Ridge Memorial Park as a fitting testament to those who served in Canada's world wars.

*(13:40)

Local artist Charlie Johnston created a unique tribute depicting air gunner Andrew "Andy" Charles Mynarski's hand stretched out in his effort to free his trapped friend in a burning bomber, and for which he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Our men and women stand ready today, as they have over the years. These men and women have committed themselves to the understanding that some causes are larger than any of us. That unlimited liability often requires that they give everything. Their willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice grants all of us the luxury of safety and security, something we must never forget or take for granted.

As a former soldier, I had and you have an obligation to serve, even if it means sacrificing your lives, because we all made that commit to our Queen and country. We honour the dedication of these brave ones, their families and veterans. Those who have served and continue to serve with strength and resilience are an example to us all.

So, today, I can never thank you enough. We can never thank you enough.

I am proud to be here today with my fellow veterans and all Canadian Armed Forces members,

and even members from the US Air Force who are in the gallery to take part in the act of remembrance. Thank you for your service.

Madam Speaker, I would ask the House to rise for a moment of silence to remember those who served our nation on June 6th, 1944.

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

A moment of silence was observed.

Mennonite Heritage Village–Russländer Exhibit

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, Canada and Manitoba have long offered opportunity, peace and freedom to those who were in need of each. Since almost its beginning, Manitoba has offered these qualities to Mennonites who found their beliefs and values being oppressed in other places.

In the 1870s, Mennonites by the thousands fled Russia as they felt their religious beliefs being oppressed and compromised. About 7,000 came to Manitoba with the offer of land and cultural and educational autonomy. Among that group was my great-great-grandfather and -grandmother: Jacob and Maria Martens.

In the 1920s, about 24,000 Mennonites fled Russia during the Russia revolution, where they were subjected to violence and theft of their businesses and possessions. Many had only a handful of possessions as they came into Canada with their families and began a new life, sure that a poor life was better than the life they were fleeing in Russia.

The latter group of immigrants is known as the Russländers. This past weekend, an exhibit dedicated to their trials and their resilience and dedication to make a new life opened at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach.

The exhibit features some of the meagre possessions that the Mennonite immigrants were able to bring with them from Russia and the story of how they began a new life and have contributed to our province for the past 100 years. Curator Andrea Dyck and assistant curator Jenna Klassen have done a wonderful job of telling a difficult story.

Madam Speaker, as the House is scheduled to rise next week, I know that members will have a bit more free time. I would encourage them to visit the Russländer display at the Mennonite Heritage Village. It will contrast for them the tyranny of

communism with the hope of a people of faith and determination: a lesson that should never be forgotten.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to oral questions we have a number of guests in the gallery that I would like to introduce to you.

We have seated in the public gallery from St. Gerard School 22 grade 4 students under the direction of Heather Pollock, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe).

And also seated in the public gallery from Elmdale School we have 23 grade 4 students under the direction of Bethany Dueck, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Education and Training (Mr. Goertzen).

And on behalf of all members we welcome you all to the Manitoba Legislature.

I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's gallery where we have with us today Stephan Day, who has recently taken over from JoAnn McKerlie-Korol as Director of Education and Outreach Services for the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Stephan graduated from the University of Winnipeg with a degree in education and has worked in several school divisions in Winnipeg. Prior to joining the Assembly, Stephan managed two drop-in youth centres for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Winnipeg. Stephan will be running the Classroom in the Legislature along with other Education and Outreach programs. He is more than willing to answer questions and give more information on the programs we offer for educators, students and community groups across Manitoba.

On behalf of all members here, we welcome Stephan to his new position.

Madam Speaker: And, as is our custom, when we have a page that is leaving us, we have an opportunity to say thank you and learn a little bit more about what the page thinks about how things are here.

Kes Gameiro will be graduating from Kelvin High School in June of this year. She will be

attending the University of Manitoba enrolled in the interdisciplinary health program in the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences. She hopes to go into medicine after completing her schooling and eventually studying neurological degenerative diseases.

Kes has been a member of Kelvin's established cheerleading team for the past four years and has served as a captain for the past two years. Next year, she will be returning as a coach for the Pom team as they recently earned a bid to the 2020 World School Cheerleading Championships. This will be her third time at the competition, and she will be aiming for gold after her previous third- and fourth-place performances.

Throughout her summer, Kes will continue working as a sales associate as well as travel with her friends and family to enjoy her final summer before university.

The Page Program has been an integral part of Kes's senior year and is one of her most cherished experiences to date. She has enjoyed being able to directly witness the democratic process and be a small part of it.

On behalf of all members here, Kes, we wish you the very best in your future.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Seven Oaks Hospital Request to Retain ER

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Care should always come first. Sadly, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the Health Minister doesn't believe that statement. All we ever see from this government is cut after cut after cut, and they continually put money over care.

But enough is enough. That's what nurses at Seven Oaks Hospital are saying. I'll table for the Premier today a letter that was sent to the minister signed by the concerned subacute nurses at Seven Oaks Hospital. This is the second letter this year. Lack of staffing, overcapacity, high patient-to-nurse ratios and highly acute cases: the Premier is setting up his, quote, unquote, model subacute unit for failure.

Will the Premier, for the first time, listen to nurses—

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

Order.

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I did not receive a question, and thereby, this gives me the opportunity to correct the record, inform that member—as we all understand on this side—that, actually, health spending is up \$414 million under this government from what the NDP ever spent on health care.

Secondly, I would point out to that member, yes, I've received the letter. It's a little confusing because we have not, of course, made a transition to a subacute level of care, and there have been no reductions to nursing staff at that centre. Nevertheless, I have instructed the chief operating officer as well as the chief health operations officer for Shared Health to meet with these concerned nurses. I understand that meeting is taking place this afternoon.

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

Mrs. Smith: Shame on that minister again misrepresenting what nurses say and always attacking the front-line workers. Shame on him.

Nurses are scared and there—isn't the first time that they've spoken up against this government. Nurses are scared for their patients' safety and their well-being, and I'll quote: Given these current changes and the high acute of patients admitted and transferred from three—to three units, units 10, 11 and 12, we do not feel that we can provide safe and adequate care to these patients. End quote.

* (13:50)

These are people's lives we are talking about.

Will this minister take it seriously, admit that his plan is failing and stop the closure of Seven Oaks ER?

Mr. Friesen: Well, Madam Speaker, I do welcome the opportunity to get some context, especially for those guests who join us in the gallery today.

Manitobans understand that for years in this province we had one of the most expensive health-care systems in the country but one—*[interjection]*—but one that for years and years got some of the worst results in Canada for the number of hours that patients would have to wait for emergency departments, to see a specialist and to receive treatment.

We are embracing the challenge of change. We know that this change comes—is difficult at times.

We thank all nurses for their service. It's why we've immediately instructed the COO to meet this afternoon with Shared Health and to hear these nurses and to hear their concerns.

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

Mrs. Smith: Nobody believes anything that this government says around health care.

We'll believe the nurses who are on the front lines telling this government, who refuses to listen to them, that there is a serious problem, that they are worried about patient care. But will this minister—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —listen? Will that Premier (Mr. Pallister) listen? No. They are worried about money and they are putting patient care over money. They need to start listening to the front-line nurses and worrying about patient care in this province.

Why won't the Premier—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, order.

Mrs. Smith: Unfortunately, after these nurses have raised their concerns, this minister doesn't listen. His Premier doesn't listen.

Why won't the Premier and his minister listen to the concerns of the front-line workers and stop the closure of Seven Oaks and Concordia—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Friesen: So, Madam Speaker, to recap, this very afternoon the chief operating officer, the chief nursing officer, Shared Health chief health operations officer, are listening to the nurses this afternoon to hear their—*[interjection]* And the member heckles now instead of actually receiving the answer that she requested.

But, Madam Speaker, we do as a government accept the challenge of change. We thank all those who are working the system. We are listening, as our decision to reconfigure the changes at Concordia to an urgent care clearly demonstrates. In order for this plan to work it must be adaptable. We are showing it's adaptable.

What Manitobans want is better health care sooner. That remains our pledge. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Manitoba Liquor Sales Privatization Concerns

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): This Premier and his minister should actually be taking pride in Manitoba's Crown corporations, but instead all we see them do is attack them and try and fast-track them towards privatization.

The minister of Crown corporations' most recent mandate letter to Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries prioritized privatizing good jobs and sending profits out of the province. Premier—only interested in putting profits earned into the hands of the wealthy rather than back into public services, and it's the first step in breaking our Crowns apart piece by piece.

Will the Premier back off this silly plan and keep Manitoba liquor sales in Manitoba?

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): I'm proud to be part of a government that for the first time has provided public mandates to our Crown corporations. This is something that's never been done before, and we are taking a lead and giving our corporations the outlined path to work with us in our corporations.

They represent important features of life here in Manitoba, and it's important that Manitobans see where our corporations are going, the direction and the efforts that they're putting into it.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a supplementary question.

Churchill Liquor Mart Privatization

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): The Premier, it seems, has suddenly found out where Churchill is on a map. After three years he decided to pop in for a couple hours. What was clear was his little display of going up there—was that the Churchill liquor store, which was part of the Manitoba Crown corporation, has—now going to be privatized. So all the Premier was in town for was to say he's all in favour of getting rid of good jobs.

So will the Premier reverse this decision and reopen the Churchill Liquor Mart?

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): It's amazing the language that comes out of the member's opposite mouth, the fear mongering that they continue to display on member—or Manitobans, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries continues to serve the community in Churchill, and they did so even when the railroad–railway was shut down, without, I might add, without increasing costs. They reviewed their operation costs on a regular basis. They are providing. They found an avenue that worked, that will work for the community, and they'll continue to work in the community.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Flin Flon, on a final supplementary.

Hydro Rate Increase PUB Ruling

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): The Premier (Mr. Pallister) continues to make it appear that Hydro is in a doom-and-gloom state, and that's simply not the case. Public Utilities Board ruling is clear: Manitoba Hydro is profitable, earning \$95 million in 2018, \$64-million profit this year without a rate increase. And that's what the Premier–
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lindsey: –and his ministers are refusing to tell Manitobans. The PUB said, clearly, this morning, they rejected Hydro's recent rate increase request. Hydro doesn't need the increase for its 2019-2020 operations.

Why is the Premier pushing hydro rates higher instead of making life affordable for Manitobans?

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): Well, let's put some facts on the record. The NDP government had left a mess, a mess that Manitobans will be saddled with for a very long time. We have the courage to try to make the changes that put Manitobans and find more cost–
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Crown Services.

Mrs. Mayer: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

And, as I said, we're trying to clean up a mess in this province left by the former NDP government, one that the current NDP government seems to want to continue down that path.

We inherited a mess. We're going to clean it up, and we'll continue to do that day in and day out because you know what, Madam Speaker? That is what Manitobans expect, that's what we were elected to do and that's what we're going to continue to do.

City of Winnipeg Review Treasury Board Report

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, Madam Speaker, the tone starts at the top, and this Pallister government can't seem to get along with anyone. The Premier saw his hand-picked board of Hydro walk away. He drove away the chairperson of Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries. And after he used to complain about political interference, the Premier is now interfering with our Crowns like never before: cuts to personnel and privatization by Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries, putting Hydro projects at risk by cancelling agreements and even blocking Manitoba Public Insurance.

The Premier hasn't answered questions in Estimates, now, apparently, on question period.

So I'll ask the minister for Crowns: Why does this government continue to promise one thing and do the exact opposite?

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): It's funny that the member for Minto brings up about trying to do what's best by Crown corporations. That individual sat at the Cabinet table for many years and did nothing to benefit Manitobans.

We'll take no lessons from members opposite, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Swan: Well, I wonder if this minister cashed her 45 per cent rebate cheque that she got because of Manitoba Public Insurance being a well-run public corporation.

* (14:00)

Now, the tone starts at the top, and we know this government is running roughshod over its partners. The Premier says he's going to release a Treasury Board report that was conducted in secret. The work began even before he stood in public and promised an independent review.

The mayor of Winnipeg has real concerns this is nothing but a partisan political investigation. We've now learned the City hasn't even been given an advance copy of this report.

I'm going to ask the Minister for Municipal Relations: Why does this Premier and this government continue to damage the Province's relationship with the City of Winnipeg?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): The process that we're involved in ensuring that permits and inspections are done in appropriate way is something that all Manitobans can embrace. This isn't something that just looked at the City of Winnipeg; Manitoba Hydro is being looked at, the office of Fire Commissioner, also other planned districts.

If we can enhance this and make it better it's going to mean a—better finances for the Province of Manitoba, increased GDP and help regulations. It can help the City of Winnipeg, too, in terms of the finances, in terms of property tax revenues that could come in. So it's a very good exercise, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Minto, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Swan: Well, again, Madam Speaker, the tone starts at the top, and no one can count on this Pallister government.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) promised to operate at arm's length from the Crowns, but has done nothing but direct cuts, privatization and even ripping up an agreement which is—decision by the Premier's own admission could cost ratepayers \$200 million.

This Premier promised an arm's-length report on the City of Winnipeg, but he ordered employees who report to this Finance Minister and Treasury Board ministers to conduct a partisan political investigation, and he didn't even have the courtesy to give the City of Winnipeg an embargoed copy of this report.

I'm asking the Minister of Municipal Relations: Why is this Premier looking for conflict exactly where there should be partnership?

Mr. Fielding: What this government is looking for is prosperity for the province of Manitoba. We know that delays and permit and inspection fees, not just of the City of Winnipeg, but Hydro, places like the office of Fire Commissioner as well as planning districts, cost the economy of the province of Manitoba millions of dollars.

If we can reduce wait times and delays, that's a part of it, it's going to grow the economy for Manitobans. It's going to be good for Winnipeg ratepayers, Winnipeg taxpayers and Manitobans as a whole.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: I'd like to take a moment to introduce another guest that we have joining us in the gallery.

To the—in the loge to my left we have Doug Martindale, the former MLA for Burrows, and we welcome him back to the Legislature.

Hydro Transmission Line Project Federal Government Meeting

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, here is a short list of the individuals that the Premier has either alienated or attacked in just three short years: the mayor of Winnipeg, the Prime Minister, the board of every major Crown corporation and indigenous leadership here in Manitoba.

The Premier's actions have jeopardized the Manitoba-Minnesota transmission line, and now the Premier is on his way to Ottawa to try and fix the very mess that he made.

Why should Manitobans not expect the Premier to make things much, much worse?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Deputy Premier): Well, Madam Speaker, this is something that the NDP simply don't understand. Our Premier is going to Ottawa to stand up for Manitoba. He's going there to stand up for the interests of Manitobans.

Of course, the NDP don't understand that. They never stood up for Manitobans.

We know that the federal Liberal government is standing in the way of a project, a green project, a project that would benefit Manitobans, a project that would benefit the next generations. We're not going to let the NDP or the federal Liberals stand in the way of that. Our Premier's going to stand up for Manitobans. We should be doing it as one voice, but the NDP never stand up for Manitobans.

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

Ms. Fontaine: No Manitoban has confidence in the negotiating abilities of this Premier. The only move he knows is how to attack anyone that doesn't disagree with—or agree with him, and this is putting a major hydro project in jeopardy—that's hundreds of millions of dollars and good jobs for Manitoba—all because the Premier only listens to himself.

Now the Premier (Mr. Pallister) is forced to go to Ottawa to try to undo the damage that he's done.

Why does the Premier think he won't just make the bad situation worse?

Mr. Goertzen: Well, classic NDP, Madam Speaker. When we wanted a unified voice to go to Ottawa to look for an equitable partnership when it comes to funding for health care, the NDP were nowhere to be found. They wouldn't stand up.

Of course, when we wanted a voice to stand with us when we were trying to ensure that we had the energy plan that was made in Manitoba, well, the NDP wouldn't stand with us. They wanted to jack up taxes way more, Madam Speaker. And now we have the NDP standing up again trying to stop a negotiation that should be happening for Manitobans with all Manitobans and all members in this House, and they won't do it.

If that member wants to launch her future leadership campaign in four months on that, I wish her well.

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

Ms. Fontaine: The Premier's created a big mess. The Premier's insulting and inflammatory language has put a major hydro transmission line at risk. Shovels are all ready to be in the ground, but instead, the Premier is going to Ottawa to try and fix the mess that he's made.

But he hasn't apologized. He hasn't changed his attitude.

So Manitobans want to know why the Premier thinks his trip won't make this bad situation much, much worse.

Mr. Goertzen: Madam Speaker, already Manitoba has participated in the gold standard when it comes to consultation on this project. This is a green energy project, Madam Speaker. Never in the history of the federal government has a federal government decided to block a green energy program. It's bad enough that they block all sorts of other projects in the national interest of Canada, but now they want to block a green energy product—project that would help Manitoba and Manitobans for future generations.

I would hope that the NDP would realize that by standing in disunity as they always have, they fight amongst each other. They don't get along with each other. They tear apart their own party.

Don't tear apart Manitoba like you teared apart your own party, sir.

Health-Care Reforms Funding and Staff Concerns

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Today the Liberal caucus received a letter signed by the subacute nurses at Seven Oaks Hospital. It's clear from the Health Minister's answers he has no idea what's happening there.

The letter is a cry for help and a warning, Madam Speaker, because these nurses make it clear they are, and I quote, receiving unsafe transfers from other hospitals that are not appropriate admissions. Diagnoses such as congestive heart failure, sepsis and unstable angina are putting patients at risk. We as nurses are not equipped to handle multiple acute medicine patients.

They go on to say: Seven Oaks General Hospital has been running at overcapacity for the past few months. There is no funding from the WRHA for extra beds. We do not feel we can provide safe and adequate care to these patients.

Will the minister admit that adopting the NDP's Peachey plan to close ERs was not an act of courage, but a colossal error in judgment? Will he put the brakes on a plan that nurses say is putting patients at risk?

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): Madam Speaker, actually, it was only two weeks ago that the original author of this report came back into this jurisdiction—an independent, external expert who has done this work all over the world, as those NDP know because they hired him.

And what his summation was is that the plan for Manitoba's health-care transformation is the right plan, that there is implicit across the system buy-in from leaders and from front-line workers, but that the plan must be adaptable. We are showing that we can adapt.

The member is asking, will we listen to nurses? I am happy to inform that member that even this afternoon as he speaks, the 'chiep oferating'—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Friesen: —officer and the chief nursing officer are both meeting with system leaders to hear the concerns raised by nurses.

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

Mr. Lamont: Madam Speaker, we keep hearing that these ERs have to be closed because Vancouver and Calgary have fewer ERs.

But what the NDP-PC Peachey report did was put ERs in a straight line across Winnipeg: nothing for south Winnipeg, nothing north of the tracks. So good luck to anyone who gets stuck at a rail crossing in the back of an ambulance in Transcona.

*(14:10)

That's not how ERs in other cities work; they're spread out the way they were in Winnipeg until this government came along.

Yesterday the Minister of Health listed the health cuts and closures under the NDP, which I table. It reminds me of the end of Animal Farm, Madam Speaker: voices were shouting in anger and they were all alike.

We can look from NDP to PC and from PC to NDP and from NDP to PC again, but already it's impossible to say which was which.

When this government lists NDP closures of ERs and hospitals, is it out of envy?

Does the Premier (Mr. Pallister) think that closing even more ERs and hospitals will make him better than the NDP?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, it's interesting to hear the leader for the second opposition join the chorus of NDP voices who say go back to the past.

Manitobans understand what the implication is of that message. They know that they had the worst wait times in Canada. They know that they had some of the toughest challenges to actually see a specialist or a doctor, and yet the NDP and Liberals say, in one voice, go back.

Manitobans don't want to go back. That member is right when he cites the fact that Calgary has one third the number of emergency departments and yet has wait times that are one fifth that of Manitobans. The plan that we have for Manitobans is a plan to get better health care sooner based on evidence, based on expertise and based on the positive experience of other provinces.

They didn't have the courage to act. We do.

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

Mr. Lamont: It's important to point out how much the government relies on arguments that are purely imaginary.

The Premier talks about a projection where the deficit was headed, not what the deficit actually was. He talks about what federal health-care funding would have been, if it hadn't been different. He talks about the funding promises in budgets that never materialized. It's a world of make-believe.

But nurses and doctors and patients in the health-care system are facing cold, hard reality that is spelled out in black and white in this government's own budgets. Even as this government gets more health-care funding, as our population grows and ages, and as this government demands massive change and adds a whole new layer of bureaucracy, actual spending by this PC government has been frozen since 2016.

Will this government listen to the nurses, doctors and patients at Seven Oaks, Concordia, St. Boniface, Grace, Victoria and across Manitoba and stop the cuts and invest before it's too late?

Mr. Friesen: Madam Speaker, the member essentially asks will this government return to the same failed approaches of the past NDP government? The answer to that question is no.

Manitobans expect more. We have promised to deliver more. It's why even CIHI now cites the fact that Manitoba is bucking the trend. Where every other jurisdiction has seen its wait times go up, Manitobans is seeing those wait times drop. I regret to inform that member and the members on that side that even in emergency rooms across Winnipeg, those wait times are dropping this month.

Madam Speaker, there's more and more evidence that this plan to get better health care sooner for Manitobans is working. I only regret that the members would spend their time listening to the answer that they asked for, and not chirping on the other side the whole time.

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder to members that we have grade 4 students in the gallery, and I would think that they're here to learn something about how democracy works. So I think I would urge everybody that we want to—may want to spend a little bit more time listening.

Hydro Power Sales Saskatchewan Market

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I have to admit, after listening, that it was not the Premier (Mr. Pallister) who called the agreement with the Metis hush money—it was the NDP; it was not the Premier who ripped up the agreement—that was the NDP; and it's not the Premier who now has to go to the Prime Minister begging for a meeting to fix the problem that he caused.

I don't have high hopes for a straight answer to my question, but I'll throw it out there anyway. The far bigger, more exciting project that might not even be on the agenda in that meeting between the Premier and the Prime Minister is an east-west power sale between Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Why isn't that happening?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sustainable Development): I'm pleased to see my critic actually stand up on his feet and ask a question. He's been rather silent for a while and I was afraid he was no longer the critic of the environment, so pleased to hear him speaking today and asking about a very important project.

We're committed to building our electric grid so that we can help other jurisdictions displace their GHG-intensive heating and electricity sources. So I would like to say to that member, stay tuned.

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

Mr. Altemeyer: The plain tragedy of it is it's this Premier's own mistake with a deal that was already signed and ready to go that has now been put into jeopardy by his bungling—and it doesn't matter what any of his irrelevant ministers say. He's the emperor in charge and he's the one that has to go and fix his own screw-up by begging for federal forgiveness.

Meanwhile, Saskatchewan is running on 84 per cent fossil fuels for its electricity and Hydro has surplus power available to send to them.

Could the minister tell us what the price difference is between Saskatchewan and what Manitoba Hydro gets on the spot market, and what we could do with electricity rates if they could just get their act together?

Ms. Squires: Speaking of screw-up, that would define the NDP's plan for 17 years on reducing the carbon footprint in the province of Manitoba.

We are committed to reducing our carbon emissions not only here in Manitoba, but also in our neighbouring jurisdictions by helping them displace their coal energy or their other GHG-intensive methods of producing energy.

That's something that the NDP never accomplished when they were in government, and I wish that they would get on board right now with helping us stand united when we go to the federal government to tell the federal government to get out of the way and let us build our clean electricity and export it to customers who want that electricity.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Wolseley, on a final supplementary.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, Madam Speaker, all I can do is ask the questions, and if they want to put someone up who can't answer them that's not my fault.

Allow me to fill in the blanks that the minister cannot answer—and who knows why she's getting up on her feet when she's not the minister for Crowns. All this information is in a radical source of information called Manitoba Hydro's latest annual report. They get 3 cents a kilowatt hour on the spot market on average. Saskatchewan pays 14 to 15 cents per kilowatt hour. If we met them in the middle, that would be about where Manitobans pay their residential rate. That would be 350 million additional dollars in revenue for Manitoba Hydro every year. We could freeze hydro rates for five years.

Is that what they are talking about, or is the Prime Minister trying to now be convinced to bail out our incompetent Premier?

Ms. Squires: I did not hear a question in that member's windy preamble, but the one thing that he does not understand is that we work together as a team on this side. We don't need a solidarity pledge to work together on this side of the House. And while that member knows nothing about working together as a team, our government is committed to getting real results for Manitobans, unlike the NDP, whose major accomplishment was doubling the Hydro debt during their time in office.

We're going make Hydro sustainable for Manitoba's future and to help displace high energy,

high GHG-intensive transmission projects in other jurisdictions.

**Policing and Public Safety Strategy
New Funding Announcement**

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Manitobans elected our PC government with a mandate to build a stronger, safer province for all. An important part of delivering on our mandate means taking further action to address challenges in the criminal justice system and ensure that families feel safe in their homes and in their communities—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Guillemard: Recently, the Minister of Justice made an important announcement about our commitment to safer communities.

Can the minister please share details of this announcement with the House? *[interjection]*

* (14:20)

Madam Speaker: Order.

Hon. Cliff Cullen (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Our government does take public safety very seriously. That's why we're investing \$2.7 million in a Policing and Public Safety Strategy. The NDP never had such a strategy. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Cullen: Madam Speaker, our focus is on intelligence gathering and a co-operative approach to policing. Criminals and criminal activity do not recognize municipal boundaries. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. Order, please.

I'd like the table to stop the clock, please.

People may not like the questions and answers that are being given, but, certainly, I think people here that are elected owe each other some respect to listen to each other. There's some constant heckling that I'm hearing.

I'm disappointed that despite the last couple of days, of the cautions that have been given, I am still not hearing the co-operation from people as we should in a parliamentary democracy and what we're supposed to stand for, especially when we've had grade 4 students here. So I would just ask for everybody's co-operation, please.

When people are asking questions and answering questions, please, let's have the courtesy and the respect to listen to what they're saying. Constant heckling is not what our parliamentary democracy should be about. I have said once before that there is, you know, we'll never get rid of heckling, but there is constant heckling that is very disruptive to this whole House.

And it is very disrespectful to the Chair, and whether it's me or anybody in here, I represent something that is bigger than all of us. I represent a parliamentary democracy, and all of us should be more respectful, I think, when you find a Speaker that is standing, that is asking for people's co-operation, that there is respect for that Chair.

I shouldn't have to go home like I did yesterday hardly being able to speak because I was hoarse from yelling order. You'll find I'm not yelling order today so much because I don't have much of a voice left from yesterday.

And I'm hoping that I can please have everybody's co-operation as we move forward through the rest of this oral questions and the rest of the day and the rest of this week—a reminder of why we're all here in the first place and what we're trying to achieve.

The honourable Minister of Justice, to conclude his statement.

Mr. Cullen: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and just like our criminal justice modernization strategy, this new Policing and Public Safety Strategy will also have an accountability component. We have made a commitment that we will report back to Manitobans on the results of this strategy.

Madam Speaker, we are excited about this strategy, and I want to table this document for the House and share it with all members.

**Gilbert Park Resident
Case Concern**

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): We know that overhousing is an issue that exists in our province. Over the past three years we have been successful in ensuring that the residents of Gilbert Park are not unfairly treated. However, another senior who has been living in Gilbert Park for 38 years has told me that they are at risk of being evicted from their home because of the need for more units for families.

Madam Speaker, I table a news story where the former minister responsible for housing claimed that

eviction letters had been sent out in error, and I ask the current minister: Is this just another error?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Our government is very proud of our record in creating housing for Manitobans, affordable housing. We know the Rent Assist program has provided more than 3,000—3,000 individuals are able to be supported by the Rent Assist program. There's also more than 750 new units, social and affordable, that have been created by this government.

So we're very proud of that record. We want to continue to work, not just with the federal government but other levels, to create affordable housing solutions for Manitobans.

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

Gilbert Park Residence Management Practices

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, in addition to receiving a letter of raising his rent, my constituent, Mr. Chartrand, says that his unit needs repairs but is told by the Gilbert Park property manager that he needs to learn how to deal or fix them on his own or move out.

This is unacceptable. The ongoing, unfair evictions at Gilbert Park show a track record of disregard and disrespect for people who call it home. Mr. Chartrand has been in Gilbert Park for 38 years and is an outstanding, respectful tenant in good standing, but the property manager is unapproachable and unco-operative.

What is this minister doing to change management practices at Gilbert Park?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): As the member indicated, when I was the minister in respect to this issue, I took the time to call all the residents that are part of that. Our government is all about listening to individuals, listening to people, whether there be issues that come up. And so our government would be more than interested in listening any concerns that would be raised. I can refer that to the minister when the minister—the current minister of housing.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Burrows, on a final supplementary.

Meeting Request

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, forcing Manitobans to move from place to place when they

have done nothing wrong is undignified and isn't healthy. There is unbelievable stress in being told you're getting evicted unjustifiably and feeling your concerns, but be ignored by those who have been appointed to advocate for you, in this case, management at Gilbert Park.

Madam Speaker, a stable home is crucial to a healthy life and raising a family. Mr. Chartrand and his friends feel as though they are being targeted by management at Gilbert Park.

Will the minister agree to meet with Mr. Chartrand and work with him to help improve the issues many are having with Manitoba Housing?

Mr. Fielding: Well, again, Madam Speaker, our government is always interested in listening to people, whether it be in policy items, whether it be things like housing. This is a good example where we've listened to people at Gilbert Park in the past. We're always interested in listening to people.

I am very proud of the fact that we have made important investments in housing. As mentioned, there's over 3,000 more people supported than ever before under the former NDP government for the Rent Assist program. There's over 750 new social and affordable housing units that our government has created.

We want to work with the federal government more to create some housing solutions for Manitobans.

Manitoba Housing Units Government Intention

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): The Pallister government handed management control of 567 units to third parties. Housing now faces a \$2.7-million cut this year and so will transfer 1,000 more units to other management agencies.

Does the minister intend to dispose of more public housing?

Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance): Our government is engaged in a housing strategy. We had consultations. We went to all different parts of the community to listen to individuals, to make sure our housing needs are there. We worked with the federal government in the past to deliver more housing solutions, whether that be affordable housing, whether that be social housing, whether that be Rent Assist types of programs, to support individuals.

We provided some grants to upgrade centres, and we'll continue to work with Manitobans to create housing solutions for all Manitobans.

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

Mr. Marcelino: The contract Manitoba signed with the third parties gives the ability to sell these house-social housing units in the future. We have already lost social housing, and they'll—the minister is opening the door to a loss of even more.

Is this really part of his housing strategy?

Mr. Fielding: Our government is engaged in community-driven approach to housing. We think that's important. We've worked with the federal government. I think there'll be some good news with working with the federal government on housing starts to begin with.

The reality is, the sad reality is, Madam Speaker, we were left a mess by the NDP government. They did not—they—there was over \$500 million of deferred maintenance on the housing. This is from a party that claims to be supporting low-income individuals for affordable housing. That's nothing further from the truth.

Where they failed, we are going to complete the job, Madam Speaker.

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

Mr. Marcelino: Finger pointing does not really help.

An Honourable Member: No, it's not nice.

Mr. Marcelino: And it's not nice.

* (14:30)

The facts are these: the maintenance budget for social housing was cast—was cut last year by 62 per cent; capital spending has been cut 90 per cent; and over 1,500 units of existing housing will be farmed out, potentially to private operators with allowance for their sale in the future.

Can you stop the blame game, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Fielding: Our government is proud of the fact that we're investing more—close to \$300 million more—in the Families Department than when we first came to office. We know that the former NDP government failed Manitobans, failed Manitobans in terms of making sure they had proper supports in place for affordable housing. That's why we've made

important investments. That's why there was over 3,000 more people supported under the Rent Assist program. That's why we've invested in more than 750 new social and affordable housing units, Madam Speaker. There's a process that's in place to deliver housing solutions for Manitobans.

We know the NDP take an ideological approach to housing. We want a balanced approach, Madam Speaker, that's going to benefit all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a point of order?

Hon. Steven Fletcher (Assiniboia): Yes, on a point of order.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Assiniboia, on a point of order.

Mr. Fletcher: Madam Speaker, I listened attentively to your comments about the heckling, and it continues on and on. There have—you—they—the members of this place have forced you to intervene far more times than there have been matters of privilege or points of order on the issue of heckling alone.

May I make a—hopefully, a helpful recommendation, and that is to do what I've done for 11 years in Ottawa and three years here, and that is not to heckle. Just don't heckle. And if someone heckles, boot them out. Make them stand in the corner.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on that same point of order.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): While I appreciate the member's comments on not interfering with the House and allowing things to proceed, well, and to—and not get removed from the House, Madam Speaker, those are all wise words from the member opposite. I hope he adheres to them in the hours and the few days that he has left in this Chamber ahead.

However, you've already cautioned us, Madam Speaker. I think all members took that caution to heart. We know that you have a difficult job to do. You do it in an exemplary way, and I'm sure that all members took that caution to heart.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (Second Opposition House Leader): Yes, Madam Speaker, this has become serious enough that it may be necessary to remove somebody or more than one person, and I just wanted to let you know that Liberals would approve more forceful action.

Madam Speaker: I thank everybody for weighing in on this point of order.

I believe I have already dealt with the issue of heckling. So I do want to thank members for—and the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Fletcher) for drawing it to our attention that we do have a higher purpose here and that we do need to strive in a better way to try to achieve it, but I do not think we need to belabour this at this point because I have ruled on it already.

PETITIONS

Daylight Saving Time

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The loss of sleep associated with the beginning of daylight saving time has serious consequences for physical and mental health and has been linked to increases in traffic accidents and workplace injuries.

(2) According to a Manitoba Public Insurance news release, collision data collected in 2014 showed that there was a 20 per cent increase in collisions on Manitoba roadways following the spring daylight saving time change when compared to all other Mondays in 2014.

(3) Daylight saving time is associated with a decrease in productivity the day after the clocks are turned forward with no corresponding increase in productivity when the clocks are turned back.

(4) There is no conclusive evidence that daylight saving time is effective in reducing energy consumption.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to amend The Official Time Act to abolish daylight saving time in Manitoba effective November 4th, 2019, resulting in Manitoba remaining on Central Standard Time throughout the year and in perpetuity.

And this petition has been signed by Anne Loewen, Shirley Rempel, Andrew Heinrichs and many, many more fine Manitobans.

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

Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And, Madam Speaker, this petition is signed by Nicole Andrychuk, Tracy Adolphe, Michelle Lettro and many other Manitobans.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

* (14:40)

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating

funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

Signed by D.B., Langhan, Jo-Anne Izatt, Judy Heckert and many, many others.

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And, Madam Speaker, this petition has signed by Tracy Lawson, Scott Miller and many other Manitobans.

Tina Fontaine—Public Inquiry

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

(1) Tina Fontaine was murdered at the age of 15 years, and her body was found in the Red River on August 17th, 2014.

(2) Tina Fontaine was robbed of her loving family and the Anishinabe community of Sagkeeng First Nation.

(3) Tina Fontaine was failed by multiple systems which did not protect her as they intervened in her life.

(4) Tina Fontaine was further failed by systems meant to seek and pursue justice for her murder.

(5) Tina Fontaine's murder galvanized Canada on the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, MMIWG, as she quickly became our collective daughter and the symbol of MMIWG across Canada.

(6) Manitoba has failed to fully implement the recommendations of numerous reports and recommendations meant to improve and protect the lives of indigenous peoples and children, including the Manitoba Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People and the Phoenix Sinclair inquiry.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Justice to immediately call a public inquiry into the systems that had a role in the life and death of Tina Fontaine, as well as the function of the administration of justice after her death.

(2) To urge that the terms of reference of a public inquiry be developed jointly with the caregivers of Tina Fontaine and/or the agent appointed by them.

Signed by Faith Chorette, Alex Catellier and Josh Delaronde and many more Manitobans.

Early Learning and Child-Care Programs

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to increase funding for licensed, not-for-profit child-care programs in recognition of the importance of early learning and child care in Manitoba, which

will also improve quality and stability in the workforce.

Signed by many Manitobans. Thank you.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

* (14:50)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, order.

Mr. Altemeyer: Sorry to break up the tea party.

Signed by Atif Ali, Morgan Colamenci *[phonetic]*, Beatrix Lee and many other fine Manitobans.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly—the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to the petition is as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

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

(2) Licensed, not-for-profit early learning and child-care programs have received no new operating

funding in over three years, while the cost of living has continued to increase annually.

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This petition was signed by Colin [*phonetic*] Maxim, Ron Loewen, Morris Stern and many, many more.

Thank you.

ACCESS Bursary Program

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) All Manitobans deserve the opportunity to pursue a university or college degree.

(2) The ACCESS program was introduced by the provincial government in the 1970s. It provided grants to Manitobans who were historically underrepresented in professions such as teaching and social work.

(3) Under the ACCESS program, northern, indigenous and low-income students were prioritized with significant and targeted assistance of up to 60 per cent of the student's needs, including living

expenses, to counter the effects of historic and systemic barriers to education.

(4) In 2018, the provincial government cancelled the ACCESS Bursary Program as it existed, and ACCESS students will now have to rely much more heavily on student loans.

(5) The situation presents a barrier for many underrepresented students who may choose not to pursue an education due to debt concerns. This change is especially unfair to students who are already in the midst of completing multi-year degrees and did their financial planning anticipating a long-term commitment from the program.

(6) The provincial government has already made it hard for all Manitoba students to afford post-secondary education. It cut the tuition tax rebate, cut funding to post-secondary institutions and lifted the cap on tuition fee increases, leading to the highest tuition fee increase in the country.

(7) The provincial government's cuts are making school a debt sentence and placing more barriers to education in the way of disadvantaged Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to immediately restore the ACCESS Bursary Program to ensure targeted funding for northern, indigenous and low-income students to help reduce barriers to access and ensure all Manitobans have equal opportunity to pursue post-secondary education.

And this is signed by Gail Lemoine, Kara Fraser and F. Sutton and many other Manitobans

Concordia Hospital Emergency Room

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I wish to present the following petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

And the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government has announced that Concordia Hospital's emergency room will be closed by the summer of 2019.

(2) In addition to the closure of the Concordia ER, Seven Oaks General Hospital's ER will also be closed in the fall of 2019, leaving families in north Winnipeg without any point of contact with front-line health-care services.

(3) These closures will result in patients needing to travel 20 minutes or more to emergency rooms at St. Boniface Hospital or Health Sciences Centre to receive care.

(4) In recent years, a nearby QuickCare clinic was closed and plans for ACCESS centres and personal-care homes were cancelled.

(5) The forthcoming closure of the Concordia ER, in addition to the cuts in health care that have already been made, will place a heavy burden on the many seniors who live in northeast Winnipeg and visit the emergency room frequently, particularly those who are unable to drive or who are low income.

(6) The chaos from the provincial government's health-care overhaul is resulting in a nursing shortage, with the staff vacancy at Concordia being 40 per cent. Nurses have expressed concern for their patients because the shortage is increasing overtime hours and thereby creating an environment in which quality patient care cannot be guaranteed.

(7) The provincial government failed to consult with families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg regarding the closure of their emergency room or to consult with health-care officials and health-care workers at Concordia to discuss how this impact—this closure would impact patient care in advance of the announcement.

(8) Access to emergency medical care on a 24-7 basis is essential for people living in northeast Winnipeg.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to reverse the decision to close Concordia Hospital's emergency room so that families and seniors in northeast Winnipeg and the surrounding areas have access to quality health-care services.

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Grievances?

* (15:00)

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Could you please call for concurrence and third readings: bill 26, The Presumption of Death and

Declaration of Absence Act and Amendments to The Insurance Act; Bill 240, The Elections Amendment Act; and Bill 228, The Sikh Heritage Month Act.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider concurrence and third readings of bills 226, 240 and 228.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 226—The Presumption of Death and Declaration of Absence Act and Amendments to The Insurance Act

Madam Speaker: Starting, then, with the first one, we'll call concurrence and third reading of Bill 226, The Presumption of Death and Declaration of Absence Act and Amendments to The Insurance Act.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): I move, seconded by the member for Southdale (Mr. Smith), that Bill 226, The Presumption of Death and Declaration of Absence Act and Amendments to The Insurance Act, reported from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Micklefield: This bill amends The Presumption of Death Act and declaration—sorry, Presumption of Death Act currently in existence in Manitoba. That act was the result of research done in the mid-1960s. The bill came into effect in 1968, which, of course, for those doing the math, is 51 years ago. It has not been amended since that time.

Other jurisdictions with similar legislation have outpaced this province and demonstrated that we are behind the times. Elements of the existing legislation are clumsy, are outdated, are ineffective or ambiguous. This legislation seeks to not only modernize but clarify those ambiguities.

Madam Speaker, although we're speaking here about legislation, I want to be very clear that this affects the lives of people and these people are in a harrowing situation.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this act also was the subject of a report commissioned and published by the Manitoba Law Reform Commission. They identified numerous problems with the existing legislation and recommended that those problems be rectified.

This bill does take, very carefully, the recommendations of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission and, I believe, enacts almost all of them. We also, in Bill 226, naturally, touches insurance issues, which are reflected in the bill as well.

Also, there's a number of interesting developments in this bill that I just want to touch on. The first is that it gives the court power to declare somebody not only to be dead, if the situation meets certain requirements, but also to be declared missing for specified purposes.

And that language may seem a little archaic or unclear, but Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is being referred to there is that in circumstances where the family of a missing loved one may not want to declare that person to be considered dead, they now would have the option of saying, well, then we'll have them declared formally absent, which means that, for now, they're not here.

And the court can authorize a committee or somebody on behalf of the absent missing person to sell assets or deal with financial or legal matters on behalf of the person who is declared absent, stopping short of declaring them dead but acknowledging that we don't know where they are—but elements of their life do need to move on. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill provides for that to happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've been asked on more than one occasion: are the—when assets are moved around, what happens if an individual who is thought to be presumed dead—by the way, these are never hasty things. There's a process, there are requirements, but what happens if by some amazing turn of events, the person turns out not to, in fact, be dead? Well, there are provisions in the bill that contemplate such an eventuality.

The dispersing of assets is considered to be final, but if there is a situation where somebody who turns out not to be dead, if it would not cause undue harm or be unjust to help them put their life back together, the courts have that option. And we spent no small amount of time trying to contemplate this situation, which I can't imagine going through.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do want to acknowledge the families who I met with for this bill. I also want to acknowledge the families I did not meet with, and this is a bill that is sparked by a heart of compassion. We're trying to make it easier for these families. We're trying to make it easier for people who are—

already find their lives turned upside down because their loved one has vanished.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my hope that all of us in this Chamber will pass this bill this afternoon so that, as one grieving mother said to me, their—these families do not need to be re-victimized every time a collection agency shows up at their door, every time they have to have a very difficult conversation with a bank or a car company or whomever it may be. These banks are not necessarily trying to be bad, but they have to function within rules, as well.

This afternoon, we have the opportunity to enact—or, to pass legislation that will make it easier on these families. Those are the people that I'm thinking of this afternoon, and I would ask all honourable members to join me in thinking of those people already suffering plenty, and, hopefully, by our actions this afternoon, suffering just a little less.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm going to be put a couple of words on the record in respect of Bill 226, The Presumption of Death and Declaration of Absence Act and Amendments to The Insurance Act.

We have had quite a bit of a robust debate in respect of Bill 226 and I have put other words on the record, so I won't take up the full time allotted. I think I just want to use this opportunity to once again reaffirm my commitment and also the commitment of the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith)—our commitment to families of Manitoba's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, and all Manitoba families that are in the midst of having a loved one who is missing and there is not a sense of closure.

As I have said previously in the House, we, on this side of the House, do support the bill. I think it is important to recognize—and I would suggest that most that have been working with Manitobans who have a loved one missing recognize that there is no sense of closure. And I would hope that this bill will help alleviate and mitigate some of that closure for Manitoba families.

I want to just quickly put on the record that—what year would that have been—back in 2011, when I was the special adviser on indigenous women's issues for the Aboriginal Issues Committee of Cabinet, I had the opportunity to work with—we had an informal formal MMIWG families advisory group.

So the advisory group was made up of families. In fact, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), alongside many other family members, was a part of that.

* (15:10)

And so around the beginning of 2011—well, actually, beginning in 2010, when I first started working for the Province—I worked with families to discuss and develop a provincial strategy on missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. And one of the first things that was identified by families, particularly families that had a loved one missing, was the desire to have a monument, a permanent monument that was dedicated to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

And that discussion and that work started late 2010, early 2011. And, actually, we had the opportunity to have a more fulsome discussion on a monument at one of our Wiping Away the Tears gatherings, and I don't remember which Wiping Away the Tears gathering that would have been.

That probably—we would have been the second or third, probably the third Wiping Away the Tears gathering that—under my duties as the special adviser that I would put on every year for the families. And so, we did discuss the monument, and so we had—with families from across Manitoba. And families from across Manitoba wanted to have a monument in honour of their loved ones.

And what was interesting about this particular discussion that we had at the Wiping Away the Tears gathering was that, depending on if your loved one was murdered or if your loved one was missing, families had different desires and interpretations of the monument. And so we tried to marry a lot of those different aspects of what a monument would induce in families.

But actually, I remember that, in fact, I think the beginning of that discussion, we had called it Manitoba's monument to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls—no, no, no. Pardon me. We called it Manitoba's memorial to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

And, in fact, it was the member for Point Douglas's stepmother, Brenda Osborne, who is the mother to the member for Point Douglas's sister, Claudette Osborne, who's been missing since 2008. She actually brought up, in front of everybody, it was actually Brenda who spoke about, well, it—we can't

call it a memorial, she says, because my daughter's still out there. My daughter still may come home.

And I thought that, for me, personally, that was a very poignant moment, and for all of us, really, that because there's not this sense of closure, there is always this hope that your loved one will come home. And so, actually, from that moment, one of the key recommendations that we had, in respect of the monument, is that we never called it a memorial.

So it's actually officially called Manitoba's monument dedication to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. That project took me about two years, in concert with family members, to get—from the start to the finish, to get completed.

And that monument, originally, I had been trying to get the monument on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature, but for whatever reason, there was a bunch of things, and it just didn't work out to have a monument, an MMIWG monument on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature, but that was okay.

It was meant to be that the grounds here, we couldn't have it here, because we ended up meeting—and I've told this story before—we ended up meeting Toby Chase. Toby Chase was, like, the CEO for The Forks. And, literally, within five minutes of meeting Toby, he had identified the space at The Forks. And so our monument dedication to MMIWG actually sits at the cross point of the Red and the Assiniboine River at The Forks.

And we worked with families. The designer for the monument is Charles Brunet. He owns Brunet Monuments in St. Boniface, which was also meant to be that I was going to meet him, because I was advocating for an MMIWG family member—in fact, the family of Hillary Angel Wilson, who was murdered in 2007.

We were advocating to get a headstone, and he offered to donate a headstone. And so I had gone with the family, and we were, you know, discussing what Hillary's headstone was going to be like, and then him and I started talking about that—the fact that he does monuments. And so it was—all of these pieces just fell into place. And he's a beautiful human being. His folks that he works with are just beautiful.

And so we worked on the design. I knew the design that I loved, but when we met with the families and we had dinner—we had all gone out for dinner and gone through the design—and all the family members had loved the design as well that I was so drawn to. And so she—I always call her she—

she sits at the two rivers, but in the centre of that monument there's a circle, and what most Manitobans don't know is that that circle actually looks down and is positioned to look down on the sacred fire. I was very blessed to be there when she was put together, and it was like a ceremony because there is a—the way that she was placed, it's almost like a sacred pipe.

And why I share that is because before we rise, I want to be able to ensure that Manitobans going back into Hansard know that the monument at The Forks is a monument dedication for MMIWG, but it was born out of Manitoba's MMIWG family members, but, in particular, families who had missing ones because they wanted to go—they wanted to have somewhere that they could go to honour their loved ones because Manitoba families, if you have a missing loved one, you have nowhere to go.

If you have a loved one who's been murdered, you can always go to the gravesite, and, actually, even that is an obstacle because a lot of folks don't have the ability to travel if your, you know, your loved one is back home, buried on the reserve or even outside the city.

And so the monument has served a purpose of bringing families together, of educating Manitobans, and also offering some semblance of honour and connection and peace to their missing loved one.

As I said, that project took about two, two and a half years, and we actually had the grand unveiling, tragically, only two days before Tina Fontaine's body was found. And so then that monument quickly became that meeting place where we all honour Tina Fontaine.

So all of that to say I want to just take this moment to honour all of Manitoba's missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and again reaffirm both myself and the member for Point Douglas's (Mrs. Smith) commitment to them and to say that we support this bill. Miigwech.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I'm glad to have the opportunity to stand today and put some words on the record about Bill 226.

I'm happy that this government is amending The Presumption of Death and Declaration of Absence Act, as 50 years is a long time to leave this type of legislation untouched. It's clear that changes were needed based on the 2015 Manitoba law reform report, and, although it took this government almost

four years to take action on the recommendations, I'm so glad it's being done.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are the only province in Canada that has not significantly amended their presumption of death legislation since originally enacted. While some legislation is good and does not require amending, this is not the case with the presumption of death legislation.

Bill 226 deals with how families are able to grieve and heal from loss. Currently, without a court order, families must wait seven years before their loved ones are presumed dead. Our process to seek a court order is too complicated for families that are suffering with grief. We so desperately need a process that is streamlined so that families can proceed with what they need to, to receive closure, including distributing property.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's also important that presumption of death orders that are made in another province or outside of Canada are recognized in our province. Families do not always live in the same province, and this can make arrangements very difficult and complicated.

When I think of Bill 226, I think about the family of Thelma Krull and the family of Cooper Nemeth and all the families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in our province. They deserve legislation that respects their ability to heal from loss.

We will be supporting this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there any further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading on Bill 226, The Presumption of Death and Declaration of Absence Act and Amendments to The Insurance Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

* (15:20)

Bill 240—The Elections Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Now we'll go on to the next bill, which would be Bill 240.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), that Bill 240, The Elections Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi électorale, reported from the Standing Committee on Private Bills, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Guillemard: Transparency, honesty, authenticity. These are qualities that voters are asking for and our government is actively producing policy and legislation to encourage elected officials to set high standards in response.

Bill 204 fits within this goal, and will assist voters as they make informed decisions in the next election. If members from all parties have nothing to hide, I expect this bill to pass in order to show how we all value and respect Manitobans. If we are asking for voters to trust us with their vote, we must show we trust them with voluntary disclosure of our own history.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): It is important for us as legislators to create space and ensure space is equitable for people who have ambitions of running for political office to be able to have the opportunity to do so. We've seen in the last three years the government put measures in place that have really dismantled and undermined democracy in Manitoba.

We've seen the Pallister government put in a legislative framework that certainly—I would suggest to the House—leans elections, provincial elections in favour of the PC party, the PC government, the current ruling PC government. And we have seen that this is, as I would suggest, very strategic. It is creating a legislative framework in Manitoba where it is unfair, it is inequitable, and certainly it leans towards favouring one party over another.

We have seen the Pallister government do away with electoral tax rebates. We've seen them reduce the amount that candidates are able to claim back that will allow candidates the resources and means to be able to ensure that they are able to run in the election and certainly perhaps even run again if they are elected or not elected actually, Deputy Speaker.

We've seen the Pallister government put in place a legislative framework that increased the single allowable dollars to participate in the electoral

process. We've seen them increase the amount from \$3,000 to \$5,000. We've said it quite a few times on the record here in respect of what that does.

And I know that members opposite—when we've attempted to bring forward and note again how important it is to have an equitable and fair electoral process in Manitoba, members opposite have, you know, yelled across the way that we're lazy socialists and we're this and we're that. But actually, you know, I certainly take great exception to that, and I would suggest all the members on this side of the House would take exception to that. We work really, really hard, and I'm really proud to belong to a caucus that works so hard.

The situation, though, is that—and the reality, though, is that when you stand on the side of people, when you stand on the side of people who are marginalized—economically marginalized—who are vulnerable, who are historically disenfranchised from the political process—when you stand on the side of individuals who are struggling with mental health issues, when you stand on the side of people that are dealing with addictions, when you are standing on the side of individuals who deal with a variety of different issues—including intergenerational trauma—when you stand on the side of individuals who come from—are situated within a newcomer context here in Canada and Manitoba, when you stand on the side of individuals who are, you know, seeking to get better education, when you stand on the side of people, when you stand on the side of equal rights, when you stand on the side of human rights, when you stand on the side of social justice, oftentimes you stand on the side of people who are struggling, who do not have \$5,000 to give a candidate.

As much as they probably want to, there's simply not the means, and I would suggest that even before that, it would be difficult for individuals to even be able to make a \$3,000 donation.

But what we've seen is that this government has put in that legislative framework that only seeks to ensure that they have the dollars to be able to run, because members opposite have, you know—the people that they stand on the side of, I would suggest to you, have a lot more capital and money that they're able to access, as opposed to the folks that we stand on the side of here.

I know that last time we debated this—and I think it is worth, again, just quickly noting—I read out what Elections Quebec pays out per year in respect of their political process, in respect of ensuring that they

have an equitable political system. I think it's—I'm not going to read all of it because, Deputy Speaker, you will recall that there's actually quite a few parties in Quebec. I'm just going to read out some of them.

Le parti—le Quebec Liberal Party—they were paid out close to \$3.5 million.

La Coalition Avenir Québec—L'équipe François Legault—they were paid almost \$2.5 million.

Parti Québécois—they were paid \$2.2 million.

The Green Party of Quebec was paid almost—no, Québec solidaire was paid a million dollars—close to a million dollars.

The Green Party of Quebec was paid almost \$80,000.

The Conservative Party of Quebec was paid almost \$64,000.

Where was the one that I really liked? Bloc Pot, which I thought was pretty interesting—so even a party that I'm assuming is advocating for marijuana, cannabis, which I don't know what they would have paid out now because everything is legalized, but they were paid almost \$7,500.

So the Quebec government understands the need to ensure a fair and equitable political process and to ensure that there is a legislative framework to ensure that. And, you know, in total, last year, Elections Quebec, in 2018, paid out \$9,576,000 to political parties to be able to participate in the political process. That's not even all the amount that they paid. They paid an additional allowances, so additional allowances that you could access was \$6 million.

* (15:30)

So, for 2018, the Quebec elections—Elections Quebec paid out almost—over 15, almost \$16 million to be able to support an infrastructure that allows everybody to be able to run.

And what does the Premier (Mr. Pallister) of this province—what does the PC Premier of Manitoba decide to do? He actually does the exact opposite. Instead of ensuring that we've got equity in this province, he's actually dismantled it.

He's very methodically and strategically dismantled the electoral system here in Manitoba, ensuring—and as I've said before—that the lack of diversity in their caucus continues on after the next election. That's essentially what the Premier of

Manitoba has done. The Premier of Manitoba has ensured that there is a lack of diversity.

In the last minute that I have, I want to clarify for members opposite what diversity means, because I've heard them say, well, you know, we have some women. That's not diversity. That's actually gender equity. There's a difference between diversity, in respect of where folks come from and their culture, and then there's gender diversity. And I would suggest to you, Deputy Speaker, that they don't have any of that.

And so what they've done is they've ensured that they will continue to only have what they have right now, which does not reflect the Manitoba population, does not reflect Manitobans that I know. And they're proud of it. They're proud to chirp up while their Premier dismantled the democratic process in Manitoba.

They're proud of that legacy, that as they're about to break Manitoba's fixed-election date law, they're proud that they did that. They're proud that they ensured that Manitobans who deserve to have a seat in here and actually represent—because political representation matters—they dismantled it and they're proud of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Mr. Speaker, a few words on this bill.

It has been brought forward, and one of the problems in this bill is that it's not, as I would say, fair, in that there are people who clearly should also have to disclose issues.

For example, somebody who has, themselves, or runs a corporation, owns a corporation which has been sued, and not just been sued, but has been sued and the suit is successful and that individual has had to pay compensation. We certainly don't want to include somebody who's just been sued because that would encourage vexatious lawsuits.

But where we have somebody who clearly, themselves, or as part of a corporation, which they are a major owner of or they were the CEO or the exec director of while that corporation did something that was wrong, and they were successfully sued because of that and they had to pay compensation, I would suggest that under those circumstances, that information should be made public as part of what is disclosed about their candidature.

This would, at least, provide a little bit of balance, in terms of individual responsibility and responsibility for businesses and corporations that somebody would own or run. I think that the fairness issue is certainly a significant one.

And we would like to see some changes in here so that it would actually be a little fairer, but that being said, that—we supported this at second reading and would be prepared to support it again, but we would certainly like an amendment so that it could be a little fairer.

With those few words, I will pass the opportunity to speak over to my colleague for St. Boniface, and I expect that he'll have a few more comments.

Thank you.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): I have expressed some of our concerns about this bill—in part, that it seems to single out certain types of behaviour and that it sets the bar low in terms of saying that people at the minimum should be disclosing their former criminal convictions when there are, of course, other types of convictions—civil convictions—which are a concern—I mean, that may raise concerns about fiduciary duty or people's ability, essentially, to be trusted handling money.

The other is that, over the years, there have been a number of challenges when it comes to laws around elections. And one of the odd parts about election law is precisely that the people who—is that essentially players get to vote to change the rules of the game in the middle of it. And it is worth recalling that there have been a number of instances over the last 25 years or so where there have been some quite significant violations of election law, including in Manitoba but also across Canada.

In the 1995 election, there were allegations that there had been an attempt in the Manitoba provincial election to fix the outcome of the vote, that certain individuals were paid to run for a party. And a five-month investigation by Elections Manitoba actually found nothing. It actually cleared the then-PC party of any wrongdoing. But, in 1998, as the media reported, the accusations surfaced again when witnesses were willing to talk and there was an inquiry.

And, frankly, I would say the one thing that's very important that's worth recognizing the then premier, Gary Filmon, for doing is that he was willing to call a judicial inquiry, which actually found that high-ranking party officials in the

PC party broke the law. And the judge who oversaw that inquiry said, and I quote, in all my years on the bench, I've never 'encounted' as many liars in one proceeding as I did during this inquiry. That was Judge Alfred Monnin.

And there were very senior people implicated in the scheme, including the former—the premier's former chief of staff, who admitted he used \$4,000 in party funds to fund candidates in the Interlake and elsewhere, and Allan Aitken, the campaign manager who passed the money to three independent candidates and then others who helped cover up the plan.

And more recently, in 2006, there was something called the in-and-out scandal, which again was a national scandal, which involved the Conservative Party of Canada at the highest levels organizing to work around election spending laws.

And the reason we have election spending laws is because of—fundamentally, we have to have a commitment to free and fair elections, that in a democracy it isn't just a question of one dollar, one vote—that it's one person, one vote. And that's an incredibly important principle and that our elections—elections in Canada actually have been—tended to be more fair because we have recognized the role of independent agencies—of Elections Canada and Elections Manitoba—to set their own rules, to make sure that it's taken out of the hands of politicians so politicians aren't able to rig the game.

But, in the case of the in-and-out scandal, it was a close election. And what happened is that there were some constituencies where people had extra money, and other ridings—federal ridings across Canada where—which were considered to be close but that were at their spending limit. So what happened was there was a large and co-ordinated effort. It actually involved one in five Conservative Party of Canada candidates, including a number of Cabinet ministers who—and, in fact, the current leader of the people's—some People's Party of Canada, Maxime Bernier—in order to fund—to make sure that these other—these constituencies or campaigns that were at their limit could spend even more in order to put them over the top.

*(15:40)

And this was only discovered, actually, when the campaigns in question submitted their invoices for rebate and asked for \$700,000 in rebates from Elections Canada that it turned out they weren't

actually entitled to, because the money had not been spent in their constituency. And that was part of what triggered the investigation. And, at the end of it, it was not just that the Conservative Party had asked for \$700,000 in public money they weren't entitled to, but they'd done so using forged invoices, that it had been a plan that involved, again, the highest levels of the party.

But in the end, and I think this is one of the lessons in both these scandals, is that there was a real reluctance to actually punish anybody, is that there were in the end no one was found to be personally responsible for any of these things, despite essentially findings, public findings, that these things had happened. And, eventually, a guilty plea on the part of the Conservative Party, which was a guilty plea that was entered on the condition that nobody be found personally responsible. And the same thing happened after 1995.

And this is a challenge because obviously elections are absolutely critical to our fair and free elections, and open and transparent elections are absolutely critical to our democracy and our ability to, and the integrity of those elections is incredibly important, because of—because, ultimately, it's the individuals who find themselves in power after that election, if they're willing to use the sort of unfortunate techniques or tricks to get into power, it seems to be just as likely that they'll use similar sort of techniques and tricks to stay in power, so that there are, again, offences far beyond criminal which should be of concern to people.

Of course, we need to balance this, we need to balance all of this against, I think, a sincere belief in our ability to forgive people, in actually recognizing that people can grow and can change and can be redeemed; these are absolutely critical beliefs that we need to have in a society if we were actually to believe in justice.

It isn't simply a question of punishment or of restoration or, and making good or making amends but also that there's an aspect of forgiveness and the belief that people can actually change and better themselves so that they are not, in a sense, prisoners of their past.

So, again, there are all sorts of ways in which our electoral process, I think, could be improved, could be made more fair, could be made more open, make it easier for people to be candidates, make it easier for people to fund campaigns, and make it easier for people to vote, to not require such

stringent, either such stringent ID requirements or that if we are going to insist on an ID requirement to make sure that everyone can have an ID that is free so that everybody has that opportunity to cast their ballot because, ultimately, it is one of—the act of voting is one the moments that really defines our society because though we live in a society which is unequal in so many ways, at the ballot box everyone truly is equal, that a homeless person has the same say in choosing the next government that a billionaire does. *[interjection]* Yes, ideally.

But that is one of the—thank you, as the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) pointed out, that it is actually critical that we not raise barriers for people's participation to democracy, and that of all the priorities that need to be considered in our elections of making sure that people can participate in opening it up in various ways because I think over the last decades we've seen people feel—lose trust in political institutions, in democratic institutions that we should—that of all the priorities that have to be brought forward, I don't see this particular bill as being particularly high on the list.

Ultimately, we should be able to do better than this, and we should also be finding ways to encourage people to be more civil and focus on what's best in people rather than simply focusing on the negative, and focusing on the future rather than focusing on the past.

So, with that, I will wrap up.

Thank you very much, Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there any further speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 240, The Elections Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Bill 228—The Sikh Heritage Month Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Now we'll go on to the next—okay, I'll call on number—the next bill is Bill 228, The Sikh Heritage Month Act.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Could you please canvass the House to see if there's leave to allow for me to move the concurrence and third reading

motion for Bill 228 on behalf of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew)?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it will to the House to have—canvass the House to seek that there—leave for the member from Concordia to have moved—that move the concurrence and third reading motion on behalf of the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Wiebe: I move, seconded by the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), that Bill 228, The Sikh Heritage Month Act, be now concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member from Concordia, seconded by the honourable member for Point Douglas, that Bill 228, The Sikh Heritage Month Act, be reported from the Standing Committee on Private Bills and be concurred in and now read for the third time and passed.

Mr. Wiebe: It is my pleasure to rise here this afternoon and to move this particular bill forward and have it passed this afternoon. This bill, of course, is important to a lot of people in Manitoba, and it's certainly been something, a bill, that has been a priority of this caucus and certainly a priority of the Leader of the Official Opposition as well.

It's a bill that, unfortunately, has had a bit of a rocky road to get to this point, and it is quite unfortunate that it's taken this long to come to this point. But, as I said, it has been a priority, and so that is why, as the official opposition, we have called this bill back so many times in the limited amount of time that we are given as an opportunity to bring forward private members' legislation, and it really was a focus for us to make sure that we called it back to ensure that it finally got to committee and then, of course, to this stage.

And so, you know, casual observers of this place might sort of wonder why exactly it took so long to move forward. I mean, if you look back at the Hansard of members, certainly on our side of the House and members of the official opposition, but also if you look at the words of members opposite, you will find nothing but positive words and support of this particular bill. And so it might be curious to those casual observers why it took so very long for this House to finally come together and move forward in unity on a bill that is—you know, celebrates those in our community of the Sikh faith

and heritage, who are so important to the fabric of this province.

Casual observers might be confused, but I can certainly tell you that those members of the Sikh community who came to this House day after day after day to ensure that the pressure was kept up on the government to finally move forward, they understand very clearly who was on their side and who was holding this bill up. And so, again, it took much longer than it should've.

It took many more days of debate than I think we expected it to take certainly because we brought this bill forward on behalf of the community and not just the community in general terms, but specifically the Sikh heritage committee and those members who have joined that group here in this province who have said this is not just words on a piece of paper; this is not just general goodwill, but this is integral to who they are in building their sense of community not just as the generation who's come here as first generation Canadians, but even for those who are now the young generation, many of whom are being born in Manitoba but still want to hold on to that important link to their heritage, to their language, to their faith and who see this as an important part of that overall endeavour.

* (15:50)

So I want to congratulate the Sikh heritage committee for sticking with it, sticking with us as we championed your bill through the legislative process. We want to thank you for bringing this to the Legislature—not just here but, of course, in other legislatures across Canada.

And it may have taken a little bit longer here in Manitoba, but you can certainly see that all members of this House, hopefully, will stand in unity to support you, to support the Sikh community and to say that it is an important step for us to move this piece of legislation through and to get it passed here this afternoon.

So, as I am given the opportunity to be the one to move it forward, I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to say some words. But I really want to, as I said, focus on the community—the community who has applied that pressure, who has continued to talk to individual MLAs. I know members opposite, many of them got an earful when it was delayed at various stages throughout the process, but that is their job as concerned citizens to make sure that their MLAs are paying attention.

And, certainly, you know, not just myself, but I know our leader, who has been steadfast with the community, has been pushing this piece of legislation through the process at every single stage to ensure that it gets the attention that it needs—he gave the opportunity for the community's voice to be elevated in this place, and that's certainly where, you know, what I think got it to this point.

So, again, it really starts and ends with the community, and we want to honour and thank them for pushing us as legislators to listen to them and make sure that we were honouring their wishes in bringing this legislation forward, and also our caucus for being steadfast with the community and making sure that we were honouring their will to have this move forward.

So I do hope that here this afternoon, as we get to the end of session, there will be plenty of opportunity in the next few weeks, I think, for us to be out on the campaign trail and be fighting a larger battle about who we—or the vision that we have for Manitoba.

But, certainly, when it comes to this issue, I think it's very clear that individuals within the Sikh community and throughout the city and the province, they understand very clearly who's been standing with them at every step of the way, they understand the pressure that they were able to apply. And I think they appreciate that at the very—at least at the very end, hopefully, we can have all members join together, we can actually move this forward and we can have some semblance of consensus in this House to say that the Sikh people and communities that make up our province are important, that they are some individuals that we want to honour and respect. This is one step towards that.

So I do hope that all members here this afternoon will stand in unity to support this bill moving forward, will support us in our fight to have this bill finally moved to the—have an opportunity to be passed and will respect and honour all of those—not just members of the Sikh heritage committee, but also the larger community as well and show our respect as legislators through this piece of legislation.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

Mr. Dougald Lamont (Leader of the Second Opposition): Very pleased to be—to put some words

on the record in support of this bill and thank the opposition for bringing it forward.

We know it's an important bill for the community, that it came from the community. They supported it.

I just wanted to mention that Manitoba has played a historic role for the Sikh community. In fact, the first MLA ever elected in Canada of Sikh origin and born in India was Gulzar Cheema, who was a Liberal MLA who was elected in 1988. He was also elected as an MLA in British Columbia and went on to become a Cabinet minister in BC. So he was one of the few people actually, in Canada, to be elected as MLA in two provinces.

Madam Speaker in the Chair

We know that the Sikh community, again, is extremely proud of their contributions to Manitoba, to Winnipeg. A friend of mine was one of the first—moved in, I think—I believe, 1973—was one of the first Sikh families to move to Brandon—San Grewal—where there was also a growing community.

And, as others have said, that it's important to recognize the role the Sikh community, that they have been nation builders as much as anyone else. They've been in Canada for—not—they're not necessarily even recent, though we are marking a 50th anniversary of the Sikh heritage society—that they've been here for hundreds of years, and that Sikh soldiers served with—alongside Canadians and fought for Canada in the first and second world wars.

But the other is that—how important—the alignment of Sikh values with Canadian values, that when you go to a gurdwara, they feed everyone for free and they put a roof over people's heads because of that fundamental commitment to equality, the fundamental commitment to the understanding that people should have shelter and people should be fed and then they should not be in need.

So I just want to—again, I'll just thank the opposition for putting this bill forward. I know everyone is eager to get it passed, to make sure it becomes a regular, permanent celebration that's part of our life and culture here in Manitoba, and we're more than happy to support it.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): It is an honour to rise today to speak to this bill, the Sikh Heritage Month—recognizing Sikh Heritage Month. And I do know that all members on this side of the House are

quite involved and—with the Sikh community in Winnipeg and, of course, across the province.

Madam Speaker, I do feel quite a connection to the Sikh community. I know that they've grown significantly as a population here in the last little while, predominantly in the last five to 10 years, and I know that they've contributed greatly and will continue to contribute greatly to this province, so I do appreciate that.

And I know that sometimes I even feel part of the family. Just before my wife and I got married, we had a traditional celebration for the wedding in a traditional Punjabi way. Of course, I know the Punjabi community is very big on eating and partying, and that was part of our celebration leading up to the wedding. So, Madam Speaker, they had me dressed up like a Punjabi groom and I felt very honoured to be in that position.

I know my wife and I, to this day, have been incredibly close to the community, and much of our connection also comes from the time we visited Punjab and we visited Amritsar and the Golden Temple—about 2013, I believe, or 2014. It was a wonderful experience, and I know, at the time, Madam Speaker, they were doing some construction on the Golden Temple, and it was—I know that to this point, it's completed, as I understand.

And I know that the surrounding area has become—has been improved and it's a very nice facility. And when I visited—I visited twice; I visited once in the evening and once during the day, and during the day it was quite crowded with a lot of tourists, as one can expect. But, in the evening, it was actually quite the sight. If you had—the moon was reflecting off the water that surrounds, like, a moat that surrounds the Golden Temple. And it was just quite a peaceful scenario and peaceful scene, and I couldn't describe it. I don't think words would ever do it justice.

So I know I'm very supportive of the Sikh community, and I know colleagues on this side of the House are very supportive of the Sikh community and Punjab community—of course, the Indo community on a whole.

I was very pleased to rise in this very House a few years ago to introduce the Indo-Manitoban Heritage Week resolution, and that lines up with India Independence Day and, of course, our great celebration of Folklorama here in the province—here in Winnipeg, anyways, Madam Speaker.

So I do want to say that I very much support the Sikh community and I'm very much involved in the community and I do appreciate everything that they do here in the province. I know they just add to an already great province.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (16:00)

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I would like to put a few words regarding this bill.

First of all, I think you may know that I also introduced Bill 229, and my main reason to introduce Bill 229 was that, because I see, like, the opposition was playing some games with Bill 228. They did not designate that bill, and, if they don't designate that bill, it will be spoken all the time. It might go to the next year. It would not pass. So I had to bring in Bill 229. So, at least I designated it; at least there will be voting. And then I think the opposition also got forced to designate it, and I don't think they should get all the credit because they did it, they were just playing games.

And, on the other hand, I would also point out how the opposition leader was supportive of the Sikh community. First of all, let me remind, Madam Speaker, who drive the cabs? Those are the people, most of them are the Sikhs, who may have—beaten up. And who is the leader of the Sikh community whom, wholeheartedly, whole Sikh community supported three times in the elections? Who are the conspirators against him to cook up this story, because criminal people, sometimes they have no *[inaudible]* and because of *[inaudible]* they can create the story to create—make it suspicious. And so who undermined the Sikh community and their leader? That's what happened.

And, on the other hand, these people, they started thinking—using religion for political gain. Let me warn this House, and I see that in India, in the recent election, so many people used religion, and the party came in the power because they created hate against the minorities, and when they created hate against the minorities, and—they are able to win that election. If these religions are being used for the political purposes, it will be chaos in the world. It will—if chaos—chaotic in the India, and slowly, slowly, it will do the same thing over here because Christians will say they are better people, Muslims say they are better people, and Sikhs will say they are better people.

But I would say—but I want to correct it. I won't think Sikhism is a religion; I think Sikhism is a movement, and that movement was about equality, irrespective of race, caste, and also about equality between men and women. And also it was the struggle against the forcefully converting one religion to—the people of one religion to the other religion.

There were two sons of the 10th guru. One was nine years old; one was seven years old. And, when they were captured by the government forces and they wanted to convert them to Muslims, but—they were given all kinds of incentives: you change your religion, we will give you this incentive. You change your religion, we'll give you this incentive. They said, no, we are not going to change our religion. At the end, they made to stand, and a wall was raised against there and they died of suffocation.

So those two children of 10th guru, seven years old and nine years old, they are really stand-out examples throughout the whole world of how the children can stand up against the—forcefully converting the religion. And I pointed out a few times those children should be recognized during children's international day.

And, during international day, those children, I pointed out to the previous sports and culture minister the same thing I will point out now: let me, when that time comes, we appreciate those two children who sacrificed their life for the sake of equal rights and human rights.

Therefore, I wouldn't say more than that, Madam Speaker. And I will emphasize that that should be emphasized in the next time when children's—International Children's Day come.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Always a pleasure to put a few remarks on the record, particularly as I have the opportunity to do so this afternoon pertaining to my—it's not only my Sikh friends but the broader Sikh community in our province.

Members here will all recall, and I'll just revisit this unusual turn of events for us, and that earlier in the session we ended up with two bills on the same topic—or almost on the same topic. And so that put many of us in somewhat of a quandary, as we were not sure of the two bills to support. Well, we managed to iron that out.

I met with members of the Sikh community from my own constituency, we had a wonderful and productive and friendly meeting in my constituency office, and I said, guys, look, what is the best way to serve the community. And so we gave some consideration to this, realizing that any bill that is brought forward by the—by one of the opposition parties is just not going to pass without the government saying, you know, we'll help you with this one, we'll lend a hand, we'll come alongside and make sure it passes. And, you know, once in a while, that can happen.

And I guess this is once in a while, Madam Speaker, because we do want to send that signal to the Sikh community, that we do value their heritage, we do value their contribution, and we don't just value what they bring or maybe what we could get from them. No, we value them as people. We value their community for the wonderful things that they have brought and continue to bring to this great province of Manitoba.

The reason, Madam Speaker, that these things are particularly pertinent in my own life is that I've been to India twice, and my wife has been to India. Interestingly, both of my parents have been to India. Actually, I think they've been—my dad has been three or four times, and my mom went just a few months ago. And I dare not divulge her age, but she's a very young looking mom, I'll just say that. I don't think she reads these things. But, anyway, she was, there very recently had a birthday—or had a celebration while she was there not a birthday.

But—so India and my family have intersected on more than one occasion, and I hope that bond and those relationships continue to go forward. Certainly, we have—I have many friends in India and not just from India—in India, I have many friends, and I am so blessed to call them my friends; they're very dear and special people.

So, when I began to pursue a political career in Rossmere, I was pleasantly surprised to discover more than a few Indian people in that area as well. And so, when they found out that I'd been to India a couple of times, they were overjoyed and we hit it off just great.

In fact, I remember door knocking one Saturday morning, it was freezing cold, and I had a number of Sikh friends with me. They all had long beards and they made fun of me because I did not have a long beard. And, Madam Speaker, I have not ruled out that at some point in my life I do aspire to grow a

long and manly beard, because at least in the wintertime I see that it would be of great use. But I digress.

I do want to say that I honour the Sikh community because not only are they lovely people and fun people and dear friends—our family has eaten in Sikh homes and we've had—we always seem to have Sikh people in our home. The other night I was criticized for making butter chicken the incorrect way by a Sikh young man who was in our home playing with my son. So I guess you live and learn.

Madam Speaker, though, in all seriousness, our government did proclaim Sikh heritage month, and it's my understanding that's the first time that's ever happened. That proclamation by the minister drew no small crowd in this building, and then those proclamations have been passed around the province, at the various gurdwaras. I think there's nine or maybe even 10 gurdwaras in our city now, and, certainly, those were warmly received sentiments from the minister and from our government to that community.

* (16:10)

Madam Speaker, there's lots that I want to touch on, but just a few small things. I remember one time I was—I actually don't recall what I was doing, but I noticed there were dozens of cars parked outside a certain home in our neighbourhood. And I thought, what's going on here? And so I pulled over and I was kind of curious. And, well, it was a Sikh wedding. And there were people there for several days and the whole neighbourhood kind of gathered around. And we had a great time. There was a very warm welcome and lots of food, lots of hospitality.

And one of the things that I think that I have learned from my Sikh friends is they always have time to welcome you into their home. They always have time to make room for one more person. If I'm door knocking, it's not infrequent that I have to turn away Sikh hospitality. And, Madam Speaker, I confess to this House that I have not always turned that hospitality away. Sometimes I have stayed a good long time and enjoyed every minute of it. And they're very gracious, hospitable people.

Madam Speaker, I've done business with Sikh people and found them very pleasant to work with in that capacity as well. In fact, when I was principal over at the King's School—no secret that's what I was doing before I was here—although it was a Christian school, we said we serve everybody; we'll serve

people from every faith, we'll serve people from any faith. And lots and lots of Sikhs came and were very, very appreciative of the school. And the school was very, very appreciative of their community, as well.

One of the values, as well, that I must commend the Sikh community for is they value education. And, you know, quite often students from that community were high achievers, took their studies seriously and did very well. And that is a commendation to that community. And I suspect that in the coming years, as is already the case, we will see a growing number of Sikh professionals influencing our city and our province.

Madam Speaker, I'm grateful to have friends who see the world from a different perspective than I do. I'm grateful to have friends who have experienced a very different life than I've experienced. And what makes our relationship particularly special is I kind of get the impression they feel the same way about me. Maybe that's just their graciousness, but I certainly feel loved and appreciated by them. I'm grateful for the Sikhs who have served on my campaigns or board or just who serve in the community.

I get my haircut by a Sikh person. I get our groceries at a Sikh person. I was at a restaurant last night—*[interjection]*—it's not a hard job, I'll admit that, but I tip well—I try to. So, Madam Speaker, our province is richer, our province is blessed, and I hope that we can welcome not only Sikhs, but people from every nation, people who have things to offer this province. Certainly, the Sikh community should put us at ease because when we welcome people, we are enriched by that experience. When we find—when we make a place in our province for them to come and find a new start and start businesses and raise their children, our province is enriched by that.

And if anybody would ever dare say to me that maybe we should be cautious about those kinds of things, I would be very quick to say, no, there are thousands and thousands of wonderful examples. And I would point to the Sikh community in that regard because in my experience, Madam Speaker, there has been only positive things that I've—that I have to say about this community.

Madam Speaker, the clock is almost over. I think I'll probably leave it there, but just to summarize, of course, on a personal level I support this bill. I know at a caucus level we're very pleased to be supporting this bill. But we don't look at it, really, as supporting legislation, though, of course, in this place at this

time, that's what we're doing. We're supporting our friends. We're supporting those who've helped us. We're supporting those to whom our hearts have a real connection.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Madam Speaker, I'm very pleased to put a few words on the record today about Bill 28, which will declare April as Sikh heritage month in Manitoba. I'm very pleased to see that it appears that this bill will complete third reading and be supported all-by all members of this House this afternoon. This bill, of course, will proclaim April as Sikh heritage month and it will recognize the fact that Manitoba is home to a large growing and vibrant Sikh community.

We know that Sikh-Canadians have made significant contributions to the growth and prosperity of our province and, indeed, all of Canada, both in their own right and also as just one more piece of the puzzle of our incredible multicultural society.

Now, we know the month of April is particularly meaningful for the Sikh community around the world, and that's why our leader and the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) and others have made it very clear that April's the right month. It is the month in which the Sikh community celebrates the creation of articles of faith as well as the values of humanity, tolerance and equality, and I can't think of anything better than that.

And I think every member of this House now accepts that a month to honour Sikh heritage and the creation of the Khalsa is an opportunity to remember and celebrate and educate future generations about Sikh-Canadians and the important role they've played and continue to play in communities across Manitoba.

Now, there are many reasons for the bill, and I really appreciate the fact that our leader, the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Knew), brought this forward. It's really about supporting our Sikh community, about supporting Sikh heritage, art and culture and the various organizations in Manitoba that promote and enhance Sikh social and cultural life.

And April now, from this day forward, will be a great opportunity to honour the history and contributions that Sikhs have made in Manitoba and the chance to celebrate, educate and reflect on Sikh-Canadian stories that acknowledge how these stories have shaped our province and our country.

Of course, everybody who isn't indigenous has an immigration story. For some of us, those immigration stories may be lost to time now. I wish, actually, when I was younger, that I'd spent more time talking with some of my older relatives to understand some of their stories—my mother's aunt, who was a war bride.

I spent most of my time trying to get my Uncle Reg [*phonetic*] to talk about his experiences in the war, which, like many World War II veterans, he didn't want to do, when, really, I probably would have got a lot more out of talking to my Aunt Eileen [*phonetic*], who was a war bride. And I could have learned about her immigration story, but I didn't and I regret that. I'm sure many members of this House regret the fact that they've lost the chance now to learn more about their own family's immigration story.

And so, when I talk to people in the community, when I go in and visit students in schools, I'm always happy to raise those kinds of stories and ask students whether they may happen to be Sikh-Canadian or Filipino-Canadian or African-Canadian. I ask them to tell us and their classmates about their own stories of coming to Canada. And, of course, being kids, many of them don't really remember much about before coming to Canada. Others are just incredibly practical.

You know, you ask them: So what was it like when you first arrived in Canada? And they said: Well, we came here, and my relatives met me at the airport, and we had a big dinner and then the next day I came here to Sargent Park School or to Clifton School or Wellington School. And, for them, it's just the way it is.

For their parents, who had to make the decision to pack up and leave home—in some cases, to sell all of their belongings, to sell property, to say goodbye, perhaps for a long time, perhaps forever to some friends and family, it's a lot—obviously, a lot more difficult, a lot more emotional for kids, the next generation here in Canada. Sometimes it's just the way it is.

And, for our Sikh-Canadian friends, of course, many of those families still have their immigration stories very, very vivid and very bright, and I hope that this bill will encourage Sikh Manitobans to share their stories. And sometimes the stories are happy and they will tell us about what it was like first arriving in Canada. Sometimes the stories may not be that happy, because we know that Sikhs have been

the subject of prejudice, of unfortunate events in the past and, unfortunately, still at present. And I hope, as well, that the proclamation of this bill will give those who maybe haven't had the happiest immigration story to still be prepared to share, to work and to make sure that we continue to move forward as a multicultural society.

*(16:20)

And, you know, Sikhs have suffered from discriminatory actions around the world and, unfortunately, Madam Speaker, even in Canada. And I think everybody in this House now knows the story of the Komagata Maru ship, which came to Vancouver in 1914. The ship carried 376 passengers, most of whom were Sikhs, with the rest being Muslims and Hindus.

And following the docking of that ship in Vancouver, well, the Canadian immigration policy was set up to prevent people of colour—especially people of colour from South Asia—from settling in Canada, and the ship was turned away. And it took 102 years for an apology to come from the Canadian government. I suppose better late than never, but, of course, 102 years later is a long time to wait.

And it reminds me, when I do go to visit schools—John M. King School, which is at Ellice and Agnes—they had their 100th anniversary a couple of years ago. So I talked to the students about what it must have been like 100 years ago, and I asked them, have you ever heard—had some old person tell you about the good old days? And all the kids kind of smiled and nodded. And I said, well, all right, let's go back 100 years and let's see if they really were the good old days.

And I would ask the kids three questions, and I would say, alright, I want you to put up your hand if you're indigenous. And, of course, at John M. King School, about a quarter of the kids put up their hand. And I said, did you know, 100 years ago, if you were indigenous, you didn't have the right to vote, you didn't have the right to run for office, you didn't have the right to be a lawyer or a doctor or an accountant or another professional and, as an indigenous person, you didn't even have the freedom to leave your reserve and to move about freely. Of course, many of the indigenous kids already knew that.

Then I asked kids how many of them were Asian—whether it was Filipino, Chinese, South Asian. And, of course, John M. King School, about another 70 per cent of the kids put up their hands.

And I said, did you know that 100 years ago, if you were of Asian heritage, you actually weren't real citizens either because, again, you weren't allowed to vote, you weren't allowed to run for office. You were also denied a lot of the things that we take for granted in our plural, multicultural society.

The third question I asked is, well, how many of you are girls—are women? And, of course, 52 per cent of people dutifully put up their hand. And we talked about what it was like for women 100 years ago. And, of course, Madam Speaker, you and I spent time on Sargent Avenue as they unveiled the mural to recognize the suffragettes and the tremendous involvement of West Enders. But we know that before that happened, women were, again, not permitted to enjoy all of the benefits of what we consider citizenship.

So I asked the students—I said, all right, how many of you have not raised your hand at least once? And in a school of about 400 students, there were about five boys who raised their hand who didn't follow—fall under any of those three categories. I put up my hand. My constituency assistant put up his hand. A couple of white, male teachers put up their hands. And, in all, in a gym with about 450 people, there were about 15 people at maximum that would have had full citizenship 100 years ago.

So I asked the classes again, do you really think those were the good old days?

And I was very proud of myself for having made this big point until an old white guy wanted to argue with me on the way up to the library to have a piece of cake and glass of punch. And he said, I'm not sure what you're telling those children, and he started in on women. He said, what do you mean about women not being citizens? And I said, well, over 100 years ago, women weren't allowed to vote, they weren't allowed to run for office, they were even not considered to be persons. And he said, well, I don't know what you're talking about. And I said, sir, the Persons Case was determined by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1929, and, until that time, women were not declared persons.

He then wanted to know why I was talking about some court in London, so I decided I was going to go back to my kids and stop talking to somebody who didn't want to learn.

So, definitely there are things that we can learn. We learn from the history, from the things that we did wrong, but we also embrace the things that we do

right. And I want to recognize our Sikh community here in Manitoba—a vibrant, exciting community. I'm glad that from this day forward, we'll be recognizing April in Manitoba as Sikh Heritage Month.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education and Training): Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words, particularly about Sikh heritage month, the bill brought forward by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew), but also more generally about today in the Legislature.

And I know, Madam Speaker, your office, I believe, still produces a video called a day in the life of the Legislature, and this would be one of those days, I think, that would be worthy of highlighting, maybe with the notable exception of question period, but that's often the case, Madam Speaker.

But, when you look at how this day has gone, I think it speaks well of all the members of this House. We began, of course, debating a private member's bill, as this is as well, Madam Speaker, and passing that bill and then later this afternoon passing another private member's bill, and this one will pass before the end of this day.

And private members' bills allow individual members who aren't members of the Cabinet to bring forward good ideas, and often those good ideas come from within their own community or the outreach work that they've done at various places or various events where individuals bring forward ideas, and those become the impetus for a private member's bill.

And not all private members' bills pass, of course. Probably a relatively small percentage do, but nonetheless an important percentage of the bills do pass, this being one of them and two others previously today. And it speaks of the good work of MLAs in working with constituents and working with Manitobans, and I think that all members who have brought forward bills today that are passing and, more generally, who bring forward bills even if they're not universally agreed with by members of the House should be proud of their efforts because it is an important part of what individual members in the Legislature do here.

Following the private member's bill this morning, we had, of course, had a resolution that is not exactly the same as this bill, but is a bit of an akin when we're celebrating a culture in Manitoba, that being the Filipino community. This bill is celebrating the Sikh community, and, certainly,

while I didn't have the opportunity to speak to the resolution this morning on celebrating the Filipino community and recognizing it, I certainly would like to spend a couple of minutes doing that now.

In my own community of Steinbach there's been a great deal of change over the last 15 years in particular when it comes to the growth of the community—significant growth, largely driven by immigration, and a significant portion of that immigration being the Filipino community. I've learned to truly appreciate the Filipinos who've come into Steinbach, many of them I call friends now. I've learnt a lot about their culture; I've learnt a lot about their hospitality, learnt a lot about their family nature.

The very first Filipino event that I was able to go to many years ago was a Filipino Christmas party, and it surprised me how they all sort of take care of each other when it comes to their kids in that particular hall, which is maybe a little bit foreign in the North American sense where we tend to not want to interfere with anybody else's children. But you could tell there was a real strong sense of community, and that continues on today in Steinbach. And I've appreciated learning from many of the—appreciated learning from many of my Filipino friends.

And I often say that in the city of Steinbach, when I grew up in that—in the community, if you wanted to see the world, you had to get on a plane and go see the world, and now the world has come to Steinbach, and it's really changed the environment that my son has grown up in. He has a far wider understanding of the world and of diversity and of ethnicity than I did simply because the nature of the community has changed significantly.

And so, in the K-to-4 school that he was at, they had—I believe it was in the gym—they had flags of all the different countries that are representatives of the home countries of the students in that school, and it was remarkable to look at that and see the diversity within. That was the Woodlawn School at the time when he was of that age. And so I know that he's been enriched by that tremendously.

When it comes to this bill in particular, and I'll give credit to the member for Maples who I know brought forward a similar bill earlier on and I know he brought forward a similar bill with all the right and good intentions to honour his community and those who were within it, so I give him credit as well, though it's not his bill that's passing.

He certainly had a role in ensuring that this bill is passed and I commend him for that.

* (16:30)

When it comes to the Sikh community, however, we have grown to get to know a number of those within the Sikh community. Again, for my son, it's been an important learning experience.

While I've not had the opportunity to travel to India, like the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield) was describing earlier, I have many friends who have. Recently, in fact, I was visiting with—having supper with Bev Penner, who's the widow of Jim Penner, a former MLA in this House, my predecessor, and she recently had visited India.

Jim had visited many times when he was involved with MEDA, the Mennonite Economic Development Association, and often wanted to take Bev. And so she didn't have the opportunity to go when he was alive, but she did go fairly recently.

And so we had a wonderful evening, sort of, going through the pictures that she had taken in India. And she really described it as a wonderful place and a real learning opportunity for her to be able to visit. And I know that's been the case for many of my friends.

Having not had the opportunity to go, my understanding of the Sikh community is more from those who are here within Manitoba, and that has been a learning experience to show the hospitality, the incredible hospitality. And that's not just true for the Sikh community. I see that more generally in the various cultures who've come to make Manitoba home; tremendously welcoming.

And I see that particularly, sometimes, with us as politicians, because there are many times when these individuals are coming from countries where their politicians aren't particularly accessible, and they don't see them within the community or they don't see them at events.

And so, not that Canadians necessarily take it for granted, but when you're growing up in the environment where politicians are expected to be at things and expected to be accessible, for those who are coming from countries where that isn't the experience, I think they particularly appreciate it when you attend.

I know that was true for the Filipino community early on. I had a Filipino visitor who was staying at a friend of mine's a couple of doors down on the street that I live, and he offered to bring them over to our home and my wife Kim and I hosted them.

And throughout the evening, they kept remarking how remarkable it was that, as an elected official, we lived in the community and weren't off in a, sort of, gated area, which I guess is often common in the Philippines and where politicians don't walk around without security and where they are generally not accessible.

And so they were quite amazed by that, and I think that that's true for a number of different cultures who are—and people who are coming from other places to Manitoba. So they appreciate that we're there, and then in turn, we appreciate learning from them.

And I think that this House, today, has demonstrated the best of members. I would be remiss if I didn't also mention, of course, the ceremony that we had at noon for the D-Day—recognition of the anniversary of D-Day and recognizing those who have given their lives for our country.

And, when you put that all together, when you look at it as the one-day mosaic of the Manitoba Legislature, from passing several private members' bills to recognizing the Filipino community in the resolution to honouring veterans in the Rotunda in that remarkable and dignified ceremony to now passing and recognizing the Sikh community, I think this is an exceptional day in the Manitoba Legislature and certainly is a credit to all members on all sides of the House.

And where we often get divided on issues, and we see that most notably in question period, there are many times, and unfortunately, it doesn't get the attention it often deserves, Madam Speaker, where members of this House agree on a significant number of issues. But as the media have often reminded me, we—they don't report when the planes land safely. They only report, unfortunately, when they crash.

But, in this instance, I think we have a great deal to be proud of in the Legislature today, in particular, for the Filipino community, for the Sikh community, we hope that this recognition shows to them that we appreciate greatly the contribution that they make to Manitoba, and the contribution that they make to our

individual lives, whether that is as MLAs or simply as people within the communities that we live.

We are made better by the diversity that they have brought and by the understanding that we have of the different experiences that they can then educate us about, and collectively, we all learn.

So I look forward to this bill passing, hopefully, at this point, and to see the continued good work of MLAs as they bring forward private members' bills as a result of the experiences that they're having within their own communities.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 228, The Sikh Heritage Month Act.

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

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, could you seek—could you canvass the House to see if it's the will of members to call it 5 o'clock.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 28, 2019

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS			
Members' Statements		Health-Care Reforms	
		Lamont	2182
		Friesen	2182
Lorne Henry		Hydro Power Sales	
Wishart	2175	Altemeyer	2184
		Squires	2184
TELUS Motorcycle Ride for Dad		Policing and Public Safety Strategy	
Lamoureux	2175	Guillemard	2185
		Cullen	2185
Concordia and Seven Oaks ERs		Gilbert Park Resident	
T. Marcelino	2176	Lamoureux	2185
		Fielding	2186
D-Day 75th Anniversary		Gilbert Park Residence	
Reyes	2176	Lamoureux	2186
		Fielding	2186
Mennonite Heritage Village–Russländer Exhibit		Manitoba Housing Units	
Goertzen	2177	T. Marcelino	2186
		Fielding	2186
Oral Questions		Petitions	
Seven Oaks Hospital		Daylight Saving Time	
B. Smith	2178	Graydon	2188
Friesen	2178	Early Learning and Child-Care Programs	
		Allum	2188
Manitoba Liquor Sales		Klassen	2189
Lindsey	2179	Gerrard	2189
Mayer	2179	Lindsey	2189
		Tina Fontaine–Public Inquiry	
Churchill Liquor Mart		Fontaine	2190
Lindsey	2179	Early Learning and Child-Care Programs	
Mayer	2179	F. Marcelino	2190
		Altemeyer	2191
Hydro Rate Increase		Lamoureux	2191
Lindsey	2180	T. Marcelino	2191
Mayer	2180	ACCESS Bursary Program	
		B. Smith	2192
City of Winnipeg Review		Concordia Hospital Emergency Room	
Swan	2180	Wiebe	2192
Mayer	2180		
Fielding	2181		
Hydro Transmission Line Project			
Fontaine	2181		
Goertzen	2181		

ORDERS OF THE DAY

(Continued)

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Concurrence and Third Readings—Public Bills

Bill 226—The Presumption of Death and Declaration of Absence Act and Amendments to The Insurance Act	
Micklefield	2193
Fontaine	2194
Lamoureux	2196
Bill 240—The Elections Amendment Act	
Guillemard	2197
Fontaine	2197
Gerrard	2198
Lamont	2199
Bill 228—The Sikh Heritage Month Act	
Wiebe	2200
Lamont	2202
A. Smith	2202
Saran	2203
Micklefield	2204
Swan	2206
Goertzen	2208

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>