

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CHIEF, Kevin	Point Douglas	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
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EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
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FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
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GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
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TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 27, 2016

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

House Business

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, pursuant to rule 33(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Thursday will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine). The title of the resolution is Pharmacare Must Cover All Essential Medication for Women.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader that the private member's resolution to be considered next Thursday will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. Johns. The title of the resolution is Pharmacare Must Cover All Essential Medication for Women.

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Mr. Maloway: I would ask the—whether there's leave to move directly to Bill 212, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to move to Bill 212, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 212—The Health Services Insurance
Amendment Act**

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I move, seconded by the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), that Bill 212, The

Health Services Insurance Amendment Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wiebe: Madam Speaker, it's indeed my honour and privilege to rise in this House to bring this very important bill before this House and to give every member of this House an opportunity this morning to debate, to put some words on the record and to stand firmly and decisively behind the idea of free, accessible, universal health care in Manitoba once and for all.

And I do believe, Madam Speaker, that it is potentially an opportunity for some more bipartisanship. I—maybe I'm just feeling the love from yesterday's afternoon where members of this House came together to vote on a private member's—on a motion before this House. But this is a rare opportunity where we can come together for—from different perspectives, maybe, as legislators, but, ultimately, come to the conclusion that Manitobans should not be taxed more for the services that they are receiving.

So we believe it on this side of the House because we believe health care is something that should be truly universal, that should be truly accessible to all Manitobans, and the other side might come to this conclusion that this is a good bill to support because they are—they don't believe in taxes; they don't believe in more taxes for Manitobans. This is something that their premier went, knocked on doors in Manitoba during the last election. He said read my lips; no new taxes, and he said we're not going to raise the tax.

First thing he did, of course—I digress a bit here, Madam Speaker, I must admit—but the first thing he did is he took the seniors tax rebate, the single biggest tax increase for seniors in this province in the last two decades; that was his first act. But he did say he didn't want to raise taxes.

But I think this is where we can come together, because I think members opposite have the opportunity now to stand up and say that health premiums in this province are a tax. This is a backdoor tax on Manitobans; it's a burden for low-income Manitobans and it's a regressive and a

blunt instrument-type of tax that I'm sure the members opposite are happy to stand up, put it on the record to say we will not burden Manitobans with any new taxes like this.

So it's a simple commitment. It's a—once again—a reasonable request if members have taken the opportunity to read the bill. It's not very long; it's very to the point; and it's very straightforward. This is not meant as a partisan move, and I think Manitobans would be happy to hear that their new government stands clearly against this. And they would be happy to hear this because they feel that this government, because they've looked at what previous Conservative governments have done in health care and they said, well, they did try to privatize home care; they did bring in US consultants to try to privatize and Americanize our system in the past.

Now, they say that this is not where they're headed, but Manitobans are worried that that's where they're going. So this is an opportunity for them to come in now and very clearly and put it on the record to say that they will not go that route with health-care premiums.

Health-care premiums, Madam Speaker, they don't work. They don't work and the proof is in how they've been applied across this country.

So yesterday in question period I had an opportunity to ask a question with regards to this bill to give the minister an opportunity to stand up on—put his words on the record, and we know that he went to Saskatchewan and he looked at some of their private delivery options and he said, well, maybe there's some good ideas there.

And then he went—maybe he went to Ontario. We don't know this, but maybe he went to Ontario. He said, look, in Ontario a family earning \$20,000 a year is paying \$300 in tax premiums. Or maybe they went to BC where the number is astronomically higher. So we don't know where he's looking. We know he's looking at all across the country and he's looking at all of these options, and is he actually looking what the impact is on low-income families on everybody?

As I said, this is a regressive tax. It's a tax that impacts the lowest rung, the lowest income earners disproportionately. We know this because we see how it's applied in places like British Columbia. We know in other places they've seen this. They've understood this to be the case—places like Quebec

where they're now moving away from this system and they're moving away from burdening individuals and families.

* (10:10)

Here in Manitoba, we have a different system. We've had it for a very long time. In fact, we would call this the cornerstone of our system, that individuals aren't burdened with this. We do collect a health and education levy, you know, which is sometimes called the payroll tax. This is the opportunity for employers and employees to step up to the plate, to put money towards health and education, so we do think that there is room for that. There is room for a shared system where we can all fund the health-care system as it needs to be funded.

But to put his on the backs of Manitobans, and particularly low-income Manitobans, is the absolute wrong way to go. As I said, it's a blunt instrument. It doesn't actually get the results that you want in the sense that the highest income earners in our province aren't paying their share, and I bet you if you went out and talked to some of them, they would say—they would agree with that. They would say, you know, I'm happy to pay my share. I'm a citizen of Manitoban—Manitoba. I am, you know, have been lucky enough to earn a good wage and I'm happy to pay my fair share.

But then those on the lowest rungs in our society, those who have the least ability to pay, well, they're paying a disproportionately higher amount. It's a backdoor tax. The money flows directly into general revenues, which we know this Premier (Mr. Pallister) is looking for, you know, any kind of value for money, efficiencies he can find. He's only looking at the bottom line. That's what we're concerned about. So it's an absolutely clear opportunity to—for this government to stand up clearly to Manitobans and tell them where they stand.

Now, I just wanted to take a quick moment to talk about that because in question period yesterday when I had the opportunity to ask the minister directly about this, he mused that maybe this is a referendum issue. Maybe this is something he'd like to go directly to the people of Manitoba about.

Well, I think I'd welcome that. I think it would be an interesting exercise for him to go to the people of Manitoba and say, you know, I'm planning on raising your taxes. We're going to call it a health premium. We're going to call it a levy. We're going

to call it something else, but I am effectively raising your taxes right now, and I'd like to hear what the minister has to say about that idea. Does he really believe that that's the best way to go? Does he think he'd have the support of Manitobans? Well, perhaps. Perhaps that's the direction that he's going, and I'd be happy for him to go down that road.

But this is a moment for us as legislators to stand up at a time when the minister is going through a health review. He's looking at all ways to find efficiencies. We know he's going to the United States to get advice. You know he's going across Canada to some other jurisdictions. It's now our opportunity as legislators to simply stand in this House, to simply say that we do not believe that health premiums are the right way to go, to set that out in terms—in the terms of reference for whatever outside consultant tells us what to do with our health-care system, to set it out here clearly that we are always looking for efficiencies but we will not download those costs and we will not burden Manitobans by putting this on their shoulders.

So I hope that the government takes this opportunity to stand with Manitobans to be the champions here. And, again, I really don't care how they come to this. If they just think it's a tax issue, then that's fine, then they're going to be in agreement with it, and that's fine. We'll take it. We'll take it however it comes.

But, if they truly believe in making sure that our health-care system is accessible, is truly universal, is progressive and it doesn't go backwards—it doesn't take bad ideas from other provinces, instead, looks at the best options for a made-in-Manitoba solution to health-care challenges—I welcome that support from the government. I think this is something that we can move through very quickly, move it to committee and ultimately pass it in this House and clearly stake out for all Manitobans where we stand, that we as a Legislature stand with our constituents, stand against health premiums and stand with our health-care system in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Before moving on to questions, I would just like to clarify for the House that we are in orders of the day, private members' business, and we are doing second reading of Bill 212.

Questions

Madam Speaker: We will now move into the question period. 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; the independent member can ask a question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): Interesting little side train there that we heard from the member.

I'm wondering if the member went and talked to anybody in the legal profession other than his side—other than his colleague beside him there. Did you get a legal opinion on the enforceability or the constitutionality of this bill?

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Well, I must admit, Madam Speaker—first of all, I thank the member for the question—I am not a lawyer. I know this went through the legal counsel here in the Legislature. But I also understand that we have been, as legislators, given power by the courts to tax and to stand firmly against taxes, and I think that's what we're trying to do here today. So I would welcome the member's support on—in that regard.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I think this is, you know, basically a reasonable bill put forward, but I wonder why there's no mention of accountability as an important principle in health care?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I thank the member for the question. I know it's something we had an opportunity to talk about in this House just last week, I believe, a private member's resolution brought by the independent member.

This is a very specific bill, and what my goal here was was to keep it focused on health-care premiums, as to not, as I said, politicize it, hoping that the government would just see the value in this and support us and move this bill forward.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Why is it important to ban health-care premiums now?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I thank the member for Flin Flon for the question.

As I mentioned, this is a unique opportunity where the minister has indicated that they are looking for a new way to deliver health care. They're looking for efficiencies and they are looking to outsiders, in fact, to outside consultants to deliver those results. We feel that this is an opportunity for us to get out ahead of that process, to say very

clearly we look forward to whatever efficiencies and we'll take those as they come, but we will not consider health-care premiums. It's not the Manitoba way.

Mr. Helwer: Well, I'll go back and expand on the question that the member didn't answer, then, that I asked previously, because when the NDP were in government they actually did get legal opinion on the constitutionality of such a bill as this one. In fact, they spent \$155,000 on outside legal fees to go to court and find that the NDP's ability to raise taxes and fees was declared unconstitutional.

So why is this member introducing legislation today that the courts have ruled unconstitutional and illegal—that the Province actually spent money on. Why is he introducing a bill today? Did he not read the judgment?

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I think this member is certainly taking a very specific tract on that and maybe trying to, you know, pretend he's a lawyer today, I'm not really sure.

You know, this is a bill that came through Legislative Counsel. If he has an issue with that, I think he should take it up with them. I trust very much in Legislative Counsel. The work that they do for all members is phenomenal and I would, at any time, stand behind their work and their judgment in this case.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I want to congratulate the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) for this very visionary bill.

Like to ask him: How do user fees and premiums shut out low-income families from health care?

Mr. Wiebe: It's a great question. As I said, it's—not only is our health premiums a regressive tax in that they impact those low-income folks disproportionately compared to those at the highest income levels, but they're also a point-of-service tax. So it potentially keeps low-income folks from even seeking out the health care that they potentially need. So we have to be very careful when we're talking about these kinds of taxes, that this is not the way we should go in Manitoba.

* (10:20)

Mr. Gerrard: Yes, Madam Speaker, just a follow-up. The member from Brandon West may have a good point and it would be important to know whether the member from Concordia's

actually consulted members of the NDP who were in government previously. The former premier is here, for example, to talk about this very issue.

And—but I would also—the member from Concordia mentioned that he was not interested in putting in accountability because he felt it would politicize it. From my point of view, putting in accountability is not politicizing this. This is something that we should all be supporting.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I couldn't agree more with the member in regards to, you know, whether this is a politicization of the bill. I simply meant that, you know, with the government voting against their particular resolution, it shows that they certainly don't agree with that element, whereas I do believe that this something that they can get behind. Again, and from an ideological point of view, I think it's something that they should support.

Mr. Helwer: Well, obviously, the member did not consult with the legal profession at all on this bill. He seems to seem that it's not necessary.

The government did get a ruling that they spent \$155,000 on. But I'm wondering—it—so, I know there's something that he can do; he can read, and I'm wondering if he actually read The Health Services Insurance Act because under that act, section 33, it says each resident is an insured person and entitled to benefits subject to such waiting periods as may be prescribed in regulations.

The act already defines every resident, the fact they're a resident, an insured person, and the NDP bill here is, in fact, unconstitutional.

So, did he read the act?

Mr. Wiebe: I think it's very clear from what this member says that it's clear that all Manitobans have a right to health care, and in this case, we stand very clearly to say that they do not have to pay health-care premiums. I mean, if this member is saying that this Legislature has no power to clearly say that we won't impose a tax on Manitobans, I'd be very curious how he would defend that. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Sorry. The honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Helwer).

Mr. Helwer: Again, thank you, Madam Speaker, again, the member doesn't answer the question because the legislation that he brings in is not necessary. It's already covered under legislation that

exists, so I encourage him to read the act because apparently he can't talk to a lawyer to find out that what he's proposing here is illegal, and all they're really doing is trying to distract from their record. In fact, we heard the member go back, more than 17 years back, to a former-former administration and try to blame them for things that they were not able to fix.

So will the member go back and actually read the act and see where this particular legislation is irrelevant and unnecessary and wasting our time?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order. Order.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I think I just heard this member say that protecting universal, accessible health care and banning health premiums in this province once and for all is a waste of time. Unbelievable, Madam Speaker.

If I could just read into the record: There have been—there have to be consequences for elected officials. I said that when I introduced the original balanced budget law in 1993 and I continue to be a strong believer that elected people owe Manitobans some personal accountability, some level of personal accountability.

Who said that, Madam Speaker? The Premier (Mr. Pallister).

Madam Speaker: I would just like to take a moment here and just indicate for the House there had been a reference, I believe, by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) referencing the presence of somebody in the Chamber. Again, it goes to our rules of not indicating whether somebody was in the Chamber or not.

And, just for rule—a rule clarification, I would indicate that the independent member can only ask one question during this period, and each of the independent members can only ask one, so that this member would only be allowed to ask further questions if there were no other questions from the floor.

So I would have to acknowledge the honourable member for Brandon West.

Mr. Helwer: Well, again, the member didn't answer the question but tried to put words in my mouth. I'm thrilled that he's here today, that he wants to defend the NDP record on health care, so I'd like to see him defend the NDP record on health care and I want to

see him defend how he's going to go against the courts in this particular bill. We're going to waste Manitobans' money again to go to court to defend something that has been proven to be illegal and unconstitutional. How does he intend to do that—waste Manitobans' money and, obviously, he is not reading our own legislation—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Wiebe: Well, I find this position baffling, Madam Speaker, that this member would, you know, pretend to be a lawyer here in this place and hide behind legal definitions. If he stands against health premiums in this province, then he should stand up, clearly say it and the debate will be done. Will this minister do that?

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: The debate is now open.

Mr. Reg Helwer (Brandon West): I'm pleased to rise in the House today to discuss Bill 212, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act. And, you know, we went through the question period and the member failed to answer any of the questions. They are—basically, I don't see how there's any defence here, Madam Speaker. This is a bill that's not necessary. It is already covered in legislation that we have and it's not—so we can even see it—an issue.

And the member had 17 years. The government had 17 years to bring this in. They could have done this at any time, but they didn't. So why is it important, now, after 17 years of their rule that they could have brought this in at any time, that they ignored it and they ignored Manitobans.

And I want to know what is his idea of a free, universal and accessible health-care system? Is that what he thinks existed under the NDP government? Because I can tell you, it's certainly not free. Manitobans pay the highest taxes just about anywhere in Canada levered on them by this NDP government. It is not universal because we have people searching out health care everywhere. We have failures again and again and again from the NDP health-care record.

You can talk to any Manitoban that's tried to go an emergency room has been turned away or spent hours and hours of time waiting, finally left to go

home without receiving care. That is the NDP legacy and, certainly, not accessible.

So those are all the things that our government has been elected to change and we have been elected with one of the biggest majorities, Madam Speaker, in Manitoba history. Manitobans elected us to make changes and make things better for them, especially in health care because they know the NDP had failed time and time and time again.

Interesting to hear the member say that Manitobans should meet—not be taxed for services they are already receiving. Where was this member in the last government? I would have been thrilled if he would have been—stood up and said that, because this is the government that levered the highest tax increases ever in Manitoba history. They came and they promised that there would be no tax increases. The former premier said it was ridiculous that there would be any tax increases, and what did they do? They expanded the RST, the PST to apply to many, many more things that Manitobans had—did not expect. They promised that they would go into infrastructure and, of course, when we look at—

Madam Speaker: The noise level in the Chamber is going up. I'm having a lot of difficulty hearing the member speak. So I would ask that everybody please respect the person that's got the floor and up on debate so that we can hear all the comments that are made. This is a very important debate, and I would ask that everybody respects each other's time on the floor and allows the member to be heard.

Mr. Helwer: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will endeavour to speak a little louder so that the member can hear me. I'm sure that they want to listen to common sense.

Because, Madam Speaker, what I hear from the member and what I see in this bill is pure fear mongering. They are fear mongering Manitobans again that this is something that might happen out there. In fact, there's been no promises in this regard; there's been no movement in this regard; and he's trying to set up something here that doesn't actually exist.

He condemns the Minister of Health for going out and talking to other provinces about best practices because that is what we did not see the former NDP government do. They tried to fix things from within and we saw that failure, Madam Speaker.

* (10:30)

Why wouldn't you go out to talk to other provinces to find out how they are doing things better than we are? We have the longest waiting lists in Canada. Surely, I think, that indicates that there are other provinces that are doing better than we are.

Should we not go and find out how it's done, how they're able to make changes, small changes, to make sure that if someone needs access to health care, they can indeed get it?

And, Madam Speaker, you know, he talked about the health and education levy, the payroll tax. That's something that when I was in the private sector, and still am in the private sector, I pay that payroll tax. It is a tax on jobs. It is a job killer. And, you know, as a business, I would be thrilled if that payroll tax, that health and education levy, actually went to improving services in education, actually went to improving services in health care. But we know that that did not happen under this—the former NDP government. It is just something that went into general revenues and they frittered away with nothing to show for it but higher ambulance fees, longer wait times, failures throughout the medical system.

Now, Madam Speaker, I've spent a great deal of time in the medical system with our family, as you well know, and that failure falls on the feet of this former NDP government. I know many people in medical system, as I'm sure many MLAs do here. They are all looking for change. They are looking for the little things to change that will improve the services for health care for Manitobans that this former government ignored and would not listen to.

It's sad, Madam Speaker, how I sit there and I listen to the doctors, the nurses, the health-care practitioners, the paramedics that tell me, time and time again, of the little things that they would like to see changed, but they were ignored, time and again, by this former government.

Instead, now we have a member trying to pretend that he's protecting Manitobans by bringing in a piece of legislation that is clearly unconstitutional. They have gone to the courts and had a previous piece very similar to this declared unconstitutional, and now he's introducing one in the Legislature here and trying to say it's all okay, just trust us.

Well, Manitobans, Madam Speaker, don't trust the former NDP government. They don't trust the people across the aisle. They know who they trust and they elected us with their trust to protect their trust.

So, you know, the member says that he's trying to protect Manitobans. Well, did this currently exist under the former government? Obviously not. I can tell him, time and time again, of people that have come to me, Madam Speaker, and they've talked about the fees that they have to pay in the health-care system. Those fees were implemented under the NDP. Where was he? Why wasn't any of this done before? Where was he protecting Manitobans for the past 17 years? Wasn't there.

In particular, Madam Speaker, I can talk about a particular aunt that you know well, and she had carpal tunnel syndrome in both of her wrists and she was told by the medical system, well, it's going to be at least a year wait before you're able to get surgery for that, but, you know, if you go over to this clinic and you pay a tray fee, you can get it done tomorrow.

That was done under the NDP government, Madam Speaker, and he's trying to pretend that those fees didn't exist under them. He's trying to pretend that he protects Manitobans when, obviously, they implemented that structure and it existed under that government. So, don't try to pretend you're anything for Manitobans because they saw through you in the last election and we saw the results in this Legislature. Manitobans elected us to enact change. They elected us to protect them against the wilful damage that was done by the former NDP government. It is sad to watch what has happened to our health-care system under the NDP.

What was the initial promise that they came in with? Let me think, now. Over 17 years ago, Madam Speaker, they were going to do away with hallway medicine. Automatically, with a minor investment, they suggested, they could stop all hallway medicine.

An Honourable Member: Who said that?

Mr. Helwer: I wonder who said that.

So what happened to hallway medicine, Madam Speaker? They came in and they changed how they count people in the hallway.

And it's sad. I had another aunt that had open-heart surgery, again on the wait-list for many, many months. And, when I went to visit her in the

hallway of the Buhler centre, she was not counted as hallway medicine. This was my lovely aunt recovering from open-heart surgery, out on her bed in the open hallway—not in a room. This was just a couple of years ago, Madam Speaker.

That was the failure of that former government. They promised—solemn promise to Manitobans they would end hallway medicine, and what do I see? My aunt recovering from open-heart surgery in the hallway. But she's not counted in their statistics, Madam Speaker. We have the nurses; we have the aides walking by her. We have other visitors going to see other patients, and this is my aunt trying to recover in the hallway. Sad to watch. That is one of the ultimate failures of the NDP health-care system, and here he protects—to try to protect Manitobans, try to pretend he's 'protecting' them.

He can—he says that this is going to put, you know—who does he think pays for the health-care system now, Madam Speaker? Taxpayers pay for that health-care system, and we've seen how those taxes increased with no improvement in services, indeed, a degradation of services under this NDP government. That was sad to watch and damaging to Manitobans. That is much more damaging than anything what I can see that's coming forward. Indeed, this is just a 'follicy' that he is presenting to Manitobans—fear mongering.

Mr. Derek Johnson (Interlake): Manitoba needs innovative solutions to improve home and primary health care so it can match other countries which have overcome similar problems by spending less money and getting better results.

Manitobans are tired of paying more and getting less. It's a myth that Canada has the best health-care system in the world, or even more so a myth that Manitoba has the best health-care system in Canada. After 17 years of NDP decay, we spend near the most per capita on health care, more than the majority of other provinces. What's worse is while we do this, we have gotten poorer outcomes for our patients.

It's not the quality of health care that needs to be addressed, but the way in which it's delivered. While the federal health-care budget has ballooned to historic heights, our province is paying historical highs as well. To what avail, you may ask? After 17 years of the NDP rule we successfully have the longest wait times in emergency rooms in Canada. Other countries—not to mention provinces—are

spending less per capita as a percentage of GDP because they have done a better job of co-ordinating health care.

The previous government has left us with a mess, Madam Speaker. When the great people of Manitoba need to put our province back on course, they elect a Progressive Conservative government, and that is what they did with conviction on April 19th. Our Health Minister and our new progressive government is having ongoing talks with federal government about health spending. This is an opportunity to set health care on a new course and to move from the bottom of the barrel compared to the other provinces and other countries. This government will put health care back on the right track. We are committed to making Manitoba Canada's most improved province and making Manitoban families safer and stronger.

There is so much more that can be done to improve health care. We spend more per capita on health care than many other provinces. What's worse is while the previous government did this, we got poorer and poorer outcomes for patients. Solutions can be found in encouraging better collaboration between family doctors and specialists, using digital technology to keep records, and sharing that information that patients can access, and giving greater priority to the social factors that affect health, particularly among Aboriginal Canadians. We need some modernized health care.

*(10:40)

Some priorities will need consideration. Manitoba's health-care infrastructure also needs to be modernized, possibly allowing patients to access their health-care information on their phones. Manitoba could conceivably consider, like our neighbours to the south, having digital systems that are easily accessible by patients and providers to help patients be active partners in managing their care. Earlier this year, Nova Scotia announced a system that would will enable patients to access their test results by phone.

Experts believe innovation is the implementation of a new or significantly improved good, service or process, a new marketing method or a new organizational method in business practices, workplace organization or external relations. Here are some distinctions among four types of innovation. Product innovation: innovation of a good or service that is new or slightly improved with

respect to its characteristics or intended uses. This includes significant improvements in technical specifications, components and materials, incorporated software, user-friendliness or other functional characteristics; (2) process innovation: implementation of a new or significantly improved production or delivery method. This includes significant changes in techniques, equipment and/or software. The process is required to deliver a product or service to manage the relationships with various stakeholders; (3) marketing innovation, implementation of a new marketing method involving significant changes in product design or packaging, product placement, product promotion or pricing. This may include advertising to Manitobans so they are aware of the services that are available to them; (4) organizational innovation: implementation of a new organizational method in health-care's business practices, workplace organization or external relations.

Ultimately, Madam Speaker, health-care innovation can be defined as the innovation of a new concept, idea, service, process or product aimed at improving treatment, diagnosis, education, 'outreach'-outreach, prevention and research, with the long-term goals of improving quality, safety, outcomes, efficiency and costs.

I feel our previous NDP government had very little innovation, Madam Speaker. Innovation solutions can be found. Our minister, along with our government, will do that. Our new Progressive Conservative government is working hard on reducing ambulance fees by half within our first mandate. Manitobans shouldn't have to make difficult decisions about the cost of an ambulance when they need emergency services.

As you can see, we live in a time of great changes and great challenges. For an innovative government like ours, this also means new opportunities. Sometimes this requires courage to take bold decisions and grab these opportunities, Madam Speaker. Success is the result of ambition, courage and action: ambition to make a meaningful difference in the world, courage to take bold decisions when needed and action to get the real results. This is not something we have seen in the last 17 years. Hard work will give us the focus and strength to imagine and build a better future for our hard-working people of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, on my 45th birthday, December 30th, 2015, I opened the Winnipeg Sun

and read an article that made my stomach churn. It involved the quote from the former Finance minister, Greg Dewar. It went something like this: You hit some of the targets, some you don't. The deficit is stubborn, and it's not going in the right direction.

Madam Speaker, I ask what—in the near 17 years of NDP rule, what did you do in the right direction?

The NDP promised to end hallway medicine, but under the NDP's decade of decline Manitobans were left with highway medicine where too many Manitobans travel elsewhere to get the care they need. Together with our minister, our government and the hard-working staff in the Health, Seniors and Active Living we will help Manitobans be healthy, live well and enjoy life. We have to make the necessary corrections from the previous misdirection that the NDP government has taken us. Our Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living (Mr. Goertzen) is ambitious, courageous and he is making those bold decisions.

Madam Speaker, we are now going in the right direction. We will leave this province a better place than we inherited it. Our children will be proud of the great changes the new Progressive Conservative government is undergoing and will continue to undergo in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I rise to talk about this bill, but first I want to say about—a few words about Rett syndrome because this is Rett Syndrome Awareness Month and I want to pay a tribute to the people in the Manitoba Rett Syndrome Association for the work that they have done. This is about creating awareness about the importance of Rett syndrome, the significance of the Canadian Rett Syndrome Registry, to better information about Rett syndrome and to helping people and families, as well as physicians and scientists trying to help these people.

I think it is noteworthy that the Manitoba Rett Syndrome Association is concerned with providing all parents of a child newly diagnosed with Rett syndrome and their caregivers a complimentary package, that they are concerned about connecting families in Manitoba who are dealing with Rett syndrome. They're concerned about providing the latest information and resources to parents in Manitoba through a website and support groups, and that they organize and host conferences, workshops

and other activities to promote networking opportunities within the membership and nationally.

Rett syndrome occurs one in every 10,000 female births. It is identified usually between 16–six and 18 months of age where there's a 'declay'—delay or regression in development particularly affecting speech and function and walking. And many, in fact, most girls with this condition live long into adulthood, and they need ongoing and continuing support to achieve the best—their optimum potential.

With that said about Rett syndrome, I want to move to talk about this bill.

I am a little bit surprised that the MLA for Concordia had not talked with the MLA for St. Boniface about the experience that the NDP had while in government and their efforts to look at this question and whether, in fact, there should be legislation. And if, in fact, the MLA for Brandon West is correct, that this was looked at and a lot of money spent, then—and, in fact, this is already in legislation. You know, the MLA for Concordia probably should've known that and checked into it first.

From my perspective, one of the most critical items in health care is accountability, and this bill really should have included accountability. And I'm particularly concerned because we in the Liberal Party brought up the issue of accountability in a previous bill, and incomprehensively the current Progressive Conservative government, which talked about accountability in health care, voted against Bill 206 to bring in such accountability.

*(10:50)

One thing is for sure, we didn't have much accountability in the previous government which was there for 17 years. And a note written by Tom Brodbeck today in the Winnipeg Sun is pretty good, you know, information about this lack of accountability under the previous government.

The wait times in our emergency rooms, which have long known to receive lots and lots of needed attention, they should have been shortened, they should have been addressed. It's—was never clear why the NDP managed the health-care system so badly that we had some of the longest wait-times in Canada, but even in their last three years the pledge was that by 2015 90 per cent of non-admitted ER patients would be treated and discharged with—within four hours.

But, in 2015-2016, the last year that the NDP were in office, there were only 48.2 per cent of patients were treated and discharged within that time frame.

We can look at, you know, other measures. The NDP pledged that 90 per cent of admitted ER patients would get a hospital bed within eight hours, but in 2015 to 2016 only 28.1 per cent of patients got a bed within eight hours. That's only a third—less than a third of the target, and it's just not acceptable. As Tom Brodbeck says, these guys are going backwards.

In 2012, 51 per cent of non-admitted patients within the ER WRHA were treated and discharged in four hours, and that has now fallen down to 48 per cent.

The opening of the quick clinics has not had the impact that the NDP claimed that it would, in part because the NDP decided that health care was really a part-time activity and that the QuickCare clinics would close at 7:30 in the evening. And so this created a situation where people didn't have any option but to go to the emergency room, and so the planning around that really was not very satisfactorily and basically it didn't work adequately, as it should have done.

The Grace Hospital is to be complimented because they have seen some improvement in patient flow, and two years ago, 27.5 per cent of not-admitted patients at Grace were treated and discharged within the target time of four hours, and that has improved to 42.3 per cent. But that's less than half of the target and it still shows that there is a long way to go.

Now, as Tom Brodbeck says, after 16 and a half years of government the former NDP administration failed miserably on that file. And certainly it is another strong reason why we need to have accountability in health care, and clearly we are seeing that in spades at the moment because we have a government which, in more than six months, has not yet even called the promised task force on reducing emergency room wait times.

It is hard to understand why it is taking more than six months to get a task force together. One, you know, is a little bit concerned that if it takes this long to get a task force together, how long will we take to get answers and how long will it take to implement it, you know? Maybe the next century—I don't know, but this government needs to show a little bit more

action on this very, very important file because we're really talking about something which is fundamental to what Manitobans need, and that is to have quick access to emergency room care when it's needed. And the statistics, as I've already gone over them, are clearly far short of what was—on what needs to be done.

Interestingly, there were a whole series of presenters at the Brian Sinclair inquest and they present—presented many, many very well-thought-out recommendations. The government could have started out by saying, well, we're going to implement those recommendations that have been present in the past, but this seems to be a problem—that we have recommendations about emergency rooms but they're not implemented.

And, indeed, this history goes back to the early 90s when Dr. Moe Lerner, who was a well-known emergency room physician who was very often quoted on CBC, and he led a task force in about 1991-92 and made a lot of recommendations about improving emergency rooms. These recommendations, sadly, were not adequately attended to. There were multiple recommendations in the last 17 years and, once again, these recommendations have not been attended to.

So it is a sorry state of affairs when we have a government which is not supporting accountability and is not moving on existing recommendations. We need better than this. We need much better than this, and that's why I'm speaking strongly on this bill, to make sure that accountability is actually included in how we manage health care.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 212, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Recorded Vote

Mr. Jim Maloway (Official Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, a recorded vote.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

* (11:00)

Order, please. Order. The question before the House is second reading of Bill 212, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act.

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Chief, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Klassen, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Saran, Swan, Wiebe.

Nays

Clarke, Cox, Curry, Ewasko, Friesen, Goertzen, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Schuler, Smith, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 15, Nays 29.

Madam Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And prior to switching over to private members' resolutions, I just would ask that there was a ruling brought down last week where it was asked of all of you that when pages are calling out names there is to be no discussion going on in the House, and there was a lot of conversations going on today.

And I would ask in the future, in fairness to the pages here who are young and learning their roles, it is very distracting for them and it's hard to concentrate, and I know many of us would probably have a hard time doing what they are doing.

So, please, if everybody could show the real respect they deserve and not have any conversations going on at the time pages are calling a vote.

Thank you.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

RESOLUTIONS**Res. 10—Accurately Reflecting the History of Newcomers in the Provincial Curriculum**

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour is now after 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Accurately Reflecting the History of Newcomers in the Provincial Curriculum, brought forward by the honourable member for The Maples.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I move, seconded by the member of Tyndall Park,

WHEREAS Canadians and Manitobans are passionately committed to the principles of diversity, multiculturalism and the defense of human rights; and

WHEREAS many historical truths about Canada's relationship with immigrants have been excluded from the provincial curriculum, despite official apologies from the Federal Government and education campaigns by advocacy groups and survivors; and

WHEREAS more than 300 Punjabi passengers aboard the Komagata Maru were barred from entering Canada under the 'continuous-journey-provision', forcing them to stay aboard for two months before being sent back to India; and

WHEREAS the Canadian government charged a 'head tax' to discourage immigration from China and then eventually brought in the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 which halted Chinese immigration altogether; and

WHEREAS between 1941 and 1949 the Canadian government systematically forced Japanese-Canadians into internment camps, sold their businesses, homes and belongings, perpetrated

rumors that they were spies, disenfranchised them and restricted their property rights; and

WHEREAS nearly 9,000 Ukrainian Canadians were systematically arrested and interned in camps throughout the country, where they were forced to do heavy labour after the First World War; and

WHEREAS 900 Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi regime in Hamburg pleaded with the Canadian government to allow their ship, the St. Louis, to dock, but were denied and forced to sail back to Europe, where many would die in concentration camps; and

WHEREAS Canada and Canadians welcomed tens of thousands of Vietnamese boat people in the late 1970s and 1980s in a massive refugee resettlement operation; and

WHEREAS Canada has an obligation to reach out to Syrian refugees fleeing one of the largest humanitarian crises in history and to responsibly and respectfully settle them into this country; and

WHEREAS it is the Provincial Government's responsibility to keep Manitoba an inclusive province that welcomes newcomers by providing the services, education and opportunities that ensure their success.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to update the provincial curriculum to reflect Canada's past mistreatment of these groups and to celebrate, support and protect all Manitobans through education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It was been moved by the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Saran), seconded by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the legislation of assembly of Manitoba urges the provincial government to update the provincial curriculum to reflect Canada's past mistreatment of these groups and to celebrate, support and protect all Manitobans through education.

Mr. Saran: First of all, I want to emphasize that these topics should be a compulsory part of the curriculum, not optional because then it will leave up to the teachers then, it's up to the teacher whether he or she wants to include in the curriculum or not. And some of the topics already may not be in the curriculum, even is optional. So I want to emphasize that it should be compulsory because whatever

happened that happened on this land, so this is history of this land.

And during Estimates, the honourable Minister of Education, who is also responsible for immigration, he agreed with me that these talks should be included. And this time extending that understanding, and I emphasize, that we move forward and make history correct and correct those wrong doings that have been done in the past.

Our NDP team knows that Manitobans are proud of the multiculturalism and diversity that exists in the province and we are committed to defending those very values. Education plays a key role in fostering tolerance, understanding and inclusion. Despite this, many historical truths about Canada's relationship with immigrants and indigenous people have been excluded from the provincial curriculum.

* (11:10)

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urges the provincial government to update the provincial curriculum to reflect Canada's past mistreatment of immigrant groups and to celebrate, support and protect all Manitobans through education, thus making it a mandatory part of the province's curriculum. Our NDP team will continue to maintain a support for multiculturalism in Canada and recognize the contributions of newcomers to Canada.

Many of us are very, very close to the immigrant experience. We know it is only with courage that people choose to leave their homeland and arrive somewhere else. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's very hard to leave your birthplace and go somewhere. Sometimes, it's because of ambition, other times because of the situations in those places. When they come to the new place, if they get the same kind of situation they leave, that does not leave those people to go anywhere. So it's very important people of a new land understand where those people have come from and what kind of—why they come from. They came here for equal opportunities and to raise their families and they can have a better life.

Also, we should not forget to thank the indigenous community who welcomed all of the people from all over the world. It is a privilege to welcome those people of courage and to the province of Manitoba to establish roots that can grow very, very deep, in the *[inaudible]* and fertile prairie soil.

Here in Manitoba, we are proud of our multiculturalism. The New York Times calls

Manitoba a hub of parka-clad diversity. We call it home. And, of the province, we speak more than hundred languages, and there are more than 300 organizations that actively represent our unique ethnocultural communities. We have a diverse team of MLAs that reflect the Manitoba of today, and we are standing on the side of Manitobans that think we should do even more to attract new Manitobans and help them get good jobs and build a life here.

I—it's very important to understand different cultures, their values. Sometimes, if we are not educated enough of the different cultures, and it will not go so great.

I can give you examples, Mr. Deputy Speaker. When I got elected first time, I went to few Folkloramas. One Folklorama, they would not let me go through VIP side and even I explained I am MLA. They would not believe I am MLA because my colour is not quite to be MLA. And so I had to stand there. I went through there. And other time I was sitting in front, on the VIP table and a volunteer came. He asked me: Can you move over there because this is for VIPs. And I smiled and—but I moved anyway, and my *[inaudible]*, then she came and she told him who I am, and then they apologized, they let me sit.

So it's something understanding only there's one culture and the other culture deserves everything but the other don't deserve it. If we teach that in schools, and that will be understanding created and everybody, all people, will be equal.

Creating partnerships and encouraging co-operation among cultural communities is important to our team, the NDP team. We made steady progress. We were a driving force behind starting the Manito Ahbee Festival that celebrates indigenous culture and we helped fund Folklorama—it's a celebration of many cultures found in Manitoba. And also, yesterday, I was listening to the Punjabi channel, and Indiana, they included the topic about the Sikhs and their culture and history of Asia in the 7th grade. So that will create some kind understanding, otherwise, one group is being mixed with the other group and it causes some problems.

So it's very important we emphasize this. I know history is a compulsory subject, but the topics in the history are not compulsory. We make sure all those topics are included and made compulsory so that more students have to go through it; they will have a

better understanding and a future and, therefore, fear of the unknown won't cause any problems.

So people from all over the world recognize Manitoba is a great place to live. Every newcomer to Manitoba should have his chance to build their life with a good job because everyone matters. So I will emphasize all the members of this House that they approve this PMR unanimously and so that we will be going forward.

Thank you very much.

Questions

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

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'd like to congratulate the member for this PMR, and I'd like to ask him how important is a diverse public service for promoting better representation and inclusion for all Manitobans.

Point of Order

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe just seconds before the Opposition House Leader got up, you had indicated that questions should be asked by a member of another party. Unless I'm—unless I misunderstood something or perhaps the members opposite are no longer in the same party, just wondering if I'm understanding correctly that that was out of order for the Opposition House Leader to stand and ask a question before someone from another party, as I thought I understood you say, stood up. Correct me if I'm wrong here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the point of order, I just wanted to clarify that when I—when we finished—when I finished the statement of the questions, nobody came up on the government side of it. So the only person that was up was the member from Elmwood.

Mr. Micklefield: The resolution specifically discusses only certain groups of—*[interjection]* Oh, I'm asking a question, so just—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay. We're going to go to the Government House Leader on a question, and

we're going to start over. And we're going to go over to the member from Elmwood.

Mr. Maloway: Point of order.

* (11:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, on—the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), on the same point of order.

Mr. Maloway: My point of order is that this particular rule was adopted from what is common practice in—used in Ottawa. And the way it works there is everybody who's interested in the question stands up and the Speaker decides who to recognize in the order in which they stand up, but recognizing members from other parties as well. Clearly, I was the only member in the House standing at the time and recognized by you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On that point of order, just to clarify that you're—the member from Elmwood had got up first, and when nobody from the government's side had come up—stepped—stood up, so we'll continue with the member from Elmwood and then we'll continue with the Government House Leader (Mr. Micklefield) after.

Point of Order

Mr. Maloway: On a second point of order, would it be possible for us to restart the clock?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the second point of order, we will restart the clock at 10 minutes.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: I want to congratulate the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran) for this terrific PMR, and I'd like to ask him once again how important it is for a diverse public service for providing better representation and inclusion for all Manitobans.

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): I thank the member for asking the question. It's very important that representation should be there so people of different cultures can feel comfortable. And I think there was an unfortunate situation. The deputy minister for visible minorities who are kind of a role model, but that Premier (Mr. Pallister)—that didn't fit under the Premier's diversity definition, and she was removed.

And we have to be very careful, but new politicians, when they come in, they will understand different cultures. They won't make that kind of decision.

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Resolution specifically discusses only certain groups of people. Why did the member leave out so many other important groups in our history?

Mr. Saran: No, my intention is not to leave any group out, but main—we have to start from somewhere. Are these the groups which I was able to recognize that these things happen. If other members have some other groups, I wouldn't mind that they should point out those, too, because it's up to the—I would ask the minister to include all the groups.

Maybe we should invite people to have their input and ask them, okay, well, other groups should be included, this group should be included. And indigenous people, they should be included in the history as well, whatever happened to them. Nothing should be left out, because anything what happened on this land, that should be part of the curriculum and it should be compulsory.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask the member what role do community museums play in promoting our local stories and histories, including the immigrant experience?

Mr. Saran: Yes, thanks for the answer—sorry, question. This—and museums play a very important role, and because when people visit over there, they see different kinds of cultural displays and also different incidents. They learn from them, from those incidents. And it's very important.

Sometimes, also, we will figure out, as the member opposite said, why this is not included. I went to the Manitoba Museum. I've seen there are six groups; they are not included. And one group, ninth guru, was—god sacrificed his life for the other religion, not an own religion. And that's very important. That should be part over there. And—

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

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): We know that the Manitoba social studies curriculum provides support to teachers in the education industry on the issues such as this, and I'm just wondering if the members opposite have had the opportunity to speak with any of the teachers to find out what their practices are when discussing these sensitive issues.

Mr. Saran: I thank the member for the question.

I have discussed with one of the teachers whose background—teaching back in India, now he's a

teacher over here—and I asked him what kind of inclusion is over there. He said, well, there are some topics are already there, but those are optional. It's up to the teacher whether he or she wants to teach it or not.

So even I emphasized to a principal, like, these should be made compulsory at least in that area where there's more ethnic groups are there. I asked them to maybe add a history of Philippines, add a history of India; at least our children will know where we come from when they will deal back, have some kind of business back over there, so they will be able to understand—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask the member: What kind of investments did our previous NDP government make to help support and integrate newcomers to Manitoba?

Mr. Saran: I think, under the NDP there was, under the Provincial Nominee Program, there was many programs were delivered, and through those programs newcomers were able to get English upgrades and get other entry programs. And I think we should keep that continued. I hope the minister also, the new minister, also will keep continue on that line. And we should be investing in the immigrants.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Southdale): As legislators, we do know how important it is to reach out and certainly speak with stakeholders in relation to proposed legislation. So I just want to ask the member from Maples if—who have you all consulted with when creating this resolution?

Mr. Saran: I thank the member for asking the question.

Number 1, I consulted with myself because I am an immigrant and I've gone through all those stages and also I discussed with other and different organizations. One organization is called DESSA [*phonetic*], democracy equality secularism in South Asia, and so they are bringing all these kind of issues. Actually, they're planning to have discussions with the—some person from the Education Department so that we can promote this inclusion.

Ms. Judy Klassen (Kewatinook): I believe that all nations across the world bring beautiful additions to the country of Canada and, indeed, to Manitoba. I want to personally apologize to the member of

Maples for the treatment he received at those VIP events. I myself have gone through that.

What can we do today to start your inspiring movement?

Mr. Saran: First of all, I think it's important we start teaching our children, because they will be a next generation of politicians; they will be the next generation of businessmen. And in that way it will be understanding between all the cultural groups, because it's always being—not knowing about the other cultures, people are always have a kind of fear often not knowing the other culture. And then, that's where the problems comes.

If we are able to understand each other and different cultural values, we will be celebrated instead of fighting with each other.

Mr. Micklefield: Could the member outline some educational tools available to teachers in order to discuss these important issues?

Mr. Saran: I think these valuable tools, whether they are there, whether they are not, we have to create those tools because it's if we have a will, there is a way.

* (11:30)

I will emphasize Education Minister direct the department to look into the issues and make sure those tools are available so that this could be taught properly.

Mr. Maloway: I'd like to ask the member: What role do ethnic and cultural organizations play in preserving their heritage and promoting multiculturalism in Canada?

Mr. Saran: I think there's a good example of Folklorama. We had 44 pavilions. We had all these cultural organizations, they have showcase of their culture, their food. In that way we learn about each other's culture and it's more understanding created. I think that's one of the best in maybe in the whole world but for sure in North America. That kind of initiative of having Folklorama is really great and those are being funded.

Mr. Isleifson: I know previously in the question I asked, you had mentioned that you followed up with one teacher. So good for you.

We also asked who you had consulted with, and you consulted with yourself and I believe a couple other groups. So, you know, where I can appreciate

your reaching out a bit, I'm just wondering if you had the opportunity, or took the opportunity, to review the current curriculum that is actually being used in the schools in Manitoba.

Mr. Saran: One thing I will admit; I'm not a teacher, therefore, I cannot review everything but I—*[interjection]* A discussion with that teacher, I discussed with the principal of Maples, I also talked a few times to the superintendent of Seven Oaks. I—whenever I get a chance I try to talk to them somehow I can start it. I discuss with the minister not in this certain situation but sitting on this side. So, whenever I get a chance, I try to promote it and get as much information so we can come to the understanding that we need this compulsory lesson and the history and it's compulsory.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for question period has expired.

Debate

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

Hon. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): I want to put some remarks on the record for this resolution that is before us this morning, and first of all, sincerely congratulate the member for his concern about these important issues. I want to reflect my respect for the member, particularly as an immigrant. I think it is notable and should be applauded that, having come from another country, he has taken the steps to get himself elected, and I sincerely do honour that and congratulate him on the ambition. And although we're in different parties I do respect that journey that he has been on and the intent of what he seeks to put forward this morning.

I hope in the next moments to fill in some of the gaps raised by some of the questions and to inform all members that what is being asserted this morning we can be thankful that it is in large measure—in fact, I would think we could say—I hesitate ever to say in complete measure but this is already a focus of our Manitoba curriculum.

I'd like to offer, by way of introduction, some background remarks, that teaching is—in Canada is already pursuing diversity, multiculturalism and the respect of other cultures. This is not just something that is slipped into textbooks here and there; this is a reality on the playground. And I can't speak of this without hearkening back to my own experience at the King's School in North Kildonan.

You know, the King's School, like many schools in Winnipeg, is an independent school, and is—but is not a school that caters only to one segment of society. We once did a sort of hands-up kind of informal questionnaire of our extraordinarily diverse student population and discovered that dozens and dozens of nations were represented in our student population. I don't have the number in front of me, but I do recall—I seem to recall at one time when we did this sort of informal survey, we found something like 45 nations were represented. What a tremendous privilege that this is a reflection of so many schools.

And the interesting thing is that our children do not see the—they do not see these as barriers. They see this as enrichment. And I'm so honoured that children all across our province can go to school and interact with fellow students from not just other countries here and there but literally right across the globe.

Well, that begs the question, doesn't it? How could any curriculum ignore such diversity when it's literally sitting right in front of us? And, thankfully, thanks to the fine work of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, to professors who have worked very hard not just to make curriculum in the distant past but, with frequency and diligence, to update that curriculum and ensure that those important issues, even the ones which are unpleasant to recall, are mentioned, are referenced, are discussed, are reviewed, are remembered in the curriculum documents and not only the curriculum documents but other supporting documents.

I recall during my years in the education system the privilege of attending—and I must confess, this is one of the highlights of my experience in the education system—when I got to go on a field trip. Now, I know they're supposed to be designed for students, but the secret was that teachers often quite enjoy these field trips as well. And I remember going to celebrate a Jewish festival with the students who I was privileged to be overseeing, many of whom, I've—I must just say, on the side, that I've been able to keep in touch with—and how enriching it was to attend this Jewish festival, to hear about the richness of that culture and to hear about the challenges that Jewish people in Canada had faced, some of them nothing short of horrific, which we might hear about later this morning.

These are some of the ways, but not all of them, that the curriculum already addresses these things.

This is certainly not a new concept or a new idea that is being presented this morning, but rather it already has been not just suggested but implemented throughout numerous grades in Manitoba's kindergarten-through-grade-12 curriculum.

I'd just like to draw our attention, if I may, to some examples of the curriculum already incorporating these kinds of themes. Diversity and multiculturalism and human rights outcomes and learning experiences currently exist in our K-to-12 social studies curricula. Several outcomes about diversity exist already in kindergarten, phys. ed. and health education and also English language arts curricula as well.

There are numerous examples—as I look over the curricula, I must confess I did not scan the entire curricula, although I'm familiar with it because I was a principal. But in grades—in age-appropriate ways, these things are certainly talked about. These things are not ever glossed over or ignored or minimized. And I think that is something to be celebrated in our country and in our province, not just that we talk about the wonderful things, of which there are many, but that we also talk about those moments in our national and provincial past, of which, quite frankly, we are ashamed.

* (11:40)

But we need not look too far in the past to hear about the unpleasant experiences of those who come to our country. And it was with much delight that many of us have seen in the news, even in recent days, our federal government changing its course under tremendous public criticism to welcome the Yazidis who are being persecuted—not in the 1800s or the 1900s, but right now, today, in 2016. And I know that good teachers across this province are highlighting this and bringing it to the attention of their students.

And I would submit that there are two things happening in those kinds of interactions: (1) is the obvious, transmission of information, which is necessary and important in the educational exchange. But the second—and I would submit that this is as important and, possibly, more important—I wouldn't want to—I'm not wanting to weigh my words too carefully on that point—but as well as the information which needs to be brought to our attention.

Any time we raise—we bring people's attention to a human rights issue or something that has gone wrong, we are training young people to think in these

terms. We're not just telling them to read a newspaper article or watch a clip on the Internet. What we are doing is telling them that these things matter, that these things should not be skirted over. And that is the kind of value-based education which has been happening in this province, which has been happening in this nation and which I know will continue to happen.

If this resolution was being presented some time ago in the past—and I don't want to attempt to put a date to that—we might find a completely different educational landscape in the curricula. But what we find today is that the fine teachers of our province are already bringing these issues to attention, not just as issues in a sort of by-the-way-we-should-kind-of-talk-about-this sense, but as values. And it is this values-based education which I believe our teachers are to be commended on. Because there are so many issues, are there not, fellow members, that we could talk about. And the list is not short, I am ashamed to say, and, possibly, it's not even short enough to cover everything.

But it is the values of remembering those things which I would call on us to continue to applaud our teachers for upholding.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Maples, for bringing forward what I think is an important resolution as we continue to move forward; we advance the bar on human rights in Manitoba; we move ahead to a greater understanding of the things we've done right in our province and, quite frankly, the things that we have done wrong.

I'm proud to represent an incredibly diverse and existing community in the West End—exciting community in the West End of Winnipeg. It is an area of the province that has always been a place where newcomers starting their lives in Manitoba have come. And although the waves of immigrants may look quite different from decade to decade and century to century, it has always been a place where people have made their new start.

My own great-grandparents were born in England. They wound up living on Langside Street, which was actually the last street on the eastern edge of Minto constituency. My grandparents were both born in Scotland, and when they got married, my grandmother left her parents' home on Toronto Street and moved into my grandfather's house on Lipton Street, which is, actually, only a block from where my constituency office is at present.

They came to this province. They were white; they spoke English; they had no difficulty fitting into the dominant culture in Manitoba at that time. There's many others that came from European countries that may have found it relatively easy—less so if they didn't speak English as their first language—who fit in. But that aren't—those are not the only people who have come to the West End of Winnipeg and who've come to Manitoba over the years.

We've seen waves of immigration, particularly following World War II when people who were called DPs—or displaced persons—from countries in central Europe wound up finding their way here. We know there's been immigration from China, from Japan, from the Philippines, from Korea, from Thailand, from African countries, from many, many Muslim countries in Asia, and not all of those groups have been treated the same, as is clearly spelled out in the resolution that the member for The Maples (Mr. Saran) has put forward.

And although I understand what the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield) had to say, and I believe that most teachers in our school system do celebrate diversity, and I would like to think that most members in this Legislature are proud to celebrate diversity.

The thoughtful resolution brought forward by the member for Maples goes beyond that, that it's not just good enough to say: Well, we're from all over the place. Isn't that great? It's more than that. And it calls on the government to continue to work. It's not prescriptive of exactly what would be done, but it encourages the federal government to work to make sure that our provincial curriculum doesn't just celebrate diversity, which we know it does, but also—also—has students learn and reflect and think about some of the darker moments in our history.

And I'm not going to speak about each of those set out in the text of the resolution. I'm a little surprised the member for Rossmere is upset that it—he claims it leaves things out. Well, if it listed everything that had been done to immigrants in this country, it would be 12 pages long and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you'd still be reading it.

This highlights some of the challenges that have been faced by people coming to Canada. We should be very proud as Manitobans that we have the Canadian Museum for Human Rights right in our city. I'm sure that every member—or almost every member has had the chance to visit that museum. And although it gives us pride to have this museum

in Winnipeg, it's painful. It is painful learning about some of the details and learning more about things that maybe we intellectually knew but didn't actually think of the effect on individual people, on individual families, when they were put in internment camps or had their property taken away, or even found that, despite living in this country for decades, they still weren't allowed to vote or to become professionals like pharmacists or doctors or lawyers and didn't enjoy the same rights of citizenship that my white European ancestors were able to get very, very quickly.

And why is it important, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Well, a few reasons. It's important for all of us to understand that newcomers, who some people may look down on, who may not appreciate, who may not see their worth, are, in the years to come, going to be such an important part of Manitoba's fabric. The West End is filled with Portuguese families who came here poor, who may have come with only the clothes on their backs, who may work in construction, who may have been labourers, who then moved on to become professionals—teachers, lawyers, doctors—and their children now, of course, enjoy all the benefits of our country.

And, of course, those people would tell you they are not the most hard done by in the West End. There are many other people we can talk about, but it's also important to have this resolution pass and to have us to continue moving the goal post, because it's so important for our newest Canadians to understand that there are other people who have been through this before. And I know, in the Winnipeg School Division, there are still teachers in our system who were themselves boat people, who came from Vietnam, and the horrible conditions back in the 1970s, and their ability to empathize and understand what some of our refugee children are going through makes it much easier. And that has continued over the past many years.

It certainly makes it easier for our newest refugees, for our newest newcomers, to know that not only do we celebrate their diversity—but we are standing together to shine the light on some of the darker parts of our province's history and our nation's history to recognize that we are doing better but we need to continue doing better.

So that's, really, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all I want to say on behalf of people living in my area that have come to this province from all over the world. We

are stronger when we respect each other. We are stronger when we learn about each other. Even if that learning is not something that always makes us comfortable or makes us happy, it is still so very, very important.

So there is more work to be done. I believe this resolution is a good step to making sure that we get there.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Again, I just—I want to say it is a privilege to stand and speak towards the private member's resolution. I'm not a teacher like my counterpart—or my colleague, but I can tell you, though, when we look at immigration—my family immigrated to Canada 127 years ago. And, as everybody's aware, I'm Icelandic descent, and some of the history, if you look into that, what my ancestors went through coming in is definitely a struggle for all. I certainly see it. The minister—pardon me, the member for Minto (Mr. Swan) talking about some stats from Winnipeg in his area, definitely, you know, we see that in my constituency in Brandon East.

* (11:50)

You know, again we look at some food processing plants that reached out and brought in people from the Philippines working in our health-care sector, people from the Polish descent, Mexicans, Hondurans, and many more moving into Brandon and creating such a diverse culture that we need to understand so that they fit into—not just fit into our communities, but actually be a growing member of our communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to talk about the member from The Maples putting this resolution forward, is a great step; it's a good process to move forward. Again, looking at some of the information that's in it, though, there are some things that I believe are lacking.

Again, we looked at why we as a government were elected and that was to simply repair the services. And when we look at the education industry we all know there's lots of areas improvement in education. We need to work towards that, we need to ensure they have the curriculum so that the students are well educated. I have a number of friends who are teachers and principals and in the education industry. It bothers me just a little bit that one teacher was consulted; a small group was looked at. The tools in the industry were not reviewed. I think those

are steps that we need to still do to add more to the resolution, to make it something that we can buy into, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Again, teaching diversity, multiculturalism, and the history of human rights is so important for our young people to learn. In the last 10 years, we've had approximately 130,000 immigrants come into Manitoba, and I'm happy to say on November the 14th I will be attending one of two ceremonies in Brandon that are welcoming 130 newcomers. Unfortunately, I say one of two because they have two ceremonies going on and they're at the exact same time, so I'm only able obviously to attend one of those. So it is something that we look forward to.

Manitoba is a province that is working hard to correct this course of mistreatment that we've been hearing about. It's going to take a while; it is definitely not something that is going to happen overnight. We really have to look at a lifelong process, and as my colleague had mentioned, when you look at the educational curriculum, it's in there, what more can we add. We can look at the Government of Canada's program called Teachers' Corner, there's lot of things online that people can do on their own that would only enhance what they're learning in the schools already.

In Brandon we're fortunate to have Westman Immigrant Services, which is a great organization that brings a lot of folks together so that we can help understand what the culture in Canada is like to help our new immigrants migrate into the community, and it's something that we rely on heavily.

The education of what is going on is the reason and why we have resources for teachers, we need to look at the Manitoba Education and Training webpage, for example, as well as the Manitoba professional learning environment. Maple is an environment out there that provides access, provides tools to the educational industry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so that teachers have those resources, so that they have the ability to sit down at the beginning of the year or the end of the previous year to, in order to be able to move forward with their own curriculum as they move throughout the year. So again, I really feel that we have that.

Our government is committed to repairing the services that were broken by the previous government. And again, the resolution, very fitting; however, again, we just feel that there's not enough, at least I personally feel there's just not enough to support the program. We need to improve literacy

rates. There's a lot of educational opportunities for us to improve throughout our schools, throughout all of Manitoba, and I just don't feel that this resolution as it is written would be beneficial at this present time.

Again, a diverse culture is very welcoming and much needed for our environment in Canada. After all, if we all look back, I'm sure we can see that if it wasn't for immigration, if it wasn't for immigrants there would be no Canada. I mean, we have a beautiful country—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being 11:55—when this matter is before the House, the member from Brandon East will have five minutes remaining.

Recorded Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being 11:55 a.m., pursuant of rule 23(5), I am interrupting the proceedings to conduct a recorded division that was requested during the Tuesday's private members' business. Therefore, call in the members.

* (12:00)

The question before the House is the resolution from the member for Kewatinook (Ms. Klassen). Would the members like the resolution read?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

Division

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

Yeas

Allum, Altemeyer, Clarke, Cox, Cullen, Curry, Fielding, Fontaine, Friesen, Gerrard, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Kinew, Klassen, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Lamoureux, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino (Logan), Marcelino (Tyndall Park), Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Reyes, Saran, Schuler, Smith, Smook, Squires, Stefanson, Swan, Teitsma, Wiebe, Wishart, Wowchuk, Yakimoski.

Nays

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 43, Nays 0.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 27, 2016

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