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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Good morning, Madam Speaker.

Could you please call for debate of second readings, Bill 300, The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, sponsored by the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski).

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of private Bill 300, The United Church of Canada Amendment Act.

SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 300—The United Church of Canada Amendment Act

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I move, seconded by the member for Assiniboia (Mr. Johnston), that Bill 300, The United Church of Canada Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Madam Speaker: Before we proceed, I wonder if the member happens to have his headset there. We're having difficulty hearing him in the House.

Mr. Nesbitt: I was trying the headset and I can't make it work. I'll talk loud.

Madam Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Nesbitt: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to sponsor this private bill that will amend The United Church of Canada Act to reflect changes to the

church's governance structure. Bill 300 continues the tradition of this Legislature playing a role in legitimizing and codifying administrative procedures and protections of institutions in this province.

United Church is the largest Protestant denomination in Canada, with approximately 2 million adherents. The church has been a leading voice for social justice in Canada for almost 100 years. United Church of Canada was incorporated in 1924 by an act of Parliament.

That same year, the Manitoba act was passed in this Legislature dealing with property and rights and powers of the United Church in Manitoba. This means that any significant structural or administrative changes made federally must be ratified through provincial legislation.

At first glance, the original United Church of Canada Act was a simple piece of legislation. It was a private bill that incorporated three religious bodies: the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches in Canada.

Like many religious denominations across the country, United Church of Canada is facing social, demographic and financial pressures. Membership in the church peaked in 1964 at 1.1 million, and it's 'accline'—declined since that time. From 1991 to 2001, the number of people claiming an affiliation with the United Church decreased by 8 per cent, the third largest decrease in mainstream Christian denominations in Canada.

Church statistics for the end of 2018 showed 388,363 members in 317,051 households under pastoral care, of whom 120,986 attend services regularly in 2,119 communities of faith representing 2,774 congregations across Canada. As I said earlier, Statistics Canada has reported that approximately 2 million people identify as adherents.

A new structure to address changes in the realities of the United Church of Canada was first broached at the General Council in 2012. A committee was put in place to come up with general reorganization proposals. A document with the suggested changes was approved for discussion with the entire membership at the 42nd General Council in 2015. After

nearly three years of discussion and debate at the congregational and presbytery levels, significant changes to the church structure were confirmed by the United Church's 43rd General Council in July 2018.

Madam Speaker, one important change involves the United Church of Canada moving from four courts, as they are called—pastoral charge, presbytery, conference and General Council—to three councils: a local community of faith or congregation, a regional council, and a national General Council. The United Church of Canada believes the three-council model provides a more agile and sustainable structure that better supports and enables the church's main purpose of ministry and mission, and also reduces administrative costs.

The church's national General Council will be reduced from 68 voting and corresponding members to 18 in total. This will allow for the council to work in a more agile and engaged way while continuing to ensure representation by church populations from all across Canada.

A portion of Bill 300 outlines the conditions and terms of how a majority of trustees of a congregation—but only with the consent in writing of the regional council—could undertake to sell church land in either a public or private sale. This is a reality that is happening in many areas of rural Manitoba as congregations disband and merge with other congregations, creating surplus property.

An office of vocation, which has been described to me as similar to a College of Physicians and Surgeons, would be established to handle personnel matters involving clergy and other employees who work for the church. Previously, this work would have been handled by volunteers on the ministry and personnel committee.

Madam Speaker, these amendments bring the United Church of Canada's structure into the 21st century to meet the current needs of the church. The church membership understands it no longer has the volunteers or money to support its current structures and processes. It is important to note, colleagues, these changes are the result of an eight-year consultation process that involved input from the grassroots congregational level, right up to the members of the General Council.

The church has undergone a very democratic process over the past eight years to restructure its governing structure to allow the church to meet the reality of today's society. The new structure will allow

the church to focus more of its precious resources on its global and community work and in promoting its faith. At its core, this reorganization will help the church focus on its mission of making a positive difference in people's lives through faith and moral commitments that come with faith.

*(10:10)

This legislation reshapes the church's governance with better decision-making, accountability and transparency, keeping the church's vision and mission clear. The Canadian Parliament passed the federal version of this bill in 'september' 2019. The Ontario Legislative Assembly passed a provincial version of this bill in April 2019.

Madam Speaker, today I urge all honourable members in this Assembly to pass this important bill unanimously and send it on to committee.

Thank you.

Questions

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

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I just want to begin by thanking the member for bringing this bill forward here for debate.

Certainly lots to talk about and lots to support here this morning, but I just wanted to begin by asking about consultation. I understand this is brought forward by the United Church of Canada. But locally, I'm wondering if he can just talk about some of the churches in his own community, maybe throughout the province, that he has had a chance to talk to.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Well, thank you very much to the member for Concordia for that question.

As I stated, this was an eight-year process. When it was first introduced back in 2012, it was—there was a committee established at General Council then to come up with a framework for this. Once it was ratified in 2015, it went back to the local level for church congregations to discuss the changes, move those—move—put their thoughts up to presbytery and then it would go up to General Council with the comments.

So I think every church member in Canada has had a chance for input into this if they wanted to.

Mr. Wiebe: Of course, we know, Madam Speaker, just how important faith communities have been during the pandemic and how challenging it has been for them and how some of them have struggled to adapt to the new realities.

I'm just wondering if the member could just talk about those struggles and maybe just identify some ways that his government is supporting faith communities like the United Church here in our province.

Mr. Nesbitt: Well, thank you again for that question.

As we are aware, the pandemic we're currently experiencing here has affected all sectors of our lives and church is certainly one of them. I know churches certainly wanted to operate fully, they—but they respected the guidelines that were put in by public health and I think they—some churches have adapted with Zoom meetings and things like that.

So I think churches are certainly doing their part in terms of allowing members to continue to worship but in different ways and I think this is very important for the mental health of the members.

Mr. Wiebe: Yes, I just want to echo very quickly what the member has said, and I do agree. I think faith communities have been challenged but have really stepped up, and I do see them as part of a larger social network of not-for-profits and other faith communities from all denominations who have really stepped up to support their members and our communities at large.

So I'm just asking a little bit more specifically, what steps has this government taken with regards to supporting the not-for-profit and the faith communities here in our province?

Mr. Nesbitt: Well, our government has certainly worked with all sectors of Manitoba businesses, non-profit sectors, to try to assist them during this difficult time.

Obviously, in some cases, we're criticized for not doing enough but there's no handbook on a pandemic and I think with—public health and our government is doing the best it can under the circumstances here. And I want to thank all the faith-based congregations out there for adhering to public health guidelines but still being there for the people they serve each and every week.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, to the member, I would just signal that this is important in one way in that restructures and put a major role for the regional council.

Can—I wonder if the member could tell us a little bit more about why this is an improvement and what the regional council will be doing?

Mr. Nesbitt: Well, as I said in my speech, it basically takes it from a four-tier system to a three-tier system. It allows a little more flexibility, I think, and a little more agility in terms of dealing with matters. I'm sure that, you know, all the considerations from the local congregational level will still be—go to the regional level and move up the ladder like it has before.

The eight-year consultation period, I think, was a plenty of time for any problems with this new system to be discovered and finalized in the document, so I have no concerns whatsoever about the average member of the United Church being hurt.

Mr. Scott Johnston (Assiniboia): I'd like to ask the member, could he further clarify why this bill has to be done under a provincial jurisdiction?

Mr. Nesbitt: Well, thank you very much to my colleague from Assiniboia for that question.

As I said before, this United Church of Canada act was a federal act of Parliament in 1924. At that time, it had to be—acts—similar acts had to be passed in provinces all across Canada. Similarly now, with the changes that are going to the federal act and have been approved federally, all provinces then will be required to ratify this with provincial legislation. I guess, we're being proactive here. Ontario was No. 1, we'll be No. 2, and all the other provinces are set to follow through on that as well.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions?

Debate

Madam Speaker: If not, debate is open.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Thank you to my colleagues.

It is an honour to rise to speak to this very important bill here and, as I said briefly in my questions, to indicate our support here for this bill and hopefully move it forward quickly. *[interjection]* And now I get additional applause, which is always appreciated.

It is a sad note though, Madam Speaker, that I would just simply note that usually during a debate, especially as unanimous I think is this bill would be,

normally we would have the public gallery, well, maybe not full, but certainly attended by members who this affects and in this case, members of the United Church of Canada.

And I just want to express, for those who may be watching in a different format, watching digitally, you know, how I see that as an unfortunate thing because I would've liked to have spent a little bit of time with the amazing people that I know in the United Church and to have that personal connection. But I do hope that, for those who are watching remotely, they understand that, again, we support this bill and look forward to moving it forward.

I also want to just to express my appreciation, as I mentioned in my questions, for all of our faith communities here in Manitoba. I know in my own home church this has been a difficult time, to say the least. And I know when reaching out to other faith communities, other denominations, this is certainly true across the board.

Obviously, there's a limit on personal and in-person gatherings that can happen, but the need that also arises has been—has grown exponentially. And I know for many of those faith communities, they are struggling, as the rest of society is, to make sure that they're supporting their members, supporting the larger community. And in fact, in many cases, they have taken on a larger role. They have taken on more than they would normally take on.

At the same time that their personal connection with their congregation has diminished and, quite frankly, Madam Speaker, the money, it probably isn't flowing in the same way it was before. And so I know that that's a struggle.

*(10:20)

And so when we can move forward on a bill such as this, that I believe helps the United Church in its organizational structure to address some issues that, as the member said—from Riding Mountain said, are long-standing, have been going on for a long time, but I think would only be exasperated during this pandemic. So it's a great thing when we can stand as legislators, we can support a bill like this and we can just get this done with the support of all parties.

We know that communities across Manitoba are feeling the impacts of the pandemic. And it's small congregations, in many cases—like in my own community, Grey Street United Church, which is a very small congregation, a very small church but they have an enormous impact in the Elmwood community

and they're very proud of that fact, very proud to be in that community and making a difference.

They continue to support their community. I think recently they just had a pie sale that raised a few funds for their church but it was really, I think, indicative of the support that they're offering to their members which, as I said, is so important during this pandemic.

I know other faith communities like Transcona United Church—and I'm looking on the Zoom screen here for my friend from Transcona because I know that he will not mind me mentioning the amazing work that Transcona United is doing in their community. They continue to have their weekly services to support the community, to reach out to members and we have a long-standing, good relationship with them. I know the former member from Transcona did as well. I think all members understand the importance that the grey—that Transcona United is undertaking.

And I just want to point out at this time too, that, you know, the United Church doesn't just do that local work but they continue to push us as a society on social issues. And I was proud that the member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt) mentioned that in his remarks because they have continually pushed us as a faith community to re-examine who we are, whether it be on issues of reconciliation or just recently, with regards to the Black Lives Matter movement.

And once again, it's the United Church who is out front, who is, you know, pushing us as a society to examine ourselves to do better and to be leaders in that regard. And so we have a lot of respect for the work that they do in that regard and I certainly appreciate that.

You know, I got married in a United Church. Of course, members here will know I am of Mennonite faith and Mennonite heritage and so it was a bit pushing the boundaries, I guess, for me to step into Kildonan United Church, which is my wife's home church, or was when she was growing up.

And as—and I have something in common as well with the member for Transcona (Mr. Altomare) in that Bill Blaikie, who is a former United Church minister, officiated my wedding, as he did the member for Transcona. I don't want to steal all his speaking notes here but this is something we share in common and something we're very proud of.

We know that—you know, I go into this church and I'm expecting, you know, this kind of—based on their policy and based on their pushing of the social

agenda and what I know of the social gospel and the history of our own political movement, I'm thinking this is going to be a radical church and I'm expecting this to be a, you know, a raucous service and a raucous community.

Again, they are raucous in the sense that they're pushing us continually to be better as a society, pushing us to understand those social issues better. But I was actually quite surprised that it was a very buttoned-down, can I say, service, that it was very regimented.

Again, coming from the Mennonite faith and in my own church, it was quite a shock. But I appreciated that, underneath that level of history and of ceremony that exists within that faith community, there is still the ability and the need for them to push us as a society and to continue to make sure that we are pushing that social agenda.

So members will know, as I said, that the faith community of the United Church has a deep—a long and deep history within our own political party. I mentioned Bill Blaikie, who was a minister in the United Church who I cut my political teeth under, I could say, who was a Member of Parliament when I was coming up in politics and somebody I have great respect for.

And I believe a lot of people have a lot of respect for Bill because of his faith and because of his work early on in the United Church in the North End, helping people there in the communities that need that support the most.

But, you know, beyond that, when I started in this place, of course, Doug Martindale was still a member of our caucus, and it was always important to have his perspective and to have his input around the caucus table. And again, in a very socially astute way, would be able to bring that back to our faith roots of the social gospel movement and of our party.

So it's just a great feeling here this morning to be able to identify the good work that the United Church continues to do in our local communities during the pandemic, how they continue to reach out to their own congregations and to be very supportive in those communities and to be an important part of the response that we have to COVID and to the pandemic, but at the same time, be able to recognize the important work that they're doing as a national organization and as a church to push us in social justice issues. They continue to do that work and we support them.

So when we can come to this Legislature and actually pass concrete legislation that makes that happen, I think that's something that we can all be proud to support. I do believe there are some members that would wish to put some words on the record but, as I said, there's—our intention to move this forward here this morning to get this done and to, in very concrete terms, show those leaders in our faith community that we stand with them at every step of the way.

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education):

This is a rare morning in that I wasn't actually planning to speak but the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) inspired me to speak, Madam Speaker, and so perhaps that's a good tone for how the rest of the day might go.

I want to echo some of the comments that he put on the record, however, Madam Speaker, in particular, when it comes to the faith communities and the challenges that they are facing in this time. And, of course, every part of society during this pandemic is facing difficult times. It's not exclusive to the faith community. It is true for every organization and individual, but in particular, while we have this moment, I do want to acknowledge those who were involved in our religious institutions.

Last month, October, was Pastor Appreciation Month and, of course, it's specifically designated and designed to thank pastors in our community for the work that they do at all times, but particularly during this time, but I would extend it to all leaders within our faith community for the work that they're doing.

And the member for Concordia touched on a particular point, that at certain times, both in Manitoba and throughout the world, faith communities have been curtailed in terms of how they can deliver their services, their messages.

Sometimes there's been—and there is still—limitations on the amount of those who can gather. And that has been challenging, particularly in the spring when it was essentially a virtual environment for faith communities. That is a very different way for those who are leaders within our faith community to deliver their spiritual service and their spiritual message, but they really did adapt in many ways.

And I often heard from those who are leading within the Christian community, which I'm connected with through my own faith and through my own beliefs, that the church is not limited by the four walls

and, in fact, that is the example that those in the Christian faith have from Jesus Christ during his time when he would very slowly and methodically in a three-kilometre-an-hour walk go from place to place and to speak to individuals and to give comfort to those who needed comfort and to provide that message of hope and of everlasting life, Madam Speaker.

And that is an example today all of us, regardless of our faith, are often having to rely upon because our life has slowed down in many ways and it's gone from maybe 100 kilometres an hour to three kilometres an hour. And as we're making a slower walk, a slower journey in our lives these days, we do have that opportunity—just as Jesus Christ did—to provide comfort and to provide solace to those who need it and to provide optimism and hope and all of the different things that so many need these days.

And so whether it's the church or religious organizations, that is now beyond the walls of those organizations. So whether they're in-person in a limited way or going completely virtually, that comfort that our religious organizations provide each and every day doesn't have to be confined to those walls. In fact, it shouldn't be confined to those walls. The greatest need is often beyond the church and beyond the religious organizations, and that is true more so today than ever.

* (10:30)

So the member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) touched on a very important point that these organizations, these faith-based organizations—United Church and others—are designed to help individuals in their time of need. And there's more need than ever, and they need more support than ever.

And yet, we're asking—and because of the restrictions we are asking these faith-based organizations to help people in a different way when the need is greater than ever. And we've seen the examples—I've seen in my own community, the—a local church, Southland Church, had a big Thanksgiving clothing drive and a food drive. And you can come and, at that time, get food, and you can still get clothing.

I believe we've seen the United Church step up. We've seen those who's partnered with food banks and gone and done food drives to get food into the food banks that were having a difficult time. We've seen faith leaders reach out virtually and try to have groups in a virtual way. So there's so much example, so much demonstration of how the ardent of those of faith,

those theologize doctrines that we often rely upon can now be demonstrated in an unique way.

So I would say, Madam Speaker, that this is an opportunity for all of us during the pandemic to look at our own lives and to look at our family's lives and to, while we're going through a difficult time, look how there can be good things and maybe better things that come from that.

Whether that's spending more time with those that we weren't always be able to spend time with—maybe not in person, maybe that's virtually but that is still time and that is still important. In the way that we reach out to people, in the way that we treat people, we have that opportunity.

And for the religious organizations as well, they have an opportunity to look beyond the pandemic—I mean, how can the lessons that they're learning today carry forward beyond the pandemic so they can continue to do what they're doing, but maybe even in a better way.

So we're all learning lessons in this as individuals, as those who are believers in faith, as organizations, as legislators. We're all learning lessons during this pandemic. And while we're probably in one of the more difficult seasons of the pandemic, we should never stop looking at how we can be better as individuals, how organizations can be better, and how we can ensure that on the other side of the pandemic, some of those lessons are learned.

So I want to conclude by saying to the member for Concordia and others, we are grateful for the work that our religious organizations are doing. Now, in this very difficult time, they play an important role in ensuring that peoples' mental health and social connections are maintained.

We really appreciate the difficulty that you're going through and the struggle that you're going through, but more than that, we appreciate the hope and the optimism that you provide all of us and to our society. And in this small way, through this bill, that can be supportive of you, of the United Church, but we also know that the larger faith-based community is supportive of all of us.

And so we use this opportunity to say thank you for what you're doing, for what you're going to continue to do. And may you be blessed and uplifted in the days and the months ahead.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The next in the rotation would be a member from the NDP.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Oh, the honourable member for Wolseley, and she would have to unmute her mic.

Ms. Naylor: Yes, sorry. I had unmuted but I was muted by the House, so I'll try again. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

This bill reflects recent changes in the governance structure of the United Church of Canada. I know this is a difficult decision to make as it meant eliminating many jobs across the national church.

As Sunday morning church attendance declines across the country, UCC and other faith groups in Canada are facing challenging times. From reorganizing governance to making better use of their buildings, communities of faith are becoming more creative in how they will engage in the broader community moving forward.

The Manitoba NDP is proud to have a long history of connections with and contributions from United Church of Canada members and ministers. Many of our past and current members and supporters were or are associated with the church.

I myself grew up in the United Church of Canada in rural Ontario. There, my father served as the lay minister when I was very young, and later my older sister became a diaconal minister. Her involvement in the United Church helped to shape my own progressive activism and feminism.

The United Church has a long history of liberal and progressive theology. Although, like all major denominations, they were also responsible for some of the harms to Indigenous communities, they have worked faithfully to heal those relationships over the past 35 years.

In 1986, at its 31st General Council, the United Church of Canada responded to the request of Indigenous people that it apologize to them for its part in colonization. And the church marked the 30th anniversary of the apology in August 2016 and continued to live into its promise to, and I quote: "walk together...in the Spirit of Christ so that our peoples may be blessed and God's creation healed."

As early as the 1970s, gay and lesbian members of the United Church were forming support groups within their congregations, and by 1988, the 32nd General Council declared that all people,

regardless of sexual orientation, were welcome as full members of the United Church and all members were eligible to be considered for ordered ministry.

It also affirmed God's intention for all human relationships, both heterosexual and homosexual couples—I'm using the language of the time—is that they be faithful, responsible, just, loving, help-giving, healing and sustaining of community and self. These are just two examples of why all Manitobans should be proud of the work of the United Church.

And now I'd like to take this time to put a few words on the record. Some of the examples of the United Church ministers and active members who have made valuable contributions to the Manitoba NDP, going way back to the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which was a 'precursor' to the NDP, we find social democrat leaders like J.S. Woodsworth and Stanley Knowles, who are also both ordained in the Methodist church.

In 1925, many of the Canadian Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches came together to form the United Church of Canada. Both Stanley Knowles and J.S. Woodsworth served as ministers in the United Church while also representing Winnipeg Centre and then Winnipeg North Centre in the House of Commons.

In more contemporary times, I count many friends among United Church leaders with strong ties to the NDP: Ann Naylor, Nancy Sanders and Barb Janes are three retired women, retired United Church ministers, who all live in the Wolseley constituency and are all active NDP members.

In St. James, we have Joan Jarvis and Irene Greenwood, actively involved with the St. James constituency association. Other NDP leaders and activists who served in ministry or are very active UCC members include Al Mackling, Muriel and Bob Kenyan and Glenn Nicholls.

Norah McMurtry is a long-term friend of mine, a United Church member and an NDP activist in Wolseley, and today, I want to put a few words on the record about her father, Reverend James Douglas McMurtry. The late Reverend J. Douglas McMurtry served the United Church of Canada for over 40 years. He was received as candidate for ministry in 1940, and after a year of training in Saskatoon, he served the Jenner-Buffalo Mission field.

He spent the early 1940s continuing his studies and caring for his ailing mother. Douglas also served at Bright Sands field in northwestern Saskatchewan,

for two years in China and at the Yorkton Presbytery Round Lake Michigan—mission and in Winnipeg. While at Round Lake Mission, Douglas served the surrounding four Indigenous communities for three years, and when he moved to Winnipeg, he became the superintendent of Hope Mission.

In 1978, after several years away from active ministry, Douglas served at the Immanuel church in Winnipeg. During this time, he was involved with the conference and presbytery and the broader communities such as the native ministry board. And like Doug Martindale, another United Church ministry who has also served as NDP MLA, they worked with the North End Community Ministry, previously known as Stella Mission, to many of us, and at Project Peacemakers.

Through his work with Indigenous communities near Round Lake, Saskatchewan, and northern communities in Manitoba and Ontario, as well as his involvement with the Dr. Jesse resource centre, now known as the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre and the All Native Circle Conference, Doug formed a deep respect for Indigenous people and for many long-lasting friendships. He also participated in the Northern Flood Committee, where he advocated for fair treatment of the people affected by hydro development in northern Manitoba.

Doug was honoured with the commemorative medal of the Golden Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Doug was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Saskatchewan for his leadership in ministry. He was always active in the local NDP, federally and provincially, and active in the CCF in his younger years. Douglas died at the age of 97 in 2016, and after his death, his children tell me they found a vintage collection of Bill Blaikie election signs and many other NDP campaign signs stored in his garage.

*(10:40)

I wanted to mention Douglas today because he really clearly connected his spiritual and political work in an intimate way. He was known to make it a spiritual practice to care for and pray for elected officials, and there are a number of past NDP MLAs who speak highly of the encouraging letters they received over the years from Doug.

Matt already celebrated the work of Bill Blaikie in the church and in elected office and, of course, his children, Rebecca and Daniel, are well known to the NDP, but I also wanted to mention the work of his

youngest daughter, Tessa, because it has significant impact in the Wolseley constituency.

Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud is no stranger to social justice. While not an elected official, she has very strong ties to Manitoba NDP. Tessa's actively involved with the United Church of Canada and even ran for moderator, the spiritual leader of the church, in 2018.

Today, Tessa is the executive director of 1JustCity, an organization that represents several United Church community ministries across the city of Winnipeg. There are three drop-ins connected to 1JustCity—Oak Table, West Broadway Community Ministry and St. Matthews Maryland Community Ministry—and the latter two of these are located in my constituency.

Between these locations, 1JustCity offers a variety of services to marginalized Winnipeggers, including meals and emergency food, access to hygiene supplies, showers, laundry, community mentors to provide support and advocacy and volunteer opportunities.

1JustCity opens an emergency overnight warming centre called Just a Warm Sleep during the months of January, February, and March, and they serve a maximum of 30 guests per night. Just a Warm Sleep is welcome to—welcoming to everyone, and it allows guests to bring pets and shopping carts inside for the night. While substances are not brought inside, sobriety is not a requirement for using the space, which allows folks struggling with addictions to have a warm and safe space to sleep.

1JustCity's motto is loving the under-loved: a sentiment that is valued both by the United Church and by the Manitoba NDP. Tessa embodies this in the work she does every day.

So thank you for allowing me to speak about some of the amazing history of the United Church of Canada, and to support them as they move forward in these changes. We are happy, as a party, to support this bill today in support of the United Church, and to recognize their outstanding contributions that United Church members and leaders have made to the New Democratic Party and to our province.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard)—the member will have to unmute his mic.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for River Heights.

Mr. Gerrard: I speak in support of this bill, The United Church of Canada Amendment Act. I speak as a member of the St. Andrew's River Heights United Church, and a proud member.

This bill will move the United Church to three-council model, an important role, of course, for the regional council in the future.

The United Church has been a leader in Manitoba and Canada in calling for attention to and help for those who are in need. It has been a progressive church for many years, reaching out to and recognizing those who have been marginalized. It has recognized when there have been problems in the past in—within the United Church; as within the relations with Indigenous peoples, has apologized for these issues and has worked to try and bring around better reconciliation.

The United Church has been active—and I can speak for the St. Andrew's River Heights United Church—not just in trying to bring together communities, interfaith communities, get people in Manitoba working together on important issues for Manitoba, but has also been active globally.

The United Church in River Heights has a connection with Guatemala, where there are many church members who have travelled to Guatemala and helped with developing, building schools for children there in poorer areas. It is an initiative which has been important, but it's also been important—and not only for people in Guatemala but helping many younger members, in particular, to get an insight of what's happening globally as well as what's happening locally.

The United Church has been working hard within the COVID-19 pandemic under conditions—were not always easy. I'd like to thank those who are leaders in the United Church for all their efforts and thank the members, who contribute in so many ways to helping others.

Before I close, I just have one particular note. I would ask the Speaker if we could do better in using masks, even within the Chamber. We are at a very serious situation currently with the COVID pandemic in an accelerating phase, and the more that all of us can contribute to that safety, the better.

Oh, and thank you for the opportunity to bring forward these words. Merci. Miigwech.

Mr. Scott Johnston (Assiniboia): It's with great pleasure that I speak briefly to this bill.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate my colleague, the member from Riding Mountain, for bringing this bill forward, because I believe, as previous speakers have indicated, this is a very timely bill, especially under the circumstances that we're all living in, these challenging times, and faith is certainly something that I think we'd all would agree certainly is very beneficial to our peace of mind.

So again, I thank my colleague from Riding Mountain for bringing this bill forward.

I support this bill, and as a member of the United Church of Canada, it's with great satisfaction I see the church progressing under very difficult and challenging circumstances. Attendance is down in all faith-based churches and that of course is very difficult for many churches to overcome, but it's nice that—to see that the United Church is certainly trying to make every effort to come to terms with that.

My family has a very significant history with the United Church, particularly—excuse me, particularly the Deer Lodge United Church, which unfortunately, due to dwindling attendance was not able to survive, but certainly it has had a very, very strong—was a very, very strong component of our community. And I was baptized there, as well as my sisters, and it was part of our family, part of our being.

And I can speak very comfortably and indicate that a lot of our friends and our neighbours who we grew up with also participated in the church and also had that community comfort, and that's a very, very positive thing. The United Church of Canada is certainly one of the more popular faith-based churches and certainly has a significant attendance within our community.

I mean, I recall very, very comfortably that I was a Cub there and from there, a Boy Scout there, and my sisters were in Girl Guides there, and not only did we—when we attended church on our Sundays, we also too attended these other activities which certainly were very, very positive for our upbringing. And the United Church can certainly take a great deal of credit for that.

My folks were founders of that particular church. And going back generations, my great-grandfather was involved in it and participated, as well as my mother and father and my uncles and aunts, so that

church played a very significant part of our well-being. And, Madam Speaker, my father was a Progressive Conservative MLA who was elected several times in that community by friends and neighbours who attended that church.

* (10:50)

And again, it—the communal aspect of the church goes beyond just the church. It certainly got in behind and supported many of the people that were involved in the church and also representing the community.

I myself, Madam Speaker, an elected Progressive Conservative member, have certainly a lot of gratification of those people, my friends and neighbours, who are also part of the church who were very supportive. So this doesn't go to one particular political party. It's an array of every—of all members of the community and I think that's a very, very positive thing for a church to have, a very diversified and varied community.

So, Madam Speaker, I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to this and I endorse this bill completely.

Thank you.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): I stand today, you know, with great humility and wanting, obviously, to very much support this bill and the passing of this bill. I'll just put some words on the record with my experience with the United Church and how it's influenced greatly not only my family, but my worldview.

As many of you know, I wasn't a member of the United Church growing up. As a person of Italian background, I grew up in a Roman Catholic church and, as a matter of fact, served as an altar boy in my church as I was growing up.

But then I had the good fortune of meeting my partner a little bit later on and my partner was part of our—the church community in Transcona, known as Transcona Memorial United Church. And so, we were married in that church and as been put on the record earlier by the honourable member from Concordia, I was married by Bill Blaikie a former member of the House, a former MP a long time for Transcona.

And Bill has been an important part of our life and, after I retired from teaching and from being a school leader, I was having a conversation with Bill in the basement of our church on Yale Avenue and he asked me if I would consider to run for the NDP in Transcona. I took about two weeks to make that

decision and through the support of my church and faith community, decided to run and a lot of members from my church, from Transcona Memorial, supported my campaign and helped with our success.

But some of the other pieces I would like to put on the record is that our United Church is blessed with having a pastoral team of ministers. They're a husband and wife team, Carol Fletcher and Jeff Cook. Both Carol and Jeff have been long-time ministers of TMUC since the mid-'80s and continue to serve the community with great faith and humility. Both Jeff and Carol have this abiding faith and an abiding belief in people and that they will always be part, and want to be part of a—not only a faith-based community but also a community.

One of the things, once I became a member of the church, they asked me if I would do the communion and the confirmation classes for the church and, of course, with my background, I said yes and had many, many people run—go through that confirmation class and one of them was Tessa Blaikie Whitecloud.

I remember as a 14-year-old, we had a lot of dialogue around not only the role of faith-based organizations in community but also the role that people themselves can play. And that's what a real strength of most of our faith-based communities are is that we believe in ensuring that we have a lot of community members participate in the betterment of making these places better places to live.

So, Madam Speaker, I'd like to conclude my remarks right now by saying that we will support this, I will support this bill and I want to thank the member from Riding Mountain for bringing it forward.

Thank you very much.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further members wishing to speak in debate?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 300, The United Church of Canada Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, is it the will of the members to call it 11 a.m.?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to call it 11 a.m.? *[Agreed]*

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 1—Call on the Federal Government to Increase the Quota of the MPNP

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions.

The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Call on the Federal Government to Increase the Quota of the MPNP, being brought forward by the honourable member for Brandon East.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I move, seconded by the member of Lagimodière, that

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is working to protect Manitobans in these unprecedented times; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is preparing to restart the economy and is anticipating the reopening of the province's borders which are still closed as a result of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program is essential to restarting Manitoba's economy as new immigrants improve the economy by creating jobs; and

WHEREAS the Progressive Conservative Government created the first Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program in 1997; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program has brought in over 130,000 new Canadians to Manitoba; and

WHEREAS without the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program the provincial GDP would be 30% lower; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is eager to welcome new immigrants in order to work towards protecting the economy; and

WHEREAS the current Federal Government cap on immigration places a risk of hindering the province's economic recovery which has been hampered by the closed borders.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial government urges the federal government to expand the federal quota for Manitoba allowed under the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program.

Motion presented.

Mr. Isleifson: Good morning to everybody in the Chamber and gathering online here.

When we look at immigration to Manitoba and the importance of it, I can't help but just think how we are all blessed. I look at the number of members sitting in the Legislature and think where we all come from.

I look at every member the—of the population of Manitoba and where did we come from. And it makes me go back 132 years when my great-great grandfather immigrated to Manitoba from Iceland.

And I look at where would we be if our province and our country was not so open to welcome newcomers. So when we look at that every year here in Manitoba people from around the world move here, they move here for a number of reasons.

They come for education, they come for new jobs and careers, and some just to start a new life and bring their families over and give them an opportunity. Many, many reasons are out there for why people come to Manitoba and why these choose us.

Again, I like to believe it's because Manitoba is Canada's friendliest province and vast opportunity awaits anybody that comes over.

I do know, according to a recent survey, 85 per cent of Manitoba provincial nominees were working within three months of their arrival to Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, 76 per cent are now homeowners, or became home owner—homeowners, pardon me, within five years, and 95 per cent of families settled permanently in the community.

I'm sure, like many of my colleagues on all sides of the House, there is probably no better celebration that we can have each and every year when we attend ceremonies that welcome newcomers to Canada to become Canadian citizens.

I look through Westman alone and I look at opportunities, and my colleague from Brandon West and I have attended many ceremonies where we have the privilege of welcoming folks who have come to work in, you know, in places like Maple Leaf Foods or HyLife, or I've even had a conversation and found out that even the Russell Inn has half of their employees are working there due to the MNP program.

So, again, there's lots of opportunities that the program has really brought forward to us to help advance all of us here in Manitoba, and to help

advance Manitoba as a province: numerous recruitments, even in my days and even now, within Health. You know, when health regions seek out, and then the numbers of recruitments they've done from overseas.

* (11:00)

I've met some fantastic people who have come over to become workers from the Philippines. I've worked with a number of people that have come over to Canada simply because of our skilled worker in Manitoba program.

There are numerous opportunities, numerous parts of this program. And I even reflect on a comment that was made by—from the member from Logan in her response to the Throne Speech, where we look forward to increasing opportunities—increasing numbers of folks coming to Manitoba through this program and, again, immigration has really allowed all of us to really expand our even personal circles.

I have some amazing friends that live in this province now that have come from other countries and very successful, what they bring—I mean we can go and walk around communities and whether you're going to a Filipino restaurant, whether you're going to the Asian food spice store in downtown Brandon, whether you're going to a restaurant that sells Mauritius foods, the opportunities are endless, and I'm so privileged to be able to attend Diwali and experience the culture of other countries.

Even when we look at the MPNP program, I got to say, where would we be today if it was not for the actions of the Filmon government and Bonnie Mitchelson, who brought this program forward and has really helped our province excel.

And I think all of us on all sides of the House see the value of, I mean, the work that Bonnie had done to bring this forward is remarkable, and I receive a number of phone calls in my office and we help people, you know, go through the program, understand the program and every time I get that phone call, I cannot help but think of what the work she did in moving Manitoba forward by bringing this forward.

When we look at the program itself, even when we have the opportunity to look at education and education stream, I'm going to talk specifically about two organizations that are in my constituency or in my hometown of Brandon, and I'm sure the same is more if not greater at the University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg, but when I look at Brandon

University, for example, we look at this year alone—over 200 international students from more than 30 countries are attending regular and English language studies at Brandon University. We look at Assiniboine Community College in Brandon and Dauphin campuses alone, over 500 international students from 20 different countries.

Currently, Madam Speaker, I do realize that Assiniboine Community College, again, at both their Brandon and Dauphin campuses are reaching out, and they do have over 20 programs available for folks that are immigrating to Manitoba.

When I look at some other opportunities, I mean, let's look at the reasons why the MPNP program was designed. You know, we needed to provide Manitobans with an opportunity to increase the economic benefit of immigration to Manitoba. I have heard that—and I believe it was released in 2017, that by 2022, over 20,000 jobs would be requiring employees, and based on numbers back in 2017, it's estimated that 25 per cent of those jobs will be filled with immigrants coming to this great country.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

So, of the program—if we did not have this program in place right now, Manitoba would experience a 30 per cent decrease in our GDP. So we can look at over \$330 million being invested in our province since inception of the program through immigration.

An additional amount coming in, you know, for provincial taxes being paid by immigrants that, you know, help us expand as a province. And again, over 90 per cent of economic immigrants to Manitoba arrived through this program.

There are lots of—there's lots of data out there supporting various aspects of where we can go with the program. You know, for example, because of the MPNP program, Manitoba has seen a population net growth since 2006.

So when you look at the number of folks coming into the province of Manitoba, this program definitely drives that population in growth. Again, looking at between 2010 and 2016, over \$433.3 million in income taxes coming into this province due to this program.

There are new streams that we have available, again through the skilled work for folks that are already in Manitoba, skilled work for Manitobans

who are overseas, the business investment opportunities and education opportunities. There are many things that this program does that hugely benefit all of us in Manitoba, and as lawmakers and as representatives of the folks in our community it's a pleasure to come into work every single day representing every single citizen in our province and, again, without this program and without immigration none of us would be here.

So I look forward to passing this resolution today. Let's work with the federal government on this, let's be partners with the federal government and have them increase our allowable numbers coming to Manitoba through our MPNP program. I look forward to further comments from my colleagues and at the end of the hour I look forward for your support so we can move this resolution forward.

Thank you again, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

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 another party, any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties, each independent member may ask one question. And no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

The honourable member for Notre Dame (Ms. Marcelino)—the—I don't—I will ask the honourable member for Concordia.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know technical difficulties and getting used to the new format is certainly what we're all working through.

I simply wanted to ask—I know that the Provincial Nominee Program is so important in communities like mine and so many members that are represented on this side of the House. I'm wondering what consultation did the member do. What work did he do in reaching out to those who work closely in the immigration field? Who are working directly with folks who are having issues coming to Canada? What sort of consultation did he do?

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I want to thank the member from Concordia for the question.

When we look at consultations, I mean, I can go into great depth if he likes when I have more time. But, you know, when I—what I have personally done is I've reached out to both Brandon University and to

Assiniboine Community College to discuss their immigration policies, their input into the program. We know we have a need in the future of skilled workers coming to Canada and, in particular, for us here in Manitoba. So I've also reached out to, in the Ag sector that we have in Brandon, where I don't have any farms in my constituency, I certainly have a lot of services that are available.

So to reach out—

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

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Yes, my question is if immigration is so important and international students are one of the main members, people who are actually part to—part of the Provincial Nominee Program, why did this government strip away their health-care coverage?

Mr. Isleifson: I mean, if one looks at the numbers in our post-secondary education system, the numbers are increasing. I know, again, I've had that conversation with the president of Assiniboine Community College and at Brandon University as well, and the important thing is, is to provide an opportunity for folks to come to Canada and, in particular Manitoba, to our post-secondary education facilities or institutions and provide that opportunity for them. And, again, the proof is in the pudding where their numbers have actually increased.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Rossmere, if you can take your mic off. Turn your mic on.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Yes, thank you.

Wondering if the member could explain how the program facilitates skilled immigration to our province. I know that I have many constituents who are skilled and have benefited Manitoba and the Manitoba economy, and wondering if the member could just expand a little bit on that relationship regarding people who come from other places who have needed skills and come here to contribute those needed skills to our economy.

* (11:10)

Mr. Isleifson: Thank you to the member for Rossmere for that great question.

I know with the program and the skilled workers, there's a piece of the program where the job applicants' requirements are put forth by the industry. So when

we're looking for skilled workers in Manitoba, it's actually driven by the local labour market.

And again, whether someone is applying for the skilled worker program in Manitoba or the skilled worker program overseas, they actually put forward a nomination process or an intent or—of interest, and then after that process has gone through, should they meet the criteria of filling the needs of that skilled labour, then they are invited to apply. And we look at—

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

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I want to ask about—that I think, as the member rightfully mentioned, immigration into our province is very beneficial, and with that, if we're hoping for an increase, that means you're also expecting or should anticipate an increase in the level of support that we're providing to these newcomers to our province.

So please tell us about what supports, 'inditional' and increased supports are going to be available for this extra number of newcomers to our province?

Mr. Isleifson: I want to thank the member from St. James. That's a great question.

And I also want to thank him for the work that he has done, you know, since he's been here. And it's—I believe it was probably within the first month and a half of the last election when he assumed his role as the MLA for St. James that we worked together on an immigration—or pardon me, St. Vital—we worked together on an immigration issue where I had someone contact me from overseas wanting to move to my constituency but had family and friends in St. Vital. And so we worked together on that.

And the MNP program outlines the needs and requirements and what's available—

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

The honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield)—or does anybody else have another question?

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): If the member wants to attract more newcomers, will he and his government commit to removing the \$500 head tax?

Mr. Isleifson: I think it's important to remember, when we first formed government in 2016, there was an incredible backlog of people who had applied that were not getting through. And we worked hard and

our minister of the day worked hard at creating a system, making changes in this program that allowed us not only to speed up the acceptance period but to eliminate that backlog.

And, like I say, the opportunities of moving to Manitoba, whether it be skilled work or education, the numbers are increasing.

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

Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière): Question to the member: Could the member please explain the important changes that our PC government implemented in 2017 to renew the MPNP program?

Mr. Isleifson: As I just said, you know, we—back in 2016, we did have a backlog. So we had to renew the Provincial Nominee Program to get rid of that backlog and improve the standards for our applicants. So we did reach an agreement with the federal government to expand the program by four streams, and that is, again: the international education, the Skilled Worker in Manitoba Stream, the Skilled Worker Overseas Stream and the Business Investor Stream. So the streams are new, they're better, they're more efficient and it better matches newcomers to the skilled labour that we're looking for here in Manitoba.

Ms. Marcelino: Many immigrants work in our food processing, health, retail and hospitality sectors. When will the member and his government step up and provided the needed financial assistance to ensure that workers like these are kept safe?

Mr. Isleifson: Thank you for the question.

You know, we're always looking at ways that we can provide safety for our residents, for all residents. You know, we look at the situation we're in right now with COVID going through the province and going through the country, going through the world, and we are, daily, watching it with professionals and taking advice from the experts on what we need to do to ensure the safety of our residents and will continue to do so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any other further questions?

Mr. Micklefield: My last question had to do with some more specific details regarding the skilled worker program, but others have come to our province more broadly, and I would like the member, if he could, to explain just in a—in a more general—in a broad sense how the MPNP program has helped Manitobans.

And if I may take the moment to say that I came from another country myself. Over 30 years ago, I was a child. But Manitoba has been a wonderful place to land for our family. And I know that many—

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

Mr. Isleifson: That's a really great question.

I mean, when we look at the opportunities that we provide for all of us, everybody has an equal opportunity to be their best, to do their best and to fit in.

Now, we are a loving, giving society here in Manitoba. And when we welcome immigrants open-handedly, they not only help their families by coming to Manitoba, but they help all of us. They help the entire province of Manitoba. We excel with our residents and this province is their province, and when they become—in Manitoba there's just nothing better for life than being—

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

Time for question period has expired.

Debate

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

The honourable member for Burrows. Do you want to take your mic off?

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Mr. Deputy Speaker, are you getting me?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes, I can hear you now.

Mr. Brar: The COVID situation is bad in Manitoba. Just wanted to spare a moment to send my condolences to all the families who lost their loved ones fighting this battle.

Talking about the resolution today, it's true that we need more immigrants and it's okay to ask the federal government to increase MPNP quota for our province. But when we talk about immigration, look at the system broadly, then there's so many points that need to be thought about, discussed, emphasized.

This weekend I was serving breakfast to my son, Jai Singh. He is turning eight and he likes pancakes. He was like, Dad, I need more pancakes. I said, Boy, finish the one on your plate first.

Talking about backlog, there are thousands of applicants waiting to hear from Manitoba who have

already applied for their expression of interest, and they are in the queue. Almost 7,000 applications are pending assessment. More than 4,000 are in the middle of being assessed. There are so many families waiting overseas to hear from this government on their applications, and they haven't heard anything for months, over a year.

* (11:20)

This government didn't pull any draws for those applicants who are waiting overseas. There have been draws pulled for the people who are inland applicants right here in Canada and have applied for this program. That's fine and that's good that the government is working towards that, but we need to put more resources into our MPNP program.

This government needs to recruit employees in this department so that we can fasten this process. And when this government says that we need immigrants because they work to make this economy better, well, that's true. I agree to that. But this government always talks about money. This government always looks at immigrants with people coming with two hands. Let's talk about their head. Let's talk about that, the diversity they bring with them. Let's talk about the social benefits of immigration. Let's talk about the cultural benefits of immigration, the values they bring to this society, the passion, love and harmony they bring to this society.

When I look at my caucus, I feel proud because this caucus reflects the real diversity of our province. But when I look at the other side of the Chamber, I'm not that happy. We need to include more people in our political system from diverse communities, from ethnic communities. We need to encourage them. We need to bring programs that's inclusive.

And when we talk about this Premier (Mr. Pallister), he is not very positive about immigrant populations. He spoke negative on November 28th, 2016, and he indicates that it doesn't do them service to being—put them on welfare.

For the information of the Premier, I must tell that 98 per cent of the immigrants—new Canadians who settle in Manitoba, they get jobs within the first year of their landing here. Eighty-six per cent of those immigrants, they stay in Manitoba.

They're not a burden; they're not here for getting welfare; rather, they're here to contribute to this society, and I have examples. I know so many new Canadians, I know so many Manitobans who came

here as a student and now they're entrepreneurs. They have set up their businesses, they have pumped millions into this economy. A single business is generating close to 100 jobs right here in Winnipeg. A single trucking business has donated \$10,000 to CancerCare Manitoba three weeks back.

So, Mr. Premier, please note, these immigrants are not here to live on welfare; rather, they feed people. During COVID, I have worked with so many immigrants who have distributed food, spending money out of their own pocket. I have led campaigns—I am a new Canadian, I am an immigrant—I have led campaigns raising funds for University of Manitoba just between December 2018 and December 2019. I was working with a group that represents 99 per cent of the members who are new Canadians. We raised \$38,000 for a human rights scholarship for University of Manitoba, and you're talking about they're living on welfare? That's not true, Mr. Premier. And the same group, they raised more than \$10,000 for Seven Oaks Performing Arts Centre.

If this government really supports immigration and immigrants, why they put a \$500 application fee for MPNP program? That's not encouragement to the applicants, that's discouragement. And this government knows that these immigrants, they put millions of dollars into the economy, and you're just talking about \$500 for an application. Why? Why did you apply this fee on the applications? Are you thinking of removing it right now?

You raised \$5 million through this application fee. And the minister of immigration from this government, they committed that this money would be spent on new Canadians. But that turned out to be false, eventually. Only \$3.1 million was spent.

There's so many—there are so many other issues that I can talk about regarding this resolution. I know this is important. We support that we should bring more immigrants, but we need to think about how we settle them. How about the settlement programs? How about putting more resources to put them into the professions they belong to? I have seen doctors doing real estate. I have seen nurses working at Canada Goose. So, Mr. Premier and PC caucus, we need to focus more, we need to strengthen this program and we need to put more resources into this program to make it better.

Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière): It is my tremendous pleasure to rise today to put some words on the record regarding this resolution.

I'll first start by thanking my colleague, the member from Brandon East, for introducing the resolution asking the federal government to increase the quota for Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program.

Let's be very clear, we've heard some folks on the other side of the House here talk today about our caucus. And I'll be very clear that it—the PNP was in fact created by a PC government in 1998. And it has since been improved upon by our current PC government. And since its inception, it has brought in over 130,000 provincial nominees to our province. Now, this is an impressive number, considering the population of 'Manit' today sits at just over 1.3 million. It's also important to note that over 90 per cent of nominees are employed within the first year in this province, and that Manitoba retains almost 82 per cent of provincial nominees five years after landing.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these outcomes demonstrate to Manitobans that this is an incredibly successful program created and improved upon by two different PC governments.

At its time of creation, it was the first of its kind in Canada, with the exception of Quebec. And I believe that the Filmon government had the foresight to see the tremendous opportunity that this program would bring to the people and the economy of Manitoba.

In 2017, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our PC government redesigned and improved the program. We provided newcomers with new pathways to permanent residence in the province, and ensured the renewal of the program. Today, the PNP now includes a skilled worker immigration stream, a Manitoba Business Investor Stream, an International Education Stream.

Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker, I recall in 2018, when we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the PNP in the rotunda here at the Manitoba Legislature. It was an excellent turnout and we had folks representing companies and nominees alike who benefited from the PNP. The event attracted people like Chris Simair of SkipTheDishes and Winnipeg's own Obby Khan, and His Honour Gary Filmon and many others from the community who benefited or were involved with the creation of the program.

* (11:30)

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, owners of small- and medium-sized businesses across the province have found this program to be vital to recruitment of qualified workers. Many business owners who live in Lagimodière, for example, have told me that they appreciate the program and hope that the government continues support the PNP.

One example of a company that has used this program is Tuff Built Products, a manufacturer of fall protection and confined space safety equipment. The owner, Jan Vetesnik, and Chief Operating Officer Sylvester Oyamienlen are both incredible community and business leaders in Lagimodière. Both Jan and Sylvester represent good news immigrant stories in Manitoba, stories that are very similar to those of Manitoba families that have been coming to our province for decades. These two gentlemen are examples of just how Manitoba is truly the land of opportunity.

I know that Manitoba will continue to be the destination of people like Jan and Sylvester, and with today's resolution, I know that this will only help increase the number of people who immigrate to Canada and call our great province home. It is for this reason that I and my colleagues on this side of the House will be supporting this resolution.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): As the critic for immigration for the NDP, I am pleased to contribute to this debate on the resolution before us, to call on the federal government to increase the quota of the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program, proposed this morning.

First, I sincerely appreciate the welcoming nature that this resolution speaks to for people of colour in our province. Even if the member's wording solely focuses on immigrants as GDP generators, I get this welcoming gist of what he's saying.

This resolution, by and large, would most definitely be perceived as welcoming by the people of colour in this province and that's what counts. As such, this resolution is an example of positive leadership, especially in the face of what we're seeing across the country, in the US, in Europe, increasing acceptance of racism in alternative right and mainstream discourse, including full encouragement of white supremacy in the White House.

In Canada, we somehow rank the highest in online creation and participation in alternative right and white supremacy platforms. In light of this, it is

somehow reassuring to see the member raise a resolution that is in spirit welcoming of immigrants' contribution and even inviting more immigrants to come to live to—in this province permanently.

To tell the truth, I was beginning to think worse of my Conservative colleagues across the aisle because of their aggressive focus on First Nations people in a series of bills now before us; for instance, all the aggressive posturing with the Manitoba Metis Federation this past year, everything from night hunting to the easy equation of Indigenous protests as illegal blockading. But worst of all these is the majority Conservative assured passage of a bill this week that will take away constitutional rights of Indigenous children and youth to be heard in court. That last one is plain racist and wrong on so many levels.

To the members opposite, I'm not offended if you don't take my word for it because I'm here for the sole purpose to scrutinize all that you do, but do take the time to go back to your communities and consult with your constituents on this specific action, perform your due diligence as legislators and confer with child welfare advocacy groups that can speak to the impact your vote would make on the lives of these children. Better yet, speak to an Indigenous child or youth in care and ask them what they think of this topic, since they are the ones being directly impacted by your vote.

And as flawed and wanting as we all are, especially me, we are Manitoba's leaders in the province, entrusted with making laws that will benefit all the people of Manitoba. And when leaders flirt with or tacitly accept or purposefully engage in racist actions, it makes it more than okay for everyone else to do that too. But today's resolution strikes a spark of hope.

I sincerely encourage more resolutions and legislation of this nature from members opposite that seek to work for the economic and intrinsic benefit of all peoples here in Manitoba. As NDP critic, I am concerned with the out-migration currently happening in this province, folks leaving this province at alarming levels not seen since the 1990s or the last PC government.

Statistics Canada estimates the components of interprovincial migration on an annual basis. Since this Pallister government took over the MPNP, Manitoba has seen higher and higher levels of out-migration to other provinces. From 2017 to 2019,

approximately 23,188 people migrated into Manitoba and then left Manitoba.

These 23,188 people who left our province don't count folks like students, who are leaving to go to different out-of-province university, or retirees who want to live in Victoria. These 23,188 folks over the last three years of Tory rule were skilled newcomers who came to Manitoba and then left.

As the MLA for Notre Dame, I regularly connect with newcomer communities, and I can, unfortunately, assure this government that many educated skilled newcomers to Manitoba are leaving Manitoba even though they want to work and live here permanently.

Last Friday on Zoom, I met with two different groups of internationally educated nurses or IENs to discuss various re-accreditation that they currently face. One IEN told me that she had to go on a wait-list for two years to get to a bridging program to update her skills at Red River College. Another IEN had to go on a wait-list for that bridging program for three years. These bridging programs need to be better funded by this government to address these backlogs.

I spoke to another IEN who is part of a group of 80 of them that are in limbo right now. These 80 IENs have successfully completed their bridging program at Red River College, and they are ready and willing to take their Manitoba board exams but cannot because their required English test scores have expired—they expired two years ago because of the waiting list, and there are no scheduled English test called CELBANS coming up in the foreseeable future.

These 80 IENs who have completed their bridging program, some have even multiple nursing job offers from hospitals who desperately need their expertise especially now with COVID, but since they cannot write their licensing exams and get accreditation, they are working in jobs in fast food like Kentucky Fried Chicken. They have written the Minister of Health and the college of nurses to no avail. The barriers don't stop there.

Manitoba is currently the most difficult jurisdiction in which to obtain accreditation as an LPN and as an RN, internationally educated nurses are required to take a blind assessment test for which there is purposefully no review process. This is a test so difficult that only 1 per cent pass it.

And even the director of faculty of nursing at the University of Manitoba said half jokingly to a group of IEN advocates that she probably won't have to pass

it either—she wouldn't be able to pass it either. But there's nothing funny about the situation.

Internationally educated nurses have hard choices to make when they face these barriers: either stay in the province and take on low-wage jobs in the service sector and continue to try saving money for the thousands of dollars it takes to write multiple tests and pay for bridging programs or leave the province of Manitoba, leave loved ones and get accreditation in virtually any other province in Canada in a matter of months.

These types of barriers to credential recognition are fueling the outmigration of skilled newcomers to our province, and though this resolution would endeavour to increase the quotas for skilled newcomers, these newcomers will continue to leave the province if these barriers to accreditation are not addressed.

Financial barriers were imposed by this government like the \$500 head tax and new fees to bridging programs and thousands of dollars charged by the regulatory bodies on multiple tests—those are some examples.

Years-long backlogs in bridging programs and gap training need to be addressed. This government needs to raise important questions of procedural fairness with the regulatory bodies to ensure that testing barriers raised by the regulatory bodies are fair.

Why is the blind assessment test—the clinical competency assessment or the CCA is a blind test and you can't review for it? Why is it a pass or fail scoring with no other information for feedback? The government needs to pose questions like why is it that in the past, when this assessment was administered by educators at Health Sciences Centre, less than 10 per cent of the CCA nursing test takers will get a score so low that they would be compelled to take a four-year bachelor nursing program? But now that failure rate is nearly at 100 per cent. It's high time this government raise these questions and have these important discussions with the self-regulating licensing bodies because these Manitoba-only barriers are directly, negatively impacting our health care and our communities.

Our rural northern communities continue to face skilled labour shortages in health care. And now, our province's health-care workers are in a fight for their lives due to COVID. Public health authorities are asking retired nurses to come out of retirement to fight against COVID, why not let these 80 internationally

educated nurses who have already passed their bridging programs, why not let these 80 men and women write the board exam so they can practise here?

The Manitoba nominee program needs to evolve to meet the changing needs of this province. That's a given, but what we're seeing is that while the MPNP may be fulfilling economic component of bringing in specific workers for specific industries, this program's heavy reliance on the strategic initiative stream is also contributing to the outmigration of skilled newcomers that we're seeing in Manitoba.

Why? Because unlike the Skilled Worker Overseas Stream, whether it's extra points given for family or connection to Manitoba, the strategic initiative stream does not have this Manitoba connection dimension that was at the heart of a successful program for attracting and retaining newcomers to Manitoba.

* (11:40)

Again, it doesn't matter how much of an increase in quota you will have, if this government does not hunker down and look at the causes of skilled newcomer outmigration, the NDP urges this government to focus on removing barriers to success for newcomers. Otherwise, we will continue to lose good people that communities across provinces—our province desperately need. Remove these barriers and newcomers will continue to provide the diversity and strength, calculable economic benefit, and incalculable intrinsic benefit to Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Last week, when there a proclamation brought forward about the federal government and health care, we said we weren't going to put up with this nonsense anymore. This is yet another proclamation where the PCs are pretending to care about an issue and shifting blame to the federal government in the middle of a crisis.

We should—we are in the middle of code red in a pandemic. There are teachers who are on the verge of breakdown. There are nurses who are burning out who don't have PPE. There are a whole bunch of businesses across Manitoba who are on the verge of bankruptcy. And this government is—has brought forward in a completely symbolic motion, it will have absolutely no real effect instead of bringing forward any legislation that's going to help doctors, nurses, teachers, businesses, or families stay safe in a code red.

Why are we talking about bringing people to Manitoba when we have a pandemic that is out of control? This is unbelievable. It is incredible that this government actually goes out of its way to try to distract and to actually draw attention to the fact that it doesn't care about what's happening with the pandemic. It's unbelievable.

Now, I'll also say, the very first bill that this government ever brought forward when being voted in in 2016—after being voted in in 2016 was to add a \$500 head tax to every immigrant—\$500. And I had people who were long-time PC supporters who said it was absolutely disgraceful because they were immigrants and that the first thing that the PCs did was to introduce an immigration head tax.

The second thing, yesterday I was talking with university students. One of the single biggest pools of immigrants to Manitoba in the Provincial Nominee Program are post-secondary students. And what did they do to them? They took away their health care. Did it save money? Absolutely not. The fact is international students are used as a cash cow. They're charged three times the tuition the domestic students are. And I had calls from people in my constituency because you had students who were having mental health crisis who were getting—who were unable to get any help. Professors were having to pay out of pocket to make sure that student actually got the health—mental health care they needed. It's absolutely shameful.

And again, this is—immigration is a federal issue. The fact that the PCs want to take all the credit for this—I will actually recall—there were two things about this. The provincial nomination—I believe, Provincial Nominee Program was a suggestion of the Business Council of Manitoba, which was led by Jim Carr in the 1990s. The Business Council of Manitoba had to be formed after 1995—the 1995 election and the Jets left town and—because it was clear to the business leadership in the province that the PC government, at the time, didn't know what they were doing. That we were spiralling around the drain.

And the claim that there are 130,000 people who have been brought here, we also need—you know, this is a perfect example of the way the PCs don't want to talk about the two sides of a ledger. How many people have left? We had how—oh, we had just about as many leave Manitoba last year as came. So we—you had 20 people—or 20,000—so we had 20,000 people arrive and 10,000 people left. We have record

numbers of people leaving Manitoba because there aren't opportunities for them. Because, in fact, they're lured here and then they're denied opportunity.

How many years have we been talking about the fact that people can't get their—can't get their qualifications? Doctors, nurses, professors. I also recall that, back in the 1990s, there was a—there was a fertility program was set up in Manitoba. They approached a Chinese doctor who—a world famous fertility doctor. He came to Manitoba in order to run this program and the PCs cancelled it. He was a world-renowned fertility physician and he ended up working in a bicycle repair shop. That was—that's how the PCs treated immigrants back in the 1990s, and, frankly, it's not that different today—especially the way we're treating our international students. It's absolutely shameful.

Now, I look at my mother as an immigrant, our family has sponsored refugees. We—I have helped shepherd people through the process of bringing them to Manitoba helping them get jobs, and so I recognize the incredible importance. But the act—the fact is that there are plenty of people that they're treated as disposable. They're treated as being part-time labour. They're not paid what they're supposed to be, and they're not treated—they're treated as second-class citizens. And that's not acceptable. A Manitoban is a Manitoban is a Manitoban.

So I'm not going to—I'm not—again, my colleagues and I are not going to dignify this with a vote. This is not—this is a waste of time for this—for our—for the government to be pretending they care about immigrants, when they don't.

And finally, I will say about the—I just want to make one comment about the—some of the comments from the member for Burrows (Mr. Brar), when he talked about criticizing the Premier (Mr. Pallister) for talking about people on welfare.

This is—once again this is about—this is—to me sums up lots of what's wrong with the—again, the NDP have not learned their lesson, because there are people on welfare who have not seen an increase in EIA since 1986—since 1986. In 1992 the PC rolled back EIA rates to 1986 level and left them—and the NDP and the PCs left them there. So there are people today on EIA who have disabilities, who are seniors, who have mental health problems, who have addictions problems, who are getting the same amount they did more than 30 years ago.

So I—it is—I—honestly, I know—I have a lot of respect for the member for Burrows, but I would urge him to—him and his fellow caucus-mates to reconsider the way they talk about people on welfare, because a lot of those people who are on welfare were forced into poverty by the policies of PC and the NDP.

So I will say briefly a couple of words in French.

Il y a beaucoup de problèmes avec cette proclamation. J'ai déjà parlé avec des gens de Saint-Boniface qui ont—qui étaient absolument clairs que, quand on invite les immigrants ici au Manitoba, on demande beaucoup plus des immigrants qu'on leur donne.

On demande de l'argent. On demande qu'ils travaillent pour moins d'argent. On demande qu'ils—il y a beaucoup de gens avec beaucoup de qualifications qui ne sont pas—qui ne peuvent pas avoir le boulot qu'ils devraient avoir. Et c'est à cause—parce que ce gouvernement, le gouvernement Pallister, n'est pas intéressé à faire les changements pour donner—de donner les supports et soutiens que—aux immigrants ou nouveaux canadiens.

Nous sommes tous des Manitobains, mais on—comme Libéraux, on va pas prétendre qu'il—que cette proclamation aujourd'hui est sérieuse. On—ce qu'il faut—on devrait—ça serait beaucoup mieux si on parlait de la pandémie, des crises qu'on a avec le code rouge maintenant.

Et c'est encore ce que le gouvernement Pallister est en train de faire, c'est d'avoir un distraction, d'offrir de quelque chose qui va changer rien pour prétendre que l'immigration, c'est quelque chose qu'il prend au sérieux et de suggérer que le problème, c'est le gouvernement fédéral.

Il y aura des gens qui vont dire que c'est—que je suis en train de défendre le gouvernement fédéral. Je ne suis pas—c'est pas vrai. Ce que j'essaie de défendre c'est la vérité.

Translation

There are many issues with this proclamation. I have spoken with people in St. Boniface, who were very clear that, when immigrants are invited here in Manitoba, they are asked to give much more than they are given.

They are asked for money. They are asked to work for less money. There are many with lots of qualifications who cannot get the job they should have. And this is because this Pallister government is not interested in

making the changes required to provide supports to immigrants and new Canadians.

We are all Manitobans, but as Liberals, we are not going to pretend that today's proclamation is a serious one. It would be much more worthwhile to discuss the pandemic and the crises brought on by the code red.

And this is again what the Pallister government does: they offer a distraction, something that will not change anything, in order to pretend that immigration is an issue they take seriously and to suggest the real problem is in fact the federal government.

There are people who will say that I am defending the federal government. I am not; it is not true. What I am trying to defend is the truth.

English

So, I'll just finish. There are a lot of people who are going to say I think—that I'm trying to defend the federal government. I am not. I am trying to stand up; I'm trying to defend the truth, and that's it.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm done with this.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): I just remembered I should put this on. Can you hear me?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We can hear you.

Mr. Micklefield: Okay, thank you.

I'm privileged to put a few words on the record about the Provincial Nominee Program. I've helped many constituents through this, I'm helping people through this even as we speak and cannot say enough good things about this program.

I must confess that, before being elected, I knew comparatively little about it. I was aware that it was a program which people could access, but the details were not as clear to me. I did move from the United Kingdom, from England, when I was 11 years old, back in 1989—yes, that makes me 42, for those of you trying to figure out the math—and we came here and I experienced the challenges of being a newcomer in a strange country.

* (11:50)

I recognize that many people would think that the gap between England and Canada is perhaps not so wide as other places and Canada, and that's probably not untrue. However, it's not insignificant, and I had to grapple with many, many things as we came here and figured out what the labelling on food that was

different, often the same things—the recipes were different, the flour is different, the plug outlets are different, Canadians drive on the other side of the road, some words are different.

I am pleased to say that I speak both English and Canadian and with my friends from Britain, I often translate for them or maybe caution them about using certain terms.

The humour is different. I got in trouble at school for jokes which I thought were pretty funny but no one else seem to appreciate. British humour is often a little more insulting, which maybe prepared me for this place, I'm not sure. Hopefully that's not what I'm known for as much.

But there are lots of differences when you move to a different culture, and I had to get through those. Not all of those were easy or may be taken in as lighthearted ways, I'm trying to remember those years.

Now, people made fun of me because I had an accent. People had lots of things to say to me because I was different. I didn't know how these things all worked. I didn't play hockey, I played soccer. And so there were lots of things to learn.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's a privilege to be able to help others through some of those same challenges. I remember what it's like. I don't know what it's like to come from many of the countries that my newcomer friends have come from, but I do know what it's like to come from a different country. And with those—with that heart and that experience, I'm privileged to help newcomers trying to grapple with the Provincial Nominee Program.

And so, in the interest of time, I'm going to leave it there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but it is a privilege to put just a few words on the record this morning and I thank you for the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): I would like to put few words on the record on this resolution brought forward by the member from the Brandon East.

I will be supporting this resolution where the provincial government urges the federal government to expand federal quota for Manitoba allowed under the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program.

We know that Manitoba nominee—Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program has drawn bright and skilled individuals from various countries across the globe, yet the current Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program is still lacking and, simply put, need drastically improved.

First, quotas are to be introduced for the number of people that can be approved in province and for a number of people outside of Canada. As it stands, I can say only 14 applications were invited to—14 applicants were invited to apply for MPNP last month from outside Manitoba.

International students play a vital role in building Manitoba's economy. They pay tuition fees that triple the amount local Canadian students pay. What benefit has the PC government put in place to ensure that these students, who later become work permit holders, can continue to contribute to the economy in a sustainable way?

It is sad that students coming from various countries who have spent four years training in our province's post-secondary institutes are finding challenges in applying for MPNP after graduation.

If this program is not improved further, we risk losing highly skilled, intelligent minds to other provinces.

Currently, work permit holder who's bound to apply for MPNP are on the same level as a potential applicant to the MPNP in different circumstances. Work permit holders should be given priority when applying to MPNP because they have spent years in Manitoba and actively contributed to the economy while having studied at our—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order. When this matter is before the House, the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Sandhu) will have seven minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 3, 2020

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