

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AL TOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	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, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	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	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg, Hon.	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	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
<i>Vacant</i>	Kirkfield Park	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, September 29, 2022

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.

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

Good morning everybody. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I have a statement for the House.

I'm advising the House that I have received a letter from the Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) regarding her caucus's first selected bill for this session. As a reminder to the House, rule 24 permits each recognized party to select up to three private members' bills per session to proceed to a second reading vote. The Official Opposition House Leader has advised that her caucus has selected Bill 200, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act, as the first of their three selected bills for this session.

In accordance with the Official Opposition House Leader's letter, the process on the debate will proceed as follows: Debate on second reading will resume this morning at 10 a.m. immediately following this statement, and the question shall be put on the second reading motion this morning at 10:55 a.m.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act (Various Acts Amended)

Madam Speaker: Oh—resuming debate. Resuming debate on second reading of Bill 200, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act (Various Acts Amended), standing in the name of the honourable member for Radisson, who has two minutes remaining.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): I thank you for the opportunity to speak to this issue today.

I think it's appropriate that the day before the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation we have an opportunity to discuss this bill and to talk about these kinds of issues, to talk about how we live out reconciliation in our actions and our thoughts, how we teach it to our children.

And I think—I hope to hear from other members this morning about what reconciliation means to them and what this national day, Orange Shirt Day, means to them and how best we recognize it. And so I'm hopeful for a good discussion this morning, not so much a debate but a—but certainly an opportunity to share.

And I'll share also for myself. I want to thank you, Madam Speaker. You know, we begin each day now not just with the prayer but also with the land acknowledgement, and I think that's a good thing. That's a appropriate thing in a place like this, in a Manitoba Legislature, where those acknowledgements should be made and should be given.

And I'm pleased that the House leaders were able to come to an agreement to have that be incorporated into our daily routine. And I think it's another small step but a necessary step in promoting reconciliation and doing so.

I'll leave to others to speak to the specifics of the bill. I think, you know, we want to make sure that we're listening, want to make sure that we're letting Indigenous peoples drive how this day is going to be commemorated and all the details of that, too. That's not as just simple as saying it is so, but you have to

make sure that it's done respectfully and that's what we're here to today to talk about.

Thank you.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I am pleased to be able to get up this morning and put a couple of words on the record in respect of Bill 200, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act.

First and foremost, I want to acknowledge my colleague, the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie), for bringing forward this bill and, you know, for the work that he's been doing in the communities and all over Manitoba, and certainly the work that he's been doing in the House here trying to ensure that Bill 200 gets passed and receives royal assent. So miigwech to my colleague.

I also want to acknowledge the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) in respect of—and I was reflecting on this this morning. Back in June of 2017—so, folks in the Chamber will recall that the member had put forward a private member's bill to have an official day recognizing orange shirt, so The Orange Shirt Day Act.

And I was sharing with caucus this morning that, you know, in all of the six and a half years that I've been in this Chamber—or six and a half-plus, whatever it is—actually, that day I will always remember. If, years from now, when I'm no longer in this Chamber and people will ask, you know, well, what were some of the positive moments in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly? That day would be the first thing to come to mind. And why that was a really important and special day and why I look fondly on it is because it was the first moment that this House, from when I got elected, came together in support of a bill—and a really important bill.

And folks will remember that we had guests in the gallery. We had the late Ted Fontaine, who was a member of my family, who I'm so honoured to be family members with Ted Fontaine. And then we went through all of the steps. We had agreement from the House, we had agreement from the House leaders and we were able to get through all of the steps so that that very day that bill received royal assent.

I member us going to standing committee during our lunch and listening to Ted Fontaine, which was, you know, so beautiful and yet for us, as Indigenous members of this caucus, was really, really difficult to hear. And we got through all of it.

And so, you know, people will say to me on the—you know, just citizens in general will say, you know, what's happening with Bill 200? Like, is it going to get passed? And I keep saying, well, I don't know.

* (10:10)

What I do know is this, is that, and similar to what my colleague was saying yesterday in his questions, if there's the political will, this Chamber, this House, can actually get through anything and can actually expedite the legislative processes so that we can pass things that need to be passed.

And I would submit to the House this morning that Bill 200 is one of those bills that everybody in this Chamber should be supporting today. I don't want to hear from members opposite how important it is to reflect on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation or Orange Shirt Day. I don't want to see members opposite wearing orange shirts on this day or tomorrow. I don't want to see members opposite participating in Orange Shirt Day activities tomorrow.

I don't want to see members opposite posting on social media, on Twitter or Instagram or Facebook, about the importance on reflecting on the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation day, in their orange t-shirts with other people that are wearing orange t-shirts, if this morning they sit in their place and do not demand that their Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), that their minister, that their House leader, gets up before 11 a.m., lets this bill pass.

Not only do I expect them to let this bill pass, but I expect them to get up and to say that they're going to expedite all of the legislative processes that we need to go through today. All of us on this side of the House are prepared to sit at lunch, we're prepared to sit after we finish the day's proceedings, we're prepared to sit here until midnight or five in the morning, if need be, to get this bill passed.

So, Madam Speaker, as I have said many times in this Chamber, it is not enough for people to be elected, it's not enough for people to represent their constituents, to represent Manitobans, but to do nothing when they're in that elected position, to not stand in truth, to not stand up in courage and to say here's what we demand today, that this Bill 200 gets passed and receives royal assent. It's not enough.

We are one of 900 people in the history of Manitoba that have ever been elected to be able to sit in this Chamber. It is an extraordinary privilege to be elected and to be in this Chamber day in and day out.

But with that privilege comes, as I have said many, many times, a sacred responsibility.

Nobody wants to see—Manitobans don't want to see elected officials get elected, come knocking at their door for their vote, get elected and then do nothing to affect transformative change in our province and in our country. People are not putting up with that anymore.

And what I can say in respect to Bill 200—and I would disabuse the—what the Minister of Labour is putting on the record that there's still more consultation to do, that they have to listen to more people—people have spoken. Manitobans have spoken. They want Bill 200 to be passed, they want Orange Shirt Day to be a statutory holiday in Manitoba, that is a given. Full stop.

And for the minister to get up in this House and to say yesterday, and I—and, again, let me put this on the record that this caucus has six Indigenous members. All of us, every single one of us, as Indigenous members of the NDP caucus, have grandparents, great-grandparents, parents, uncles, aunties, cousins, friends, who are survivors of residential schools. Or, in some cases, are not survivors.

All of us, we live and breathe the consequences of residential schools every single day, and so for the minister to get up in this House yesterday and say, we continue to listen to Manitobans—obviously the members opposite have stopped listening to Manitobans.

In respect of Bill 200, for the minister to get up and to say that to the Indigenous members in this House is absolutely shameful and disgraceful.

But not only did he say that, Madam Speaker, the other thing that he said a couple of weeks ago—or eight days ago—was, and I quote: it would be very disrespectful of everybody to introduce something at this point. We don't want to make people uncomfortable.

You know what's uncomfortable, Madam Speaker? Genocide. Genocide is uncomfortable. And if the minister, or any other one of these PC caucus members and—any one of them want to get up and stand in solidarity and actually action truth and reconciliation, this morning is the time to do so.

And my final words to this, Madam Speaker, is that on this day and tomorrow and every day, I acknowledge all of our relatives who survived

residential schools, and the ones that never made it back home.

Miigwech.

Hon. Reg Helwer (Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services): Well, I'm pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 200, and I will agree with the member opposite on one thing: it is indeed a privilege to sit in this House, Madam Speaker. And I reflect on that each and every day that I am an elected official and have been. I represent Brandon West, as you well know, and listen to many people around the province.

With respect to this piece of legislation, having read it, having gone through many detailed briefings on it, I have to say that this legislation asks the government to do less than we're doing today. September 30th is a provincial day of recognition. Our staff, the schools, child-cares have the day to go and experience September 30th to learn about truth and reconciliation, and that is the format that is in place for this year.

I have had indeed the privilege to meet with chiefs, grand chiefs, labour, business, Inuit, Manitoba Métis Federation president, to learn from them about what their thoughts are on September 30th and to take their guidance.

And that is still evolving, Madam Speaker, and we have more of those consultations to do. They have more information for us that needs to be received by the government, and determine what should happen on September 30th beyond what is already being done. If this bill were to pass, it creates a statutory holiday, and I have trouble with the holiday name with respect to this day. Many people have trouble with it being called a holiday.

It is a day to recognize what happened on residential schools. It is a day to talk about truth and reconciliation and to learn about truth and reconciliation. Is not a holiday, but I know the member opposite is bound by some of the words we use in the Legislature and in legalities to call it a holiday.

So, should this bill pass, everything would be open on September 30th—everything. Province, schools, child-cares, businesses, casinos, gaming centres—nothing has to be closed.

Nothing has to recognize September 30th as a day of any importance, and it is a day of importance, Madam Speaker. There is no ability in this legislation

for somebody to refuse work. That is a necessary part of this day.

* (10:20)

An Honourable Member: Sit down, Reg.

Madam Speaker: Order. *[interjection]* Order. I don't think this is the time for some disrespectful heckling. Everybody has an opportunity to say their words, so for members to tell some other member to sit down is, in my view, especially this morning in this debate, very disrespectful. So please, I'm going to ask for everybody's co-operation.

Mr. Helwer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The members opposite seek to silence me. They seek to silence people, and that is not what our government wants to do.

When we first met with chiefs and grand chiefs—and it is indeed an honour, Madam Speaker, to hear them and listen to them—one of the things they told us is that they never had the opportunity to meet with the previous NDP government, that meeting with our government was some of the first meetings they'd had with government. And if they did meet with government, they were told what to think, they were told what would happen. They were not listened to. They've been listened to, they've been heard. And we continue to do so.

The Labour Management Review Committee spoke and listened to business, spoke and listened to labour, spoke and listened to the honourable Justice Murray Sinclair and took all of that information in a report, Madam Speaker. And we are talking to them. I spoke to them last week—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Helwer: —about what their 'recommaydations' were.

So, we continue to consult, Madam Speaker. As recently as this week, we had meetings with chiefs and grand chiefs and listened to how their thoughts had changed over the previous year and what their recommendations were. You know that the Auditor General has a report on truth and reconciliation and the government. I am—been working with the public sector commissioner to make sure that over the last couple of years we have met—had many forums for staff, for public servants, about what truth and reconciliation responsibilities—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Helwer: —are for the government, what the responsibilities are as a public servant. And out of that and out of the Auditor General's recommendation for a—has come a compulsory training model—module. And that is currently being designed, Madam Speaker.

We've accepted that recommendation and it will be made available to all public servants in the next fiscal year. It will be one of our compulsory training modules. We have six other ones: The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, Inclusion and Diversity in the Workplace, the Manitoba Government Corporate Orientation, Supporting an Ethical Environment in the Manitoba Government, Information Security Awareness and Building Respectful Workplaces foundations. So, this will be added to those compulsory training modules, Madam Speaker. We are responding to the Auditor General's report.

So we are working with a variety of individuals and a variety of groups, listening to them of what this day should look like, Madam Speaker. As I said, if this bill were to pass I don't—I know the member opposite is bound by the restrictions of what he can introduce in the Legislature and is limited in the framework. I think the intent is for this to be a much more aspirational piece of legislation and I understand that aspiration and that's what we are working towards in our consultation and in our design of legislation for all of Manitoba.

I know I had a tremendous experience last September 30th, Madam Speaker. Many Manitobans did. It was challenging to hear some of the stories, it was challenging the week leading up to September 30th, as it is this year. One of my regrets is that, as much as it is a privilege to be in this Legislature, many events are happening in Brandon that I can't participate in because I'm here. Last year, I was fortunate to be with then-premier Goertzen to attend some of the events in Memorial Park during the week. *[interjection]*

Then how do I address a previous premier? Former premier Goertzen. Sorry, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The member can certainly say the former premier, but can not add that personal name to that—or could say the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

Mr. Helwer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The former premier, the member for Steinbach, that I was able to attend some events with him and learn and listen to the stories, and they were very emotionally

devastating. And I know that there are many more of those stories to be told.

This September 30th, I know there are events happening on the Legislative grounds, in Memorial Park. We encourage members to participate and attend what they can. I know there are events happening in Brandon that I hope to attend. I should—depending on when we sit late tonight, there's a sunrise ceremony. I'm not sure if I'd make it back for the sunrise ceremony. That's dependent on the members obvious—opposite, obviously.

I think that's an important part of the day, should I be able to attend that and other events that are happening there. It is about learning more about truth and reconciliation, Madam Speaker. And that is the government's intent when we're working on this legislation, and as I said, there are many more groups that we need to hear from.

There are a couple of grand chiefs that we have meetings that are scheduled that have not heard yet, follow-ups to previous meetings and questions that were asked. And those are the guidances that we will be taking as a government, Madam Speaker, to decide indeed what September 30th will look like for Manitobans.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the MLA for Keewatinook for bringing forward Bill 200, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act.

You know, as Liberals, we want to pay particularly—particular thanks for the—to the MLA for Keewatinook, you know, in part because it was the Manitoba Liberal caucus, specifically the MLA for Tyndall Park, who first introduced a bill in this Legislature to have September 30th recognized as a statutory holiday in Manitoba to recognize the importance of reconciliation and of fulfilling the recommendation of our Call No. 80, on the provincial level, for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that had been made by Justice Murray Sinclair and others in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report.

Indeed, my colleague, the MLA from Tyndall Park, had initially written, on August 12th of 2021, to the Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations (Mr. Lagimodiere) and the Minister of Finance, encouraging the government of Manitoba to join the federal government in recognizing September 30th as the National Day for Truth

and Reconciliation by declaring it a provincial statutory holiday day.

The government has now had more than a year—indeed, from August to today, we are talking 13 months that the government has had to make up their mind, to do the consultations, to get in place legislation. And failing the government acting in 13 months and not doing anything, in terms of bringing forward legislation, we are pleased to have this bill brought forward by the MLA for Keewatinook to debate this morning.

I want to remind the House that on October 7th of 2021, almost a year ago, the MLA for Tyndall Park moved, seconded by the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Lamont), that bill 240, the recognition of national day of truth and reconciliation act, be now read a first time. *[interjection]* What? Look, well, I am. I'm—*[interjection]*

* (10:30)

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —just putting on the record the importance of the history behind this bill.

And on August—on October the 12th, the MLA for Tyndall Park asked the government whether—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order. *[interjection]* Order.

Mr. Gerrard: —whether the government would support bill 240 and do everything that they could to pass it before the end of the year. That was by December 31st, 2021.

The Minister of Indigenous Reconciliation and Northern Relations replied, and I quote, "I respect the question from the member opposite. We are currently engaging," the minister says, "with Indigenous leaders throughout Manitoba on—seeking their input as to how we can properly recognize this day moving forward, and that engagement has started a while ago." The minister says, "We'll continue with that engagement and we'll follow their directions."

Well, it's actually very sad that, a year later, the government of the province which promised action a year ago has still not acted. It is a disrespect for the bill that has come forward this session. It is a disrespect to the government to have delayed and delayed and delayed without bringing forward—either supporting this bill or bringing forward another bill.

This is an important, important subject. And it is vital that we move forward in addressing the calls of

the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It is vital that we move forward in properly recognizing September 30th as a statutory day in Manitoba, with all the full recognition that that day would provide.

We believe that without this bill, or one very like it—that it'll—this—tomorrow, it will not be complete. There are many, many events coming up. I will be attending, for example, an event which is happening at the former—at the site of the former residential school in River Heights. Just to emphasize that the matter and the issue of residential schools was all over the province and affected people in all constituencies, including my own in River Heights, and that it's important that we recognize the impact that the residential schools had, and that we're prepared to complete the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including this one.

I want to also mention, among the variety of activities, that for those MLAs who are interested, there is a showing this evening of a film, *Unusual in Every Way*, which is a story and a documentary brought together by an Indigenous individual who's a status from Shoal Lake 40 whose name is Don Barnard, combined with a Jewish filmmaker Yolanda Papina-Popeck [*phonetic*]. And, you know, here is another example, for those who see this film, of the need to pay attention to what—not only what has happened in the past, but what is still happening today.

That there is still not enough fairness and justice when it comes to people who are Indigenous in this province, and that all of us need to be aware of that. We need to be aware that, in what we do every day, we are considering that we need to be giving opportunities. And, in this case, the opportunities needed to be greater, for example, in allowing—in enabling people in the Indigenous community to provide opportunities for them to be producing films which can be shown.

There is much that it is very important to do in our province, in terms of reconciliation. We have a history, not only of residential schools but we have a history of bias and discrimination and people not paying enough attention to the needs of Indigenous children and the needs of Indigenous—and the opportunities for Indigenous adults in Manitoba.

So I am pleased to support Indigenous MLA from Keewatinook in this bill. I congratulate him in bringing this forward and we're fully in support of

having this passed today so it can be in effect for tomorrow. So thank you for—merci, miigwech for your efforts on this bill. I say this to the MLA for Keewatinook, respectfully.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I want to begin with an acknowledgement of my colleague, the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie), for bringing forward this important bill and I want to recognize the courage and leadership of all the Indigenous folks, the MLAs on this team. That would include the member for Keewatinook, the members for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew), Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), Thompson (Mr. Redhead) and The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin).

I also—before I speak on this issue, I think it is important to acknowledge—to provide an acknowledgement as well as an apology for the harms that settler families like mine have inflicted on the families and the ancestors of my colleagues.

Madam Speaker, if there is a will, there is a way. If there is a will, there is a way. That may sound like a familiar quote, as I am quoting the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) of our province speaking to the issue of making Orange Shirt Day a statutory holiday.

The question we are really asking today: Does the Premier and her PC government have the will—the will to recognize Orange Shirt Day and honour residential school survivors in the way they have told us they want to be honoured and in the way that the TRC recommendations have said governments must do?

I've heard from a member of the government this morning that he feels uncomfortable—uncomfortable—with some of the language of this bill. I would suggest you're supposed to be uncomfortable. Part of the work of deconstructing colonialism and racism and repairing harms of the past—it isn't about sitting around feeling cozy. This isn't like Christmas Day in your pyjamas.

You're supposed to feel uncomfortable. You're supposed to take the opportunity to learn, to reflect, to feel kind of terrible about some of the stuff that's gone on in this country and in this province, and then to move on from that to—because, you know, we can't sit around and wallow in feeling terrible because it makes it hard to take action.

So the next step, then, is to just simply acknowledge, apologize and begin the work of change. And passing this bill today is the beginning of the work of

change. We can encourage you to get past your discomfort. I believe it was the Minister of Labour, Consumer Protection and Government Services (Mr. Helwer) that explicitly named his discomfort with the language of this bill.

Well, the very first Orange Shirt Day took place in 2013. Schoolchildren in Manitoba have worn orange shirts and learned about the significance and found age-appropriate ways to reflect on the legacy of residential schools ever since that initial Orange Shirt Day.

* (10:40)

And the Manitoba NDP caucus recognizes that the legacy of residential schools in Canada and in this province has had a lasting impact on survivors and their descendants. The history of residential schools is part of the legacy of ignorance, disenfranchisement, abuse, racism, assimilation and genocide, which has systematically stolen languages, cultures, traditions and faiths from Indigenous people.

This bill aims to honour the survivors of residential schools and recognize the intergenerational trauma still felt by their descendants today.

This bill also aims to educate Manitobans on the long history of abuse and neglect that occurred in these institutions in what was ultimately a policy of forced assimilation and cultural genocide of Canada's Indigenous people.

We can't change the injustices of the past, but we actually all have a part to play in working together to heal relations with Indigenous people and to heal things 'withinside' ourselves, when we are settlers whose families may have contributed to this legacy. If you own property today, that was the result of stolen land. That's a difficult thing to sit with. I really get that.

But I think it's important—I know it's important to acknowledge that, to acknowledge what that means for each of us today and take this time to use these days to reflect, to use September 30th, in particular, to reflect and to take action.

Public commemoration of this painful history and ongoing impacts of residential schools is such a vital aspect of this process. In this era of truth and reconciliation, I urge every member of this House to stand with us in support of this bill to honour residential school survivors.

Manitoba actually has the opportunity here to take some leadership on this issue. One province

and one territory have made September 30th a statutory day already, but we haven't seen that in the Prairie provinces yet. And it's good to be the leaders on important legislation like this.

We also know that there is wide support for this bill across the province. When the labour and management both come together in the labour management committee that advises this government to say there is support for this bill, when the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce says there is support for this bill, I would say the will is there. It's—is it there for the government, though? That is what we're going to find out today.

Our NDP caucus feels strongly that Manitoba must follow all of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This bill is in line with recommendation 62 of the TRC's report, which calls upon federal, provincial and territorial governments to work in collaboration with survivors, Indigenous people and educators to educate the general public and Canadian students on the legacy of residential schools.

The TRC was also clear in their recommendation with respect to commemorations, and calls upon the federal government to work in collaboration with Indigenous communities to develop a reconciliation framework for Canadian heritage and commemoration.

Recommendation 80 calls for the federal government, in collaboration with Indigenous people, to establish as a statutory holiday a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to honour survivors, their families and communities, and ensure the public commemoration of the history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process.

Particularly here in Manitoba, where Indigenous people make up the highest percentage of the provincial population in Canada, we must sincerely approach this important work of understanding the intergenerational and systemic impacts of residential schools. We have to acknowledge the truth. We have to honour and grieve all of those who never made it home and the residential school survivors and their families. We must raise awareness and educate Manitobans through the implementation of a statutory day of commemoration.

The goal is to encourage Manitobans to learn about and reflect on the history and present-day truths of the systemic treatment of Indigenous people, as well as to commemorate those who were lost, those

who survived and all of their relations, some of whom are sitting with us in this room today, many of whom live in my constituency and in yours.

The discovery of the graves of thousands of Indigenous children on the grounds of the former residential schools, beginning with the discovery of the 215 children at the Kamloops residential school, has had a profound impact on all Canadians.

It wasn't a surprise to Indigenous people, and it wasn't a surprise to anyone who had previously read the truth and reconciliation report, or observed any of the stories of survivors, because they always knew those graves were there. However, the discovery made using ground-penetrating radar shows all Canadians of the deaths that purposely went unrecorded and validates the claims that Indigenous people have been making for decades.

This year over, 6,500 unmarked graves have been uncovered at residential school sites so far.

This is the day that this government needs to stand in its place and say that they will recognize, honour and leave a lasting legacy of reconciliation in this province.

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): It's an honour to stand here today and speak to Bill 200.

Our government embraces the values of equality, inclusivity and understanding. Look around us today in this great hall, and I hope and pray that this hall will continue to grow in its diversity and its inclusion—gender, beliefs, all backgrounds. Our government is committed to working in collaboration and co-operation and reconciliation, but I will sadly admit myself, I do not know a lot about Indigenous matters in Canada.

Born and raised in Ottawa, I didn't know a lot, sheltered from it. Honour roll student, went to high school, didn't know anything about it. Went off to university, Simon Fraser University on an academic scholarship, and again, I was unaware of what's happening in Canada, in our history.

It wasn't until I moved to Manitoba, where I was shocked, saddened and embarrassed to hear of the stories of what's happened here and throughout Canada. More shocking than that, I had never heard of residential schools. *[interjection]* Yes, the one time I'll agree with members opposite. Never heard of residential schools until I moved to Manitoba in 2006. After attending university, seeking an education, being well-read and well-educated, I had never heard of residential schools until I moved here, and I'm

saddened by that and I'm embarrassed. I think that's the first time I admitted that publicly.

The other day, I'm in my car with my nine-year-old son and we're driving, and he goes, Dad—and for those who have children or nieces and nephews, will relate hopefully to this story, or understand where I'm coming from as a father, not knowing much about this and learning. And every day I'm trying to, in this place and this opportunity, this platform, I have to grow and to meet with people and understand and educate and work towards truth and 'reconciliation.'

My son goes to me, goes, Dad, Dad, Dad. I said, yes, kid? He goes, I need to get an orange shirt. And as a teaching moment, I said, let's see what this kid has to say. He's nine years old. So I look over at him, driving the car, and I say, why? He says, Dad, I need an orange shirt. I said, why do you need an orange shirt, kid? He goes, Dad, you don't know?

I'm going to try and quote him, because I pulled over and wrote this down. He goes, Dad, it's truth and reconciliation day. It is a day we have to take some time, we have to think and pray for all the Indigenous kids that were taken away from their homes.

As a father it's hard to hear when your son says this to you. He goes, Dad, many of them didn't come back. Did you know that many of them were killed, Dad? It is a very sad day, Dad, so we have to wear orange shirts for them. Everyone has to wear an orange shirt for them so that people never forget and this never happens again to anyone and we learn from this.

* (10:50)

Now, my kid said it with passion. He was sad, he was moved, but he was passionate about it: making sure this doesn't happen again, expressing the importance of it, teaching me the value of it. I was sad, tear rolling down my face. Dad, we have to get an orange shirt.

Now, the member opposite might say, well, I don't want to see them wearing an orange shirt, I don't want to see them at community events, I don't want to see them posting on social media. And yet, my son, who's nine years old, expressed to me the importance of wearing an orange shirt, this—the importance of truth and reconciliation and working towards that.

That, I would argue, is important. That is how we are working towards truth and reconciliation, so my child will grow up in a world where he understands this, one that I was sheltered from and didn't know

about and am embarrassed to this day, but that my son is not growing up in. My son is teaching the values of that, and that is what we're working towards in truth and reconciliation.

Madam Speaker, it's an honour for me to be here. And I've had the privilege to meet many elders, many communities, moms and dads and children from all over, and I'm learning to grow. And that's what I'm here for: to grow, to better myself, to better Manitoba and to better everyone. And that is what we are here to do today.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to speak to Bill 200.

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): It's my pleasure to get up today and speak about Bill 200.

And, again, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie), for bringing forward Bill 200 in honour of our residential school survivors and in honour of the children who never made it home. So, thank you to the member Keewatinook for taking this work on, this very important work on.

Just to begin, I just want to reiterate that fulfilling this ability to make this a statutory holiday is one of the Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, No. 80. And having this statutory holiday would, again, be fulfilling another Call to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, from recommendation No. 62, about the importance of education and more.

There is consensus here in this province already. We know that major employers such as Boeing, Maple Leaf and Canada Life across the way, they've allowed four thousand—thousands, rather, of their employees to take a paid holiday to—in order for them to participate in tomorrow's activities and for them to be able to spend time with their families on this important day tomorrow. So we're already seeing, you know, mass action from just employers, from schools and other places all over the province.

Similar to the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan), yesterday, as a busy mom, I was with my children at the mall trying to find orange shirts for these two growing boys that I've got. I was walking with my son and—who's seven, and he said under his breath: residential school survivor. It's a mouthful.

Later on in the car ride home, my seven-year-old said to me, Nanay—which means mother—could you tell me the story of why we wear orange shirts? But before I could say anything, my five-year-old boy

said, I already know that story and I don't want to hear that story, so let's not talk about that story. So you can already see them, at ages seven and five, being exposed and processing what this day means and what this very, very painful part of our Canadian history means. And—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. In accordance with rule 24 and as previously announced, I am interrupting this debate to put the question on the first official opposition selected bill for this session.

The question before the House, then, is second reading of Bill 200, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, I'd like to call a recorded vote on that, please.

Madam Speaker: And as per our rules, a recorded vote will take place this morning at 11:55.

* * *

Ms. Fontaine: Is there leave to call it 11, please?

Madam Speaker: Is there will to call it 11 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 20—Condemning the Provincial Government's Cuts to Health Care

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and the time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this—oh. The resolution before us this morning is on Condemning the Provincial Government's Cuts to Health Care, brought forward by the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Brar).

House Business

Madam Speaker: Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Burrows, I believe the honourable Official Opposition House Leader wishes to make a request.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Madam Speaker, on House business.

Pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Sandhu). The title of the resolution is Condemning the Provincial Government for Failing to Make Life More Affordable for Manitobans.

Madam Speaker: Pursuant to rule 33(8), it has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Sandhu). The title of the resolution is Condemning the Provincial Government for Failing to Make Life More Affordable for Manitobans.

And, as per the new rules, apparently it is pursuant to rule 34(8), so I would just like to clarify that for the record.

* * *

Madam Speaker: We will now move on to the resolution, and I would indicate that the end of this hour will take place at 11:56.

So, the honourable member for Burrows.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara),

WHEREAS the Provincial Government's healthcare cuts left Manitoba's healthcare system ill-prepared for the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government cut 18 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds during its ill-fated consolidation of hospitals; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government cut 56 inpatient surgical beds before the pandemic and closed another 124 beds in Winnipeg over the past four years; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government cut important services such as CancerCare services at Seven Oaks and Concordia Hospital; and

WHEREAS hospitals across the province are struggling with high nursing vacancy rates; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government cut 75 nursing seats at Red River College, which worsened the nursing staffing crisis; and

WHEREAS understaffed nurses are being forced to work mandatory overtime, which has resulted in high levels of burnout and senior nurses taking early retirements; and

WHEREAS Emergency Room (ER) wait times are the highest they've ever been; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government's cuts have resulted in a lack of hospital beds; and

WHEREAS hospitals have been forced to place patients in hallways and staff lounges often for hours at a time due to a lack of beds; and

WHEREAS it is clear the province has returned to the practice of 'hallway medicine' just like the last Provincial Conservative Government in the 1990s; and

WHEREAS doctors and nurses have sounded the alarm regarding the drop in the standard of patient care.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba condemn the provincial government for its cuts to Manitoba's health-care system, for bringing back hallway medicine and for failing front-line workers, including doctors, nurses, technicians, aides and others.

Motion presented.

Mr. Brar: Sat Sri Akal. *[Truth is God.]* Before I start, I want to share that yesterday was an important day for all of us and for myself as well. Many of you might have seen me in orange traditional dress with matching black turban. I want to share that the dress I was wearing yesterday was the first and earliest opportunity that I could wear that dress, called kurta pajama, in this Chamber after the rule changes.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair
* (11:00)

I want to say thank you to my colleagues who worked hard to bring this change in this Chamber. I feel honoured and all the communities get an opportunity to reflect who they are, and to celebrate their culture through their dresses in this Chamber, so I'm honoured to wear the kurta pajama yesterday. I think that would be the first time an elected represented—

elected representative would have worn kurta pajama in this Chamber. Feeling honoured, thank you.

I want to start by thanking our wonderful health-care professionals, home care, nurses, doctors, specialists, technicians, aides, who have worked day and night, cared for us all, so that we could fight this pandemic and COVID-19 to save lives. I can't thank them enough.

I am so indebted to them that they preferred us over their own families and their own lives. They put themselves on risk to save us, but unfortunately this government is failing all those wonderful professionals by cutting health care in Manitoba.

Our health-care system is broken. Or I should say, our health-care system is broken under the current government. Or I should rightly say that this government broke our health-care system and we all know that we are struggling with so many issues in our health-care system.

We have shortages of nurses. We have retention issues; nurses are leaving our province. We have an aging workforce and there is mandatory overtime that those nurses have to work, even if they're not willing to or their circumstances don't allow. Wait times are up.

It's not that we don't have professionals available, but unfortunately it's the choice of this government to not hire the qualified people that are urgently needed to strengthen our health-care system.

What's happening is the opposite. They are cutting. They're cutting health care, they're cutting staff, they're putting Manitobans' lives on risk by this strategy. Internationally educated nurses are available right here in this province, but this government is failing to make use of their experience and qualifications. The system they have to go through is so slow and complicated that they get frustrated and they get upset while getting through that process and getting into the health-care system as professional workers.

Not only this, we have doctor shortages. And I want to share this, that Manitoba has the lowest number of family physicians per capita in Canada. That's not something we could be proud of. I feel ashamed while sharing this information with you all. And it's the third lowest for specialist physicians in Canada.

We can do better here. And this is the data from Canadian Institute for Health Information. Half of the physicians are showing signs of burnout and

40 per cent of the physicians are planning to retire, reducing clinical hours or moving to another province over next three years. This information comes from a survey by Doctors Manitoba.

Can we get more doctors here? Yes, it's possible, but what's lacking is the political will. If we specifically talk about the northern health, we know what the state of affairs is. It's even worse.

You see published stories. There was a recent story published about a family, a mother and seven-month-old daughter from a First Nation community. She was not getting the care her daughter deserves, and she had to call the community medical van. No one showed up for so long, she had to request a neighbour to take the daughter to the clinic, to the nursing station. And she had to be sent to emergency in Winnipeg.

This is just one of the stories. Our health-care workers, they are burnt out. They are under pressure, and there are chances that they're not able to do their jobs properly because of the stress and cuts made by this government.

When you talk about health care for international students, yesterday I got a chance to talk to international students protesting right before our Legislature. They were demanding public health care for international students.

And when we talk about international students, it's those people who bring millions—hundreds of millions of dollars—to our province. And the public health care that they used to have while NDP was in power, it was cancelled by the PC government in 2018. Just compare: hundreds of millions of dollars that a community brings here to your province, and it just costs 3.1-ish million dollars to provide that health care, which is a basic human right.

And there have been stories published where those international students had to be admitted to the hospital and there was huge hospital bills, medical bills, that their families could not afford. And the students were telling that one of the student's body was not being sent to his country, because the family didn't pay the bill. That's unfortunate.

We need to set priorities, and we need to do better in health care in this province. That's why I'm here with this resolution condemning the provincial government's cuts to health care. And when we talk about the PC's response to it, sometimes it seems—I get upset when our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) talks about her son's hockey game, when she is being asked about

why a mom died while she was being shifted from ICU to another province. I'm heartbroken.

That's why I have this resolution with me today, and I expect everybody to support it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Questions

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

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I know the member opposite talks a lot about things in the past, but conveniently misses great opportunities on advancements in health in Manitoba.

And I'm just wondering, did the member opposite not attend the Selkirk hospital expansion announcement, which added 30 new hospital beds?

* (11:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Burrows. [*interjection*] Order, order.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would gladly take this question and respond to it.

Thank you, my friend from Brandon East for this wonderful, wonderful question, and expect a wonderful, wonderful answer to this.

I would put it as a quote, Beds don't care for people; people care for people. Who said that? Bob Moroz, the president of Health Care Professionals. Thank you.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): First I'd like to thank my colleague, the MLA for Burrows for bringing forward this really important PMR this morning, and for raising and amplifying the voices of those impacted by what's happening in our health-care system as a direct result of this government's terrible decision making in health care.

I'd like to ask my colleague, what have we been hearing from front-line workers about their experiences of the failing health-care system over the last two years?

Mr. Brar: Thank you very much for this question.

Simply, they're burnt out because whenever we get the chance to talk to front-line workers, they're complaining the way this government is handling the health-care system, as a result of their cuts to health care. The health-care professionals and front-line workers are stressed; they are burnt out; it's impacting their ability to do their job.

That's what I'm hearing and I'm sure all other members, when going back to the doors and talking to front-line workers, should be hearing the same.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to thank the member for bringing forward this resolution. I'm a little surprised that there's not a mention of the problems in the areas of mental health and addictions, which also fall under health-care, and I wonder whether you could comment about that?

Mr. Brar: Thank you so much, member from River Heights, for this question. You know, mental health is equally important, and this government is treating almost all the departments, not just the health care, not just the mental health, not just the education, but all departments in the same manner, because they like to cut, cut and cut. And the impact is visible all over.

So, I think and I agree to you, that mental health is also equally important and this government should do better in handling mental-health issues as well and fund it more.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Thank you very much for putting this forward.

However, the member continues to put false information on the board, and does the member opposite think that the benefit provided the people of Swan River, and Russell with the expansion of the Russell ECCC Cancer Care, the announcement of the CT scan, the long overdue diagnostic service in Swan River, that came forth this summer from our government's investment in health care, is 'nonextracant', simply because it occurred outside the perimeter?

Mr. Brar: Should I start with the lack of hot water and tap issues in Thompson, that took like, days—sorry, weeks, or months—to fix? That's also outside the perimeter. So, everybody knows, everybody knows that how this government is handling health care, and everyone knows that they are cutting, and the people who are putting these questions to me—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brar: —they themselves know that this government is cutting health care, and the results are visible in the recent research polls. Manitobans know everything and they—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: I'd like to ask my colleague why he thinks it's important that we listen to front-line workers and respect their expertise as front-line health-care workers in our system in Manitoba.

Mr. Brar: I thank my wonderful colleague, who is a strong critic for Health in Manitoba and I appreciate their work in this field; and they're a role model and I see them as the future Health minister for Manitoba.

You know, we should listen to the front-line workers because they're the ones who are the people working on ground, right there where things are happening. And they are the people who can tell us how a policy should be formed. That would be a bottom-up approach, that would be a real and concrete information our policies should be based on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Isleifson: It's unfortunate that the member opposite, my friend from Burrows, was not at the Selkirk announcement, because he would have heard the executive there say that they have great staff, they have room, they have capacity and they're doing extremely well.

I do believe, though, that everyone realizes that in Manitoba, health is our No. 1 priority.

Will the member opposite come on board with our caucus in demanding that the federal government increase transfer payments to Manitoba?

Mr. Brar: I thank the member from Brandon East, again, for a wonderful question and I would try to answer it again in the same manner.

I was talking to friendship centre clients and workers there in Interlake recently and one of the people were talking about Selkirk. First of all, they have to drive to Selkirk to seek medical help and then, if there are chances or circumstances that the patient has to be sent—emergency to Winnipeg, they have to wait there—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Wowchuk: I'm—appreciate the member from Brandon East bringing that forward about the support for government, you know, health care and increasing

health-care funding transfers. But we know, however, they support the alliance that the present NDP have with the Liberal government federally; so, don't have any expectations there.

However, does the member opposite prefer the NDP's approach to health care, which included permanently shutting down numerous rural emergency rooms? If the NDP wants to invest, why didn't they do something then?

Mr. Brar: We would do some great things and very soon, in a few months—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Brar: —I think, or at least next year. We would do great things. And the scenario is like that and people are saying that. People of Manitoba are saying that and that information is being published that people are also waiting for us to be on the driving seat and do what you expect us to do.

We would do great things. Stay tuned, sir.

MLA Asagwara: I have to thank my colleague for his last response because, you know, people in Manitoba need hopeful leadership. You know, they need to know that despite the devastating status of our health-care system that there is hope on the horizon in health care, and so I really appreciate the way that he shared his last answer.

My question for my colleague is: How would the NDP's approach to health-care funding be different than what we're seeing from the PCs?

Mr. Brar: I thank my colleague again for this question.

I would say this simply: We would listen to Manitobans and plan what they want us to plan. It would be bottom-up approach. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is now open for debate.

* (11:20)

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Good morning, all. It certainly, as we always say, it is a pleasure to rise in the House and put a few words on the record on any bill—or resolution in this case here—and health care. I've had the opportunity to stand in this House and speak many times on health care simply because of my history in the past of working in health care for

21 years. I think I've mentioned almost every time and I will continue to mention my relationship with the great front-line staff that work in health care.

I can go to any region in Manitoba, any of the five regional health authorities, where I know a number of people, a number of the CEOs, and have a great conversation with them. And again, I do thank my friend from Burrows for bringing forward a resolution. Unfortunately, the title of the resolution doesn't fit the context of what the government has actually been doing in health.

When you look at the investments in health alone, it way outweighs anything negative that the opposition can stand in this House and say. You can tell the dialogue is one-sided, the dialogue is meant to lean folks that live in Manitoba in a direction with information that may be not exactly accurate. When they talk about investments in health care, and the opposition just laughs about what investments, just have to look at the total dollar investment in health care alone, and I will specify, though, that investing dollars in something doesn't really mean that's the end-all-be-all. You need the results.

But to say there is no investment in health care when over billions of dollars are being invested in health care—more than ever before—I'll let the public kind of decipher what that really means when those words come from the opposition. The opposition stands here, and again I will again say, I took the opportunity to attend the Selkirk announcement because it is evident of the investment that this government is making in health care in Manitoba.

When we talk about cuts, let's talk about some cuts that our government has done. We've cut wait times. That's what we're cutting. Look at the data; look at the data. And the opposition can sit there and say, oh what, what are you talking about? Well, if you look at what's happening, we're cutting vacancies by opening up more nursing seats, so if you look at things like that, it's all in how, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how you wordsmith it to make it to fit your dialogue.

But I want to talk about facts. Our government, we know, supports health-care workers. We know that health-care workers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, go above and beyond in what's been happening. Let's just look at the last two years, and the extra work that they've put in, the dedication they have to their profession. Manitobans, for example, who are waiting for hip or knee replacement surgery have the ability to get more quicker service because of three new agreements that our government has come up to.

We've three new agreements are important interim measures to help people who've been waiting for a long time. And if I can, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to mention some projects here. So, a pilot project launching with Big Thunder Orthopedic Associates in northwest Ontario with 10 patients being served, is expected that the program will expand to provide care for as many as 20 to 30 people per month in locations like Dryden, Fort Frances and Kenora.

These are opportunities not only for Manitobans to get quicker service for themselves, but if someone chooses to go—and I say yes, they get the opportunity to choose to go to one of these places for this much-needed service—what that does twofold: it allows them to get service faster, but it also removes them from the wait-list that's in Manitoba, so it shortens up our local wait-list. So it helps the entire health field.

Also contracting, with Sanford Health in North Dakota starting this month and going forward, up to 10 patients per month are expected to travel to the clinic for hip or knee surgeries, with capacity expected to double next year. That's right: double that capacity, again cutting the wait-list here in Manitoba for the member opposite, so that that member has an understanding.

A third agreement has also been signed with the Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio, for hip surgeries. This project will launch—be launched by next month, and 100 people this year expected to receive this care, with another 200 in the following years.

So again, they're—it's an opportunity to advance on our investment in health care. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about health care in Manitoba, again, it is very passionate to all of us. We all have a different perspective. But when I look at the number of challenges that are facing our health-care system in Manitoba, it's no different than the challenges facing hospitals or health departments all over not just Canada but all over North America.

I know some of my colleagues on the other side of the House and some colleagues on this side of the House, we took the opportunity to head to the Midwestern Legislative Conference this year down in Kansas. And speaking down there with a lot of our counterparts we spent time talking about mental health and addictions and the effect on health care—had on all of us during the pandemic.

And they're in no different position than anybody else in Canada. Staff shortages are seen right across North America. The challenging of people working extra hours through the pandemic—we must realize that this—the pandemic is something that is new to all of us, we've never experienced it before, we've never gone through this. I can only say thank you, and thank you, thank you, to the front-line workers, you know, who helped us through that endeavour.

A little bit closer to home, our government is supporting hundreds of internationally educated nurses to obtain their licenses and start practicing in Manitoba. Again, 149 nurses in last year's program have completed the 12-week critical-care orientation program, 29 of which graduated in May.

Those are just—we've talked about nurses, I've already talked about wait-times, there's so much information that's out there when we look at investments that our government has made. Again, 2018, we added over 1,000 additional hip and knee procedures, 2,000 additional cataract procedures, to help reduce wait-times.

In 2019, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we began renovations and committed to building a new emergency department at the St. Boniface Hospital right here in Winnipeg. In 2020, \$10-million fund for priority procedures, however the next day they did declare that—the global pandemic so that put things a little bit on hold, but in 2021 \$812 million for Manitoba's clinical and preventative services plan for rural and north—or, pardon me, rural and northern Manitoba.

The ability to provide service closer to home and bring specialists is one that we've been seeking since day one, and my education—or my career in health care—since 1994, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there's been a lot of ups and downs regardless of who—what party was in government, but I can honestly say the investments that are being made now are much better than—

An Honourable Member: It's all down.

Mr. Isleifson: No, it's not all—the members opposite, again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they look at articles and they pick and choose words and articles and then create sentences of it so that it looks something like it's not. I mean, I'm standing here right now with facts in front of me.

In 2022: \$141-million investment in the St. Boniface Hospital emergency room development, tripling the size of its ER, that is an investment; \$50 million for the Health Sciences Centre operation

of excellent to increase their surgical and diagnostic capacity by 25 per cent; \$30 million to add 28 additional beds to their intensive-care units, raising our bed base up to 100 from 72—these, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are investments—\$2.5 million for the creation of an adult epilepsy program and expansion of the pediatric program, an investment; \$8 million for a new acute stroke unit at Health Sciences Centre, investment.

So you can see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are investments that are being made into health care in Manitoba because Manitoba residents deserve it. I could go on and on, I know I have—some of my colleagues also want to speak to this, and if the opposition is really interested, I have many, many more numbers of investments that I would love to share with them, such as the \$812 million to build, expand and fix our health-care facilities in all regions of our province.

I would invite the members even to come to Brandon, come to see what's happening at the Brandon regional health authority. *[interjection]* They've got the front parking lot ripped up because we're investing in health care. *[interjection]* I know they don't like—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Isleifson: As I read in a movie—or saw in a movie one time: They can't handle the truth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are actual numbers they can search—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Isleifson: —all they want. They can come to Brandon—I invite them to come to Brandon and visit the Brandon Regional Health Centre and they can see the investments we're doing because the ground work is already under way.

* (11:30)

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): I'm really grateful for the opportunity to put a few words on the record in regards to my colleague's very important resolution this morning.

It's been a few months since we've been in the House, and, like probably everybody in this Chamber, I have heard on a daily basis from Manitobans, from health-care workers just how bad things are in our health-care system. We have gone from people talking about our health-care system in

Manitoba being in a state of crisis to front-line workers, experts, physicians describing what they're seeing in health care as a systemic collapse.

I have to say that I do have a good understanding and appreciation for the member for Brandon East's (Mr. Isleifson) background in health care and I know he's got a passion for health care, which is why it is so concerning to hear him talk about what is going on in our health-care system with such a deep lack of understanding and appreciation for the negative impacts on Manitobans. It's incredibly, incredibly disingenuous for that member to stand up in this House and talk about all of the empty announcements they have made, time and time again, without being able to connect whether or not any of those announcements have resulted in improved health outcomes for Manitobans.

The member for Brandon East knows full well; he understands that none of those announcements are ever going to be realized (1) because there's not enough staff in our health-care system to work in any of the centres, facilities or organizations where they're claiming they're going to invest those dollars, and (2) because this government is completely and utterly ill-equipped, unable to make good health-care decision making for Manitobans. That is plain to see. Manitobans know it, they let this government know, they let us know. And, unfortunately, the really sad thing about, you know, this PC government and the remarks made by that member is that they continue to neglect the reality that Manitobans are facing.

We're not talking about numbers and stats and data, we're talking about people. We're talking about families. We're talking about seniors like Jean, a senior in my constituency who lives in Lions Place and is now worried—she's 91 and she is now worried that she is going to be homeless. Jean and I talk frequently about how she used to be able to go to Misericordia and access health care, unable to do that because of this government's decision making in cutting the health care that she used to access at Concordia Hospital.

I talk to folks on a regular basis about the fact that they leave emergency rooms because the wait times are up to 170 hours. I hear from front-line workers on a daily basis who are burnt out. I wonder if that member is even aware of the fact that more nurses have left their jobs in the emergency room at HSC than there are people in this Chamber when this Chamber is full.

Does he have any concept of what that means in terms of the care that is able to be delivered and how it affects Manitobans? I don't think he does. I don't think he cares, actually, because he's more focused on regurgitating old, repeated-a-dozen-times-if-not-more over announcements that don't actually translate into things getting done by this government, nor better outcomes for Manitobans. You know, we don't have a surgical dashboard yet that was promised this month to Manitobans. We don't get regular updates on the surgical and diagnostic backlogs.

That member should—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara:—know because he's probably heard it from people, that there are literally Manitobans dying because they can't get the surgeries that they need. There are Manitobans who, when they finally get a prognosis, a diagnosis, they are further in their stage of cancer or other critical illnesses because they have gone so long without accessing the care that they need.

Honestly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member's comments are embarrassing. His focus is the wrong focus, the wrong approach. It doesn't put people first, which is the problem with this government. They do not put Manitobans first. And they're not going to put Manitobans first and Manitobans know that. Which is why they're making it perfectly clear that this government cannot be the government responsible for delivering health care in this province.

I want to make sure that I talk about the fact that, you know, here in Manitoba—because this member made a point of saying that everybody across the country is facing what we're facing in Manitoba, everybody everywhere has the shortage that we have—the reality of it is, again, he doesn't think about the people who are affected by what's going on.

Manitoba has some of the worst COVID health outcomes related to COVID across the pandemic and even now. If Manitoba is just like every other jurisdiction, if there's really no difference, we're all facing the same thing, why is it that here in Manitoba, we had some of the worst health-care outcomes in North America? Why is it that Manitoba, right now, is on pace to triple—triple—the rates of HIV in Manitoba? Why is it that we see unprecedented rates of congenital syphilis here in Manitoba?

If Manitoba is just like everywhere else, why is it, then, that Manitobans are struggling so much when

it comes to health-care outcomes? I'm talking, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about people.

The PCs need to shift their focus. Manitobans' lives literally depend on it. We are seeing unprecedented poor health outcomes here in Manitoba that are preventable. Preventable. We are seeing these things happen as a direct result of this government's refusal to invest in public health care, to ensure that there's health-care equity.

It is unacceptable that that member stands up in this House and celebrates the fact that Manitobans are having to go to another country to get access to basic surgeries that should be performed here, in their own province, in their own communities, with their own doctors, with their own nurses, with their own health-care aides, with their own anesthetists, with their own physio and occupational therapists and social workers. It is embarrassing that this member would stand up and champion that as a victory, that member—that Manitobans, our constituents, if they are able, if they have the personal resource to come up with the money up front, have to go to America to get health care.

That is unacceptable. On this side of the House, we refuse to accept that as the standard for health care in our province. Manitobans refuse to accept that as the standard for health care in our province. And those very same Manitobans who are having to make the decision about whether or not to go get their surgeries in the United States are the very same Manitobans who don't even know what the waits look like for their surgeries and diagnostic tests because this government can't even get it together enough to publish a dashboard they had the infrastructure to publish many, many, many months ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are in an unprecedented challenge in our province, absolutely. We also have an unprecedented opportunity in front of us. We can do things different in health care in Manitoba. We don't have to see more and more health-care workers either leaving their jobs altogether or going to BC or Ontario, or the nurses that I talked to last week that this member probably cares nothing about—hasn't talked to them, he talks about who he talks to but can't mention the folks who are actually actively leaving Manitoba, going to Saskatchewan for better opportunities because this government has mistreated health-care workers since 2016 when they fired hundreds of these nurses.

And I want to make clear: the nurses in the meeting that I met with last week specifically talked about the fact that because hundreds of nurses in

Manitoba were fired by this government, when they graduated they had to compete with all of those nurses who are now looking for other jobs and couldn't get employment. It's incredible how they do not see the direct cause and effect of their decision making and where it's gotten us to, in here, Manitoba today.

So, the last thing I'm going to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

MLA Asagwara: —another area this government is failing is on communicating the importance of Manitobans accessing the bivalent vaccine. It is available. If you're 18 and older, you can get the bivalent vaccine. We are about to be in respiratory illness season, which has been very hard on our health-care system since 2019 when our system could barely handle it. Go and get boosted, go and get your vaccine.

* (11:40)

Protect yourself and others. Our health-care system needs for Manitobans to be proactive about this to ensure that our system—which experts are saying is on the brink if not already collapsing—that we don't see that happen. Let's support our health-care workers.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): First of all, I want to say thank you to our health-care workers for their professionalism and exceptional patient standard of care.

Our government fully supports that we have. Manitoba's health-care workers go above the call of duty everyday to ensure all patients are cared for and taken care of. And we've come through one of the most difficult times in our generation—probably in the history of health care—with the pandemic that we endured over the last couple years.

And I know the members opposite keep on chirping, they keep on putting false information on the board, they talk about cuts, cuts, cuts, and all this stuff. Well, \$19.5 million to fill 259 nursing seats this year; \$11.6 million to permanently expand Manitoba's nursing seats by 400; \$4.3 million for 37 additional nurse training seats at University College of the North—and my colleagues from the North will have an appreciation for that; \$23,000 in financial aid for each internationally educated nurse to help with fees as they work to obtain their licensure. And we—when we talk about cuts, well, we know the members opposite. They sure don't know how to cut taxes, so that's why

Manitobans will never give them the chance to be in government because all they're going to do is elevate the taxes and we're going to lose out in health care.

But going back to health care, you know, there's a many, many things we have—we had a broken system, a real broken system. And when I talk to some of the people in health care right now, some of the professionals and people like that—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wowchuk: —they go ahead, and the member from St. Johns got an alternative but continued to 'dislitle' people—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wowchuk: —and that's all she's good at. So there you go, continues, continues. You know, unacceptable but I guess when somebody has no confidence in themselves this is the tactics that they take. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. *[interjection]* Order please. *[interjection]* Order please.

The honourable member for Swan River has the floor.

Mr. Wowchuk: So we're going to go on here and talk, you know, we had a broken system and a lot of the seniors that you talk to in the health-care system, they'll say they—we will reward the fruits of our efforts, and this is starting to show a lot of times.

The three new agreements are an important interim measure to help people who've been waiting for care for too long, and as we work to build long-term sustainable improvements, increase capacity in our health-care system, the pilot project launching with the Big Thunder Orthopedic Associates in northwestern Ontario with 10 patients being served, it's expected the program will expand and provide care for as many as 20 to 30 per month at these locations.

Contracting with Sanford Health in North Dakota, starting this month and going forward up to 10 patients per month and expected to travel to the clinic for the hip or knee surgeries with capacity expected to double next year. And a third agreement has also been signed with Cleveland Clinic in Cleveland, Ohio for hip surgeries.

So our government is working very hard to catch up on these—on this backlog of surgeries and diagnostic services—and speaking of diagnostic services, there was a thrill this year to join a number of my colleagues and the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) in Swan River

where they announced the CT scan and the funding toward the CT scan in Swan River. This was a much, much-needed diagnostic service. We're having patients, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that were going up to five times a day where ambulance services out of the community, were having to take people to Dauphin, or The Pas, for CT scans and this was really tough on our elderly patients. It was tough on the work force, it was tough on—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Wowchuk: Can I continue?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Mr. Wowchuk: Okay, thank you.

I know it hurts to hear the truth. When we say about the great things that we're doing—and that's whenever we get a lot of interference across the floor; that's the reason why—but our people in Swan River, they were very excited about this announcement because that means a lot of them will not have to travel out of community, take their loved ones to different—take days off of work, et cetera, and they all voted against it. Yes, all voted—every time we vote against.

Unprecedented spending in health care is what our government has put forth. Even in Russell, another announcement, under Russell ECCC, okay, the CancerCare expansion in—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please. *[interjection]* Okay, order.

There's heckling, there's comments, I'm hearing someone singing, I'm hearing someone chattering. The member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) has the floor. That member is the person whose voice should be heard, not other songs, chatter and heckles that drown it out. So, I don't have a problem with heckling, but it's getting out of hand. So, please, tone it down.

The member for Swan River, please continue; you do have the floor.

Mr. Wowchuk: I'll just continue to share some of these good news stories that we continue to put out, because it obviously is striking a nerve.

Last week, there were 1,117 non-emergent surgeries completed the week, and 227 emergent. This is over 101.5 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. Now that just—that shows how hard our government is working on this backlog. All emergent and—or all emergent and urgent surgeries including cardiac and cancer procedures continue to be 'prioritized,' okay, elective and non-urgent surgeries are constantly

reviewed by the physicians to 'prioritize' patients who medically should not wait any longer for procedures to be performed. Nurse staffing changes are an issue all provinces are facing. You begin listening to the national news in the evening—every province—and there are some horror stories—but everybody is working toward making the system better. And I know that all provinces, whether it's BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan or the eastern provinces, Atlantic provinces, they're all facing the same challenges as Manitoba is.

And we are doing something about it. We are investing. We had one of the largest investments in the history into the health care. And we also—\$19.5 million to add 259 nurse training seats this year at five post-secondary institutions. UCN has got to fill another 37, and we benefited from that actually in Swan River, where UCN works with the people in Swan River. And 20 LPNs will be graduated, consecutive, year after year, just in that community alone.

And I had the opportunity this year to attend one of those graduations. And we had—there was 12 new nurses in the LPN course—or that took the LPN courses with UCN that graduated, and that was really gratifying to see. Because those nurses are local; a lot of them were from the valley; a lot of them are going to remain in the hospital—some of them—so we're working toward getting this opportunity for nurses so that they can work in the communities that is close to home and they so dearly love so they can contribute and give something back to those communities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$4.3 million for 37 additional, 115 nurses graduated in October, and 106 in June, from the Rady Faculty of Health Sciences college of nursing. We've also worked with other—our post-secondary institutions to allow for an additional intake of nursing students, raising the total to an additional three a year. And 149 in the last year have completed the 12-week critical-care orientation program, 29 of which graduated in May.

So we are starting to see these graduates and these nurses coming back into the workplace, and they're improving. And now I understand when some of the senior health officials said to me that we're going to see the fruits of our benefits, because it is showing; it is going to show every day, every week, every month, every year, and we're going to have the opportunity next year to carry on for another four years to show

the great improvements that we are making in health care.

* (11:50)

We have also worked—let's see here, there's so much to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I could go on and on about all the great things and the money we're investing in health care and the improvements that are happening. Our government is supporting hundreds of internationally educated nurse applicants to obtain the licensure and start—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

I just want to say to all members that I am aware of the time change. I've checked the rules, and we go to 11:55.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, things are moving quickly, so I will speak quickly.

The current situation—we have watched and listened to this government—MLAs who are trying to go to extraordinary lengths to cover up the problems in health care. I mean, if you're going to get solutions you need to be a little more honest about the problems that are there.

Health care's being called a crisis, a disaster. We've seen situations recently at the Health Sciences Centre, at the ER and the wards which are basically without precedent, in terms of people being held up in emergency rooms, having to fill up not the normal emergency rooms but extra space, having patients with cancer having to be treated in the emergency room because there's no space in the wards and one thing after another. It is a crisis and it is there because there hasn't been adequate respect for nurses, help for nurses.

Mandating nurses to work after they've already worked eight hours or sometimes 12 hours—this is a problem and it is a problem—imagine, here, you've worked, you've sweated, you've really put yourself out for eight hours as a nurse. At the end of eight hours, you think you're going home, you're going to have a birthday party for your children, you're going to have a wedding for a friend, you're going to have all sorts of things. All of a sudden, you are mandated—you are dead tired, you have to stay here another eight hours and you have to work your butt off because this is the way that the PCs are operating the health-care system.

It is a disaster. And that's one of the main reasons why the nurses are leaving. There's an unprecedented number of nurses leaving who've been working in emergency rooms. It's contributing to the disaster and it's a disaster because this government is not treating people in health care well and properly and with respect.

There are not only long waits in the ER, there are continuing long waits in surgical—for surgical procedures. There are long waits for all sorts of aspects of health care. We finally have a stroke unit but it's about two decades after most other provinces and that's because of problems on both sides of the aisles here. The NDP and the PCs delayed and delayed and thank goodness we finally got it, but it should have been here 20 years ago.

There are lots and lots of things that need to be paid attention to in health care and addictions and mental health are part of that. When you've got people lining up at a RAAM clinic and they can only take one person out of 10 or 20 because there's not enough doctors, there's not enough time, the doctors are already allocated to people in follow up. There's not a—there's a big problem as well with access to Suboxone, for people who are having to wait and one thing and—another adds up. We have a problem.

We support this motion and we hope it goes to a vote.

Thank you.

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I just wanted to say a few words: that the health care in the North has been absolutely destroyed by this government.

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): I want to thank everyone for the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being eleven-fif—*[interjection]*—when this matter is again before the House, the member will have 10 minutes remaining.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

(Continued)

Bill 200—The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act (Various Acts Amended)

(Continued)

Recorded Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being 11:55, in accordance with rule 24 subsection (7), I'm

interrupting proceedings to proceed with a deferred division that was requested during this morning's private members' business on second reading of Bill 200, The Orange Shirt Day Statutory Holiday Act (Various Acts Amended).

Accordingly, call in the members.

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 200, the orange shirt day statutory act.

Division

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

Yeas

Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliw, Wiebe.

Nays

Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Eichler, Ewasko, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson (Interlake-Gimli), Johnston (Assiniboia), Khan, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Michaleski, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 20, Nays 29.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for—

An Honourable Member: On House business.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On House business.

An Honourable Member: Is it the will of the House to call it 12 o'clock?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart), on House business: Is it the will of the House to call it 12 o'clock?

Is it the will of the House to call it 12 o'clock?

Agreed? No? I hear a no.

The hour being 12 noon, this House stands recessed and is recessed until 1:30 p.m. this afternoon.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, September 29, 2022

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