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DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
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FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
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STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 21, 2016

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Good morning, Madam Speaker. Would you please call for debate this morning Bill 3 and Bill 5?

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) that this House will consider Bill 3 and Bill 5 this morning.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 3—The Mental Health Amendment Act

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, that Bill 3, The Mental Health Amendment Act, be referred to a—be read a—be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Goertzen: It's my pleasure to bring this bill forward for debate this morning, and I hope that it'll meet with the acceptance and the pleasure of all members of this House. This is a bill that has, in a substantive form, been before this House before. I believe that all members will agree that it is something that is important.

The debate on this bill began probably a couple of years ago in discussions that I had with the then-Attorney General, the former member for St. Johns, Mr. Mackintosh, regarding police resources and the challenge that police were having when they took somebody into custody under The Mental Health

Act, brought them to a hospital and then they were left to be with that individual, often for hours at a time, before they could seek the appropriate medical treatment and the police could then return to their job as they would normally be expected to do, Madam Speaker. I know at that time, the former Attorney General, and I suspect that other former Attorneys General, had already heard concerns from municipal officials, had concerns from different police officers at the municipal level and otherwise about this particular concern, that far too much of their time was being consumed while waiting with somebody in a hospital who was under an order from The Mental Health Act.

And so the bill came forward very, very late. Prior to the last election we indicated, and certainly I indicated as the Opposition House Leader at the time, that we supported the legislation. There wasn't time to act upon it, but I made a commitment at that time that we were supportive of it and if we were fortunate enough to win the election it is something we would act upon. That has transpired, and we are fulfilling that commitment by bringing forward the bill.

Now, the bill ultimately, once it is past the Legislature, if it passes the stages that it needs to pass, will allow us, by order-in-council, to designate individuals who would be specified to be able to take over care and custody, essentially, of an individual who is entering a hospital under The Mental Health Act order from the police officers. Those individuals to be designated by regulation, the expectation is that there would first be a set of training that would be established, and then those individuals could be assigned to that.

Clearly, there might be some obvious candidates who might be part of that: the cadets, perhaps, in Winnipeg; that, of course, would be part of negotiations that would have to happen with the Winnipeg Police Service. Also, the rural version of the cadets, the community safety officers, could potentially be part of that, but also that would take place with negotiations and discussions with the partners who are involved there. But there may be others who could—and I would expect that there would be others—who could be specified as individuals once they've achieved or if they

already have the appropriate level of training. But, ultimately, this is about using and utilizing police officer resources in a better way, in a more efficient way, Madam Speaker. I think that it's a goal that all members of this House would share and would appreciate.

There has been consultation, certainly, I know on our side. There's been a consultation that's already happened with members of law enforcement regarding this bill, but also with the Association of Manitoba Municipalities; they've long been asking for this bill to be brought forward. I'm sure that the former government also had consultations and probably received the same responses that we've received that is—that it's favourable and that it's needed.

And so I look forward to this bill passing, and if the opposition or any other member has questions on the bill, I'd be happy to accept them.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: First question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members; and, no question or answer shall exceed 45 minutes—[interjection] Sorry, 45 seconds.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Yes, I thank the Health Minister for his—for introducing this bill and for his comments today. This is the kind of a bill, of course, that Justice ministers are anxious to get completed and Health ministers have to say, well, we want to make sure everything's in place.

Could the minister walk us through the steps he believes are still necessary in order to be able to proclaim this bill into force?

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living): It's a good question by my friend from Minto, and I suspect that the steps would be the same steps that would've been undertaken by the previous government, had the bill passed before the election.

We'd want to have some consultation with those within the mental health community and within law enforcement to determine the kinds of training that

would be needed to ensure that an individual could be transferred from care and custody from a police officer to another specified individual under the act. And so I think one of the key portions would be to ensure what that training is, whether that training already exists and then who could qualify for that training.

* (10:10)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, Madam Speaker, my question to the minister deals with the emphasis that he's talked about as having cadets as potential people involved. What about people from the medical side, paramedics? What about other security personnel? I'm just wondering what the range is, and also I would be interested in more details of what the training that would be required.

Mr. Goertzen: It's a good question from the member for River Heights. It's not—the range hasn't been defined. I used the example of cadets or community safety officers as sort of a most likely example because they already have pre-existing training. Not every hospital—in fact, most hospitals won't have security within them, and so that might not necessarily be the most appropriate place. I certainly would be open to hearing from mental health professionals, and I have heard from some within the mental health community who suggest they might be able to provide some assistance with this.

So the range hasn't been defined and I think we're—we'll be more focus-specific on the kind of training that needs to take place first, and then look at the pool of applicants who might be applicable to that training.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I can appreciate the minister is taking—undertaking this process earnestly and appreciate when he says he's going to consult and reach out to the mental health community, to law enforcement, to work with them. I also recognize that the legislation says by a fixed date by proclamation is when it will come in force. Can the minister give me a sense of when he expects the process to be done and when this can be expected to be brought into force?

Mr. Goertzen: I don't have a specific date to give the member and I'd be leery to, because he's an effective and efficient critic, and the minute I give him a date, he'll come back and hold me to that specific date and that time, but I can tell him we want it to happen as fast as possible.

Mr. Gerrard: Just the one aspect of the training—it would seem as well as security training that an array of understanding of mental health conditions and mental health concerns would be vital. I wonder if the minister would agree.

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, I certainly would agree. I mean, obviously there's a combined component to this. The individuals who will be taking care and control won't be there to necessarily provide medical assistance. That'll be, obviously, the purview of the medical professionals that they're waiting to see. But it certainly would be helpful for the individuals just to have some understanding of the mental health continuum and the different people they might be dealing with. So there would certainly be an aspect of that.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): First of all, let me say that I think that this is a good bill. You know, discussing this with certain people in the health-care industry, the possibility of there sometimes being, you know, incidents with violence associated with some of these situations was brought to my attention.

So I'd just like to ask, you know, the Minister of Health: How much will that dimension of, you know, the capacity of one of these designated officials to be able to handle themselves in a situation like that factor into the regulations that he will undertake?

Mr. Goertzen: We'd obviously want them to have the ability to be able to decipher a situation, handle it in the most appropriate way, to understand the issues around mental health. But, again, they're not there to treat an individual. They wouldn't be the care provider, per se, as the member knows. They're simply to be there to assist until that care provider is available. So I think there needs to be, obviously, some understanding and awareness of the different challenges that they might face in dealing with somebody who is undergoing either a mental health crisis or an ongoing mental health issue, but they are not to replace those who are actually going to be providing the treatment.

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, just to explore a little bit further the mental health-care aspects, I think it's pretty clear that there are instances where people have mental health conditions, and I can think of conditions, really a neuro-developmental condition, Asperger syndrome, and another condition, dementia, where some knowledge of how to work with people with these conditions can make a huge difference in being able to have a situation dealt with expeditiously and calmly versus having a situation escalate into a

violent situation. And so I would suggest that the training in areas of mental health could be extraordinarily useful in dealing with people.

Mr. Goertzen: I don't disagree that some degree of training would be important; again, they are not there to substitute the care provider. And the same challenges that the member rightfully points out in dealing with individuals under the mental health orders are the same challenges that the police currently face. And so, I'm not sure that the current officers have that range of training either, but certainly there needs to be some degree of training in place.

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, you know, we've heard some of the possibilities as to those that might be designated as a qualified person under the act, like cadets, security guards; I'd add, potentially, band constables to the list.

My question to the minister, though, is whether or not the government has thought through the potential that they made need to provide additional resources, so that there are these qualified people in each health region in the province.

Mr. Goertzen: There's been some discussion regarding how do you ensure that there are the appropriate resources within health-care facilities. I don't want to leave the member with the impression that within six months or perhaps even a year there's going to be a cadre of individuals who are going to be able to blanket and cover the entire province. That might never be able—ever to be achievable, Madam Speaker, but certainly this is an option and a tool to allow where those resources exist or where they will exist in the future to have some sort of an option for law enforcement.

Mr. Wiebe: So just to get back to the timing once again, Madam Speaker, and, you know, I'm not sure exactly why the minister would be hesitant to give me a date. I think it's helpful to set timelines and have a focal point. But at the very least I think AMM is meeting in fall; I'm wondering if at the very least the minister can commit to giving a report to AMM to this, to me as a critic or making that public where things stand and if he has a date at that point.

Mr. Goertzen: I'm always pleased to give a report to AMM. I have a—somewhat of a relationship with their president, Mayor Chris Goertzen, that I'm happy to report either formally to AMM in the fall or whenever I see the mayor in the community.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions?

If not, the floor is open for debate.

Debate

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): It is a pleasure to rise today and put some words on the record about Bill 3, The Mental Health Amendment Act. This bill, as we've heard, will allow police officers to hand over responsibility for supervising individuals who are having a mental health issue to designated individuals in hospitals. As the government members have noticed, my colleagues and I have spent some time these last few weeks questioning and challenging the priorities of this new government. This is not one of these times.

This is a good bill. How do we know it's a good bill? Well, a very similar version was introduced in March of this year by then-Attorney General Gord Mackintosh and, as the Health Minister has said, the bill died on the Order Paper when the election was called.

It is a bill which has been in the works for some time. As I suggested in my comments to the Health Minister, it is the kind of bill when the Justice Minister of the day, whoever that might be, is always very, very keen to get passed. But as I think the Minister of Health is discovering in his role, it isn't always so simple.

I'll put some comments on the record that I hope will elevate the tone of the debate, not just for today but on other more contentious bills we might be debating on another day.

We know the major driver for the bill was advocacy by the Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police and the by the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and its member municipalities.

At present, of course, the law is that when police officers bring an individual in to a hospital, the police are unable to release that person and to go on with their day or night, until that person's been admitted to the hospital. And the result, plain and simple, as I think most members are aware, is that police officers are often called upon to remain with an individual who, although they're presented with a mental health issue, is no danger to themselves or others. We know the police chiefs are unhappy because it ties up their officers for sometimes hours at a time, depending on the time and what else may be going on in that particular hospital, often an emergency room.

Ironically, of course, the patients that are the least concern may result in the longest waits because we know that in the emergency room, patients are triaged, and those who actually have the fewest issues will likely get treatment after those who've been triaged with a higher priority.

* (10:20)

Municipal officials are supportive of this bill and have called for this bill because, put bluntly, they have to pay, often at overtime rates, for officers to stay with a patient. For RCMP detachments, while it's an inconvenience because officers may be tied up for a period of time and for the RCMP contract communities like Steinbach, like Thompson, like Portage la Prairie, they suffer both having the officers out of rotation and also bearing those costs. So it's clear why Justice ministers are for it and want it to go ahead, and, obviously, as I think the Minister of Health has put on the record today, it's the work at the other end. Who's going to be receiving the patients where the work has been done to a certain extent, that, as the Minister of Health has put on the record today, there is still work that needs to be done. We need protocols. I think there is an interest in making sure that the regulations are done in a way that will make sure that individuals who will be filling this role are qualified to do the job and, as others have stated, have the knowledge to make sure that they're dealing with the person safely and appropriately and hoping—hopefully getting them the treatment they need as soon as possible.

So it's certainly important to go ahead. I know that my colleague, member from Concordia, did have some questions about the timing. I promised that in opposition I'll be just as patient and just as reasonable as the Health Minister always was in opposition in making sure that this bill goes forward in a reasonable time, and I expect the Health Minister to give this a lot of attention. Of course, I'm very proud that now near the Health Sciences Centre we do have a dedicated facility that's intended to assist people who come and present with mental health issues. We know that a busy urban emergency room like at Health Sciences Centre can be a challenging place for anybody who has to present there for any kind of health concern. I do believe it was the right step to have a separate facility provided for people presenting with mental health issues, both to make their experience, hopefully, quicker and more appropriate and also to free up time and space in the main emergency room at Health Sciences Centre. I hope this is something the Minister of

Health will look at. Perhaps there's an opportunity to expand this approach within Winnipeg but also other communities in Manitoba.

We know, of course, that there is a need to continue to improve mental health services. As I asked in the House just the other day, and as I asked in Estimates, mental health courts are a great way to bring in the justice system to being part of the solution and not being part of the problem for people experiencing mental health issues. Of course, we did pioneer the first mental health court in Manitoba just a couple of years ago. That court, from everything I understand, is showing good results. I asked the Justice Minister if she'd be prepared to be an advocate for expanding the mental health court system to Brandon; I was disappointed in Estimates that that commitment is now being reviewed and there is no certainty it's going to go ahead. I see just today there's an editorial in *The Brandon Sun* which calls on the new government to proceed with the mental health court. If I could quote the last paragraph of the editorial: We urge our new government to carefully consider the benefit such a program would have to local court operation. If judges in Brandon have identified the need for a mental health court in this community, their assertion should not be dismissed out of hand but rather given due weight.

And, of course, there are many ways that our society has changed and evolved to understand mental health issues. To make things easier for people who are suffering from mental health issues we need to keep moving forward, and I hope the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Stefanson) will get off the fence and will be a true advocate for a mental health court in the city of Brandon. I hope the MLAs from Brandon will raise their voices, and I will assist them with that if they need, and I hope we can also move on that front to make things better in Manitoba.

With respect to this bill, I am pleased it's going ahead. We look forward to the bill moving to committee as soon as possible, and, as I've said, we certainly look forward to the Minister of Health completing the necessary consultations, making sure that a comprehensive system is in place and allowing our police officers to do what they are best trained to do, which is out there keeping us safe rather than cooling their heels in an emergency room.

So, with those comments, Madam Speaker, I certainly support this bill and hope we can move it through as quickly as possible.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I rise also to support this legislation. I think this has the potential to help our police services work and use their time more efficiently by not tying people in the police services up in our emergency rooms with people with brain or mental health issues. It also has the potential to provide more optimum help for the individual with brain or mental health conditions.

I think it is very, very important that, as this proceeds, that there be some careful consideration for the extent and the amount and the type of training related to handling of mental health issues that is provided here. I'm going to give a couple of examples.

I'm going to start with the example of dementia. A good friend of mine, when he was getting older and in his 90s, was becoming more—had more dementia. He had to be taken to an emergency room in the city, and it was very apparent to his daughter, who was with him at the time, that people in and around the emergency room were not adequately knowledgeable about handling individuals with dementia. They—because his dementia—there is a certain level of care that one must take in believing statements that he might be making because of his condition of his brain.

One of the first things that the—was done in that emergency room was to separate the daughter from her father. That immediately separated somebody who was very knowledgeable about her father from her father, as he was taken to receive X-rays and other examinations. It meant that he was more disoriented and more likely to do things that were unpredictable. And, although he was normally a very gentle man, sometimes individuals do, with dementia, as we have all found from public discourse in the last several years, can become very aggressive, when they are disoriented and frustrated, and can act out.

But, at the same time, if you have somebody who has some reasonable understanding of the condition of dementia who can ensure that there is a calm and helpful environment around the individual, who can ensure that there is the ability to find a calm space if the emergency room is very hectic and busy, you can make a difference between having an individual who is going to be no problem at all versus an individual who could be a very significant problem if he became aggressive and violent.

And so, being able to have individuals who are trained so that they understand something not only about identifying and understanding dementia, but also identifying and understanding what one needs to do in terms of reacting to these individuals.

Second, I think it's important that individuals are trained so that they have some knowledge of what a psychopath is. Psychopaths can be very eloquent, can be very persuasive and it's very easy to be taken in by people who are psychopaths.

*(10:30)

And so, if you don't have any particular understanding, you can be completely misled by an individual that you're to be looking after. They seemed so, you know, friendly and persuasive and, you know, they don't have any problem that you can end up with situations which, again, are inappropriate and troubling and potentially dangerous.

So it is very important that somebody who is in this situation has some ability to understand and deal with somebody who is a psychopath. People don't need to be, in fact, psychopaths to be able to mislead people who are supervising or caring for them, and this clearly is something which needs to be well understood. I have seen and know of situations where people have been taken to an emergency room who are clearly having major mental health problems but are able to, you know, rise to the occasion, as it were, and go into the emergency room and convince everybody that they were just fine. And that is something that you need to be—one needs to be aware of.

I would also say that there some of the conditions which are not mental health conditions. We need to be clear. But neurodevelopmental conditions like Alzheimer's disease or FASD where some knowledge of these individuals, how their brain works—and it works differently than most individuals—can make a huge difference in being able to handle those individuals calmly and well versus getting into situations which can be very difficult and disorderly and problematic. And so I would, you know, plead with the Minister of Health as he moves forward that there's a clear segment of training which involves some understanding of just some basic mental health conditions, how to manage and deal with individuals with those conditions so that they are helped.

I think it's also interesting and worth adding that there may be somebody who has both a brain and mental health issue and who has a—what we would normally consider a physical condition. Somebody who has, you know, high or low blood sugar can have behavioural changes as a result of those changes in blood sugar levels. And being able to have at least a little bit of understanding can help ensure that that individual gets attention faster versus slower in terms of the urgency of the condition. And so that some modest level of understanding of conditions—I have heard of individuals who have had a stroke, who are, you know, disoriented and mistook for having, you know, other brain problems. And yet they would need quick attention. You know, most of these individuals, I think, are likely to be individuals who are there being committed or have been involved in situations where there is a need to make sure that they are in medical care, but most of them would have significant, you know, brain health or mental health issues which resulted in them being taken to the hospital.

But I think that the importance of having some understanding of a few critical brain and mental health conditions and maybe a few critical physical health conditions which can mimic some brain health problems can be very helpful. And it might, in fact, if this were to happen, provide a group of people in the—have cross-trained, as it were, in some areas of security and some areas of health who could be very helpful in quite a variety of situations where there could be problems and where we may need to be dealing with situations not just in these circumstances but in other circumstances where we have, you know, activities going on that, you know, should not be going on.

I remember very recently, for example, the MLA for St. Johns talking about being in a situation where she felt threatened. Not to say that anybody there had a mental health condition, we don't know that. But it is to say that, you know, we want to make sure as we achieve and move towards a safer society that we are able to deal with situations where we may have a variety of triggers resulting in people acting in different ways that are troubling and threatening that we need to be able to deal with. And having this group of individuals who are cross-trained in both health and security issues could be very valuable not just in these circumstances where somebody is waiting in an emergency room, but they also could be helpful in a variety of other circumstances

including the one that I have just mentioned, perhaps.

So I salute both the NDP and the Conservatives for bringing forward this bill in sequence, and that this is a joint effort, but I'm pleased that the Minister of Health saw to make sure that this was one of the first bills that was brought back after the election. So credit to the Minister of Health, and thank you for bringing it back and I look forward to this legislation moving forward.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): It's my pleasure to rise today to put just a few brief words on the record and allow for others who may want to speak to this important piece of legislation an opportunity to do so.

I wanted to thank the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for his comments and his words that he put on the record with regards to some of the experiences that he's aware of, and to my colleague from Minto as well, who I know has done a lot of work with our previous government with regards to this particular piece of legislation and helping to develop it and move it ahead and move it forward.

I want to thank the minister for bringing this legislation. This is an opportunity for us to come together in the House around a good idea regardless of political affiliation and to see, you know, when there is a good idea that, you know, finds efficiencies both for the health-care system and for the justice system, that we move forward on it in a bipartisan way in a way that I think recognizes, you know, some of the pressures that are out there and works with our partners, you know, both in the justice system, works with our partners in the health-care system and, you know, the Manitoba Association of Chiefs of Police, the Association of Chiefs of Police and Manitoba—of course, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities who has long been an advocate for this, and I think this is an important reason that we need to bring this forward. And as I asked in my questions, to move this forward as quickly as possible and continue to work with our partners to make sure that this is something that comes to—into effect as soon as possible with the understanding that work needs to be done to bring all partners onside.

So, as I mentioned, this is a bill that was introduced by the former government and, really, again, just looking at efficiencies, looking at an innovative program, a way that we can look at other resources, shifting resources around, and ultimately

freeing up the important work of peace officers and allowing them to carry on in situations where there's—where it's prudent to do so.

We do, of course, recognize that, as the member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew) so importantly brought forward in this House, that, you know, of course training is so very important, making sure that the right people are there, that the right supports are there for those individuals who are put in those positions where violence might become a factor, making sure that those people are taken care of, that there's adequate supports for the people who are put in the position that they need to deal with with these individuals. So it is an important point of view and, I think, something that I think the minister is well aware of as well.

* (10:40)

But this, again, is something that comes to us as an innovative program. It builds on something that we, the previous government, brought forward with regards to claims for automobile accidents, of course, through MPI, allowing the report to come to MPI once, not having to go back to the police and sort of tie up resources with regards to that. So this is sort of—these sort of programs that I think are so important to look at innovative ways to deal with resource issues.

But we know with—specifically with individuals with mental health issues how important it is to invest in those programs that support them. And the minister will know that our previous government tripled the investment in mental health services and invested more than \$150 million in supports, and that's right across the province, things like the stand-alone Mental Health Crisis Response Centre over at Health Sciences Centre. Some of my colleagues may be well aware of this program because when we are dealing with constituents who are in crisis, I know it's been very helpful for me to be able to refer them to a place they know they can go; they can get help immediately; they can access those resources. And it's sort of an immediate way in a crisis situation. And for those who aren't familiar in the House with this great centre, I think it's something you may become more familiar with as you get to know some of your constituents who are in this situation or have family members that are in this situation. And giving them those—that immediate access to those resources can be just what they need in those times of crisis and coupling those with more longer term supports which are out there as well.

Of course, we developed the program for Assertive Community Treatment, which helped folks who have persistent and severe mental illness within the community to access resources and services; the eight-bed Crisis Stabilization Unit in Steinbach for short-term stays; and, of course, the renovations that we undertook to transform the Bell Hotel into a permanent, affordable housing complex with access, again, to mental health and social services right on site.

We, also, of course, launched the Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy, which helped more than 83,000 children to access mental health services. It helped deliver training to social workers, to foster parents, and it invested in youth-led after-school programs in northern and remote First Nations communities.

So these are just a few examples of the ways that this—the previous government saw the value of a mental health strategy and a way of investing in that strategy in a real way that really helped people. This is another example of a—again, a piece of legislation, I think, that furthers that—us down that road to that goal of giving more supports within the community, making sure that those with mental health issues are well looked after, looked after by appropriate people and given access to those services which will benefit them.

So I simply will close off by saying, again, that I hope the minister sees the urgency to this and will move forward as quickly as possible. And I know many others are on board looking for the results and looking for this legislation to come into effect. And I think there's some good work that can be done through this, and I look forward to hearing more from the minister with regards to the mental health strategy and ways going forward that we could see, again, real investments in those services that help folks with mental health issues and give them the supports that they need in the community.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to proceeding with debate, I would just like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have from Meadows West School a number of students, and this school is in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Saran). And we'd like to welcome all of you here today.

And also in the public gallery we have Ken Smith, Grace Smith, Barb Mykle, and these are the guests of the legislative page Kieran Smith. And on behalf of all of us, we'd like to welcome you here today.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further speakers on the debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 3, The Mental Health Amendment Act.

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

Bill 5—The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act

Madam Speaker: We will now proceed to debate of second reading on Bill 5, The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act, recommended by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs): Je propose, appuyée par le ministre de la Santé, que le projet de loi 5, Loi sur l'appui à l'épanouissement de la francophonie manitobaine; The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act, soit maintenant lu une deuxième fois et renvoyé à un comité de l'Assemblée.

Translation

I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 5, The Francophone Community Support and Enhancement Act; Loi sur l'appui à l'épanouissement de la francophonie manitobaine, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

English

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and I table the message.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Bill 5, The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised of the bill, and the message has been tabled.

Ms. Squires: Il me fait plaisir parler de projet de loi 5, la Loi sur l'appui à l'épanouissement de la francophonie manitobaine. Ce projet de loi répond aux demandes de la communauté et reconnaît leur contribution à notre province, en plus de protéger les services en français offerts par le gouvernement et les entités publiques.

Le Manitoba a une population francophone dynamique qui a toujours contribué au développement de notre province. La francophonie manitobaine a beaucoup changé à fil des ans et est beaucoup plus diverse qu'il y a vingt ans. Le projet de loi reconnaît cette diversité et fait en sorte de toute personne qui a le français comme langue maternelle ou comme langue d'usage est considérée comme membre de la francophonie manitobaine.

Le projet de loi reconnaît les progrès réalisés dans le domaine des services en français et pour appuyer l'épanouissement de la communauté francophone depuis l'adoption de la Politique sur les services en langue française en 1989 et le rapport Chartier en 1998. Le projet de loi protège les structures administratives existantes et les outils en place qui nous permettent de communauté de services la communauté de francophone.

Le projet de loi s'assure que la communauté francophone du Manitoba continue de contribuer au développement de notre province et que notre gouvernement a la structure administrative pour répondre aux priorités de la communauté. Il confirme les mandats du ministère responsable des Affaires francophones, du Secrétariat aux affaires francophones et du Conseil consultatif des affaires francophones. De plus, il exigeait que les ministères et entités publique soumettent des plans de services en français.

En terminant, Madame la Présidente, j'aimerais préciser que le projet de loi est très semblable au projet de loi présenté par l'administration précédente. Nous avons tenu compte de la rétroaction de la Société franco-manitobaine avant de présenter le projet de loi. Nous avons reçu beaucoup de commentaires positifs depuis que le projet de loi a été présenté en première lecture.

J'espère, Madame la Présidente, que tous les membres de l'Assemblée appuieront le projet de loi.

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Translation

Madam Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill 5, The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act. This bill was developed in response to the community's request to recognize their contribution to our province and ensure we protect existing French language services offered by government and public bodies.

Manitoba has a strong francophone population that has always contributed to the development of our province. Our francophone community has changed significantly over the years and is now much more diverse than it was twenty years ago. The bill recognizes this diversity and includes as community members all Manitobans whose mother tongue is French or who use French in their daily lives.

The bill recognizes the progress made in the area of French-language services and support to the francophone community since we adopted the first French Language Services Policy in 1989 and tabled the Chartier Report in 1998. The bill protects the administrative structures and tools that have been put in place to continue serving the francophone community.

It ensures that the francophone community continues to contribute to our province and that our government has the administrative structures to be responsive to the community's priorities. It confirms the mandates of the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and the Advisory Council for Francophone Affairs. Furthermore, it requires departments and public bodies to submit plans for French-language services.

In closing, I also want to say that the bill is very similar to the bill introduced by the previous administration, but incorporates feedback received by the Société franco-manitobaine. We have received a lot of positive feedback from the community since the bill was introduced in first reading and it is our hope that all the members of the House will support the bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (10:50)

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition

critic, or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members; and no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

There any questions?

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I ask the minister, if someone steps down from the advisory council before their three years are up, will their position remain vacant or be filled?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage): I thank you very much for that question, and I believe that the advisory council has the jurisdiction to make movement on the committee if someone steps down.

Ms. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I ask the minister what the process or procedure is if a member from the public wants to join the advisory council.

Ms. Squires: Thank you for that question.

They can be in touch with the members that are designated and appointed to be on the committee, which includes the Clerk of the Executive Council, some deputy ministers, the Francophone Affairs Secretariat, and members of the public, and I would encourage them to engage with the Francophone Affairs Secretariat to put in that request.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further—the member—the honourable member for River Heights.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I would just ask the minister for clarification around which six communities are going to be involved in teaching French and where—what the long-run plan is, whether that number is going to be expanded or whether it will stay the same.

Ms. Squires: Thank you for that question.

And this legislation was drafted with the intent to be ongoing development and enhancement of the francophone—the vital francophone community in Manitoba. And so the plans are in place so that while there are certainly no requirements for all—everyone to have the French language services plan in place immediately, it is encouraged and there will be resources provided to ensure that that is in place on a go-forward basis, pending resource allocation.

Mr. Gerrard: I think there's a reference to six communities. Have those communities been chosen,

or is that going to be chosen at some point in the future?

Ms. Squires: It has not been mandated in the legislation, so it will be chosen on an ongoing basis.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further speakers on the debate?

Is the House ready for the—sorry.

There are no further questions in question period?

Is the House ready for the question? No, sorry.

Are there any further speakers on the debate?

Debate

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in response to Bill 5. I am encouraged that the government has introduced Bill 5, a commitment to ensuring that Manitoba's francophone community is recognized through law. I'm also hopeful that the enhancements made to Bill 5 are implemented fully. That way our entire community will benefit from proper recognition of our francophone community.

Manitoba would not be the province that it presently is without our bilingualism. This is why it is critical that we recognize the history of our francophone community and how it has been developed in Manitoba since the 18th century.

Manitoba's francophone community has a vast number of recognizable figures, such as famous author and writer Gabrielle Roy. We also have a woman who I personally admire, the honourable Maria Chaput, a former senator and strong advocate for the francophone community.

Senator Chaput always proclaims the importance of bilingualism here in Manitoba. She speaks and articulates in both French and English with such ease. She encourages all around her to learn French fluently, always insisting that it is worth it.

Because of the historic role that the Francophone community played and continues to play in building Manitoba to be the abundant place that it is today, our government must provide recognition through its rich culture.

I believe that Bill 5 is a step towards the proper recognition of the francophone community. This bill clearly identifies the roles, which I would also interpret as the goals for the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs (Ms. Squires), as well as the

positions of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council. It is encouraging to have these positions spelled out and to better understand them.

It is also assuring to see that Bill 5 states that, and I quote: "The advisory council must meet at the call of the co-chairs and at least twice a year." I think this will be very beneficial for the francophone community and for the province as a whole.

There are elements within the bill that do not provide the opportunity for proper recognition of the francophone community. We fully support ensuring that French language services are offered in Manitoba communities where French is still spoken. It is incredible that Manitoba has such a deep-rooted francophone culture, one in which its language is evident throughout Manitoba. Our province has done a good job at embracing the delicate French language by ensuring it is one of our province's official languages.

Having French be a subject in our education system and promoting the language through government services, French has thus far continued to remain here in Manitoba. However, with that said, I personally believe that in order for the language to be greater preserved and prosper in our great province, we need an emphasis on French being a larger part of the school curriculum.

I recall, when I was in grade school, School Division 1, I believe it was compulsory to take beginner's French; I want to say in grade 7 or 8, give or take a year. With that said, I regrettably did not pursue further study in the language to become fluent. It is a little ironic because I am French; however, I'm still learning how to speak it.

The bill talks about French classes being accessible. I believe there are a few topics that need to be further explored in order to do this. Firstly, it tends to be difficult to afford French classes. If Manitoba wants to be proud of being a bilingual province, we need to open up more opportunities for everyone who wants to make that happen. What happens if you're in your mid-40s on low income with two children of your own, how are you going to afford to take French class? Another aspect to consider is timing, same scenario, a person in their mid-40s with children, when are they going to have the time to learn French? Perhaps it's exploring these Rosetta Stone learning tools.

People are on different levels and learning a new language, especially as adults, can be intimidating and nerve-racking. There has to be a certain level of confidence and encouragement in the system. In order to be truly—in order to truly embrace the francophone community and continue to be proud of being a bilingual province, the government may need to consider various aspects of making French-language classes more accessible.

It is a personal goal of mine to be able to speak and debate fluently in French one day in these very chambers.

Actuellement, je ne peux parler qu'un peu de français, même si je suis française.

Translation

Actually, I can only speak a bit of French, despite the fact that I am of French descent.

English

It is an—it is imperative for this government to work with other levels of government, the francophone community, and I would argue even the non-francophone communities. These upcoming discussions on preserving our francophone culture in Manitoba has the opportunity of finding new and innovative ways for us to display a culture that is so enriched here in Manitoba.

Canada should be proud of its strong francophone history, and by working with our municipalities and the federal government to promote Manitoba's francophone history and culture, we can ensure that our francophone community is forever recognized for its long-standing contributions.

In closing, the francophone community has acted as a pillar for multiculturalism here in Manitoba. It has opened up doors to be susceptible to languages and culture.

I would like to say that the Liberal caucus will support the passing of Bill 5 to encourage and continue the recognition of our francophone community.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Greg Selinger (St. Boniface): Madame la Présidente, ce projet de loi est très important dans l'espoir des relations entre la communauté franco-manitobaine et le gouvernement du Manitoba et la Province du Manitoba.

Translation

Madam Speaker, this bill is very important to the hope of relations between the Franco-Manitoban community and the Manitoba government and the Province of Manitoba.

English

I want to commend the minister for bringing it forward early in the mandate of the new government. I think that's a very positive thing.

J'aimerais aussi féliciter la Société franco-manitobaine et la communauté franco-manitobaine pour leur dévotion, leur persistance et leur patience dans la poursuite de cette législation depuis plusieurs décennies.

Translation

I would also like to congratulate the Société franco-manitobaine and the Franco-Manitoban community for their dedication, persistence and patience in the decades-long pursuit of this legislation.

* (11:00)

English

This bill comes at a time when our country has embarked on a path of reconciliation. This path, one could argue, started with Louis Riel and his provisional government when they negotiated the entry into Canada and the protection of French and English language rights in the Legislature, in the courts and in the—all the official publications of the Legislature. That path has seen many detours and dead ends along the way, but the journey continues today with this legislation and what it means for the francophone community in Manitoba and across the province.

Ce projet de loi reconnaît que les francophones communautés du Manitoba jouent un rôle intégral dans le passé, dans le présent et dans l'avenir de la province. Il met en place la responsabilité du gouvernement du Manitoba de travailler en partenariat avec la communauté francophone pour l'épanouissement et le support de leur développement de leur communauté.

Translation

This bill recognizes that Manitoba's francophone communities play an integral role in the province's past, present and future. It establishes the responsibility of the government of Manitoba to work

in partnership with the francophone community to enhance the community and support its development.

English

It's a very important bill because it puts in place the responsibility of the provincial government to support the expansion and the revitalization of the francophone community in Manitoba. This is a dramatic change from the historical role the government has played in suppressing francophone rights in this province.

This project also—this bill also provides a new definition of Manitoba's francophone community, which now means not only those persons whose mother tongue is French but also those persons in Manitoba whose mother tongue is not French but have a special affinity for the French language and use it on a regular basis in their daily lives.

C'est très important que, maintenant — qu'on reconnaît la définition d'un Franco-manitobain. Ce n'est pas simplement une personne avec la langue maternelle, mais aussi une personne avec une affinité de travailler ou vivre en français, et qui aimerait le faire.

Translation

It is very important that, now—that the definition of a Franco-Manitoban be recognized. It is not just a person who has French as their mother tongue, but a person who has an affinity for working or living in French and would like to do so.

English

And that is very important, especially with people coming to Manitoba from all over the world who would like to live and work in French.

Ce projet de loi exige que le gouvernement mette en place les ressources nécessaires pour la reconnaissance de la communauté francophone, pour l'offre active des services en français, et de le faire dans une façon de collaboration et de dialogue, et d'avoir un programme de progrès continuels.

Translation

This bill requires the government to put the necessary resources in place for recognition of the francophone community and the active offer of French-language services, and to do so through collaboration and dialogue, and to have a plan for continuous progress.

English

It's very important that we recognize that this legislation is based on four principles: recognition of the francophone community; active offer of services to the francophone community; collaboration and dialogue in the development and the offer of those services; and steady and continual progress in the way those services are improved on a regular basis.

It outlines the responsibilities of the minister and this legislation as well.

Et la ministre peut jouer un rôle d'appuyer la continuation de la mise en œuvre de la Politique sur les services en français; d'agir à titre de défenseur pour faire en sorte que les politiques, les programmes et les services d'instance pertinente prennent en compte les besoins de la Francophonie manitobaine et que les ressources équitables soient affectées à ces besoins; d'encourager la représentation de la Francophonie manitobaine au sein des instances dirigeant des organismes gouvernementaux et au sein des tribunaux administratifs; et d'encourager les efforts des entités publiques pour appuyer le développement de la Francophonie manitobaine.

Translation

And the minister can play a role in supporting the ongoing implementation of the French Language Services Policy; advocating that the policies, programs and services of relevant bodies take into account the needs of Manitoba's francophone community and that those needs are resourced equitably; encouraging representation of Manitoba's francophone community on the boards of government agencies and on administrative tribunals; and encouraging the efforts of public bodies in supporting and assisting the development of Manitoba's francophone community.

English

The role of the minister is a very important role in this, and it starts with the project that's been put in front of the Legislature today. It allows the minister to act as a advocate for policies that support and promote the francophone community in Manitoba, not only within her government but also vis-à-vis the federal government and municipal government and all the institutions of the province, including the Crown corporations. That is a very important role.

It puts in place in law the role of the French language services or Francophone Affairs Secretariat, and that is something that has been in

place since the late 1980s, but now it is permanently established in law. And it identifies the role of the official—of the Francophone Affairs Secretariat and the role that it shall play in promoting and encouraging the use of French as a language of working and of living in Manitoba. And that role is very important, and I hope that the minister also will continue to have the Francophone Affairs Secretariat housed in this building; I think that's a very important dimension. There are times when people come along and they want to relocate them elsewhere. To have them in the Legislature I think is not only symbolically important but practically important for the work that we have to do.

The advisory council is also a very important new part of this legislation. It exists in practice right now, but it's put in law. The advisory council allows the senior officials of the government, including the Clerk of the Executive Council and deputy ministers to work in partnership with leaders from the francophone community, to advance the active offer of services in the province and to promote policies that will support the vitality of the francophone community and to co-operate with all other levels of government.

It's important to recognize that the responsibilities also include the necessity to have French-language services plans put in place, la nécessité d'avoir des plans pour l'offre active des services en français, pas simplement dans les départements du gouvernement, mais aussi les sociétés de la Couronne, les bureaux indépendants de la Législature comme le Speaker, comme the Children's Advocate, like the Ombudsman as well as all of official offices of the Legislature.

Translation

It's important to recognize that the responsibilities also include the necessity to have French-language services plans put in place, the necessity of having plans for the active offer of French-language services, not just in government departments, but in Crown corporations, independent offices of the Legislature like the Speaker, the Children's Advocate, like the Ombudsman as well as all of official offices of the Legislature.

English

They all are required to have French-language services plans.

And it reaches out even farther than that, to identify all the other agencies where there can be an

active offer of service in French, and that includes tribunals, administrative law bodies in the province whether it be for auto insurance, whether it be for workers compensation, all of those institutions have to put in place the ability to offer services in French when somebody is making an appeal of a benefit they may not feel has been offered to them sufficiently to meet their needs.

So that includes everything from the Automobile Injury Compensation Appeal Commission to the Child Care Staff Qualifications Review Committee, the Disaster Assistance Appeal Board, the Licence Suspension Appeal Board, farm industry—industrial—the industry board for the farm industry, the Manitoba Health Appeal Board, the Mental Health Review Board and the Municipal Board. Those are all important administrative tribunals where, in the last 10 years, we've put in place participation for members of the francophone community that can hear an appeal made in French and ensure that people have the ability to put that forward in French, and it's already enshrined in the courts, but now it's been extended to administrative tribunals.

It's also important to recognize that it builds on a number of specific policies that have been put in place over the last 17 years in the province of Manitoba.

The bilingual community services centres act, la Loi sur les centres des services bilingues, c'était une spécifique offre active des services dans un modèle unique basé sur la recommandation du rapport Chartier.

Translation

The bilingual community services centre act, that was a specific active offer of services following a unique model based on a recommendation of the Chartier Report.

English

It's a very unique service centre in six communities. The member from River Heights asked where these six communities are, where active offer of service is provided in bilingual community services centres; they exist in Notre Dame de Lourdes, St. Pierre Jolys, St. Vital, St. Boniface, as well as Seine River throughout the province, as well as St. Laurent.

Dans ces communautés il y a des centres de services bilingues où les personnels peuvent fonctionner en français chaque jour dans leur travail,

et ils peuvent aussi offrir les services en anglais et en français. et même, s'il y une demande, d'offrir les services dans une autre langue - une troisième langue, une langue autochtone par exemple. Donc, c'est un modèle inclusif, et je crois que ce projet de loi qui existe maintenant, on peut épanouir le numéro des centres de services bilingues dans la province du Manitoba, et on ne peut pas arrêter ou abolir les centres de services bilingues qui existent au moment sans ce changement dans la législation.

Translation

In these communities, there are bilingual service centres in which the staff are able to function in French in their job every day, and they are able to provide services in English and in French and, if the demand is there, provide services in another language—a third language, an Aboriginal language, for example. So it's an inclusive model and I think that this bill we have now, the number of bilingual service centres in the province of Manitoba can be enhanced, and the bilingual service centres we now have cannot be closed or eliminated without changing the legislation accordingly.

English

The bilingual community services centre act is a very important historic institution in the province. The member will—the minister will know that in the 1980s there was an attempt to put a constitutional amendment forward which would allow for the active offer of services in the administration of the provincial government. That constitutional amendment was shut down by the reaction of the community and members of—some members of the Legislature. But now with the bilingual community services act there is a model to offer actively services in French among all the departments and institutions of the province of Manitoba. And that is a historic move forward, and those bilingual community services centres cannot be abolished unless amendment is made to the legislation in this Legislature, but they can be expanded to meet new needs and new communities where there's a high concentration of francophones that wish to have that service in French.

* (11:10)

The other thing about the model, which I think is quite unique, is they can not only offer services in French but they also can offer services in English, even though all the personnel are qualified to work in French, and do work in French on a daily basis. But

they can also offer services in a third language; it could be an indigenous language, it could be Michif, it could be Cree, it could be Ojibwa—or it could be a language of newcomers to Manitoba where they have that need to have the services provided to them in a way that they can more fully understand.

So it's an inclusive model, and I think it speaks to the efforts of this province to be an inclusive province.

So the history of French language services in Manitoba and the rights of the francophone community started out very positively with Louis Riel, but in 1890 they were repressed and that official languages act of 1890 made English the only official language for the province, and then, in 1916, the same year that women got the vote, the publicly funded French language confessional schools were abolished.

So the women made progress at that time in 1916; the francophone community lost the ability to have schools publicly supported that would offer the French language as a method of instruction in those schools.

In 1970, after some work that was done by Premier Roblin, the Schreyer government brought in legislation that now then required that French language could be available in schools as a language of instruction. And, of course, in the 1990s, because of a Supreme Court decision ruling that the francophone community was required to have governance of their schools, and we now have la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, which allows the francophone community to govern their own schools and provide languages and services in that regard.

So, j'aimerais dire le suivant : ce projet de loi est très important parce que c'est un projet de loi positif qui reconnaît et encourage l'épanouissement de la communauté franco-manitobaine au Manitoba; qui met en place les responsabilités du ministre, les responsabilités de notre gouvernement; qui met en place le partenariat avec la communauté; qui met en place la nécessité d'avoir les plans pour les services en français; qui met en place les principes de reconnaissance de l'offre active en particulier pour les services en français. Et à mon avis, c'est un projet qui est un geste de réconciliation, un geste de reconnaissance.

Translation

So I would like to say the following: this bill is very important because it is a positive bill that recognizes and fosters the enhancement of Manitoba's Franco-Manitoban community; establishes the responsibilities of the minister and of our government; establishes the partnership with the community; establishes the necessity of having plans for French-language services; and establishes the principles of recognition of the active offer of French-language services in particular. And, in my opinion, it's a bill that serves as a gesture of reconciliation and a gesture of recognition.

English

It's a historic gesture to recognize the role and the contribution of the francophone community in Manitoba, and I do hope that it is supported by every member of the Legislature.

When we brought this bill forward, we always said that we wanted to have a consensus on this, so there wasn't any polarization in the community. If the politicians could come together and agree on protecting my minority rights with a hundred per cent consensus, that sends a message to the community that the time has come to put those issues behind us and to fully recognize the role of the francophone community in the history, the present and the future of this province.

This bill can do that, and I know that we on this side of the House will support it. The government supports it. We can make a big step forward with this legislation.

Merci beaucoup.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Fort Rouge): Je trouve que ce projet de loi est un projet très important, alors je voudrais féliciter la ministre des Affaires francophones.

Je félicite aussi le député de Saint-Boniface qui a travaillé depuis longtemps par rapport à les issues pour la Francophonie et pour avancer les langues—ou les droits des langues minoritaires ici dans le Manitoba.

On sait que la langue est un des facteurs très importants pour former une identité par rapport à des individus, mais aussi pour les nations. Alors, si on veut avoir une communauté franco-manitobaine fière et forte, nous devons travailler très—dans

une façon très efficace pour avancer l'état de la langue française.

Comme une personne autochtone, les droits des langues minoritaires sont aussi très importants, alors au niveau personnel, je trouve que ce projet de loi est aussi une priorité très importante.

Il était une fois dans la province que le député de Saint-Boniface parlait au sujet de où les Franco-manitobains ont dû lutter pour leur droit de parler français, mais je suis très heureux de voir que ce temps est fini dans le Manitoba, qu'on est maintenant dans un temps où on est très fiers de la langue française et sur la communauté francophone ici dans le Manitoba.

Quand je visite Saint-Boniface et les autres quartiers francophones, ou des autres communautés francophones ici dans le Manitoba, je vois une communauté avec une grande diversité. Il y a des peuples qui viennent de l'Afrique. Il y a les peuples qui viennent de l'Europe. Il y a beaucoup de personnes qui viennent de l'Asie. Aussi, il y a des personnes qui sont des Franco-manitobains. Il y a les Métis. Puis, il y a aussi, beaucoup—plus en plus d'Autochtones qui parlent français aujourd'hui.

Alors, j'espère que la ministre va profiter de cette diversité, et puis engager avec chaque secteur des communautés francophones. Et, puis, profiter dans une façon où elle pourrait utiliser leur appui pour avancer les conditions pour tous les Manitobains, soit que nous, on pourrait tous être fiers d'habiter dans une province qui est vraiment bilingue.

Finalement, Madame la Présidente, j'espère que ce projet de loi serait une étape pour mieux protéger les langues minoritaires. Aujourd'hui, c'est la Journée nationale des Autochtones. Alors, j'espère de voir un jour ici, dans Manitoba, où les langues autochtones ont aussi des protections comme le français. Alors, où peut-être on va voir Hansard dans les langues ojibwé, et oji-cri, dakota, déné, inuktitut, et puis, aussi, mitchif. Peut-être ça va pas arriver pour longtemps, peut-être des dizaines—ou, même, des douzaines d'années. Mais, ça c'est un but personnel. Je veux supporter ce projet de loi aujourd'hui, et puis plus loin dans le futur, peut-être nous pourrons avancer cette autre priorité.

Alors, en conclusion, je félicite la ministre, et puis j'espère que tous les députés vont supporter ce projet de loi.

Merci beaucoup, Madame la Présidente.

Translation

Thank you, Madam Speaker. I consider this bill to be a very important bill, and so I would like to congratulate the minister of francophone affairs.

I also congratulate the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) who has long worked on issues for the Francophonie and to advance languages—or minority language rights here in Manitoba.

We know that language is a very important factor in forming an identity where individuals are concerned, and nations, too. So, if we want to have a strong and proud Franco-Manitoban community, we will have to work very—very effectively to advance the status of the French language.

As an Aboriginal person, minority language rights are also very important, so I also consider this bill to be a very important priority at a personal level.

At one time in the province, the member for St. Boniface spoke about how Franco-Manitobans had to fight for their right to speak French, but I am very happy to see that that time is over in Manitoba, that we are now in a time in which we are very proud of the French language and the francophone community here in Manitoba.

When I visit St. Boniface and the other francophone neighbourhoods, or other francophone communities here in Manitoba, I see a community that is highly diverse. There are peoples who come from Africa. There are peoples who come from Europe. There are many people who come from Asia. There are also people who are Franco-Manitoban. There are the Métis. And there are also many—more and more Aboriginals who speak French these days.

So I hope that the minister is going to take advantage of this diversity and engage with each sector of the Francophone communities. And take advantage such that she uses their support to improve conditions for all Manitobans, so that we could all be proud of living in a province that is truly bilingual.

Finally, I hope that this bill will be a step towards better protecting minority languages. Today is National Aboriginal Day. I hope to see a day here in Manitoba when Aboriginal languages have protections like French does. When we will perhaps see Hansard in Ojibwa, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene, Inuktitut and Michif. Perhaps that will not happen for a long time, perhaps not for tens—or even dozens of years. But that is a personal goal. I want to support this bill today, and further on in the future,

perhaps we will be able to advance that other priority.

So, in conclusion, I congratulate the minister and I hope that all the members support this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mrs. Sarah Guillemard (Fort Richmond): Madame la Présidente. Cette loi, le numéro 5, est nécessaire pour montrer que nous sommes tous fiers à supporter la culture francophone ici au Manitoba. Je voudrais féliciter la ministre des Affaires francophones pour son beau message en français.

Translation

Madam Speaker, this legislation, Bill 5, is necessary to show that we are all proud to support the francophone culture here in Manitoba. I would like to congratulate the minister of francophone affairs on her nice message in French.

English

Language is an integral part of any culture, and this country was built upon many distinct languages, each holding quite a colourful past, that has led to our vibrant present. There are many challenges that can face a culture when the language of the majority permeates the neighbourhood and opportunities to socialize in your mother tongue are limited.

I am raising my four children in a bilingual home, français and anglais. It was a difficult choice because I knew that the opportunities for them to utilize a language in a social setting, which is what builds your confidence, would be limited. So two of my children went through the French immersion school system, and two of them have gone through the DSFM, the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine.

I have been just encouraged by the growth of the francophone community in Manitoba, and I think that this bill emphasizes the need to encourage that on all fronts, whether you speak the language now or you will learn it and speak it in future.

My own motivation to learn French, and that came as an adult, was after high school. During my elementary school years, French class was really seen as more of an extra, or some people thought of it as a joke class. And there was many hijinks that happened during French class that, growing up in an anglophone community, that was kind of your experience.

* (11:20)

I feel the need, actually, at this point to apologize to my French teacher.

Je m'excuse, Madame Trentholme, je suis tellement désolée pour mes mauvais choix en classe.

Translation

I apologize, Mrs. Trentholme, I'm very sorry for my poor choices in class.

English

Right now I recognize that it actually was an asset. Her early learning and teaching years helped me to develop later on my understanding of how important in any culture and especially Canadian culture to utilize the French that you've learned, whether it's reading, writing or speaking. We did not learn the conversational French very well in the English system, but that is actually one of the most useful tools of communication. And I encourage anyone who struggles in that language to start a class and learn it for themselves.

Madam Speaker, French has always been seeming like a challenge and not very necessary in my early life. What I came to realize after years of falling in love with the language is that I had been afraid of it. Fear seems to be a common theme when you look back over the missed opportunities in your life. There are many who feel intimidated by learning something new, but I assure you every moment of learning has opened doors not only to new opportunities but also to new friendships.

The francophone community has always had an uphill battle when it comes to preserving their language within an English-dominated society. Their efforts have been resisted by some who feel intimidated by their strength of voice. It is so very important, Madam Speaker, that the government of Manitoba walk alongside this community and facilitate an openness to welcome more of our citizens to learn and use this beautiful language. That is why I am extremely proud to support this bill and the francophone community.

Merci, Madame la Présidente.

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Thank you for the time to speak on behalf of this bill, Bill 5, the Franco community enhancement act and support act.

This bill not only enhances services and makes French language more central—more of a

central part of Manitoba's government, it establishes a minister for Francophone Affairs and modernizes the Francophone Affairs Secretariat. It clearly shows government's commitment to strengthen and promote, past and present and future, a strong francophone community.

As a Metis man, it is a privilege to stand before you today to provide an insight on why it is so important to our roots and lives as a community. The long-standing history of our great province envisioned what we are set out to accomplish today. I also grew up in a fluent bilingual, or franglais, home which allowed me to speak regularly in both languages. It came naturally as I was raised, and it was respected and encouraged to speak both languages.

This is something I pass along to my family as it promotes and strengthens the language through our words and on paper. I currently have three out of my five children in the DSFM program in St. Boniface.

It is with great pride that I rise and see a government that is this dedicated to ensuring French-speaking Manitobans receive more government services in their mother tongue. It will also foster long-standing French roots and dedicate the resources for a minister to oversee the long-term vision for the future.

I currently represent the second largest Franco-Manitobaine riding in Manitoba. French language is important to my family. With this, it will modernize the mandate of the Francophone Affairs secretary. We are working closely with the Franco-Manitobaine community to strengthen the ability to the government to represent them and serve them.

Le projet de loi 5 est un projet de loi transformateur pour les relations entre le gouvernement provincial et la communauté franco-manitobaine. Avec le passage de ce projet de loi, le gouvernement donne un niveau de service et accès qui est sans précédent.

Merci beaucoup.

Translation

Bill 5 is transformative for relations between the provincial government and the Franco-Manitoban community. With the passage of this bill, the government is providing a level of service and access that is unprecedented.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madame la Présidente, je voudrais premièrement dire félicitations au député de Saint-Boniface et au député de Riel pour le travail qu'ils ont fait pour ce projet de loi. C'est important pour notre Assemblée. C'est important pour notre province, cette loi – la Loi sur l'appui et l'épanouissement de la francophonie manitobaine.

Je voudrais dire que le Parti libéral est en accord de ce projet de loi. Nous donnons notre appui, comme le député de Burrows a dit déjà, à cette loi.

Nous pensons qu'il y a certaines choses qui sont très importantes pour l'avenir.

Est-ce qu'il sera des ressources, Madame la ministre, pour le développement des plans de services en français? C'est important que les ressources seraient là pour avoir des plans et pour avoir les plans rapidement pour notre province.

Cette loi donne les provisions pour les plans pour les entités publiques, par exemple, aussi à des plans pour les organismes paragouvernementaux – comme les autorités régionales de la santé. C'est une possibilité beaucoup pour les organisations diverses pour contribuer à le plan.

Il sera un plan pour notre Assemblée législative. C'est important que nous ayons des plans rapidement, et je vous demande, par exemple, à quel temps les plans des services en français seraient-ils en place.

Il faut que nous ayons une ministre qui est prête d'agir – d'être certains que les plans seraient mis en place le plus tôt possible.

Translation

Madam Speaker, I would like to begin by congratulating the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger) and the member for Riel (Ms. Squires) for the work they did on this bill. It is important for our Assembly. This bill, The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act, is important for our province.

I would like to say that the Liberal Party is in agreement with this bill. We are giving our support to this bill, as the member for Burrows (Ms. Lamoureux) has already said. We believe that there are certain things that are very important for the future. Will there be resources, Madam Minister, for the development of French-language services plans? It is important that resources be available to have plans and to have plans quickly for our

province. This bill includes provisions for plans respecting public bodies including quasi-governmental agencies such as regional health authorities. It is an opportunity for various organizations to contribute to a plan. There will be a plan for our Legislative Assembly. It is important that we have plans quickly, and I ask you, for example, when will French-language services plans be in place? We need a minister who is prepared to act—to be sure that the plans will be put into place as soon as possible.

English

This bill provides a critical recognition of the role the francophone community has played in Manitoba over the course of the history of our province and indeed in the time before Manitoba became a province and led up to it.

It is—recognizes that the francophone community provides a critical cornerstone for our province and that cornerstone is provided in many ways, and so having services in French is vital as a demonstration of our commitment here in the Legislature to the people in the francophone community.

But this recognition and the provision of services to people in the francophone community is also, at the same time, an acknowledgement that when we recognize people in the francophone community that we are a diverse society, that we recognize that diversity and that we respect people who speak different languages and have different cultures. And that really has been a very important cornerstone in the development of our province as we have recognized other cultures, and as we respond to the important role we have today in reconciliation and in recognizing indigenous languages, indigenous cultures in our province as also a cornerstone in who we are and where we come from.

But more than that, as people come to Manitoba from around the world, and we have a large number of people who come from Ukraine, from the Philippines, from many, many different countries and from—with respect to people who speak French—from countries in Africa, Congo, for example, who are increasingly coming here and recognizing the wealth of services, the wealth of diversity that we have here in this province.

So, as we look forward to where we will be going in the future, I'm sure that there will be growing pressure and interest in looking at how we recognize indigenous languages and what steps we

take in that direction. But for now we are focused on this bill and making sure that the francophone community has the services and the—is addressed and recognized in a way that it really needs to be.

* (11:30)

Je voudrais dire des mots de ma famille. Mon épouse, Naomi, et moi, nous avons trois enfants. Ils ont tous eu la possibilité d'apprendre la langue française dans les programmes d'immersion. Et maintenant, ils l'utilisent dans leur vie de temps en temps, la langue française. Et c'est important pour eux, aussi que pour toute notre famille. Et par exemple, notre fille Pauline était mariée; elle a deux — elle et Roger, son époux, ont deux enfants, deux filles. Nous avons le plaisir d'avoir deux grandes filles. Et Alice et Grace attendent l'École Précieux-Sang qui est à Saint-Boniface, et au moment, elles parlent très bien la langue française. Et je suis très heureux quand ils — elles communiquent en français.

Par exemple, nous avons eu — il y a quelques années — une visite par le ministre — le premier ministre du Canada, ancien — Jean Chrétien. Et il était surpris que nos grandes filles parlent à Jean Chrétien en français, et il était heureux de trouver que la nouvelle génération — les jeunes Manitobains — parle bien le français ici, et que c'est vraiment possible d'avoir maintenant, parce que nous avons un développement des services ici en français. Et aujourd'hui, je suis très heureux d'avoir l'occasion de donner l'appui à ce projet de loi, et j'espère que ce projet de loi est une chose très important pour maintenant, mais pour les années de l'avenir.

Merci, Madame la Présidente.

Translation

I would like to say a few words about my family. My wife, Naomi, and I have three children. They all had the opportunity to learn the French language through the immersion program. And now, they use the French language in their life from time to time. It is important to them and to our whole family. And for example, our daughter, Pauline, is married; she has two—she and Roger, her husband, have two children, two daughters. We have the pleasure of having two granddaughters. And Alice and Grace attend l'École Précieux-Sang, which is in St. Boniface, and they now speak French very well. And I am very happy when they communicate in French.

For example, a few years ago we had a visit from the minister, the former Prime Minister of Canada, Jean

Chrétien. He was surprised that our granddaughters spoke to Jean Chrétien in French, and he was happy to see that the new generation, young Manitobans, speak French well here, and it is really possible now, because services have been developed in French here. And today, I am very happy to have the opportunity to support this bill, and I hope that this bill is important now and also in the years to come.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further speakers on the debate?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 5, The Francophone Community

Enhancement and Support Act; Loi sur l'appui à l'épanouissement de la francophonie manitobaine, recommended by Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Ron Schuler (Acting Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is leave to call it 12 o'clock.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to call it 12 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 12 noon, I'm leaving the Chair, with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 1:30 p.m. today.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 21, 2016

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