

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

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authority of
The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

The House met at 10 a.m.

The 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, 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 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.

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Can you please call, from 10 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., resuming second reading debate of Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act, and from 10:30 to 11, second reading debate on Bill 218, the celebration of the Philippine independence day act.

The Speaker: It has been announced that, from 10 to 10:30, we will resume debate on Bill 300, and from 10:30 to 11, we'll start second reading debate of Bill 218.

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—
PRIVATE BILLS**

**Bill 300—The Winnipeg Foundation
Amendment Act**

The Speaker: So now resuming debate on Bill 300, standing in the name of the honourable member for Spruce Woods, who has four minutes remaining.

Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods): Good morning, colleagues. Pleasure to be back here in the fall sitting discussing Bill 300 again which, you know, I'm sure if we reflect on Hansard from my comments from the spring, it's a very good bill. And I sincerely, you know, think that the member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle) has brought a great piece of legislation forward here for an organization that matters a lot to both of us.

But to a lot of Winnipeggers and a lot of Manitobans across the board, we appreciate sincerely the work that The Winnipeg Foundation does. It is a massive, now, organization, in terms of the amount of support that it is able to provide to organizations across the city and across the province.

And so I think it's excellent that the member for St. Boniface has consulted with The Winnipeg Foundation members on the creation of this bill to make some tweaks to their act that they feel will improve their ability to deliver support to the many great causes in Manitoba that they do.

And so we look forward to further debate this morning on the bill, likely going to hear from some members on their side, as well, as to the impact that they feel that these changes are going to bring forward. You know, I know some of our colleagues have a few words to put on the record as well, just about the impact that they believe these changes and The Winnipeg Foundation as a whole makes and will make in their communities.

You know, we made the joke earlier in this session about removing the mayor of Winnipeg from the foundation's board as part of this bill, what it's proposing to do. And I think the joke was made that it's not every day an MLA gets to fire the mayor of Winnipeg. But I do think that, you know, they've recognized that this is an important change to modernize the structure and the makeup of The Winnipeg Foundation's board.

My understanding is that the mayor's office is fully in support of this change, and so we look forward to that coming into effect and the modernization that that will make at the board level, in terms of governance at The Winnipeg Foundation as well.

That's not to say that the mayor's contributions wouldn't be valuable—I'm sure they would and have

been over the years. But nonetheless, that is something that's being brought forward as a recommended change from the folks at The Winnipeg Foundation.

So just—for—to wrap up my time here, which is very shortly coming to an end, I want to thank the member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle) for bringing this bill forward. I want to thank the members of The Winnipeg Foundation who advised on the creation of this act, which is my understanding from our member across the way. And we thank them for the important work that they do in the city and in the province. On behalf of Manitobans, we thank them. They make a very positive impact on the makeup of our communities here in Manitoba. They do an excellent job and we thank them for that very much indeed.

Thank you very much, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Before I recognize the next speaker, I just need to clarify that we are in orders of the day, private members' business.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): What a privilege it is to speak on The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act that we have brought before us today. And I, as well, would like to thank the member from St. Boniface for bringing this amendment forward—very timely, very important work.

And I also have to recognize the work that is done by The Winnipeg Foundation itself. I've familiarized myself somewhat with the work, but I don't know that I can actually give it the value in words of what they do for this community and what they do for this province, and the work that is done by this group of individuals making sure that the foundation continues to run and continues to do the great work.

So again, thank you to the member from St. Boniface for bringing this very important bill forward and to all of the members that are on The Winnipeg Foundation.

So, as I did some research and reading into this very important bill, I know that our PC government had many partnerships with The Winnipeg Foundation.

* (10:10)

And it certainly isn't lost on me the work that probably all sides of this House do with The Winnipeg Foundation and the work that comes out of there.

But our PC government established the Conservation Trust, the GROW Trust, the Wetlands GROW Trust and the Manitoba Heritage Trust, that are all managed by The Winnipeg Foundation, and that were all established by our PC Party while we were in government.

This certainly demonstrates our wise fiscal management, stewardship, forethought and visions for the future of our province, utilizing The Winnipeg Foundation as that catalyst. So, again, it's very important for all of us.

If I can talk a little bit about each of these areas that we've had great success with. So, the Manitoba Heritage Trust. In 2018, the foundation partnered with the Manitoba government to administer the Manitoba Heritage Trust Program.

So this, of course, is providing support to museums, archives, and supporting these organizations throughout Manitoba. And I'm sure my friend and colleague from Brandon East would be well aware of this, having his portfolio in sports, arts, culture and heritage, and would certainly support the work of our PC team did at that time and to continue this work with the foundation.

The program, which was initiated by the Manitoba government, is administered by The Winnipeg Foundation and support from the Association of Manitoba Museums, the association of Manitoba archives and Manitoba's 56 rural community foundations. So not only are we talking about The Winnipeg Foundation, but another 56 foundations across the province that all help to support their great work.

The Manitoba Heritage Trust Program provided support for museums, archives and supporting organizations to establish and grow their endowment funds, providing long-term sustainable revenues for their organizations. And I think that's important to note, is that—those words, long-term and sustainable, making sure that they are continually funded and they know that the work that they do is going to be supported. They don't have to worry about cuts coming from government for programs that are happening. They know that it's going to be continually supported.

The Manitoba Heritage Trust Endowment Fund supports the building of these heritage endowment funds in perpetuity through the provision of stretch grant initiatives. So it's also extremely important that we recognize all of the work and the continued growth of these funds within The Winnipeg Foundation, supported by 56 other rural foundations—areas that we all represent within our great province.

So the Conservation Trust. That had a \$102-million Conservation Trust, and it was established in 2018 as part of Manitoba's Climate and Green Plan to fund activities that promote the conservation of natural

resources by creating, conserving or enhancing natural infrastructure for the benefit of Manitobans.

And each and every one of us, I know—and our families and our friends and all Manitobans—enjoy the environment and enjoy being outside. So this trust fund, again, helps promote and support these activities. The trust is held by The Winnipeg Foundation—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I'd just remind the member to keep his comments relevant to the bill that we're actually discussing. It's all well and good to talk a little bit about The Winnipeg Foundation, but the member's strayed pretty far from what the content of the bill is. So I'd ask him to bring his comments back specifically to the bill.

Mr. Balcaen: Certainly will bring comments back. I was just trying to establish the great work of The Winnipeg Foundation.

And, Honourable Speaker, you know, so making sure that we've heard loud and clear, again, from the member for St. Boniface (MLA Loïselle) regarding the requirement of removing the mayor to be on the board of The Winnipeg Foundation. And when we look at that, and I think it was mentioned by my member—or sorry, my colleague from Spruce Woods—who said it's not too often that a provincial government can actually have some control over a municipal leader. And looking at this foundation and the hierarchy of this foundation, that certainly would seem to be what is being proposed here.

But I know from discussions with the member from St. Boniface that there has been great consultation and discussions with The Winnipeg Foundation and talking about how this can be done and why it should be done. And I trust that the work that they have done with the foundation and with the collaboration and discussions is what really brought this forward so that there could be further robust discussions on this.

You know, when I looked at the background of The Winnipeg Foundation, you know, it really started back in 1921 when the foundation was established with a gift of \$100,000. And reading further on The Winnipeg Foundation, Honourable Speaker, and the mayor being certainly a part of The Winnipeg Foundation board, they are now responsible for funds in excess—in excess of \$500 million.

And that's a significant amount of money to have that stewardship over and to make sure that there's

continual robust programs offered through the foundation and, of course, foundations that are established throughout rural Manitoba. I believe we said 56 of them are already there.

So having the mayor on the board has been a very important part of the history of The Manitoba Foundation and looking into the future. And, as brought forward by my friend and colleague from St. Boniface, has already shared having the mayor not be part of the board is part of the future vision of the board in looking at how they are going to grow and how are—they're going to continue on this.

So again, I would be remiss if I did not thank every sitting member on the board right now. The work that they do is extraordinary, within our communities. Of course, I'm not a resident of Winnipeg, but I respect the dedication and work done here.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record this morning on Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act. I thank the member for St. Boniface for his work on this important legislation, and I appreciated hearing from my colleagues who spoke previously on this important piece of legislation.

And, as I said, just wanted to put a few words on. You know, obviously being a rural member, this bill is important for many rural communities across Manitoba. They're often too small to really manage and sustain a foundation of their own, and so many of them actually rely on The Winnipeg Foundation. They have partnerships with The Winnipeg Foundation and that's where they direct their fundraising efforts through and where they draw their funds to support the community projects that they are taking on. And so, you know, that's an important part of this.

* (10:20)

And so, you know, the bill does two things.

It ensures that the mayor of the City of Winnipeg is no longer required to be a member of the board of directors of the foundation. And so that's important. And it's good also to know, as the member for Spruce Woods (Mr. Jackson) indicated, and perhaps other members have indicated as well, that the mayor of Winnipeg is apparently in support of this legislation, which is good. And so having that support is important, because there is the rural aspect, as I just talked about, to The Winnipeg Foundation, which perhaps

may escape some folks, but is an important aspect of it nevertheless. So I think that's important.

And then the second thing that it does is audit information about the foundation's financial statements must be published on its website. Currently, information respecting the audit must be published in a newspaper and copies of the auditor's report must be provided on request. So, of course, that's an important update, seeing as that it is 2024, soon to be 2025, and the way we do things are changing.

So I think overall—

The Speaker: Order, please. Sorry to interrupt the member, but could we stop the clock for a minute.

Introduction of Guests

The Speaker: I just need to recognize some guests that just showed up in the gallery, but they're leaving shortly.

We have seated in the public gallery, from Leila North School, grade 6 students under the direction of Carolyn Jefferson. And this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples (MLA Sandhu).

We welcome you here today.

* * *

The Speaker: Restart the clock, and the honourable member from Borderland has the floor.

Mr. Guenter: Welcome to the individuals joining us this morning.

So as I was saying, the bill is straightforward and simple, but it is important. And it's important to this province, seeing as The Winnipeg Foundation is a very substantial foundation.

And it's befitting of our province, because Manitobans have regularly over many years been ranked as the most generous people in Canada. And so Manitoba, being home to very generous people, it also fits. And perhaps not everyone knows this, but Manitoba is home to many, I think more than perhaps other provinces, many trusts and endowment funds.

And so that's a real strength of this province, is that these foundations and trusts and endowment funds have been set up and that, of course, generous Manitobans contribute to them and ensure their health and sustainability into the future.

And so a couple of years ago, to that end, the community of Winnipeg, the province of Manitoba, was

very pleased to learn that the Winnipeg community foundation would be receiving \$500 million—that's half a billion dollars that was left to the foundation through a bequest in Miriam Bergen's will. And so she was, along with her husband, a—very successful businesspeople and philanthropists. And so—

The Speaker: Order, please.

Once again, I would ask the member to please keep his comments relevant to the bill before us. I know it's tough sometimes to maintain that relevance, but I would ask the member to please bring his comments back to the bill.

Mr. Guenter: It's my—just my pleasure to be able to talk about community foundations, how important they are to the province, to Manitobans, to the many community projects they support. They are [*inaudible*] generous Manitobans to give. I think this act further enables that.

As I talked about, being a member from rural Manitoba and having the mayor on the board perhaps is something that is no longer required, no longer necessary. And with the Winnipeg—with the mayor's support, you know, this legislation looks to be set to pass. At least, I hope it does.

But I do think it is important while we are debating this legislation to take that opportunity just to applaud all the Manitobans who do give and to remember and thank the memory of Miriam Bergen who was so generous to give Manitobans half a billion dollars through The Winnipeg Foundation, which is something that will continue to benefit our communities and all Manitobans for many years to come.

So, you know, and as I touched on, Manitoba being home to many trusts and endowment funds, this is a real strength of our province. So we want to do everything we can to support those community foundations, to ensure that they are sustainable and that they are supported by Manitobans. And so I think that this piece of legislation goes some way in doing that, which is very good.

But I just wanted to applaud Manitobans for their generosity and talk about the integral role of community foundations in our—across our province, especially in our rural communities.

And I also wanted to mention, as well, that the Endow Manitoba Giving Challenge is coming up in 13 days now; begins on November 12 to 17. And so Manitobans will be giving generously, and whatever they give, those funds will be stretched.

And so that's a time of year that is very important to community foundations all across this province. Especially, as I said, The Winnipeg Foundation being as large it is—as it is and being as an important player as it is in our province, they—the Endow Manitoba Giving Challenge is a very important aspect of that.

So, with those words, Honourable Speaker, I just wanted to, you know, thank Manitobans for their generosity; again, thank the member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle) for his work on this legislation.

And I think, as I said earlier, it'll be positive and will be, you know, something that'll be beneficial for The Winnipeg Foundation, seeing as there are many, as I said, rural communities that depend on the contributions of The Winnipeg Foundation and the vehicle that it is as well for—to be able to carry out their fundraising in their local communities.

So I thank the member for St. Boniface for his work on that as well, and I also want to thank my colleague, and all colleagues, actually, of the Legislature as well, for their support for a bill earlier this year to make April 26 Community Foundation Day.

So, Honourable Speaker, that's something that The Winnipeg Foundation will be celebrating for the first time, along with all other community foundations across the province, for the first time on April 26, 2025.

And so I think this is just an important aspect of our province. It's a real strength of Manitoba. It's a real strength that we're a generous province, a very giving province and a compassionate province. But also a real strength that we have these funds, endowment funds and trusts, community foundations, to support the projects that go on in our communities.

So with those few words, Honourable Speaker, I look forward to further debate on this legislation.

Thank you.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): I appreciate the opportunity to speak to Bill 300, The Winnipeg Foundation Amendment Act. And I thank the member from St. Boniface for his contributions in making this amendment and bringing this bill forward.

And I thank my colleagues on this side of the House for their contributions and their words on the record today in relation to this bill.

And we all appreciate the hard work of The Winnipeg Foundation—

The Speaker: Order, please. As previously announced, the time for debate on this bill is concluded.

* (10:30)

We now move on to—oh. The honourable member will have nine minutes remaining when this is debated again.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 218—The Celebration of Philippine Independence Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)

The Speaker: We'll now move on to second reading of Bill 218, The Celebration of Philippine Independence Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson): I move, seconded by the member for McPhillips (MLA Devgan), that bill—the Bill 218, The Celebration of Philippine Independence Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended); Loi sur la Journée de la célébration de l'indépendance des Philippines (modification de la Loi sur les journées, les semaines et les mois commémoratifs), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of the House.

Motion presented.

MLA Dela Cruz: I rise today for the second reading of Bill 218, which will recognize and celebrate June 12 as Philippine Independence Day across Manitoba. June 12, 1898 marked a triumphant day in Philippine history: the day that the revolution successfully ratified Filipino independence from Spanish colonial rule, proclaiming the Philippines a provisional republic of which Emilio Aguinaldo would become the first president, and the youngest to date, at 29 years old.

While June 12 is a significant day, it really only marked the end of a large chapter in the book of Philippine independence. Over a century later, our homeland struggles in waves to find its way to the many—to many of the freedoms that we take for granted here in Canada.

During World War II, the Philippines became a nationwide battleground between the Japanese and the United States that saw over 100,000 Filipino troops and 20,000 American troops deployed to delay action on the mouth of Manila Bay.

When rations ran out, many of them unfortunately were forced to journey and surrender to the Japanese camps during the infamous Bataan death march—death march, rather. At the start of the 1940s, a six-year-old

boy named Angel Pili lived on a farmland in San Pedro, Laguna. He grew up living a life of subsistence that would often spill over to provide for the community that surrounded them. His father, tatay, was proud and strong. He raised his kids to know the value of hard work and family. He never let his kids see him hurting, and together with his parents and his six siblings, Angel lived a good life unbeknownst to what would come next.

One day, little Angel woke up to find his tatay tied to a tree and stricken to agony, surrounded by Japanese soldiers, the sight of which left the family in despair and disbelief. From that point forward, the Pili family became prisoners of war on their own land. They watched and they suffered at the hands of military forces as their land, lives and bodies were pillaged for years until they bravely escaped from their own land and fled to the rescue of their country's troops.

While Angel's tatay did not have the chance to meet his grandkids, they went on to keep his story alive, and without this story, Angel's tatay would have been erased. His descendants would have never known how part of their bloodline grappled with freedom and grappled with survival. It's this resilient spirit that propelled our people to freedom and led us to pursue better lives abroad.

Though just because we demonstrated strength and resistance does not mean that we should've had to. Honourable Speaker, Bill 218 is about freedom. This bill brings attention directly to the colonial history of the Philippines, our people's journeys to independence and the intersectional experience of Filipinos living in Manitoba's diaspora.

Honourable Speaker, it's about Filipino people's struggle to independence and autonomy and the many freedoms that we take for granted in Canada today. The people of the Philippines show strength in defending what is important to them. There is a reason that the pirate Ferdinand Magellan did not survive the Philippines. Our fierce, relentless tribes in the 1500s would not stand our people's erasure. Much later, in a new cycle of conflict, this fiery spirit manifested in the unrest during Spanish rule, which culminated in the Philippine Revolution, a true turning point for our nation after years under military powers.

The strength came with a price. It came with generational trauma from colonial harm that many of us continue to grapple with today. Honourable Speaker, Bill 218 is about freedom: the freedom to pursue a

better life, to persist through adversity and to work our way from the bottom up.

Recognizing this day will not only honour Filipinos who advocated for independence in the motherland and their descendants here in Canada but also celebrate the freedom that we love and enjoy: food, shelter, companionship, freedom of expression, good jobs, universal health care.

My Filipino upbringing and recognition of our path to independence is what compels me to unequivocally defend equal access to these freedoms across our nation and the world, to preserve what we have and to have confidence in our NDP team's work to defend it.

Honourable Speaker, as I said, Bill 218 is about freedom, the freedom to use our privileges to lift up others. Filipinos are nurses, doctors, health-care aides, pharmacists. Filipinos are also businesspeople, engineers, artists and academics. Filipinos are hard workers who defend the freedoms of others to live good lives.

Though, Honourable Speaker, many of us often forget that we have the freedom to defend our own, too. Filipinos are well represented on the front lines and working class, though disproportionately under-represented in spaces of power and decision making.

Somewhere along the lines, we developed this attitude of *hiya*, which translates to shame. We were told that, to survive on this new land, we had to roll up our sleeves, keep our heads down and do the work. Don't upset anyone, accept however they treat you if it means that you can buy an apple for your family at the end of the day.

But when governments delete thousands of jobs in a field that we are strongly represented, stall family reunification and delay crucial housing projects in the diaspora, we are reminded not to take our freedoms for granted. We are reminded of the revolutionary voice of our ancestors, the voice that made us who we are in the first place.

Honourable Speaker, Bill 218 is about freedom because there is freedom that our—there is a freedom that our peoples across the world ought to reclaim—the freedom to fight unapologetically for justice and occupy the space that we earn, because it's the reason that we survived years of violence, the reason we became who we are and the reason that we are here to stay.

And so while I imagine we'll dive into the specifics of Bill 218 during question period, I wanted to spend my time today talking about Angel Pili. I wanted to spend my time talking about him because, while our paths only briefly crossed on this earth, I owe him everything.

His youngest daughter went on to become a nurse, pen love letters to—overseas to her future husband, moved to Canada to start a better life, a new life, and have two children: one, a future leader in health care, and one who dedicates this bill to him and other survivors of our homeland's colonial occupation, as the MLA for Radisson.

Mga kapwa ko, malaya tayo. My friends, we are free.

Mabuhay mga Pilipino. [*Long live Filipinos.*]

Maraming salamat. [*Thank you very much.*]

Questions

The Speaker: A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the member by any opposition or independent member in the following—my mistake. A question period of 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by—to the member by opposition or independent member in the following sequence—and that sequence is first question by opposition official critic for or—I'm on the wrong—let me just start that over again, now that I'm on the right page, here.

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

The floor is now open for questions.

* (10:40)

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): I want to thank the member opposite for bringing this forward. I, too, have fond appreciation for the Filipino community as well.

Can you let me know what the NDP government plan to do to educate the people in the province on the importance of June 12 and the independence day for the Filipino community?

MLA Jelynn Dela Cruz (Radisson): I thank the member for Selkirk for his question.

I am proud to be part of an NDP government that has a strong Filipina as our Minister of Labour and Immigration (MLA Marcelino), and I am proud to be one of two Filipinas—one of two of the only Filipinas in this Chamber—representing our community.

Now, both myself and the member from Notre Dame share a very profound connection to our communities. We have been involved and integrated in our communities since we were young kids, and I am optimistic every single time I'm out in the community at the opportunities that come our way—

The Speaker: Time has expired.

Are there no further—oh.

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): Our NDP government is working really hard to follow through on the mantra one Manitoba.

And in saying that, I would like to ask the member from Radisson to share a little bit about what it means to her for Philippine independence to become a day of recognition in Manitoba.

MLA Dela Cruz: I thank my colleague for the question.

I'll tie my response into the response of the other and honour the work of the trailblazers from the Filipino community who paved the way for us to make it here as well; paved the way to ensure that our NDP government can have the strong Filipino representation.

I grew up seeing Flor Marcelino in Cabinet. I grew up having strong Filipino role models as well. But I still had that disconnection to my Filipino heritage growing up.

And so Bill 218, for me, is part of my journey to reclamation of that culture, of our stories, and I really hope that it'll be a big, integral part for many others in Manitoba.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I think it's great that there's a deep connection for you with—for the member from Radisson for—with her family and her heritage, and I think it's great that we're bringing this forward.

I just want to ask a question again. How—like, because it's such an important day to you, the 12th of June—how will this be shown as and educated for children in schools in different communities, so that

they know this is actually an important day and that we're not just passing a bill, but we're actually going to take action behind that?

MLA Dela Cruz: I thank my colleague for Morden-Winkler (Mrs. Hiebert) for her question.

Indeed, I agree it's incredibly important that this bill is treated with the respect and the sanctity of anything that be—that is brought up for discussion and, you know, solicits support in this House, particularly when it comes to Philippine Independence Day.

You know, year on year and for years now, I've been attending the Philippine Independence Day ball and many of the commemorative events that happen in community. And you know, our government is a listening government, and so I intend to allow the community to take the lead on events that are planning—though as elected officials, we are here to be a platform for them and to elevate their work.

Thank you.

Mr. Perchotte: Can the member—

The Speaker: Order, please.

Sorry, my mistake. The rotations is for the government members to be asking a question.

MLA Cross: June is an amazing month in Manitoba, and we celebrate many communities, including celebrating Philippine heritage month. This has been an opportunity for many Manitobans to learn and celebrate Filipino culture.

My question for the member is: How would they recognize Philippine Independence Day with her family?

MLA Dela Cruz: I thank my colleague for the question.

Now, Philippine Independence Day being introduced in this House and hopefully passed as a consensus bill will introduce an opportunity for all of us to recognize Filipinos not only as, you know, one-dimensional contributors to the workforce and folks who have really tasty food and awesome parties, but also have an entire history that backs up who we are.

And so, you know, how I would spend that day with my family, I would be asking my mom and dad questions, asking our elders questions about the ancestors that came before us, and our history, because there is still so much to uncover.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Perchotte: I guess I was really excited last time to ask my question.

Can the member opposite please confirm who she consulted with on this important bill moving forward?

MLA Dela Cruz: In a previous question, I did allude to, you know, the integration that I have been very grateful to have in our Filipino community. And as I mentioned earlier as well, it's really important to me that we let the community lead and that we become, you know, vessels for the good work that they want to see done.

And so over the years I served as the first youth chairperson of the Philippine-Canadian Centre of Manitoba, a venue at which many events around—surrounding Philippines Independence Day and heritage month reside. And from this position, I also, you know, have been in conversation with the Philippine Heritage Council of Manitoba, Kultivation Festival, BIBAK Association. This past May, when we hosted the first annual Filipino Heritage Month kick—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

MLA Cross: Recognizing Philippine Independence Day is a huge step in celebrating and appreciating Filipino Manitobans. Filipinos have made significant contributions to many sectors across our province and continue to be integral to our Manitoba identity.

My question for my colleague is: What are some of the other ways we can celebrate and support Filipino Manitobans and their contributions?

MLA Dela Cruz: Honourable Speaker, thank—I thank the member for the question. One thing I just wanted to end off with, I know that I was cut off at the end there; I'm losing track of time here. There's just so much that I have to share about my Filipino heritage and our contributions to society.

But this past May, when we had our first annual Filipino Heritage Month kickoff here at the Legislature, and I read this bill into Hansard for the first time, we were surrounded in the gallery by community groups and leaders and businesspeople and folks who are really influential in the Filipino community, and they were all in support of the bill.

When it comes to what our NDP government can do, we look at industries that we are disproportionately represented within, like the care sector, for example. When it comes to health care, we are, you know, lifting the burden on—

The Speaker: Member's time is expired.

Mr. Perchotte: Once again, thank the member for bringing this forward.

What would you hope to get for the recognition for the Filipino community on this bill?

MLA Dela Cruz: I apologize, I didn't quite hear the question that the member asked. And maybe he'll be able to reiterate if I don't answer the question in my response.

Though maybe just elaborating on the spirit of this bill, it really is important to me that, you know, growing up I saw a number of times and witnessed and experienced a number of times where me and my peoples were reduced to a stereotype, a caricature. And it's really important that we bring that dimension into our identity and that we encourage folks to also learn the stories that we bring to the table.

MLA Cross: As a former teacher, I was fortunate to teach in every grade here in Manitoba. And I know that one of the things I made sure that I did was, I took a look at what days were being recognized across the province; what were we commemorating, what were we recognizing and what were we celebrating?

My question to my colleague is: What is the one thing that you would love for a teacher to make sure their students know on this day?

MLA Dela Cruz: I really appreciate the question from my colleague for Seine River and I thank her for the years that she devoted to, you know, to cultivating meaningful and lasting impacts within the young generation. Because those are things that folks will keep for the rest of their lives and remember forever.

* (10:50)

And so if there were one thing that I could recommend that any educator educate their students on, it would be José Rizal. Dr. José Rizal is a poet, a leader in the Philippines, and largely led the revolution through his art and through his spirit and his speech, and, you know, caused this wave of—

The Speaker: Time is expired.

And the time for questions is also expired.

Debate

The Speaker: The floor is now open for debate.

Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk): Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and once again the member opposite for bringing this forward.

I know when people have an opportunity to represent not only the community that elected them to come here, but their heritage in this Chamber, it is a special day. And this is a bill that I take a look at and I have a lot of respect for the member opposite for bringing this forward.

I've had the opportunity to sit with the member opposite at different events, the—during Folklorama. And we both agree that being in these Chambers and having the opportunity to represent our communities is truly an honour, and for that I have a lot of respect for her.

The Filipino community has done a tremendous amount for our province. There's, in Canada alone, there's almost 1 million Filipinos that call Canada home. And 10 per cent, a little greater than 10 per cent, chose Manitoba to be our province.

And at a very early age when I was, you know, a very young individual growing up in Tyndall Park, that was a large area where the Filipino community was living. And I had an opportunity to return back to my home street and drive down that street when I was out to celebrate the Filipino Street Festival that they had this year. It was a step back. It made me proud. A lot of the families that were there when I was a child are still there now, which shows the resilience of the people to—not only to leave their home country and find Canada as a home, but Manitoba—in particular, Winnipeg—but they've stayed there. They've stayed there the—at least the 45 years since I lived there. It was wonderful walking through the schoolyards that I attended.

But in—more heartwarming was to see the faces, the enjoyment, of the people celebrating that Filipino Street Festival, to show the tremendous pride of the community and the welcoming nature of everybody there. Whether you stopped at one float or the other, or you actually made it to the end and you actually talked to the people in the different booths or you went into the church and seen the presentations that were done, it was a very uplifting community event.

And events like that showcase so many of our diverse areas in our culture that we have here in this province, and I'm very blessed to be the critic for culture and heritage. And more so, I think we're blessed as individuals that we get to attend these events all the time and everybody is so welcoming.

Many years ago, I owned a machine shop, and if it wasn't for the efforts of the Filipino community and the number of people who chose to be in the

manufacturing industry, we wouldn't have been the success that we were.

One of the things that I learned from the Filipino community is their sense of family. They have a tremendous sense of family and always watching out for each other.

And once you get to know the members in that community, they also have that tremendous sense of pride of where they work. They really believe in making sure that the organizations that they work for are successful. And every one of those people who worked for me at the time certainly went out of their way to make sure that we were successful. Any opportunity we had for overtime, they gladly stood up and took on that responsibility, that sacrifice to their families, the time they could have spent with them. And any opportunity we had for training and knowledge to help further their careers, they certainly stepped up and they took that.

The Filipino community has given so much back to Manitoba. And the percentage base—they're one of the largest percentage of populations in the country is right here in our city. And any time that you have a gathering of people, whether it be in the parks, you can see the Filipino families often get together to celebrate just a beautiful day with family.

Where I live and have residence, around the Selkirk, East Selkirk area, you will see the families come out and fish along the river banks. And it's a true sense of family and pride and accomplishment. And this only happens because of freedom. And celebrating June 12 as the Filipino independence day is extremely important.

I cannot imagine as a Canadian citizen being under rule from a foreign government. So recognizing the fact that in 1898, on June 12, the Philippines reached their independence. And that's something that you have to acknowledge and respect; that we cannot allow that to go unnoticed. The Filipino community has worked too hard to allow anything to be taken from them.

They continually give and, as the member for Radisson (MLA Dela Cruz) said, they work in all industries, not just the manufacturing industry that impacted myself and my family, but they're in the health-care industry, they're in all different trades, they're in the hospitality industry. They're in just about every aspect that makes our province a functioning province—we have representation from the Filipino community.

And as we said, that, here in our Chamber, we have representatives from two females from the Filipino community that proudly represent their heritage here. And for that, they have my respect.

We need to make sure that we—when we do legislation, we bring it forward to recognize the importance of these days that we don't stop there, that we have these days recognized in our school system and that we teach the history of why June 12 is important, not just for the Filipino community but for the world.

It's a marking of the end of the dictatorship on a country that just wants to exist, wants to prosper with their people. We need to make sure that we teach children that acceptance is forefront and there is no room in our world for hatred. We need to celebrate the fact that 94,000 Filipinos call Winnipeg home and they continue to call Winnipeg home and raise their families here. They start their businesses here, they go to school here, they're employed here and they've established roots in our province. And those roots will be here for generations to come.

It took almost 125-plus years to get that community to the state that it is right now. And just imagine what we can do in another 125 years. If we have communities like the Filipino community thriving in our province, there's no statement that'd be more true than Manitoba can make dreams come true for everybody.

And if we work together and we use history as a way of educating people for our future, then we can stamp our racism. We can open doors for people to come here and to prosper. And we can raise up our neighbours and thank them for being who they are and the part that they bring to our communities.

Every time I attend an event in our community, I am overjoyed with the welcoming nature of the people who put on the events. I am blessed—

* (11:00)

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

The hour being 11 o'clock, the time for debate is over. When this matter is next before the House, the member will have one minute remaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 25—A Better Future for Health-Care in Manitoba

The Speaker: The hour being 11 o'clock, we now move on to private members' resolutions, and the resolution before us today is resolution 25, A Better Future

for Health-Care in Manitoba, brought forward by the honourable member for Tuxedo.

MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo): I move, seconded by the MLA for Kirkfield Park,

WHEREAS the previous, failed PC Provincial Government cut Manitoba health-care services, exacerbated the doctor shortage, and eroded patient access to primary care; and

WHEREAS the previous, failed PC Provincial Government dismissed and disrespected front line health-care workers, fired 500 nurses, and saw mass resignations; and

WHEREAS the previous, failed PC Provincial Government's systematic dismantling of Manitoba's health-care system will be felt for years to come and take years to fix; and

WHEREAS the current Provincial Government has made investments to fix the mess left in Manitoba's health-care system, and increased funding by \$1 billion; and

WHEREAS Manitobans voted for the New Democratic Party to rebuild health-care in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government met with health-care workers on the front lines at hospitals during "The Health-Care Listening Tour"; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government hired 873 net new health-care workers into the public system and started closing the doctor shortage gap created by the previous PC Provincial Government.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to applaud the efforts of the provincial government as it works towards hitting 1,000 net new health-care workers this year.

The Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Tuxedo, seconded by the honourable member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Oxenham), that,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to applaud the efforts of the provincial government as it works towards hiring 1,000 net new health-care workers this year.

And I would ask for leave for it to be submitted as printed—considered as printed.

Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to applaud the efforts of the Provincial Government as it works towards hiring 1,000 net new health care workers this year.

MLA Compton: Again, it's still a little fresh for me, so I'm feeling very honoured to be here today, speaking to my first resolution on behalf of the constituents of Tuxedo. Very grateful.

Now, some folks may be wondering why, and I know myself, as a curious person, why is often what motivates my next step. So why should we be celebrating? Why should we encourage this House to celebrate the current progress that our government has made in health care? And really, it's just that, is that it is progress. And our government inherited a health-care system in crisis from the previous PC government.

As a health—front-line health-care worker, I personally experienced very challenging times, and I'm actually taking a recommendation from constituents of mine, as I've been meeting with folks over the summer, hearing their stories and concerns around health care and their solutions and suggestions. Multiple constituents of mine from across a political spectrum have lifted up the question of: tell us the wins; tell us the progress that's happening. And that's what I want to encourage this House to be doing today, is to tell—to celebrate with ourselves and with Manitobans what we have been able to do and make progress on so far.

So let's start moving on to what we have accomplished. So Manitobans deserve quality health care where they live, and so far this year, I know it's been said before and I will say it again, very loud and proud, that we have hired 873 health-care workers so far and we are on track to meet that goal of 1,000 health-care workers and, you know, exceed it. And our NDP government is committed to rebuilding health care which includes reopening ERs, bringing in the new minor illness and injury clinics and creating capacity here at home.

Kind of going back to what we're rebuilding. I know this is kind of speaking to my rural upbringing and that mentality of, if something's broken, if something's not functioning, what do we do? Well, we roll up our sleeves and we dig in and we get to work.

And I know I'm really appreciative of the constituents from across the political spectrum. I've been meeting with folks that self-identify as Conservative constituents, Liberal constituents, as well as NDP and

folks who have never really cared either way, and they're offering solutions and they're like, you know what? Let's just get things done.

And the record with which we are competing against is PC health cuts that came, well, over the seven and a half years that they were there. But, for example, Manitobans have found it hard—oh, here we go. From 2017 to 2019, the PCs made several budget cuts that had devastating effects. They cut five of six clinics that were intended to reduce overcrowding within the emergency rooms. The Misericordia health care's urgent care, which supplied essential mental health and drug use medical support was closed. The Mature Women's Centre and the St. Boniface family centre was also closed. And the NDP has promised to re-open the Mature Women's Centre, which is a vital service to get women the health care that they need.

The PCs slashed the budget for health governance and regulation—pardon me—by \$36 million in 2017 and 2018. And they cut \$300 million to fund—that was set to fund the new CancerCare facility, and they broke their 2016 election promise that they would introduce 1,200 personal-care-home beds over their eight years. The—and the closure of emergency rooms that happened was poorly planned and rolled out. Medical staff had increased overtime, and it was increased, actually, by 71 per cent for critical care nurses in that 2017-2018.

And now I know—I just want to also speak a moment to—as a nurse who was working on the front lines when those emergency rooms were closed. One of the things that was extremely frustrating as someone on the front lines—we were very confused and wondering what the plan was, as we knew there would be a ripple effect. And what was demonstrated to us and what transpired was the lack of planning, the lack of foresight by the Heather—Pallister and Heather Stefanson's PCs on what it actually meant to consolidate the emergency departments. There was no capacity building for that transition.

And so, you know, that's some of what we inherited.

And so, again, going back to what this government has managed to actually accomplish in one year is impressive. So this year, as of September 2024, we are proud to again announce that we have hired that 873 new health-care workers. So 290 are health-care aides, 304 are nurses, 116 are physicians and 87 are allied health.

And our NDP budget has committed \$8.2 billion into Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, which is a 13.5 per cent increase compared to the PC annual budget from 2022-2023.

And the NDP, we've inherited some of the worst ER times in the country from the PC government as of last October. But with some of the changes that have happened, Dr. Manon Pelletier, the chief medical officer at HSC, said that patients going to the HSC Minor Treatment Clinic are seen in a third of the time that it would take to be seen in the ER, highlighting the value and the impact that these minor injury clinics are already having within our health-care system.

So again, to lift up and celebrate the progress that we're making since coming into government a little over a year ago, and how tirelessly we're working, this—the NDP government, well, we set that ambitious target of 1,000 new health-care workers. And we recognize that there's a lot more to be done. You know, the health-care system didn't get to where it is overnight; it's going to take long—it's going to take time.

* (11:10)

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

But that being said, there will be wins along the way, and we are building capacity. We are building capacity as we are taking care of what needs to be taken care of in the meantime.

One of those components of building capacity is repairing the relationship that has been fractured by the previous government, by Heather Stefanson's PCs, with health-care workers. And one of the significant commitments that our government has had is on listening to front-line workers. They've started the tours, the listening tours. And I was really, really thankful that, right after being elected, I was invited to participate—also demonstrating this government valuing the voices of front-line nurses—as someone coming in later, I'm being included in conversations from day one.

And I also want to just speak quickly to the conversation around repairing relationships with nurses. Collective bargaining is something that gets brought up every now and then, but one thing that hasn't been publicly acknowledged is the different approach the two governments had: whereas the previous contract, under the PCs, it ended up having to be a seven-year contract because of intentional delaying tactics that were done and continual devaluing and disrespecting

of front-line workers, whereas this government showed up day one after our contract expired and was willing to sit at the table. And that is just one way that this government is really highlighting how much they care and value front-line health-care workers and really want to take a collaborative approach to fixing health care.

So we're making progress.

Thank you.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. 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.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): CT scan wait times are at their highest now under the NDP since the pandemic.

How can the member for Tuxedo feel comfortable patting their government on the back with over 12,000 Manitobans waiting at record-high levels for essential diagnostic services?

MLA Carla Compton (Tuxedo): I like the—I thank the member from across the way for this question touching on the—on capacity. Diagnostic capacity is essential and needed when we are working towards improving health care, making it more accessible to Manitobans throughout this whole province.

And so I know one of the things that is coming forth is the reintroduction of the mobile MRI, creating more accessible MRI opportunities for our Manitobans in northern Manitoba that have been having challenges accessing MRIs.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Can you pause the clock, please.

Introduction of Guests

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Before moving on, we have seated in the public gallery, from Leila North School, grade 6 students under the direction of Carolyn Jefferson. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for The Maples, honourable Mintu Sandhu.

And thank you so much for coming today.

* * *

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): For seven and a half years, the failed PC government disrespected health-care workers and Manitobans. The people of Tuxedo have been saying for years their calls to the former PC MLAs went unanswered.

But guess what? The people of Tuxedo have a new MLA that's actually listening to their concerns since the day of being elected.

My question for my colleague is, since being elected, what has she heard from constituents after years of being neglected?

MLA Compton: I'd like to thank my colleague for that question.

And first off, I really want to thank my constituents that have been reaching out from day one, wanting to share with me their experiences within the health-care system, as well as their solutions—because many of them also work in the health-care system, as well as are patients within the health-care system. And one of the biggest things, you know, is—well, they're asking, what are we—what have we done? What's the progress?

And again, you know, it's a really great testament to our recruiting and retaining and building capacity of health-care workers, that we've already managed to achieve 87.3 per cent of our goal of getting that thousand health—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time is expired.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Under the previous NDP government, 16 rural emergency rooms were closed, including the one in my home-town, which had a growing population.

This summer—fast forward now to this summer, emergency rooms in Prairie Mountain Health alone were closed for 391 days total. There's—including Carberry's hospital, which was shut down for over half of the summer.

How does the member justify these widespread rural closures?

MLA Compton: I want to thank the member for his question.

Rural health care is very much something that this government is concerned about and is committed to improving access to Manitobans, no matter where they live in Manitoba. And this year, we have reopened the Carberry emergency department

and I know there's also plans to be reopening the Eriksdale, I believe, emergency department. And again, that mobile MRI, serving the needs of northern Manitobans.

We are strategically investing to be building that capacity for accessibility for health care—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

Are there any further questions?

MLA Cable: After seven and a half years of mismanagement and cuts by the previous government, I would like to know, because I know that the member from Tuxedo has personal experience and has been a fierce advocate for health care in our province, I would like to know her personal experience of working under the previous government and working in health care in Manitoba.

MLA Compton: I want to thank my colleague for this question, and I know I had briefly touched on it a little bit earlier, but working as a nurse on the front lines under the previous PC government, there was a certain air of uncertainty: uncertain what was coming down next and how well thought-out of a plan that it was in terms of patient-care policies that would get rolled out.

And then there was also the matter of respecting—feeling respected as a nurse by my government, and that government demonstrated, time and time again, how much they did not value health-care workers, with wage freezes when it was time for collective bargaining, with—or attempts at wage freezes, and every time—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time is expired.

Mrs. Cook: As a former nurse, I'm just wondering if the member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton) is concerned by an MNU poll that was published online this week, showing that 88 per cent of her former colleagues believe that nothing has changed since the NDP took government.

So, I'm just wondering if she's reached out to MNU about this poll, and if she will stand up for Manitoba's nurses and demand real action from her government.

* (11:20)

MLA Compton: I thank the member across the way for this question.

Reality is, the health-care system that we have inherited as a government was in shambles. And to give a bit of a comparison, when a relationship ends with a partner, you know, it takes a little bit for the next one that comes along to rebuild a trusting relationship. And that's what this government is working towards doing is repairing and rebuilding trust with front-line workers.

I've met with the MNU president, Darlene Jackson, and I look forward to meeting with her again, as well as I am having members reach out to me directly and building face-to-face, direct communication with members.

They're giving—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The member's time is expired.

MLA Cable: I was proud to be part of a team that was elected with a mandate to help fix health care.

My question for my colleague is: What are some of the things that our government is doing to bring health-care workers back to Manitoba?

MLA Compton: I want to thank my colleague for that question.

Our government—one of the first things—or early things that they've done—they've created an office for recruiting and retention. So, you know, putting actions where they say what they value. And we know we need to have a dedicated effort to intentionally create the best opportunities to both recruit and retain the staff that we have.

Part of it also, is we've increased the number of seats in various training programs. We've increased for the physician assistants. This year it's doubled; went from 15 to 30. And I actually had spoken with an incoming physician assistant student that said—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The member's time is expired.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I don't believe that the NDP is actually listening to all health-care nurses and workers, specifically, nurses.

Can the member of Tuxedo—from Tuxedo please explain to me why some nurses' licences are paid by the NDP government and others are not, in our province, paid for, while they're all working for—in our health-care system, and all deserve to be—have that taken care of. I believe it's not fair and it's not right to take preferential treatment on some nurses in certain

areas, and some that can't have that done, while they all work very hard for all of us.

So can she explain why some nurses don't get their licences paid for?

MLA Compton: So I want to thank my—the member across the way for this question.

And it's raising up, again, that conversation, that topic of rebuilding relationships with health-care providers, particularly nurses, in this instant.

And this is why we have that office of recruitment and retention. We are working with professionals, with the educated academics on the best way to recruit and retain folks. What do they need for work-life balance? What do they want in an—you know, place to live? Everything like that that would make Manitoba an attractive place for people to come to, as well as to setting roots, build their families and have their careers in our health-care system.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The time for this question period has expired.

The floor is open for debate. *[interjection]*

House Business

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): I apologize—the honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Pursuant to rule 34(7), I am announcing the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko). The title of the resolution is National Youth Climate Corps.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): It has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private member's business will be one put forward of the honourable member for Lagimodière. The title of this resolution is National Youth Climate Corps.

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The floor is open for debate.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): The hubris in this resolution actually made my jaw drop. That the NDP would have the audacity to put forward this resolution, calling on all of us to give them a big old round of applause, that they're hooting and hollering and clapping for themselves, at a time when Manitobans

are waiting in pain for surgeries, waiting with great anxiety to see specialists and get diagnostic tests, at a time when they have failed to deliver on so many of the commitments they have made, is astounding to me.

I actually wonder if they'll be putting out a news release touting this resolution. I don't think it will play well in their constituencies, Honourable Deputy Speaker. I don't think ordinary Manitobans will appreciate that the NDP wants to waste valuable legislative time patting themselves on the back when they should be getting down to work. It's remarkably tactless and insensitive and out of touch with what ordinary Manitobans expect.

And this is no knock on the member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton); I don't think she wrote this resolution. I think she was handed this resolution and said, go, go do your best with this.

An Honourable Member: We're allowed to think for ourselves over here.

Mrs. Cook: Well, then, I'm not sure how the member will explain the level of alternative facts that are in this resolution, honourable Deputy Speaker.

So I would like to put some real facts on the record, facts about what is going on in health care right now after a year of NDP government.

I'm going to start with diagnostic waits. Instead of patting themselves on the back, they should be addressing the fact that wait times for a CT scan have skyrocketed—this calendar year, under them—to lengths not seen since the pandemic: 25 weeks for a CT scan at Seven Oaks, a 15-week jump in this year alone; 25 weeks for a CT scan at Concordia, a 16-week jump, the highest wait times have been since the pandemic; a staggering 32-week wait for a CT—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The floor just opened for debate; perhaps we just take it down a notch because we still have quite a bit of time left for debate.

Thanks.

Mrs. Cook: A staggering 32 weeks for a CT scan at HSC, the highest wait times have been in years and by far the longest wait for a CT at HSC since the pandemic. Waits for a CT scan are also up six weeks at St. Boniface, eight weeks at Misericordia, six weeks at Boundary Trails and nine weeks in Dauphin. MRI wait times at HSC are up to 56 weeks in August 2024, a 55 per cent increase from August 2023.

None of this squares with what the NDP are attempting to put on the record with this resolution.

We should also talk about surgical wait times. The median wait time for a total hip replacement is now up to 28 weeks. The median wait time for a hip replacement revision is up to a staggering 26 weeks; for context, a year prior, that wait time was 10 weeks—that's a 160 per cent increase under the NDP. The median wait time for a knee replacement has climbed to 36 weeks, and these are just median wait times, meaning half of patients are waiting even longer. Cataract wait times are up to 12 weeks at Misericordia, and yet, given all of this, all of these Manitobans waiting for their surgeries, the NDP want this Legislative Assembly to applaud them for the fact that surgical wait times are up across the board? How incredibly out of touch.

And these wait times don't even take into account the wait time to see a specialist, which, for many disciplines, can be months or even years. Instead of patting themselves on the back, they should be getting down to work and creating an actual staffing plan. I remain shocked that, after campaigning almost solely on health care, and after a year in government, there is still no strategic and credible plan to staff up the areas of health care that need it and the geographic parts of our province that need it.

They set staffing targets back at budget time, but now they've completely changed the parameters of what's considered a new hire in order to make it seem as though they've hit their target. For example, they said they'd hired 90 paramedics. They've hired seven. There's no way they're going to get 90, but they're going to backfill with other health-care professionals and say that it's the same.

It's not the same. I'm not a health-care professional and I know that other allied health professions can't do what a paramedic does. A paramedic is a paramedic. You say you're going to hire 90 of them, hire 90. If you can't do it, come clean with Manitobans about why you can't do it.

* (11:30)

In their most recent health human resources staffing update, this NDP government shamelessly took credit for any number of PC initiatives, as though they had implemented them. This is directly from the background into their own news release. Increased medical school seats—previous PC government; 400 increased nursing seats—previous PC government; increased international medical graduate training

spots—previous PC government; increased residency positions—previous PC government; creation of the provincial float pool—previous PC government.

The previous government was thinking long term, was thinking beyond the next election cycle, which I know is something completely foreign to this NDP crew. But thanks to the efforts of the previous PC government, the NDP is now taking credit for all of those initiatives. But, you know, Honourable Deputy Speaker, it would be incorrect to say that the NDP had absolutely no plan when they came into government. They did have a plan: a plan to fire the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force and to force their ideology on the health-care system.

It was one of the things they did. Shortly after coming into office, they fired the top doctors and medical professionals that were in charge of—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order.

I'd like the member for Riel (MLA Moyes) to come to order. We can't be calling across the floor like that.

Mrs. Cook: After firing the Diagnostic and Surgical Recovery Task Force, the NDP refused to re-sign key contracts signed by the task force with public and private providers, right here at home in Manitoba, to reduce wait times and increase surgical capacities. And we've seen the devastating impact this has had on patients waiting for surgeries.

In my own constituency a well-publicized case, a lady by the name of Ann Bowman had her cataract surgery cancelled by the provider that had been contracted by the previous government to provide surgeries and sent a letter to all of the patients saying if you have a problem with this, contact the Health Minister, because the Health Minister cancelled our contract.

They put ideology ahead of patient care. They cut options for patients to receive fully paid-for care when wait times here were too long, forcing people to go out of province and pay out of their own pockets.

And we're now seeing the consequences of their short-sighted decision making.

While I still have some time on the clock, I want to talk about a poll commissioned by the Manitoba Nurses Union, the results of which were published on October 24, just a few days ago. And according to this poll, an average of 88 per cent of MNU members said that despite the NDP's many campaign promises,

nothing has changed on the front lines over the past year.

Health-care workers are feeling unheard by this NDP government. And I'm going to quote from their Instagram post; this is public. According to the poll, only 12 per cent of respondents noticed any improvement in the health-care system while a whopping 88 per cent said nothing's changed. Many also shared that the new government has yet to make any real difference, especially when it comes to staffing, safety and mental health supports.

I also want to put on the record some of the comments that MNU members made on Instagram in response to these posts. Quote: Sadly there has been no noticeable change on the units, unquote. Another quote: Not seeing improvements. Things continue to go downhill in my opinion. Absolutely no change for the better.

Conditions continue to decline. Things are getting worse. On the medicine unit I work on at HSC, things have only gotten worse, not better. I'm front-line additions. They have not helped my patients with what is truly needed: immediate access to detox and treatment beds, a streamlined process. We have had government bigwigs pop in for the PR—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Matt Wiebe (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Point of order. I hesitate to interrupt the member opposite, but I believe she's reading from private correspondence or other private documents that I would prefer—I think the members in the Chamber would like to see that. If she could table those documents, that would be very much appreciated.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Thank you, Minister, for your comment. I've been informed that she had already indicated it was a public document. But is it—if it's possible, the member for Roblin (Mrs. Cook) can table this if she'd like to, but it's not required because she'd already indicated it was a public document.

Does this satisfy the minister?

I've been informed this is not a point of order.

* * *

Mrs. Cook: I'll just finish that quote: We have had government bigwigs pop in for the PR, not at all meeting my patients' needs.

Before I conclude my marks, I just want to say, this resolution is embarrassing. Calling on the Legislature to pat the NDP on the back smacks of hanging the mission accomplished banner one year into their mandate.

Fiddling while Manitobans wait for surgery, while health-care workers call on this NDP government for their nonsense, the members opposite are clearly too absorbed in their own hubris to see out-of-how out of touch they really are.

Thank you.

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): I sincerely appreciate all of the passion about health care coming from the opposite side, you know, and I would feel very similarly if I had spent seven and a half years dismantling health care.

And so, what I would recommend, truly—no, and I'm being genuine here—I would sincerely recommend the member from Roblin to maybe get on board with the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) and start voting yes for some of our amendments and policies in this space. That would be—I think that that would be a great step forward, and I think that Manitobans would appreciate to see some of that collaboration as well, with some of the hard work that we're doing when it comes to health care.

You know, before I go on, though, I do just want to quickly shout-out the member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton) bringing forward an important first resolution. We should be absolutely proud of the fact that we have another nurse working in the space here: a front-line worker who knows what some of the challenges have been over the last seven and a half years, first-hand. And so, I'm very glad that she's joined us here as the member for Tuxedo and is going to be such a fantastic representative for that community.

You know, we're incredibly fortunate to have these roles as representatives, and I get the opportunity to do so many incredible things and meet so many incredible people in the community. And everywhere I go—it could be Winnipeg South Sikh Centre; it could be Manitoba Islamic Association—I was doing a ride-along with the police last week, which was an amazing experience.

Everywhere I go, I seem to hear the same things about health care. People want to be talking, they want to be talking about what went on over the last seven and a half years and how excited they are that we're finally getting a new direction.

So we're here today to talk about that simple idea, right, that Manitobans deserve access to quality health care when they need it. And it should be without worry, without endless waiting and without ever questioning if their needs will actually be met.

So, in just one year, we made a promise last year to hire 1,000 net new health-care workers. And I want to be clear on that number, because sometimes people aren't completely sure what that means. And there were a number of times when I was working on the front lines that I would read articles about these—this former failed government talking about hiring new health-care workers, but it was never net new; they would never give that number.

So our net new hiring of 873 new health-care workers means health-care workers that are actually in that system working now, and it takes into account the workers that move on to other careers or other places in their life.

So I'm incredibly proud of that, and it's 87 per cent of that number has been met already, and that's doctors, nurses, aides, allied health workers who were—are all going to be part of those healing hands, helping out Manitobans.

You know, and they bring so much compassion and skill to those in need. And while we are recognizing—and I know the member from Roblin brought this up—we're recognizing the fact that we've done a lot this year, we're proud of that.

There's still a lot of work ahead, and these are real numbers that we bring forward here today, real progress with real people making a difference in Manitoba.

So we know that every one of these new hires is a step towards a better health-care system: a system that doesn't just treat symptoms, but actually cares for people and deals with larger problems.

* (11:40)

Now, as we look forward, it's important to remember how we got here, as I mentioned before, so let's be clear about a few things. Our health-care system did not fall into disrepair overnight. For years—years—health-care budgets were cut, emergency rooms were shuttered, vital services like the Mature Women's Centre, the Victoria ER in south Winnipeg, which so many people relied on, were closed. And the former government's decisions to reduce funding and resources weren't just items in a budget; they were

choices with deep and painful consequences for Manitobans.

You know, our predecessors, for all their talk, you know, they left our health-care system underresourced and completely overwhelmed, and clinics that were meant to relieve emergency room pressure were shut down, budgets for health authorities got slashed, gaps in services widened.

And let's not forget these cuts were not abstract. They impacted Manitobans in very, very real ways. People lost access to care, they lost loved ones and too often they lost hope. And, in fact, you know, some of the issues that are being brought forward in this Chamber over the last couple of months, last couple of weeks specifically, from some of the members opposite were caused directly by decisions that they made while they were in government. And even for the newer members, you ran under that banner, you were part of it, so let's get to work in actually coming up with some new solutions that are going to be better for Manitobans.

And, you know, this is why this mission that we're on goes beyond filling vacancies or reopening doors. We're reimagining health care in Manitoba from the ground up and we're ensuring that every single investment we make is targeted and strategic and informed by the incredible advice of the professionals that are working within that system. And that's both rural and urban, and we want to make sure that every single Manitoban feels seen, heard and cared for.

Now, I'm really proud to stand here today, genuinely, and tell you more about what we've been doing over the last year and what we're delivering on. And I just want to dig down in those numbers a little bit: it's actually 290 new health-care aides, incredible folks that do incredible work in our hospitals and clinics across the problem—province, yes.

We have 304 new nurses in the system. You know, I talked about the member from Tuxedo; our Minister of Health is a former psychiatric nurse. And the work that I have seen them do first-hand in the work that I used to do as a firefighter and paramedic, it's second to none, and I feel so fortunate and excited that we have that many new folks working as nurses here in the province.

We've got 116 new doctors—116. That is a significant number of new physicians working in this province. We also have 87 allied health professionals. And, you know, we're just getting started. Like we said, this is just the beginning. We have so much more

work to do, but this trend is going in the right direction.

And, you know, we've committed \$8.2 billion to Health, Seniors and Long-Term Care, which, actually, it's a 13.5 per cent increase from what we inherited. That means that we'll have expanded training for nurses and other health professionals, it means new opportunities for graduates and it means that we're strengthening the workforce that Manitoba deserves.

You know, our Health Minister, as I mentioned before, and the team are working so tirelessly. We've introduced new minor illness and injury clinics in Winnipeg and Brandon, which provide care for non-life-threatening issues. And I've got to say, honestly, as a trampoline owner and a father of three, those minor injury and illness clinics are incredible. Absolutely, I have used them a number of times and I appreciate the care and how quickly you can get in and get out with the great helping hand of the physicians that work there.

So let's be clear again, though: no system, no plan, no policy is going to be stronger than the people who actually carry it out. And that's why we've been focused on listening and supporting our health-care workers who are absolutely the backbone of this system.

You know, we've implemented shift premiums, increased pay for those working evenings and weekends and ensured that health-care workers in critical-care areas are recognized for the demanding life-saving work that they do.

And to all the young people stepping into this field, and the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and our Minister of Health have said this a number of times, we want you to know Manitoba values you and Manitoba needs you.

We're increasing provincial training capacity in nursing, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and medicine. We're ensuring that Manitoba's a place where new graduates want to work, where they want to live and where they want to raise their families.

You know, I have so many things here that I would love to talk about but I am running out of time, sadly, and I know I have other colleagues that want to speak to this. But I do want to say to Manitobans, I do ask each and every one of you to stand with us in this journey but to hold us accountable, and we'll be there with you. We're going to work with you on this project. We've done a lot of work so far. It shows that our intentions are good, and

we have the team to get this work done, and we thank you for your support in this.

So genuinely, let's be the generation that actually rebuilds and revitalized health care in Manitoba. You know, we'll be the ones who can look at this challenge and say, we can, and we will, do better. And together, we can create a healthier, stronger and more compassionate Manitoba, a Manitoba that will leave no one behind.

Thank you.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this resolution this morning. It—this resolution, when I saw it, similar to my colleague from Roblin, it absolutely boggled my mind that this would be brought forward before the Legislature for us to spend time to debate.

It further boggles my mind that the member from Tuxedo, who has an 18-year career in the health-care industry as a nurse, would bring forward legislation that—therefore be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to applaud the efforts of the provincial government—this coming from a government that says they are listening to Manitobans about the health care that they need, and listening to the health-care providers, the front-line nurses, the doctors and staff that run our health-care system.

But yet they bring forward legislation not showcasing the hard work that the health-care professionals provide to our province, but the work that they have done. And that work is not translating into results.

One of the first things that the NDP did when they took office was to fire our top doctors and medical professionals in charge of reducing the surgical and diagnostic backlog in Manitoba. So that's quite counterproductive to building a sustainable health-care system in the province.

It's clear to see in rural Manitoba, of which I represent a constituency in the southeast corner, which has some of the fastest growing communities in our entire province, that this government is loyal to political ideology and puts that ahead of patient care in the health-care system. They're focused on their political ideology across all departments of the government, but we're especially seeing it in health care.

And I saw it in health care in my constituency early on in this government being elected, in the far southeast corner, where the people of the far southeast corner of the province—Sprague, Piney, Buffalo Point,

Buffalo Point First Nation—these people are 250 kilometres away from accessing health care.

The Buffalo Point First Nation is left now without accessing health care. Buffalo Point First Nation is not able to access health care the same way that they were under the previous PC government, and the reason for that is that this NDP government has done nothing to staff the health-care facility that was built under the previous PC government. There was no health-care facility at the Buffalo Point First Nation, and the previous PC government had built the facility and staffed the facility of shared doctors out of the Vita health-care facility—and it was staffed.

* (11:50)

People of that community, people of the communities that surround Buffalo Point First Nation, were able to access doctors from that facility. Since the NDP taking government, they've done absolutely nothing at maintaining a staff in that facility.

Furthermore to that, there was an agreement, an agreement with the US, a US health-care facility, the Altru Clinic in Roseau, Minnesota. There was a long-standing agreement. This was an agreement that was under previous NDP government, under the PC government. And, silently, the NDP have been cutting the services that are provided to members of the communities that I represent in the far southeast corner of our province.

And these are life-saving services for people that are hundreds of kilometres away. You know, some of them are as far as 250 kilometres away from accessing health care but yet, you know, only miles, some of them, from accessing health care through the Altru agreement, which was a long-negotiated, long-standing agreement that provides health care at a competitive rate to what we're able to provide health care to those people in Manitoba. These people are not further taxing our health-care system in the city of Winnipeg. We're overrun in capacity, and this agreement allows to take a burden off of our Manitoba health-care system.

So the Health Minister—early on, it said that they're a listening government and that they would listen to all Manitobans. So, early on, this was at the end of last year, I had written letters to the minister; the municipalities had written letters; the community had written letters to the minister. And the correspondence that we had all gotten is that this doesn't align with the political ideology of the NDP government.

So they don't support outsourcing health services outside of our province and did not provide any alternative solutions to accessing health care. So the answer of the NDP for rural—especially southeast rural Manitobans, in the far southeast corner, which are very unique to accessing health care because of how close they are to some services and how far they are from Manitoba services—this Health Minister, basically, had told them, too bad, I'm not interested in speaking to you, and you can deal with this Southern Health board on accessing health care.

Well, everybody knows the capacity of health care in the region. And they know that the detriment of capacity to health care in the region had started under the previous NDP government. So I'll get to a long list of rural ERs that were closed under the previous NDP government and just how far Manitobans had to travel as a result of that. But specifically speaking to my corner of the province, the previous NDP government closed the only hospital, ER, within 100 kilometres of the people that live in the communities in the far southeast corner.

So the Vita facility included diagnostic services, an emergency room, a personal-care home, a clinic and a hospital with a number of rooms in a modern—relatively modern facility that was built in the late '90s under the previous PC government. The previous PC government, before Selinger and Doer, that government, actually, invested in health care in our rural communities and the Vita facility is an example of that.

But during the last time the NDP were in government, they closed the ER in Vita, driving people 150 extra kilometres to access health care.

Sixteen rural ERs were closed under the previous NDP government. And I'll give a quick list of what those are: We've got Emerson, which, those people had to drive an extra 20 kilometres; we've got Pembina-Manitou, 25 kilometres extra; MacGregor, 15; St. Claude, 15—St. Claude, 20 to Portage; Gladstone, they had to go to Neepawa, an extra 20; Vita, Bethesda regional health-care facility in Steinbach.

The list goes on and on because this list is 16 ERs long. So we can speak all day to the failures of the NDP's ideologically driven health-care focus right now. But specifically, I wanted to use my time on rural health care and showcase the damage that they have done to the southeast corner of our province since they've been elected, one year ago.

Thank you.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): It's always an honour to be standing here to educate our Chamber and give a northern perspective on every issue that we address in this House.

First of all, I just want to put some words on record. Manitobans deserve access to quality health care where they need it. We've made significant progress in one year that we have been elected. We are on track to hiring 1,000 net new health work-health-care workers, which we are 87 per cent on the way there. Our NDP government is committed to rebuilding health care in Manitoba, which includes reopening ERs, bringing in new minor illness and injury clinics and creating capacity here at home.

These 873 health-care workers are just one step we're taking to staff up the system. And I'm always grateful when we address issues when we talk about health-care workers.

With my own health that I'm dealing, I'm very grateful that I come across folks that are very well—that are very kind people. I've seen many doctors here with my diabetes and my eye, and I always, always appreciate them and tell them how grateful I am for their work that they do for us Manitobans.

And also, too, if you want to talk about wait times, I am looking forward to working with our NDP government to hire new health-care workers so our wait times can be reduced. But you have no idea what wait times are for northern Manitoba. First of all, you've

got to wait for an appointment. First of all, you've got to take time off work or take time off school when your appointment is given to you, say, four months away.

Now, when that four months time comes up, do you have the money to go? Do you have a place to go? Those are factors that us northerners have to face. And then guess what? We miss our appointments and that is why we have such a chronic, chronic situation when it comes to diabetes. So I am looking forward to working with the NDP government to ensure that we have these services for northern Manitobans. *[interjection]* Oh, sorry.

Mrs. Carrie Hiebert (Morden-Winkler): I just wanted to say thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I have a very, very high respect for the health-care workers and the doctors and nurses that take care of us and our loved ones.

And I just want to say that out loud. It's such an important job that they do, and we could not do this without them. So thank you so much to all of our health-care workers in our province.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Morden-Winkler will have 10 minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 o'clock, the House is recessed, stands recessed until 1:30.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 29, 2024

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