

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

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

Vol. LXXV No. 40A - 10 a.m., Tuesday, March 23, 2021

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ADAMS, Danielle	Thompson	NDP
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Woleseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Cameron Friesen (Deputy Government House Leader): I'm canvassing the House to see if there's agreement to debate, this morning, Bill 221, The Public Health Amendment Act (Banning Cosmetic Eye Tattooing and Eye Jewellery) until 10:30, and Bill 222, The Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act, from 10:30 until 11 a.m.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider Bill 221 until 10:30 this morning and then will move on to Bill 222 from 10:30 to 11.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 221—The Public Health Amendment Act (Banning Cosmetic Eye Tattooing and Eye Jewellery)

Madam Speaker: So therefore, I will call second reading of Bill 221, The Public Health Amendment Act (Banning Cosmetic Eye Tattooing and Eye Jewellery).

Mr. Scott Johnston (Assiniboia): I move, seconded by the honourable member from Riding Mountain, that Bill 221, The Public Health Amendment Act (Banning Cosmetic Eye Tattooing and Eye Jewellery), now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Johnston: I'm pleased to bring this legislation forward to address a practice that endangers those jeopardizing their healthy by implementing sclera eye tattooing as well as implanting of eye jewellery. These

practices will lead to blindness, with total loss of vision as well as severe sense of 'morbidity'.

Madam Speaker, I bring forward this bill with a full—with the full support of the Manitoba Association of Optometrists as well as the full support of the Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, these two groups of Manitoba medical professionals have endorsed this bill. They developed a position paper to recommend that the practice of eye tattooing and the implantation of eye jewellery be banned in the province of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, these organizations are active in our province and have impeccable credentials. It is our government's position their concerns need to be taken seriously. The Manitoba optometrists' association has been guiding and consulting with Manitoba governments since 1909. The Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba also offer respected voices and consult with our Health Department on all eyesight issues. The associations have presented to our caucuses, both government and opposition. They are always reaching out and offering their services to the people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, according to the Manitoba Association of Optometrists and the Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, there needs to be action taken on this issue.

There is a growing trend among body modification enthusiasts to consider tattooing their eyeballs—specifically, their—the sclera—excuse me—of the eye, which is the white layer of the eyeball. There is also an option that's being presented to implant jewellery under the 'conjunctiva' of the eyeball. The conjunctiva is the tissue that lines the inside of the eyelid covering the sclera.

Madam Speaker, these are strictly cosmetic initiatives. This being done by untrained artists under questionable conditions that lead to serious complications. The Manitoba Association of Optometrists, as well as the Manitoba Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba, indicate that ocular and periocular injections should be done by a licensed medical professional due to the high risk of infection and, ultimately, blindness.

This bill does acknowledge that there may be a need for eye injection to address a medical need. The bill ensures only a health professional who is regulated under the health professions act and who complies with all applicable requirements established by their health organization can administer the medical procedure of eye injection.

Madam Speaker, scleral tattooing is a relatively new practice. It was first described in 2007. Since then, the risk and complications of this unsafe procedure have come to light. The process of scleral tattooing injects a dye, which has—may have questionable ingredients, between the 'conjunctiva' and the scleral layers of the eye. The thickness of these two layers combined is less than one millimetre, making it incredibly risky and a challenging procedure. It should be done by a trained health professional, and only when it is required under serious circumstances.

The other cosmetic process is implanting eye jewellery. This is the—this is an—extremely dangerous, as the incision is made in the 'conjunctiva' overlaying the 'sclera'. The small flat shape is inserted between the two layers: a totally unaccepted practice, Madam Speaker.

These unnecessary initiatives are being brought to our attention by our eye-care professionals—excuse me. They recognize these acts are being done by untrained individuals who do not have the knowledge of the eye's delicate anatomy. The complications from scleral tattooing include chronic inflammation and migration of dyes into the eye, causing potential damage to the retina.

Madam Speaker, according to our eye health professionals, penetration of the eye with a dye contained in a needle can cause sight-threatening complications such as cataracts, retinal detachments, hemorrhages and as well contributing to glaucoma. Many of these eyes also develop untreatable infections inside the eye.

* (10:10)

Madam Speaker, Manitoba has had to deal with the influx of complications—or has not had to deal with the influx of complications due to eye tattooing and eye implants of jewellery as of yet. The Manitoba optometrists' association and The Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba are indicating a proactive approach to ensure future prevention.

These are—there are examples of eye tattooing—excuse me—eye tattooing and jewellery implanting in other provinces.

Ontario was the first to pass legislation to ban the practice of eye tattooing and eye implants. In 2017, an Ottawa woman got 'scler' tattoos from a local artist. Shortly after, she experienced excruciating pain and is suffering long-term complications. The troubling situation is, Ontario authorities were able to determine the Ottawa artist had performed over 20 other eye tattoos.

In 2017, an Alberta man had to have an eye removed because of bacterial contamination from an eye tattoo.

In 2018, a Nova Scotia woman and a Nova Scotia man both underwent eye 'surgery' because of eye tattoos. Both lost sight in the affected eyes.

Saskatchewan has now passed legislation banning eye tattoos and eye jewellery implants. Alberta and Nova Scotia have legislation under consideration. Manitoba Bill 221 mirrors the bills passed in both Ontario and Saskatchewan.

As I indicated, Bill 221 is endorsed by both the Manitoba optometrists' association as well as The Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba. I've also reached out to Health Manitoba, who also endorsed the merit of Bill 221.

We've reached out to some of the larger tattoo artists in Winnipeg. They were supportive of the ban. They indicated they did not perform eye tattoos or jewellery implants. They have no intentions of performing these initiatives, as they understand the dangers of these practices. Those were major tattoo artists in Winnipeg.

Bill 221 will also eliminate the demands on our health-care professionals having to deal with the ramifications of such unnecessary threats to the safety of Manitobans.

It is our intention to work with the Manitoba optometrists' association as well as the Manitoba tattoo industry to get the message out that this practice has been banned by law in Manitoba, should this bill pass.

Madam Speaker, the threat of increased eye tattoo and eye jewellery implants sometimes have roots in initiations as well as underground fads, which can create unpredicted demand. Bill 221 will deter execution, should those demands arise.

I wish to thank the organizations we have reached out to to assist in the development of this bill. I would recognize the Manitoba optometrists' association, who continue to advocate on behalf of Manitoba eye care. I had the good fortune of liaising with Tanya Dillon, past president, and her executive. Ms. Dillon also indicates that her association will be appearing at committee to support Bill 221, should it go through.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am happy to take any questions.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I know that the member noted that he had spoken with—or reached out to major tattoo artists. Can he provide a list of what, and—because I don't know what constitutes a major tattoo artist here in Manitoba, would he provide a list of the names?

Mr. Scott Johnston (Assiniboia): I'd be happy to provide the names of the organizations that reached out. I will forward that to the member. I don't have it in front of me; it was our staff that did it on my behalf.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights?

The member needs to unmute.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): There we go.

To the member: there clearly have been some major adverse effects.

Does the member have statistics to know what proportion of such eye tattoos have negative effects?

Mr. Johnston: I don't have that exact data. This initiative was brought forward by a request of the Manitoban optometrists' association as well as the physician—eye surgeons and physicians of Manitoba. They indicate that their study of this particular issue has warranted that this bill come forward and it was their recommendation that we're proceeding on.

Ms. Fontaine: And so, I guess, kind of similar to the member for River Heights' question: who was asking the member about those that have come forward or the

statistics on adverse effects—I—the—connected to that would be, would the member have the numbers of Manitobans that are actually getting this procedure?

Because it doesn't seem like there's a heck of a lot of Manitobans that are trying to tattoo their eyeballs, so I am curious.

Mr. Johnston: That is a valid question, and that was one of the—certainly, the issues that I deliberated on before bringing forward this bill. And I think the numbers, as the member sort of suggests, are limited. I don't think that that can be argued. This is a pre-emptive initiative that ensures that Manitobans don't suffer the same situations that have occurred in other provinces.

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): Can the member discuss how this bill would reduce long-term strain on our health-care system?

Mr. Johnston: Definitely. The situations that occur based on complications from these initiatives do put—or, have the potential of putting strain on our health-care system. These are purely a cosmetic initiative, and should the situation occur that complications do arise, they become quite complicated and would certainly take up a great deal of time and focus of some of our medical professionals who would have to deal with this.

Ms. Fontaine: I get that the member is, in his own words, trying to be proactive in respect of this procedure in talking about the strain on the medical system, but I am wondering and asking whether or not he knows of any cases in Manitoba that have actually borne consequences on the medical health—or, the health care of Manitoba.

Mr. Johnston: I have no personal knowledge of a particular incident or a particular situation that has existed in Manitoba due to this. As I'd indicated to members, the rationale of bringing this forward is to be proactive in ensuring that, should these circumstances exist in the future, that we took a proactive position to eliminate it.

Again, the professionals within the eye medical structuring have indicated that this is a concern of theirs—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye): I would like to commend the member for Assiniboia for bringing this proactive bill forward.

And I know it's always very important for us to know: who has been consulted on this bill?

* (10:20)

Mr. Johnston: I thank the member for the question, Madam Speaker.

And I can't emphasize enough that the Manitoba Association of Optometrists as well as the Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba were both discussed in regards to this initiative being brought forward. It was based on their recommendations. And as well, our own Health Department was also, too, asked whether or not they feel that there was merit in this bill; which they indicated there was.

And as I indicated, there was some discussion with some of the—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Ms. Fontaine: I would ask the member how he would square the right of Manitobans to decide what they do with and to their bodies with legislating away the right to choose whether or not individuals tattoo their eye or get eye jewellery?

How does he square those two pieces?

Mr. Johnston: Again, that's a good question and a fair question.

I looked at it from the perspective of being an overall safety issue for the people of Manitoba. There may be those who initiate this type of procedure who are very aware of the complications and decide to proceed anyway. However, there, in all likelihood, were a number of individuals who would proceed with this who may not necessarily be aware of all the complications and all of the danger that exists. So this bill is really put forward to protect those individuals.

And frankly—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley): Can my good friend, the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Johnston), elaborate on how this bill looks to ensure the safety and well-being of all Manitobans?

Mr. Johnston: I thank my colleague and my friend from Waverley for the question.

As indicated in my presentation, there are some very, very serious complications that result from these types of initiatives. And, you know, the fact that this can potentially cause blindness as well as other very

serious complications—this bill is set to really protect Manitobans and allow those situations not to occur.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions?

Debate

Madam Speaker: If there are no further questions, then we will move onto debate.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm just going to put a couple of words on the record. I know we don't have a heck of a lot of time this morning to debate Bill 221.

I will say I understand the member's perspective in bringing forward Bill 221 in the context of being proactive. However, I would question—I did ask the member how he squares the right of individuals to choose what they do with their bodies, and in this case, we're discussing tattooing eyeballs of the implantation of eye jewellery. So how you square an individual's right to choose what they do with their body with this legislation that would actually legislate the rights of that away to do that work.

And I know the member said that, you know, some folks don't know all of the risks. I'm not sure if that's entirely true. I mean, you know, folks that would, you know, look to tattoo their eyeball probably have done significant research and have concluded that, despite the risks that have been laid out—because if you google tattooing your eyeball, you can see all of the consequences that can happen.

And so I would submit to the House that individuals that are considering that probably have done the research but are still choosing to do that to themselves and to their body. And so I don't necessarily buy that argument from the member.

And I think it's a very slippery slope when we get into the business of legislating what people do with their bodies, and, you know, I think we can, you know, infer in that in respect of some of the discussion on abortion and what Manitobans or Canadians or folks in general do choose to do with their body. And so I think it's a fine line here.

I will just say a couple of things. So I thought that eye tattooing is, like—and if you haven't had a tattoo, tattoos are little needles that go into your skin and release ink into your skin that's permanent for as long as you're around—but actually, this is a needle that is injected into your eyeball that has dye. And so it's not literally tattooing your eyeball.

Both make me very queasy. The thought of doing that is very queasy, and I will share that I love tattoos. I've been getting tattoos since, holy heck, I don't know, probably 1997. And so I'm all for body modification. I wouldn't do eye tattooing. It's not something that I would do, but I can see why some people would choose that.

I just want to use this quick opportunity in the remainder of the couple of minutes that I have left to shout out and to just acknowledge the impact of COVID and the impact that COVID has had on the tattooing industry in Manitoba.

As we know, tattoo parlours have been closed for a good chunk of the year while we've all navigated COVID-19 and the different health code restrictions that we have, and I know that a lot of tattoo businesses and artists have really suffered in the midst of this.

And so I do want to just take this quick moment to recognize that in this House. I recognize that folks were not necessarily always supported in the way that they needed to be. I want to acknowledge—in St. John's—Phil McClellan, who owns Parlor Tattoos—that's on Main Street. I know that, you know, I had reached out to him and he was really struggling, as were a lot of tattoo folks. And so I want to acknowledge that struggle and acknowledge what they've gone through in the last year.

I also want to take a moment to acknowledge Abby with Living Canvas Tattoo. Abby is actually my tattoo artist. I've been seeing Abby since 2006. I actually just saw her on Saturday as she finished up my latest tattoo.

I want to acknowledge her in this House because she is a small-business owner. She is a woman entrepreneur. She has employees and staff. And Living Canvas Tattoo, when you go in there, you feel safe and secure in the service that you're about to get because she takes such good care of her business and of all of her clients, and hence why I've been seeing her since 2006.

I just want to acknowledge her as well. I've spent many hours as she's been tattooing and, you know, discussing the impacts that COVID has had, or even just discussing some of the issues that she, as a woman business owner, goes through.

So I just wanted to take that opportunity to acknowledge all of that, to lift up and to say that I do suspect that we need more debate on this bill before we can understand whether or not we should pass this to second reading because, Madam Speaker, as the

member did share, we don't really have a heck of a lot of Manitobans that are trying to tattoo their eyeballs.

And we certainly don't have—as far as we know—any cases where Manitobans have lost their eyes. I'm not saying that there're not risks. Absolutely. But I think, as I said earlier, it's a slippery slope in respect of legislating what people can do with their body.

Miigwech.

* (10:30)

Madam Speaker: The hour now being 10:30 and, as was announced earlier—oh—the debate on this bill will remain open.

So, the debate on Bill 221 will remain open.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 222—The Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: And, as was earlier indicated, we will move on now to debate on second reading of Bill 222, The Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act, which is standing in the name of the honourable member for Union Station, who has nine minutes remaining.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Thank you to my colleagues for that supportive gesture as I—just a wonderful, supportive applause as I go into my previous debate.

I believe I had put a few comments on the record in regards to the member for—I believe it's Radisson—Radisson (Mr. Teitsma), who brought this bill forward, and some of the comments that he had made in regards to this bill. And I didn't quite finish those comments, and I want to make sure that I do get those words on the record.

So where I left off was expressing some concern that I had, that my colleague, my esteemed colleague, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) asked some very basic questions, put forward some very basic questions to the member for Radisson that he was unable to answer. I don't think that he was unwilling; I really do think he was just unable to answer those very basic questions, Madam Speaker, which is concerning, given the significance of the bill that he brought forward.

I think it really speaks to sort of the mentality that maybe that member has in regards to unions, when

you bring forward a piece of legislation that you can't even answer very basic questions about when asked by somebody who has a wealth of knowledge in regards to unions, and gives you multiple opportunities to do so.

I also think it's really important to reflect on this government's very recent history in regards to the relationships with unions when we talk about a piece of legislation like this. When the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) makes comments that they're trying to enhance transparency and accountability, the member must understand that, by his own government's history and pattern and track record when it comes to the relationships they fail to build and establish with workers and unions, that no one's actually going to believe that member when he makes statements like that.

And it really—when you position those two things, this government's history in terms of how they've treated workers, and I'll keep bringing it back to workers because the member did make a comment that we need to, on this side of the House, make sure that we're advocating for all Manitobans, and we do. And so I want to talk about the importance of reflecting on this government's poor treatment of workers across the board here in the province, including the over 100,000 public sector workers that this government has refused to collectively bargain with and has frozen, illegally, their wages for many years now.

And so I will go back to Bill 28 being struck down in the courts here in Manitoba because I think that that's something that we have to—it's very much in recent memory, but we have to be able to look at as a good, clear example of how this government values, or rather devalues, workers and the unions that work on their behalf.

So I'm just going to read off some comments in regards to that unconstitutional piece of legislation that was struck down in court here in Manitoba. And these comments are from the judge. And I think it's disappointing that during a pandemic, during this global pandemic, where so many workers are being impacted, that instead of this government working hard to bring forward legislation and resources that would support those workers—especially workers that we know have been disproportionately impacted: Black, Indigenous and workers of colour, women, LGBTQ folks in the workforce—instead, this government brings forward legislation that simply interferes

with the ability for unions to better support the workers that they represent.

And so I'm going to just read some of the notes here from the esteemed judge that presided over the court case regarding Bill 28. And the few comments that really, really stood out to me were basically this judge outlining the fact that—well, slammed, actually, the government's approach as an entirely—a violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

And she said, and I quote: The overall impact of the legislation on a process of collective bargaining rises to the level of substantial interference. The legislation circumvents and compresses the leverage of bargaining power available and inhibits the union's ability to trade off monetary benefits for non-monetary enhancements.

This is a piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, that was described as being draconian. That's a pretty strong word. That's pretty strong language, but again, I think what it really speaks to is this government's approach. And it's important for us to recognize that we see these kinds of pieces of legislation brought forward after Bill 28 was struck down in court.

This government—instead of doing the right thing and trying to repair the relationships it's damaged with workers and unions—instead chooses to be petty, instead chooses to dig in their heels even further and continue to make it more difficult for workers to have their rights upheld and fully respected while they continue to serve Manitobans during this pandemic.

The government had a unique opportunity before it during this pandemic to rise to the level that Manitoban workers have; to make right so many of their wrongs before this pandemic, so many of the ways they've mistreated Manitoba workers. And instead, this government has continued to choose to do the opposite.

And, Madam Speaker, that clearly outlines and indicates to Manitobans—and I know that members opposite are well—I'm sure they're hearing from their own constituents; I'm hearing from many of their own constituents—that Manitobans are not happy about this. Manitobans are paying attention. Manitoban workers recognize that what this government is doing and is attempting to do—to do is wrong. And they're not standing for it, and on this side of the House, neither will we.

And so I just want to make clear that, you know, it's disappointing that—instead of this government putting forward legislation that really does support

workers, Madam Speaker, that really does work to build an enhanced, collaborative, effective relationship with union leaders and unions to ensure that the rights of Manitoban workers are protected and upheld and have longevity well beyond this pandemic—this government continues to do what it has always done, and it's fail workers, it's fail Manitobans.

And that is wholeheartedly disappointing that in the midst of a global pandemic when Manitoban workers are going above and beyond, public servants are—many of which, thousands of which they've—they fired during this pandemic—but public sector workers who go above and beyond, and have found creative ways to adapt and continue to show up on behalf of Manitobans, that this government just chooses to stay their harmful course and, unfortunately, in the process, leave Manitoban workers behind.

So with that I'm going to conclude my comments. I look forward to hearing from other folks in terms of their thoughts on Bill 222, and I would encourage the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) to really reflect on how he can in future bring forward legislation that actually really centres workers and doesn't centre this government's petty agenda to undermine and harm unions.

Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière): It is an honour to rise today, virtually, to put some facts on the record regarding Bill 222, The Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act. It is also an opportunity to highlight what a great initiative this is for improving transparency and accountability. And I thank the member from Radisson for introducing this important and necessary legislation.

* (10:40)

With the recent arrival of spring, the warm weather, the approaching summer season and the continuous vaccine rollout, there is much reason for optimism. And to add to this optimism, I was quite happy to see Bill 222 be tabled in the Legislature, as it is a step in the right direction, a step towards more transparent and a more level playing field.

To get a better handle on the importance of a level playing field, let's take a trip down memory lane. The NDP, in 1999, promised in their election campaign to eliminate corporate and union donations. Gary Doer, in fact, was quoted at the time saying, I think there'll be more of a playing field than there is right now; that being of course after they introduced their legislation.

Early in the mandate, and I believe that was in the year 2000, the NDP set out to introduce major changes to election laws in the province. This included a ban on union and corporate donations. Now, it was argued at the time that this would level the playing field. Eliminating both corporate and union donations seemed like a balanced approach, but if you look further at the details, you'll see there's more to that story.

A Globe and Mail article in 2000 by David Roberts, although he didn't oppose the move, he did note there is imbalance in this legislation. At the time, union monetary donations made up a paltry 17.4 per cent of union donations. So it turns out that legislation, although it was supposed to level the playing field, if looking at it at first blush, it did not impact the NDP party nearly as much as it was touted by the government of that day.

It turns out, union participation for the NDP goes well beyond financial compensation, and when it comes to financial compensation, we know the NDP could've just, at that time, relied on the tax subsidy for that. Union leadership, of course, as we know, is actively involved in the NDP leadership campaign and have incredible amount of say on who the next NDP leader will be.

In other words, the legislation of the time, introduced by the Doer government, had little effect on their bottom line.

A number of years later in 2008, the same NDP government passed The Lobbyists Registration Act, or LRA. After a four-year delay, the LRA received royal assent. Now this LRA, or Lobbyists Registration Act, is a bare-bones registry and has many deficiencies.

For instance, there is no ability for the registrar to investigate alleged breaches of the registry, and as of 2015, there had been no charges laid under the act, and few Manitobans are aware of the protection this legislation was supposed to create for them.

Attempts to level the playing field under the previous government came up short, and I believe if the NDP are serious about leveling the playing field, they should then support this legislation proposed by the member for Radisson.

Today's bill will make sure that the public knows the groups that are lobbying and influencing elected officials, the very same elected officials that represent their communities, the very same elected officials that knock on the doors come election time and ask for

their support and the very same elected officials who are joining us this morning in the Chamber or virtually.

I encourage all MLAs to support Bill 222 that will make changes to strengthen The Lobbyists Registration Act in order to further Manitobans' access to a fair and equal lobbying process in the province.

After all, it would be nice to know when and what topics are discussed when groups such as unions and union leadership meet with MLAs from this Chamber. Are these meetings influencing party policies, and by extension affecting government policy? Well, at this point, we don't know. What we do know is that this information would've been helpful during the 17 years of NDP government. How many times was the NDP government of the day influenced by union leadership? With this new legislation, it'll bring clarity—or bring clarity to what's going on behind closed doors.

Given the weakness of this act, there is little information on the Lobbyists Registry. For instance, the Manitoba Nurses Union is registered with only one meeting listed, while CUPE, Unifor, and IBEW are not registered. This implies that these unions have not met with any public officers or they didn't register it.

Now, I highly doubt that NDP MLAs have not met with any of these unions. In fact, I would fully expect them to meet with these unions, and—which is fine. But with this legislation, those meetings would have been registered and available to the public, creating more transparency.

With the proposed changes, union members will now have better access to the information about how and what interests their organizations are trying to achieve. The Manitoba Federation of Labour is registered as a lobbyist and their members and stakeholders have access to which public officials they are meeting with and on what issues they are trying to influence.

Now, let me be clear, there's nothing wrong with lobbying or meeting with elected officials. It happens quite frequently—I'd say, if not on a daily basis, almost a daily basis. So this bill will not affect any group's ability to lobby, but it will increase the transparency to the public about who they are—being the union leadership—are meeting with, and what topics are being discussed.

Currently, The Lobbyists Registration Act states that charitable and non-profit organizations are

required to register their in-house lobbyists—or, not, rather, required to register their in-house lobbyists unless the organization serves employer, union or professional interests, or the interest of for-profit organizations.

The changes in this bill will make public reporting stricter, in order to ensure that the public is informed of how public officials are contacted and on what issues. The public has a right to know if an organization is influencing decisions that affect government policy and how taxpayers' money is spent.

How many times did the previous NDP Cabinet meet with Unifor? How many times did the NDP meet with CUPE or IBEW? The problem is, we just don't know. And that has to change.

With the passage of this legislation, meetings will be above-board and transparent. Therefore, union members and all Manitobans will know who's influencing the decisions of the elected officials that they vote for and whose salaries they pay.

I have family members who are members of unions, and they are shocked to find out how much of a role that union and union leadership play in selecting the leadership of the NDP. These same family members are also astonished by the number of emails they receive telling them how they should vote for a certain political party or a political candidate in a general election.

With this level of political activism by a group such as unions, it is clear that union leadership has a political agenda. And having political views and a political agenda is not uncommon for any organization. However, again, their meetings with elected officials should then be on the public record. This benefits union membership and the public at large.

Manitobans expect transparency and accountability, and that is what this bill does. It creates a level playing field for groups that lobby the provincial government. Why should one be expected to register as a lobbyist while another does not?

When organizations are afforded access to elected officials, they should be upfront and transparent about their intentions.

Now, in the spirit of optimism and delivering for the interests of all Manitobans, I encourage all members of this House to support this legislation. Whether you're on our side of the House, the Liberal

or the NDP, all MLAs have the House—in this House have the responsibility to our constituents and to all Manitobans to improve transparency and accountability.

And with that, Madam Speaker, I will allow other colleagues to speak to this important piece of legislation.

Thank you.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for calling on me, allowing me to put a few words on the record on this bill brought forward by the member from Radisson.

* (10:50)

You know, with this particular bill, this is yet another bill brought forward by this government that is a direct attack not only on workers, but now, as, you know, being a member of this House, I noticed that there's been a direct attack on teachers. It started first with Bill 16, where union membership can now be divided, conquered; you can decide who's in, who's out.

Then you have Bill 45; again, another direct attack on Manitoba teachers where we invoke this ability to pay in an arbitration process that is supposed to be free and unencumbered by bias. And an ability to pay clause, which only introduces bias, greatly hampers an arbitrations board and ability to deliver agreements that are free, fair and balanced.

And then you add the hit of Bill 64, which has the imprint of Bill 16, with the removal of principals and vice-principals—yet again, another divide and conquer strategy. That is long and true with governments of this ilk that see the organization of people into unions to advocate for workers, to advocate for their membership, as something that needs to be divided, demonized and devalued. That is something that is the antithesis of what it means to be a citizen of this province, and people are now beginning to see what the true and real agenda of this government is.

The member from Lagimodière wanted to take us down memory lane. Well, allow me that same course. I will take people down memory lane.

I would like people to recall back in May of 1996, during the previous Filmon government, when Manitoba teachers at their annual general meeting were faced with the same kind of legislation teachers are facing now, where we're instituting this ability to pay, decided to leave their AGM and march down to the Legislature and expressed their views directly to

the minister at that time, asking for the important piece of fairness.

And clearly, the clear message that was being undertaken in that protest was one where, as Manitobans, we understand the need to have a free, fair, open process. And clearly with legislation like bills 16, 45 and now Bill 222, that is not what is happening.

Manitobans negotiate collective agreements with government, expect that those negotiations are done in good faith. What Bill 222 would do is force union reps to register as lobbyists for doing standard things like negotiating on behalf of their membership. These are longstanding traditions that have been in place in a free and civil society for hundred—over 100 years. And what this bill does is add an unnecessary level of bureaucracy for workers who are simply doing their jobs as representatives.

For a government that touts that it likes to cut the red tape, I will tell you the red tape is spread for miles and unfurled for miles when it comes to unions and how unions do their business. And this only adds to the unnecessary distraction that many of our workers will have to deal with—not only distractions, but also the unnecessary burdens put in place by this government to, again, distract, deflect and impede the work of a collective unit.

And, again, what ends up happening is that when you create these new hoops for unions to jump through, they are—again, become distracted and then unable to properly advocate and see what this government is doing in other areas that are of concern.

So, what the Manitoba Lobbyist Registrar defines lobbying as is a legitimate activity in a free democratic society. And it says: the act defines lobby as the mean to—relation to a consultant or lobbyist or an in-house lobbyist to communicate with a public official in attempt to influence. What this bill doesn't currently include is the administering or negotiating of a collective agreement with government or government agency, or representing a unionized employee in a government or government agency again.

And so, what we have, then, is legislation that doesn't support workers, that doesn't come out in a spirit of consultation or any kind of collaboration. Instead, what it does is that it tears down relationships in a midst of a pandemic when, instead of tearing down these relationships, governments need to be reinforcing the good pieces that need to continue so that people feel supported, feel valued, and feel like

they're part of a team that is creating a better province for not only people that work for others, but also for those that require the most support.

So those—with those few words, Madam Speaker, I will conclude my remarks.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further speakers on debate?

Is the honourable member for Waverley speaking to this?

The honourable member for River Heights?

Oh, the honourable member for Waverley.

Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to put a few words on the record on Bill 222, The Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act.

For those who—people who don't know who are listening, what is lobbying? And I'll explain, briefly. Lobbying is when there's peaceful written or oral communication in hopes of attempting to obtain the good will of a member or employee of legislation. It is a lawful—it is a lawful attempt to influence the actions, policies, or decisions of a government officials, most often with the legislation of—or members of regulatory agencies.

So, Madam Speaker, how does this change or affect Bill 222? Right now, with Manitoba, there's no means of transparency to Manitobans of how lobbyists are trying to influence the government. That's what my colleague from Lagimodière had mentioned.

I also want to mention that the NDP destroyed democracy throughout their decade through these long shenanigans. Good governments make the decisions necessary to ensure the protection of substantial quality services for their citizens to bring back democracy in the province. We are a good government. We are trying to undo the damage of the NDP's—what the NDP created.

So, Madam Speaker, I just want to also say that transparency is key with Bill 222, which is important to our government and why our government supports this legislation that was put forward by the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma).

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights.

The member for River Heights needs to—

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, I am here.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Gerrard: Madam Speaker, just a few words on the record here.

One of the concerns that has been raised, and I think legitimately, is the difference between lobbying and negotiating and dealing with bargaining situations. And this is something that the member who put this bill forward, for Radisson, has not actually clarified and I think is an outstanding issue which really needs to be dealt with. And that issue is whether any and all communications with lobbyists, with union members, with union leaders, in particular, would need to be required that the union leaders register.

I note that the Manitoba Teachers' Society—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 15—Commending the Provincial Vaccine Rollout Staff and Volunteers

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on commending the provincial vaccine rollout staff and volunteers, brought forward by the honourable member for McPhillips.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): Good morning, Madam Speaker. I move, seconded by the honourable member for Lagimodière (Mr. Smith),

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has always been committed to protecting vulnerable citizens and those most at risk; and

WHEREAS the best long term defensive strategy against COVID-19 is vaccination; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has established the Vaccine Implementation Task Force, which harnesses medical and logistics expertise from across government departments to manage the largest vaccination campaign in the province's history; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is delivering the vaccine to Manitobans via a multipronged approach, including Focused Immunization Teams and vaccine supersites in locations across the province; and

WHEREAS future plans include mobile and pop-up vaccination sites in communities throughout the province, as well as vaccination through doctors' offices and pharmacies when more vaccine supplies become available; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has recruited health care professionals from across Manitoba who have offered their time and expertise to take part in this historic immunization campaign; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government prioritized the most vulnerable citizens living in personal care homes, and had administered second doses to all eligible and consenting personal care home residents by the end of February; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government recognizes the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on First Nations Manitobans, and is working in partnership with First Nations leaders to ensure that vaccine planning and distribution meets the needs of First Nations communities; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is preparing to make the vaccine available to all Manitobans when adequate vaccine supply is made available by the Federal Government.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the efforts of the medical and logistics professionals working on the Vaccine Implementation Task Force, the health-care professionals who have volunteered as immunizers and all those front-line workers whose perseverance and courage have carried Manitobans through these unprecedented times.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin), seconded by the honourable member for Lagimodière (Mr. Smith),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the efforts of the medical and logistics professionals

working on the Vaccine Implementation Task Force, the health-care professionals who have volunteered as immunizers and all those front-line workers whose perseverance and courage have carried Manitobans through this unprecedented time.

Mr. Martin: Good morning, Madam Speaker. It is always a pleasure to be with you, even if it is virtually, and I, like many of our colleagues, look forward to that opportunity, hopefully, in the not-too-distant future, where we can have these conversations face to face, and I think that will help mitigate and minimize what has often become the partisan rhetoric that overcomes private member's business.

So it is my hope that members opposite take a look at this resolution, take a look at therefore be it resolved, and recognize that this is, indeed, a resolution that is exclusively in its conclusion recognizing the Vaccine Implementation Task Force and all those individuals as part of it.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

So I have no doubt that members opposite will want to use this as an opportunity to shout at the—shout and shake their fists at the clouds, but maybe let's take an opportunity to instead talk about—and talk about the hope that Manitobans have and that many members in our community have as they come out of this, you know, slowly come out of this year-long pandemic.

I think what Manitobans are asking for from us—and it's a reasonable ask—is to put aside our partisan nature and come together and support our medical and logistic professionals that are working on the Vaccine Implementation Task Force.

Now, the first thing I think that—I think is worth mentioning and is important to put on the record is that reminder that regardless of the efforts of the Vaccine Implementation Task Force committee and all the professionals involved, both paid and volunteer, they are only as good as we Manitobans in following the fundamentals.

And it is our need to follow the fundamentals—whether it's washing one's hands, whether it's wearing a mask or whether it's ensuring proper physical distancing—because by keeping those numbers down, and we have seen that over the last number of weeks, that below—that consistency of below 100. We're not out of the woods yet but, you know, collectively together, we can make sure that we are not overwhelming those individuals.

It's also, you know, the important part of any of these discussions and is—sometimes we need to move away, you know, from the political notes that are put in front of us in full, you know, appreciation for the staff that put together these notes for us to keep our thoughts on track. But it's important sometimes to reflect on our own personal circumstances.

And before I do that, one issue that has really touched me, and I have no doubt that it's touched a lot of us as elected officials, and that is the Colorado shooting that we saw yesterday, and the 10 dead from that, really on the heels of the Atlanta shooting, which we saw some eight people dead, including six Asian women. So just on a very small aside, my heart, my condolences go out to the families and the survivors of that violence that we're seeing south of the border.

You know, the timing of this resolution couldn't have been better for myself in that just actually this past weekend most of us saw that it was a beautiful weekend, wind notwithstanding, and we had an opportunity to engage and visit with individuals that we haven't seen in quite some time.

So in my case, I've got some pseudo-parents, Timo and Shirley, that I've known for some 25 years. And so myself and my kids went and attended their backyard. Now, these individuals are now in their early 70s, they are diabetic, and, unfortunately, Timo recently actually fell down the stairs and broke his ankle. But, you know what, notwithstanding the joy in, you know, distantly seeing each other, there was a joy in knowing that their vaccine appointments had been set.

And so being the good, you know, the good adopted son that I can be, I told them that they'll let me know and I will make sure that I drive them to the Convention Centre, obviously, because Timo is confined to a wheelchair.

But the light of these two individuals, knowing that in a matter of just a couple weeks they will get their first vaccination. And for them, they may—their life may be coming to more normalcy and they may have an opportunity to see their granddaughter for the first time since, I believe, last year.

We see every day the impact and the necessity of vaccines. And one of the obvious and the observations that the opposition will make, and, indeed, people make, is, you know, there simply isn't enough needles being jabbed into the arms. You know what, and from a layman's point of view, it is—and the, you know, the

armchair-quarterback point of view, it's easy to make and have that observation, but it is not true.

For my colleagues, you know, it's important when we do this we are—that we are well read and to do some research. I had an opportunity to do some reading previous to this morning's resolution from Stephen Gordon—or sorry, from Stephen Gordon, who is an economist, an economic professor at the university of Laval in Quebec.

And he noted that the binding and strain on the rate of vaccination in Canada right now is supply. Provinces are sitting on about two to five days worth of vaccine, and it's hard; it's very, very hard to argue that the Province could or should push that even lower.

If you haven't already guessed, mass vaccination is a massive administrative undertaking. And in order for the bureaucracy to function properly, it needs to be able to plan on a steady rollout. Staffing vaccination clinics is not a matter of calling on manpower and saying, you know, we need 150 people to administrate—administer vaccines today and another 150 people to handle the paperwork and crowd control.

The provinces receive shipments in big, sporadic bursts. They have, quite rightly, set up systems that administer vaccines at a smooth, predictable rates. And when those sporadic systems get bigger, then yes, we can expect the rate of which they administer to accelerate, but not before then. If and when the provinces are sitting on inventories that can be measured in weeks of supply, then absolutely, go ahead and jump on them. But for now, they're doing what makes sense, doing the best with what they've been given.

And that's just one perspective, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And again, I'm not an economics professor at Laval, but I will give the economics professor his due and his perspective. And I know that it's not the only perspective on the success of the rollout that we've had here in Manitoba.

* (11:10)

I know that Maclean's magazine recently noted that Manitoba is second only to—I believe it is one of the Maritime provinces may be ahead of us, but we are second in Canada. But that simply isn't good enough, and I think I and my colleagues—all colleagues—will be cognizant of that, that we need to, as individuals, make sure that we're standing up as spokespersons for the vaccine.

Not only are we supporting the volunteers and the medical and logistics professionals working on the Vaccine Implementation Task Force, but we also have to show through our own taking the vaccine, the efficacy and the ability of the vaccine to ward off coronavirus-19.

So while I'm thrilled that the NDP's—their boss has said that he won't—he will do his job and not heckle the Premier (Mr. Pallister) should he get a shot on camera—I thought that was a little bit odd, since the last time the Premier got a needle to encourage people to get the flu shot, the NDP's boss heckled the Premier and tried to shame him for using a vaccine.

But it's also worth noting, too, that this is the same NDP boss that suggested you get respiratory illnesses from—and again, his words, and I'll paraphrase—but from kissing morbidly obese women. But again, that's the NDP boss.

I encourage my colleagues across the way to support and give support to our Vaccine Implementation Task Force and—

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

Before I continue with the question period, I just want to remind members and members in the House that—to address people with their proper gender or non-gender-neutral addresses. So I'll just again want to remind everybody for that.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So now a question period up to 10 minutes will be held. Any question may addressed in the following sequence: the first question might be asked by a member of another party, any subsequent questions must follow rotation between parties and each independent member may ask one question. And no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I listened quite carefully to the copious words that the member put on the record. Unfortunately, most of them had nothing whatsoever to do with this, but—so can the member tell us why this government is congratulating themselves for the work that actual health-care professionals have done, in spite of the roadblocks or deficiencies of the government?

So this whole premise was about thanking health-care workers, and yet we didn't hear the member really spend much time thanking them. So can he explain to us the confusion in—

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

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): It's disheartening that the member's literacy skills are failing him this morning, and so I will read again that—the resolution: that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the efforts of medical and logistical professionals working on the vaccine 'implemation' task force, the health-care professionals who have volunteered and the front-line workers whose perseverance and courage have carried Manitobans through these unprecedented.

I am not aware of why any member would be against such a resolution.

Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley): Can my good friend, the honourable member from McPhillips, tell me: What has the department done to facilitate the vaccine rollout?

Mr. Martin: I thank my colleague for that question, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think one of the very first things and most important things that we have done is the Vaccine Implementation Task Force—to follow their recommendations and their lead in terms of setting up the necessary supercentres, whether they be in Winnipeg, in rural Manitoba or northern Manitoba, and as well as building a direct engagement community through protect Manitoba.

This was all about needles in the arm.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara)?

The honourable member for St. Boniface.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Yes, I was—just for some clarification, I know that there was some issues because Manitoba has appeared to lag, being 12th—or being among the last in getting vaccines out the door. So I—but there's been some confusion about this. I was wondering if the member could just explain—there's been—we've been told that they—the vaccines have been distributed, but it is a reporting problem that they're not actually being delivered.

So if—could the member just clarify whether it's a reporting problem or a distribution problem?

Mr. Martin: I thank my honourable colleague for that question. And as the member would note, these are—not only is this unprecedented in terms of a pandemic—not seen since over the last 100 years—but the vaccination rollout itself is unprecedented. The

logistical framework, the number of people involved is simply—can be quite a undertaking for any jurisdiction, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I have every confidence in the Vaccine Implementation Task Force.

Mr. Lindsey: So, contrary to what the member opposite alluded to, I've read the resolution. It was his words that he put on the record this morning that bore little resemblance to the resolution.

So I want to just ask some questions, specifically around some of these front-line health-care workers that the resolution purports to thank.

Does the member recognize that some of the shortcomings perpetuated by his government when it came to staffing levels in seniors homes, staffing levels in hospitals—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up. [*interjection*] The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Martin: Unfortunately, the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) didn't have an opportunity to conclude his question, so I can only assume he was asking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as to the current status of the vaccine rollout. I would encourage the member that he should contact his—the toll-free line to find out where he is on the list if he is indeed concerned about his future and his potential vaccine for COVID-19. But that is a matter for him and his own medical professional.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière): Can the member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin) maybe elaborate on the facilitation of the rollout despite the shortages from the Trudeau Liberal government?

Mr. Martin: I thank my colleague for that question, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And indeed, this does require a co-ordinated effort between provincial and the federal government, and there have been logistical considerations and challenges, for sure.

Part of our effort is to focus immunization teams into personal-care homes and congregate living, making sure that pop-up sites make the vaccine more accessible to individuals that can't attend the supersite, where accessibility may be an issue, and as well as an age-based rollout, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to make sure that the vaccine has reached those who are most at risk.

I believe yesterday's cut-offs were 65 for the general population and 45 for Indigenous people—

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

Mr. Lindsey: So, let's talk about the vaccine rollout plan, particularly here in northern Manitoba, where the government focused pretty much solely on the supersite at Thompson without really consulting with any of the other communities, just telling them that they had to get to Thompson.

Does the member understand the difficulties and the ramifications of the shortage of consultation in developing a vaccine rollout plan for the North?

Mr. Martin: That question—I will absolutely thank my colleague, the member for Flin Flon, for that question. It's his job as elected official to make sure that he is representing his constituents and, by extension, northern Manitoba.

And individuals have—whether you live in south, east, west or northern Manitoba, your vaccination must be a priority. First Nations, Métis, Inuit have to and should—we need to ensure, through our health-care professionals, that they are—and receive the necessary medical services and the vaccination to protect the most vulnerable.

* (11:20)

Communication, prioritization is all part and parcel of our efforts to make sure that northern— [*interjection*]

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

The honourable member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé). The honourable member for Dawson Trail, is your mic turned on?

The honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I wonder if the member for McPhillips could outline a little bit of the special processes set up to ensure that elderly and vulnerable populations are receiving their vaccine in a timely manner.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank my colleague, the member for Portage la Prairie, for that important question.

And as I noted, and as I think all of us are aware, these decisions are made by health-care professionals in terms of outlining the—not only the age demographics, but also the general demographics in terms of vaccine rollouts. I think it is only through our health-care professionals and their advice in terms of

vaccination priorities that we will come out on the other side of this a stronger, healthier community.

So I appreciate that question and, again, I encourage all of us to get vaccinated when the time comes to—

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

Mr. Lindsey: So I want to ask the member if he believes that putting people who've been self-isolating or isolating for months and months—particularly seniors—does he believe that putting them on a bus for 12 to 14 hours to get them from whatever community they live in to this supersite in Thompson is just plain wrong, that the vaccine should, in fact, be going to them in their home community?

Mr. Martin: Well, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and, again, I will thank my colleague, the member for Flin Flon, for his question and for his advocacy of his constituents.

I will say this to the member, that the Thompson site is just simply one component of the vaccine rollout. I think it is incumbent upon us to make sure, through our health-care professionals, that all individuals in Manitoba, whether you live in Lynn Lake, whether you live in—Lorette, that you have appropriate access to the vaccine.

Pop-up sites, an additional rollout component, will definitely need to be considered, but, again, by the vaccine implementation committee, not by—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up, and the time for question period has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The debate is opened. Any speakers?

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): It's unfortunate that this member brings in a resolution purporting to thank front-line health-care workers and implementation task force and one thing and the other, when, really, all he attempted to do was congratulate his government, and, really, what he should be is ashamed of his government's actions throughout this entire pandemic.

I asked some questions about the vaccine rollout in the North, and clearly the member—much like the government he's a part of—has no concept of northern Manitoba. I asked him about, does he think it makes sense for seniors that have spent the last year in their apartments, in their houses, staying away from people

to protect themselves, now being told get on a bus with everybody else in the community that you've been staying away from, spend 12, 14 hours riding on a bus, eating lunch together, when you're not allowed to eat with strangers in a restaurant. Makes very little—well, in fact, it doesn't make any sense, never mind very little. It makes no sense.

And yet, when I talk to representatives of communities throughout the North, they didn't really have any consultation with the government or anyone else on what the plan was. They got told, get people signed up to get on the bus or, in some cases, get on the plane. And some communities have done that. Initially, the plan, as rolled out, was they wouldn't be able to drive themselves there. They were mandated. They had to get on the bus.

Now, it was only through advocacy—not just on my part, but on the part of the communities themselves, on the part of people within the Northern Health Region that were frustrated as well with this government's inability to plan for a vaccine rollout in the North—it was only through all those combined advocacy efforts that at least people were allowed to drive to the supersites so that they could spend some time still being isolated from people. Because the whole point is, if you get all those folks on a bus together, one of them already has COVID—maybe asymptomatic—that you've just defeated the whole purpose of getting those folks the vaccine.

So while I do want to commend and thank every front-line health-care worker that has worked through this pandemic with inadequate resources supplied by the government, with inadequate people supplied by the government, with cuts that we saw, particularly—I represent the North, but particularly in the North with the insufficient number of people that are left in the system anymore to actually do the jobs—and I really commend them, because they have stepped up.

We see people volunteering to help out. You know, I've had constituents say that the phoning in to get registered for this pop-up clinic—which is another term that's ridiculous, in my opinion—in Flin Flon by trying to do that through some call-in service in Winnipeg.

It's been failure after failure that the system says there's no appointments left. People get hung up on in the middle of their call in. They try and call back. It takes hours and hours to get through only to find out that yes, well, there is no spots left now because there wasn't that many spots to begin with, which was never

made clear to people in the North, just how many vaccine shots were available at these pop-up clinics.

So while I do want to commend people that have stepped in and volunteered, there were actually people in Flin Flon that said, I will volunteer to schedule and co-ordinate what takes place in Flin Flon because, clearly, the people that are trying to do it from afar have no idea what's happening, unfortunately, here in Flin Flon.

So I think the government failed miserably in when they started planning for the vaccine. We all knew that there was a vaccine coming, whether it was coming this year or not 'til next year.

The plan should have been fully developed that merely needed a date put them. Here's where the vaccine is going to, here's the community that it's coming to, not we'll build a supercentre and spend all our efforts trying to convince the world that going to a supercentre in Thompson was the correct answer.

Now, these supersites may work well in a large urban centre like Winnipeg, and it may have worked well even for some communities right close to Thompson, but it didn't work well for any other communities that were further away.

And yet, the government dug in their heels and said, no, we're not going to listen. We're going to keep pushing. We're going to demand that people get on the plane, get on the bus.

So if this government was as sharp as what they claim to be—which they're not—and had actually done the planning months and months ago, if they'd actually sat down and talked to community representatives in the North, if they'd actually sat down and talked to some of their own health people in the North, they may have actually been able to come up with a proper plan. But they didn't do that. And they still fail to do that.

It's only from continued phone calls, letters, emails—and again, not just by myself, but by all sorts of people throughout the North—community members, community leaders—that any change has been effected.

And so for the government to stand up and try and take credit for their wonderful planning abilities, I really have to say that those abilities are suspect, at best, and really missing.

So I want to thank the people that are on this vaccine task force, because no doubt they've been up against huge difficulties, thanks to this government,

this Premier (Mr. Pallister), this Health Minister, that sometimes we're not even sure which department is in charge of planning some of this stuff.

* (11:30)

At one point in time, communities were dealing with the minister of municipalities' office on planning vaccine rollouts. And then when we tried to ask questions there, well, it was no, you got to go to the Health Department. Well, I agree, that's where it should have been coming from all along, but I guess maybe with all the cutbacks in staff that the government mandated throughout the pandemic, and even before the pandemic, that maybe there were short supply of people to actually do planning, to do consultation—people that understood the province that could actually implement a real plan for how the vaccine should roll out.

And I get that we weren't sure just when the vaccine would be fully available for everybody in the province, but the plan should have been detailed out in such infinitesimal detail that all they had to do was plunk a date in that people in Flin Flon—the vaccine will be in your community—and people knew that, so they didn't have to worry about where they were going to go and get it.

Instead, people have been left scrambling with misinformation, wrong information, lack of information, trying to decide, should I get in the car and drive to Thompson? Oh, wait, I can't drive to Thompson.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we even had health-care professionals that had to drive to Winnipeg to get their shots because they had no idea when the vaccine was coming to Flin Flon. And I've heard from other communities where nursing staff took time on their own to drive to a different community. And good for them. I commend them. It's too bad they had to use up their sick time, their holiday time, to protect not just themselves but to protect the people that they come in contact with.

So I really want to thank all those front-line staff, all those people that went above and beyond to do their jobs, to go over and above to help protect Manitobans, to do the best they could do with this government's abject failure at their entire pandemic plan, their abject failure at the vaccine rollout plan, particularly for northern Manitoba.

I also want to commend First Nations communities throughout the North and throughout Manitoba for standing up for themselves and making

sure that they actually had a plan. And they are getting people vaccinated, so kudos to them for their abilities to stand up to this government and make sure that their people were looked afterwards. It's too bad this government didn't stand up and make sure the rest of us in Manitoba were taken care of.

So those few words, thank you—

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

Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley): COVID-19 has rattled Manitoba in many ways. It has kept us from our loved ones, it made us celebrate Christmas and New Year's only with our households and kept grandparents apart from their grandchildren.

COVID-19 changed our lives drastically. We've had to learn to navigate through this pandemic alone. The loss of life due to COVID-19 and the pandemic is undeniable. I have personally lost an aunt and uncle due to this terrible virus.

Despite all the loss we have grieved over this past year, there seems to be a bright future ahead of us. Vaccines are getting administered daily, and the light at the end of the tunnel seems near. I'm going to spend the next little bit talking about the vaccine rollout and the implementation our government is taking to keep Manitobans safe.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I first want to recognize the Vaccine Implementation Task Force, or VIFT, that Dr. Joss Reimer leads. Dr. Reimer, along with the operations lead, Johana Botha, and their vaccine medical advisory table, which includes 27 physicians, a pharmacist and two nurses, have created a vaccine rollout that people all over Canada look up to.

Due to all their time at work, we have one of the best vaccine rollout plans in Canada. They have assigned more than 50 public servants who have worked alongside VIFT. This is an all-of-government approach, drawing resources from virtually every government department, as well as Crown corporations, Shared Health, RHAs and other organizations.

On top of this, VIFT works 'collaborly' with several external parties bolstering internal resources, including the Canadian Armed Forces, transportation logistics and human resources. VIFT continues to work close-closing with health-care experts to provide the appropriate guidance and advice. Thank you to all the individuals in each of these organizations who have worked endlessly to get the vaccine administered into Manitobans.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'd like to continue by thanking Dr. Brent Roussin and Dr. Jazz Atwal, whose conferences have been informative and motivating. They continue to work hard on helping to keep Manitobans safe while the vaccine rollout continues to occur.

I also want to thank and recognize all the hard work every single doctor, nurse and now pharmacist who have done to help make Manitobans' vaccine rollout as smooth and successful it has been. They continue to administrate the COVID-19 vaccine day in and day out.

I've personally heard of nurses using their days off to voluntarily help administrate the vaccine. I, along with the government of Manitoba and all Manitobans, thank you for all you have done for us. Without each and every one of you, Manitoba would not be in the shape we are in during this pandemic.

The government has launched a sort vaccination campaign, the largest and most complex immunization campaign in the history of our province, and would not have been as successful as it has been without each and every one of you.

I'm also thankful that my wife, who is a nurse at the Health Sciences Centre, received her second round of vaccine this past Saturday on March 20th. She's feeling great. It helps ease my mind that she now has this vaccine. My parents have made their appointment for their first dose of the vaccine as well. I look forward to better days to come with my entire family.

Manitoba's vaccine rollout has been one of the best in the country. We have been praised by many news outlets and health authorities around Canada on how well our rollout has caught. In less than 90 days, we managed to vaccinate over 100,000 people.

The best case scenario is everyone in Manitoba who wants to have the vaccine will have received their vaccine by May 18th. This will, hopefully, help bring some normalcy to our summer months. By April, our target is to be administrating 20,000 vaccines doses a day. As people get vaccinated, the numbers of COVID-19 related to hospitalizations and deaths will continue and continue to decrease. This is great news.

In a Global News article by Saba Aziz, Brian Conway, a medical director at the Vancouver Infectious Diseases Centre, gave our vaccine rollout an A-minus, calling it ambitious, forward-looking and likely to succeed. We were the highest rated province, only behind the territories.

Not only do we have the best vaccine rollout amongst provinces, we also have the highest number of vaccine units per capita amongst the Prairie provinces. Our government and health-care authorities are determined to keep Manitobans healthy and amongst the first to get everyone who wants a COVID-19 vaccine administered. We want to be the first province to fully reopen our economy up again.

Yesterday, our province announced that Manitobans 65 and over and First Nations 45 and over are now eligible to keep—to get the COVID-19 vaccine. We're getting closer and closer to the day when all adults in Manitoba have access to the vaccine.

It is also important to note that we need Manitobans to get vaccinated in order to achieve herd immunity. This is what vaccines will do. They will give us that herd immunity so we can move on to a post-pandemic world, but in order to move on from a post-pandemic world and to receive herd immunity in Manitoba, we need at least 70 per cent of Manitoba's population to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

That is just under 1 million people, 1 million people who will help get our province on the right path again. These vaccines are safe, effective and will protect the people we love. I, and this government, encourages everyone to get vaccinated as soon as they are eligible.

Despite our vaccine rollout ramping up, we still need to be careful and listen to what health authorities in Manitoba are telling us. We do not want a repeat of winter, where our province had to close to contain the deadly COVID-19 virus.

I know the people of Manitoba will get through this unprecedented and dark time in history. We will overcome the obstacles of COVID-19, and soon we'll be able to hug our loved ones again.

* (11:40)

Finally, I want to thank Manitobans. Without each of you doing your part, this pandemic would have been much worse than it was for Manitobans.

Many of you followed the rules, knowing it would save lives. It has been hard not seeing friends and family face to face. Many of us miss that human interaction you get when you see each other. FaceTime, Zoom and other video chat applications are great, but I can personally tell you they do not make up for that face-to-face interactions that I truly miss.

Each vaccine administered is one step closer to life before COVID-19, to get back to normal instead of this pandemic normal or new normal.

I also want give out a shout-out and thank you to Waverley constituents, Carey Lai, a pharmacist who owns Leila Pharmacy, who's volunteered at the supersite at the RBC Convention Centre downtown and will also be administering it in his pharmacy.

Also want to mention that my mom had a great experience when she had called the vaccine line. She couldn't get in the first day, but she had to call—I told her to call at 6 in the morning and she did. She actually told me later on in the day that she was so excited—she was so excited that she couldn't sleep, so she called at 6 in the morning. And she told me that, you know, the process took 17 minutes but it was really good; 300 people, actually, she was told, that called at 6 in the morning and—but she and my father actually got an appointment.

And someone had actually had texted me, how did your parents get an appointment? And I told them the procedure. They actually called later on that evening and, sure enough, their elderly mother was able to get an appointment, and there was no problems at all getting an appointment.

So, again, I just want to say thank you to everyone involved with this vaccine rollout. There is hope, but please continue to follow the fundamentals.

Thank you, again, to everyone involved in the vaccine rollout.

And I also want to wish my wife, my—nurse that she is, a happy birthday today.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): Thank you to members opposite for that applause. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity to put a few words on the record for the PMR this morning, which is commending the provincial vaccine rollout staff and volunteers.

I'm a little torn as to the content of the PMR this morning. Members on this side of the Chamber are in absolute agreement with components of it—and the component being thanking all the front-line workers, the doctors, the nurses, the communities, everybody that stepped up during this pandemic.

But unfortunately, the—this government, once again, is getting it wrong and getting it kind of

half done. And why I say that is this seems to be almost a pat on a back. The government is trying to pat themselves on the back, taking credit—stealing credit from front-line workers, from communities, from people that have sacrificed a great deal to be able to help their families, their communities, Manitoba, and all the world, for that matter, combat COVID-19 and the pandemic.

So some of the wording that kind of jumped out in the PMR is the word provincial government. So while the PMR, on its premise, talks about thanking the provincial staff and volunteers for the rollout, there's an awful lot of provincial government has done this, provincial government has done that. I guess the only whereas missing in here is where it doesn't say the provincial government has thrown all these same people under the bus at some point in time over this pandemic, which is, in fact, true.

And only in the therefore be it resolved do I see the word recognize. And that's where the recognition for front-line workers and staff and volunteers is apparent in the PMR.

So just, if we could go through some of the wording in the PMR and some of the whereas: whereas the provincial government has always been committed to protecting vulnerable citizens and those most at risk. Well, again, we've known that to be not true.

We've known that to be kind of half done, half-baked, not thought through, and the most vulnerable people and the most marginalized members of our society and our province have been left by the wayside to either fend for themselves or speak up and force this government to actually hold them to account.

Another one of the whereases in the PMR is the provincial government is delivering the vaccine to Manitobans via a multi-pronged approach. Again, that's not an approach that's really being driven by the government. That's being driven by the stakeholders, the community, the interest groups, the organizations that are truly looking out for the best interests of their communities.

Another whereas in here says future plans include mobile pop-up vaccination sites in communities throughout the province. Again, another failure on behalf of this government. If it wasn't for the front-line staff and the front-line volunteers that, again, would be another catastrophic failure if that was led primarily by the government.

Another one: the provincial government has recruited health professionals from across Manitoba offer their time and expertise. Again, these are the same expertise, these are the same volunteers that, at some point in time, have been thrown under the bus by this Premier (Mr. Pallister) for his own best interests, for his own photo opportunities, for his own media bites that he wants to put out, including the doctors—shaming the doctors into trying to incite some kind of chaos, when what are they doing? They're doing what this PMR is recognizing. They're stepping up for the staff and volunteers and they're overseeing the vaccine rollout with the best interests of all Manitobans at heart.

Another whereas in here: the provincial government prioritized the most vulnerable citizens living in personal-care homes. Again, personal-care homes were afterthoughts of this government. We know all the tragedies and we heard many stories.

We've even heard stories from members opposite in regards to what has happened in personal-care homes, either in a personal story from that member opposite, personal stories from members on this side of the Chamber, or their family stories. We've seen those and we've seen exactly how this government has failed our elders and our seniors living in personal-care homes.

And I guess one of the ones that stands out most to me in this is—whereas is where the provincial government recognized the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on First Nation Manitobans and is working in partnership with First Nations leaders to ensure the vaccine planning and distribution meets the needs of First Nations communities.

Come on. That's—I almost have no words for that other than, come on, are you serious? That's really going to be something that they're going to promote, that they're going to hype, that they're going to talk about, saying that they did in a meaningful way?

Our First Nation communities and our First Nation leaders that—and the First Nation pandemic teams and task force are the true heroes that stood up for our communities, not the provincial government. The provincial government did not do that.

Instead, they used that opportunity to shame them, to hoard vaccines and not have those vaccines distributed, to instead try and pit First Nation communities versus the people of Manitoba, to say that First Nation people in Manitoba were getting the vaccines over and above other Manitobans, which,

again, First Nation communities in Manitoba are still Manitobans. So this government has failed in that way in trying to do that.

So when we talk about the rollout that's coming there and the thank you, members on this side of the House have the utmost respect for all staff and all volunteers that have truly stepped up in time of pandemic, have come at a great sacrifice to their personal lives, to their personal families, and some—in some cases, the ultimate sacrifice, and lost their lives, either their lives personally or the lives of loved ones.

And those are the recognition that should be giving, not saying the government is here taking a victory lap and trying to pat themselves on the back for doing what they should be doing, what is their responsibility; what, in good conscience, they should be doing without having to have partisan politics come into play and say, I'm doing this only if I could get a thank you.

When you get into public life and you do those kind of things—there's a lot of careers in Manitoba, health care being one, a doctor, social workers, that, for the most part, those are thankless jobs. And sometimes you only get that recognition when you've almost created almost a miracle cure for somebody or a miracle revelation to help somebody or some family. And instead this government uses those to try and shame people, to try and tell people no, no, we've done this. I want credit for this. Pat me on the back.

You know, I was trying to—what does PMR stand for, you know? Pat myself, or, you know, I really don't know what that means, you know. So private members' resolution is brought forth by a private member to recognize what this is that—again, the failure on this government to speak to the true intention and falling short of what they want to do.

* (11:50)

Again, this whole page of whereas does nothing but talk about patting themselves on the back: we did this, we did this, we did this. You've heard the term, there's no I in team. Well, apparently, there is a lot of I's on that side of the Chamber to be able to say, we've done this, I've done this. If it wasn't for us, if it wasn't for the Premier (Mr. Pallister), if it wasn't for this government, you wouldn't have this.

Well, no, we would still persevere. And who would help us persevere? The people that this PMR is thanking: the staff; the volunteers; the hard-working, committed health-care workers that have truly, truly

got us to this point in the pandemic—not got us over it. We're not there yet, but we are getting there.

But we're not there yet, but yet this government is taking this opportunity to give themselves a little bit of a victory lap and say, you know what? We've done this. Please thank us for recognizing these strong, working—hard-working Canadian—Manitobans, Canadians, health-care workers and staff.

So when we come and we talk about being able to thank these health-care workers and thank what they do and thank what they bring to the table, let's do that. Let's do that as a group. Let's do that as all of Manitobans, all political stripes aside. Let's sit there and do that. But instead, this government sits there and says, no. We've done this.

Let's give credit where credit is due. If this PMR is truly above giving credit where credit is due, strike out the words provincial government has done this in every aspect of this PMR, in every whereas, and actually refer it to, we, as Manitobans, have done our part. We, as Manitobans, thank the front-line workers, thank the staff, thank the volunteers.

Because members on this side of the Chamber absolutely do that. We recognize that. We're professionals, prior to our lives in this Chamber have a lot of experience in a variety of different areas: some in health care, some in social work, some in just family aspects of community living.

And that's where the thank you has to be. That's where the thank yous deserve to go.

So on behalf of ourselves, on behalf of myself personally, I want to thank and talk and respect and have utmost respect for all the doctors, the nurses, front-line workers, staff, volunteers, even the children that are waiting and checking every day to see exactly, when is it my turn to be vaccinated? When can I do my part?

I have a picture of my parents both being vaccinated. Just a simple, I'm vaccinated. I can help. I've done my part. So for that, I have the utmost respect for everybody in this field that's done this, and on behalf of myself and our side of the Chamber, miigwech.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Clearly, this is a very important resolution. It is important to thank all the people who've been involved in the vaccine rollout.

That being said, there are lots of whereases, as others have noted. They're a serious issue. The fact is, is that there are two things that really need emphasizing: one is that this government failed to prepare, despite ample warnings for months, for the second wave and resulted in the second worst mortality rate in Canada.

This is nothing to be proud of or congratulate ourselves for. The first vaccines arrived on December 15th, but it wasn't 'til December 23rd that this government put together a request for proposal for vaccinations at 5-4:58, the day before Christmas Eve—to put an RFP out for private companies to assist while health-care workers and nurses who've been giving vaccinations for years were sitting and waiting to hear whether they could qualify to vaccinate people because they had to apply to a private company that was engaged to hire these things—to hire people.

It wasn't 'til January that the provincial task force—that a provincial vaccination co-ordinator was advertised for, and I will note that, you know, at least one of the members of the government has said that Manitoba has received more vaccines than almost any other province in comparison, and that is absolutely true.

But the fact is, is that the actual delivery of vaccines in Manitoba has been among the slowest and worst in Canada, which has been—which I will not lay at the feet of the individuals who were involved in the vaccine task force because, ultimately, I believe responsibility flows from the top—that all these people who've worked so hard have succeeded despite the problems with this government and not because of them.

Certainly, First Nations leadership was doing an extraordinary job in keeping their communities COVID-free, and the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) response was to hector them.

Métis have been largely left out of the entire process of vaccinations, and there were—we've continually had to remind this government to try to vaccinate people who are the most vulnerable, especially people with underlying health conditions who can be of any age.

This has been a huge problem, and we've heard throughout. We've heard about public health nurses in tears because people were dumping unused vaccine down the drain. We've heard about—and we've heard about issues with various sites being absolutely chaotic.

We—the—there's been a little heads-up. People are often being told at the last minute that they're going to be getting vaccines that day. There has been an enormous amount of chaos, and I will not—again, I will not lay it at the feet of the people who are on the front line who are struggling to deal with a government that often went on vacation when they needed to be getting organized instead.

That is, quite literally, the case—that in the month of December, when we should have been preparing for getting a vaccination schedule ready, that we needed to be letting people know a number, not just one or two, but at least half a dozen senior advisers to the Premier left the province during the peak of code red.

And right now, the government is running ads on Facebook telling people not to travel. Well, it would have been really great if that was happening back in December because—and that the government had actually followed its own advice.

These are incredibly challenging times, but we also need to recognize there was an H1N1 pandemic where there were 700,000 people vaccinated as well; that a lot of this resolution is the government congratulating itself for doing its job—or doing the bare minimum of its job—or puffing up its actual role, when it actually has not been particularly successful.

And there have been enormous frustrations with people—for people who have been unable to get vaccinated. I will add one more, which is I've been getting emails from police officers who can't understand why they are often called to scenes, why they have been excluded from being a priority vaccination as well.

And the other is simply the absolutely inexplicable announcement on the part of this government to engage with Providence Therapeutics—which is a company with no track record whatsoever for vaccine development—to, on the spur of the moment, spend millions of dollars to prop up an Alberta company with no track record, that will actually only deliver a vaccine long after everybody has been vaccinated—again, is part of the erratic and sometimes reckless track record of this government when it comes to handling the pandemic.

Too often we've seen complacency, we've seen real challenges around just basic communications, in part because this government also did things like shut down the incident command centre when they should have kept it going. This is a government that declared

that they were going to have event attractions in the middle of July because we had a few cases and failed to prepare for the second wave.

So, there has been a lot of really, really great work, but credit needs to go where credit is due and the credit goes to the people on the front line and the people—everyone who has had to struggle to make these things work despite this government, not because of it.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière): It is an honour to be able to put some words on the record today, and thank the member for introducing this resolution.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there any other speakers?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question is the resolution of the honourable member from McPhillips, Commending the Provincial Vaccine Rollout Staff and Volunteers.

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

The hour being—is it will of the House to call it noon? It's not quite noon yet. *[Agreed]*

The hour being 12 p.m. noon, the House is recessed and stands recessed unto—1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Resolutions	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS			
Second Readings–Public Bills		Res. 15–Commending the Provincial Vaccine Rollout Staff and Volunteers	
Bill 221–The Public Health Amendment Act (Banning Cosmetic Eye Tattooing and Eye Jewellery)		Martin	1856
Johnston	1847	Questions	
Questions		Lindsey	1859
Fontaine	1849	Martin	1859
Johnston	1849	Reyes	1859
Gerrard	1849	Lamont	1859
Morley-Lecomte	1849	A. Smith	1860
Smook	1849	Wishart	1860
Reyes	1850		
Debate			
Fontaine	1850		
Debate on Second Readings– Public Bills		Debate	
Bill 222–The Lobbyists Registration Amendment Act		Lindsey	1861
Asagwara	1851	Reyes	1863
A. Smith	1853	Bushie	1864
Altomare	1855	Lamont	1866
Reyes	1856	A. Smith	1868
Gerrard	1856		

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>