

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

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Myrna Driedger  
Speaker*

**Vol. LXXV No. 22B - 1:30 p.m., Thursday, November 26, 2020**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
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
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 26, 2020

*The House met at 1:30 p.m.*

**Madam Speaker:** Good afternoon, everybody. Please be seated.

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

**Madam Speaker:** Introduction of bills? Committee reports? Tabling of reports?

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

**Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Acting Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, I'd ask leave of the House to have the Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage to make a ministerial statement today recognizing the Holodomor.

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to allow that ministerial statement to proceed? *[Agreed]*

### Holodomor

**Hon. Cathy Cox (Minister of Sport, Culture and Heritage):** I'm pleased to rise today to recognize the 87th anniversary of the Holodomor, the Ukrainian famine and genocide of 1932-33, when wheat became a weapon in the Ukraine.

We must forever remember the millions of Ukrainian lives cut short by this artificial famine, where lands and crops were deliberately seized, leaving millions of men, women and children without food or sustenance. At a time of peace, on fertile lands known as the breadbasket of Europe, millions of people slowly starved to death.

For decades, the Holodomor went unrecognized and even denied. And today, as I recognize all of the Holodomor survivors, like Mrs. Luba Semaniuk, who boldly and passionately shared her story where growing up as a young girl in Ukraine, she painfully watched her family and neighbours dying of starvation. I say, *dyakuyu [thank you]*, Luba, for your courageousness.

Madam Speaker, we must continue to shine a light on the Holodomor. It's upon all of us to educate the next generation, our children and grandchildren to ensure this atrocity is never repeated. And all this week, we fly the Ukrainian flag at half-mast on the grounds of Memorial Park to raise awareness and remember all of those lives cut much too short.

Manitobans recognize the value of creating a compassionate society rich with cultural diversity where all are welcomed and able to contribute. We appreciate that Manitoba's unique and vibrant mosaic draws strength from its citizens, who represent over 200 ethnic origins and speak 150 languages. Madam Speaker, when we work together, we can all build a better province where all citizens, regardless of culture, religion or racial background, have the freedom and opportunity to thrive.

The stalks of wheat that I hold in my hand, so delicately tied with a black ribbon, serve as a sad reminder of the Holodomor. I'm sorry, I'm just very emotional. I would like to express my sincere thank you to our Ukrainian community for so graciously sharing them with me today.

And while this year we are not able to gather together on the grounds of our beautiful Manitoba Legislature to light candles and say prayers at the Bitter Memories of Childhood monument, I know that we are all united in our thoughts as we remember and reflect on this very, very dark chapter in Ukrainian history.

So on this solemn anniversary, I encourage people from across the globe to remember the victims of the Holodomor and to honour the immense contributions our Ukrainian community have made in the establishment of our beautiful province.

Madam Speaker, as we reflect on this dark moment in Ukrainian history, I ask all members to bow their heads in a moment of silence in recognition of all of those who perished in the Holodomor.

Thank you.

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** In 1932 and 1933, the Soviet regime deliberately induced a famine that killed several million Ukrainians. This regime sentenced Ukrainians to a horrifyingly slow death by starvation in an attempt to destroy their hopes for a free and independent Ukraine.

This horror is now known as the Holodomor, whose name emphasizes how the famine was man-made and efforts to help the Ukrainian people was purposely thwarted. This genocide has left a deep scar on the Ukrainian community throughout the world,

including here in Manitoba, where many survivors and their descendants have made their home.

Manitoba Ukrainian community has played a major role in the development of our society and our province, and every Ukrainian family in Manitoba has, in some way, felt the suffering and loss of the Holodomor.

The exact number of deaths during the Holodomor genocide remains unknown. We only have best estimates of between 10 and 14 million people. What can't be disputed is how deeply the dark time has impacted all Manitobans with Ukrainian ancestry. It can never be allowed to happen again to any other ethnic group or nation.

To honour the memory of those we lost, our government marks the fourth Saturday of November as the Holodomor Ukrainian famine and genocide memorial day. While in-person memorials can't be held this year, I encourage Manitobans to engage in some of the Holodomor or human rights-themed events over the next several days, so that we do not forget the past.

There will be a virtual Holodomor Memorial Panakhyda on Saturday, November 28th, which I encourage people to view. You can also visit the Holodomor famine genocide monument, mother and child, at Winnipeg City Hall or the Holodomor famine genocide monument, Bitter Memories of Childhood, on the west side of the Manitoba Legislative grounds.

May we continue to honour their lives by doing all that we can to aid those affected by genocides and to prevent future genocides.

Eternal memory, eternal memory, eternal memory: Vichnaya Pamyat, Vichnaya Pamyat, Vichnaya Pamyat.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I ask for leave to speak to the ministerial statement.

**Madam Speaker:** Does the member have leave to speak to the ministerial statement? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Lamont:** We rise to commemorate the Holodomor, the great famine that delivered genocide of millions of Ukrainians. Millions died and many more had their lives curtailed by a famine that, like other historic famines, was a political creation.

Trevor Erlacher, a historian, wrote that Stalin appears to have been motivated by the goal of transforming the Ukrainian nation into his idea of a modern, proletarian, socialist nation, even if this

entailed the physical destruction of broad sections of its population.

One critic wrote that a collectivization of Ukraine did not go well. By the fall of 1932—around the time that Stalin's wife, who reportedly objected to his policy, committed suicide—it became apparent that Ukraine's grain harvest was going to miss the Soviet planners' target by 60 per cent. There might still have been enough food for Ukrainian peasants to get by but, as Anne Applebaum writes, Stalin then ordered what little they had be confiscated as punishment for not meeting quotas.

Ukrainian life expectancy at birth dropped from about 43 years for men and 46 years for women to barely seven years and fewer than 11 years, respectively.

It was made possible by a government that was inhumane, which manipulated gullible and sometimes complicit Western observers, and those reporters who denied the atrocities had a broader platform than those who wrote about it.

Ukrainians fled that horror, arriving here in Canada and in Manitoba, where survivors live among us still. In September 1933, one of the first reports of the famine in North America was by a refugee, Maria Zhuk, who told her story to the Edmonton Journal. It was sent to both British and Canadian Prime Ministers of the day as an appeal for aid. And the Edmonton Journal published a few more appeals, but to no avail.

It is a story of both monumental cruelty and indifference where humanity was sacrificed in the name of ideology and power.

We honour the memory of those who died and those who survived.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** As requested, is there leave for a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please stand.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Grace Claeys

**Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to honour another Dawson Trail hero and soon-to-be-centenarian, Grace Claeys.

In 1940 at the age of 19, Grace married her husband, Jules Claeys. Grace and Jules lived on a farm and together raised their family in Dufresne, Manitoba. She was kept busy as a homemaker managing the many responsibilities of their home, farm and raising their four children.

\* (13:40)

Along with the joy of being a wife and mother, Grace is a very content grandmother and great-grandmother.

Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren all lovingly call her Granny. Her family remains at the centre of her life.

Grace is an animal lover, and she loves horses. She continues to enjoy working on puzzles and is still an avid fan of the Toronto Blue Jays.

Grace, exceptionally well-travelled, has taken many trips throughout Canada and the US, including destinations leading north to Alaska and west to sunny Hawaii. She has travelled extensively in Europe, and she has had the privilege of travelling to Asia: China and Malaysia. She also has had a wonderful opportunity to travel over a 10-year period to Australia, spending many months at a time living and enjoying her lifestyle there.

Grace remains independent as ever. After selling her farm, she moved back to Transcona for 10 years. She then moved to Lorette, where she continues to this day to live independently in her own home.

As family continues to be her most important focus, Grace phones her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren regularly.

Please join me in honouring Grace Claeys.

**Dr. Alex Wilson**

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak):** Groundbreaking research on two-spirit people, land-based and anti-oppressive education, and fighting to eliminate issues such as health disparities, housing insecurity and homelessness in Indigenous communities: these are just a few of the accomplishments that Dr. Alex Wilson has achieved.

A member of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Dr. Wilson was one of the first Indigenous persons from Canada to graduate from Harvard University. She is now in the College of Education and director of the Aboriginal Education Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, where she is being honoured as a distinguished researcher for 2020.

During her time at the University of Saskatchewan, she also co-developed a master's program in land-based education. She's also won the 2016 Nellie Award for human rights education and leadership and the 2016 Peter Corren Award for outstanding achievement in LGBTQ education and activism.

Even though she is internationally recognized and has done guest lectures in countries such as Norway and New Zealand, Wilson stays close to her roots. She's been working with OCN community members to map the traditional territory of Opaskwayak, marking directions, locations and landmarks with Cree words.

She is also One House Many Nations campaign and Idle No More organizer and has used these expertise to steer an innovative housing solution through her local OCN band council. She has said that: Research has the capacity to implement transformative change, and that is why I do it.

I would say to her that her research also has the capacity to inspire people around the world, but perhaps mostly in OCN.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Alex Wilson on being recognized as a distinguished researcher for 2020.

Ekosi.

### **Historical Museum of St. James-Assiniboia**

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Today I wish to recognize and 'gratulate' the Historical Museum of St. James-Assiniboia in Kirkfield Park.

Madam Speaker, 50 years ago during Canada's centennial, a group of community members got together with the purpose of preserving the history of St. Charles, St. James, Old Tuxedo, Brooklands, Headingley and St. François Xavier parishes.

On November 22nd, 1970, the inaugural meeting of the Historical Museum of St. James-Assiniboia took place in the Municipal Hall Building of Assiniboia.

Located in the great constituency of Kirkfield Park, the site features three different buildings: first, the two-storey Red River Frame House, built in 1856; the second building is the Municipal Hall Building from 2011 that contains exhibits for the St. James-Assiniboia area and surrounding parishes; the third building houses displays of blacksmithing, farming,

transportation, allowing visitors to experience what life was like for pioneers in other ages.

Over the years, the historical museum of St. James Assiniboine has hosted numerous events, including the annual Pioneer Heritage Day, usually being held in July. This free community celebration, Madam Speaker, boasts outdoor games and pioneer crafts, tours, performances and reflects the rich history of the area.

Unfortunately, gatherings were put on hold this year because of the pandemic, but you can still do virtual tours of the museum for everything it has to offer on their Facebook site where you—where people continue to share photos, videos and stories.

The museum is run by a board of directors and their executive director, Bonita Hunter-Eastwood. Thanks to Bonita and her team for all you do to engage Manitobans.

Please join me in congratulating the historical museum of St. James on celebrating 50 years of keeping our local history alive in Kirkfield Park and St. James, Madam Speaker.

### COVID-19 Vaccine

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I have good news for Elmwood residents and all Manitobans. It's about the COVID vaccinations starting this coming Tuesday, December 1st, 2020, in the UK.

Back on November 12th, Manitoba moved to code red. On November 20th, the Province updated its health orders to impose greater restrictions after some parts of Manitoba had 40 per cent positivity rates, exceeding some of the worst US hotspots.

Today, both Winnipeg and Manitoba registered 14.8 positivity rate.

The good news is that we have three vaccine applications at Health Canada. These vaccines may be available for distribution in Canada by this January. First to be vaccinated should be the front lines of our health-care system and vulnerable populations.

Health Canada has three vaccine-maker applications: Moderna, Pfizer and AstraZeneca. Their data is exceptionally good, with the first two candidates having large stage 3 clinical trial results showing a very impressive effectiveness—between 90 and 95 per cent.

The federal government has purchased at least 154 million doses from foreign suppliers, including

the new, high-tech—new Moderna and Pfizer messenger RNA vaccines.

While these developments are cause for celebration, the bad news is that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his government continue to dodge important questions. For example, we've asked him who is sitting on the task force to determine who will get the vaccine first in our province. No answer. What we do know is that Dr. Roussin, our Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, in the words of our Health Minister, will not be at the table, which is cause for great concern.

Manitobans deserve transparency and they deserve a government that is upfront about its decisions, not one that hides such critical details during a global health crisis.

### Manitoba Teachers' Society Town Hall

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I want to talk about education.

On Tuesday, I had the honour of participating on a telephone town hall for teachers that was hosted by the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Now, Madam Speaker, there were some wonderful questions being asked by teachers all over our province, questions about rapid testing, substitutions and PPE resources. There were also some incredibly upsetting stories, stories where teachers have had to use all of their sick leave, stories where a single teacher has been tested four times already and stories where teachers are thinking about retiring early because of the expectations being placed upon them.

Madam Speaker, the Manitoba Teachers' Society conducted several polls throughout the town hall. One poll asked teachers what is their single biggest concern. And the two top answers were: managing their workload and maintaining mental health.

Teachers are juggling way too much right now. Between having to teach virtually and in person, having to create homework assignments and videos for students who are learning from home, and—some teachers are jumping between three classrooms every 10 minutes and having to leave the other two classrooms unattended for periods of time.

Madam Speaker, this is unfair, and it is not maintainable. We need to provide resources for our teachers and our school administrators. There should be rapid testing, there should be PPE gear and there should be no consequence if a teacher needs days off for testing or mental health purposes.

I urge this government to respond to our teachers by stepping up with resources so that they can continue doing their jobs safely while educating the future of our province. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Thank you.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Grandview District Hospital Emergency Room Closure

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Eight a.m. this morning. Now, that might not mean a lot to the members opposite, but that does mean a lot to the people of Grandview.

Eight o'clock this morning is when this Cabinet decided to close their emergency room without warning to the people of Grandview and, of course, without a word of protest from their MLA, who appears to be MIA when it comes to health care, Madam Speaker.

\* (13:50)

But a lot of people in Grandview are asking an important question: where should they be redirected to if they have a medical emergency now? Should they go to Roblin? No, can't go to Roblin. They closed that emergency room during the pandemic as well.

Closing emergency rooms last year left us unprepared. Closing ERs this year makes the situation even worse.

Will the Premier commit today that he will one day reopen the Grandview emergency room?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, just a couple of points.

For sure, Madam Speaker, this is a temporary situation and it's necessary because of COVID. The reality is that the personal-care home in Grandview is besieged with cases and needs the staff and the help of doctors and nurses there, and so we're deploying the staff to look after sick people. That's what the doctors and nurses want to do. That's what they're going to have the chance to do in Grandview, sadly, because the demand is very high in the personal-care homes right now.

And nobody works harder for the people of that area than the member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski).

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Kinew:** The people of Grandview will hold the Premier to that commitment to reopen their emergency room.

However, we know, because of the documents that we've tabled in the House this week, that this situation is not because of COVID. This situation is because this government has cut health care. They've created a staffing shortage across Prairie Mountain, but many empty positions right there in Grandview as well.

The community was so concerned that they convened this impressive report. It's titled: Keeping Rural Health Care Close to Home. I'll table it for the benefit of this Cabinet. But the key recommendation at the heart of this report is very simple: first off, don't close their services; (2) if you're going to close, then consult them first. There was no consultation here.

Can the Premier explain why he didn't reach out to the people of Grandview first before he closed their emergency room?

**Mr. Pallister:** Gosh, Madam Speaker, when the NDP forced the amalgamation of several of the rural municipalities in that area, they didn't reach out to anybody at all. They just went ahead and did it.

The fact is we have people in the personal-care home in Grandview who need care and help right now, and that's what the doctors and nurses are going to be doing—caring and helping for them.

And, Madam Speaker, the NDP didn't just temporarily close health facilities when they were in office, they permanently closed them. They closed Shoal Lake, Winnipegosis, Reston, Rivers, Baldur, Wawanesa, McCreary, Erickson and, actually, Rosburn as well. And those are all in Prairie Mountain alone, and there are a bunch more they closed as well, and they never reopened them.

We'll get back to reopening Grandview after the need for COVID goes away in that area and the people at the personal-care home don't need those same services the way they do now.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Kinew:** It's remarkable that we're this far into the pandemic and the Premier still refuses to acknowledge that his health-care cuts have damaged our health-care system, leaving it unavailable to respond.

The only answer that they have is that they're spending more money—spend, spend, spend, spend—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —worse results than ever seen before in Manitoba at the hands of this government. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** They said it well. The people fighting for the Grandview ER—*[interjection]*—have said it well—

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —themselves. They say that the Premier is exploiting the situation to pursue his political agenda.

It's clear that they are using the cover of the pandemic to try and bring through more health-care cuts and more closures into the region.

Will the Premier simply admit that this is a mistake, that his cuts have damaged health care in Manitoba and that he should reverse course and start creating more jobs in the health system?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, there you go, Madam Speaker. There he goes again—searching out political advantage in the middle of a pandemic by trying to raise the issue of people who've trained to help people going to help people across the road.

Madam Speaker, this is what our health-care system is about. These are the people who work in it. This is adaptability in the middle of an unprecedented pandemic. This exactly why nurses and doctors train, so they can go and help people in need.

The people of Grandview need that help. And, actually, Madam Speaker, if emergency services are needed, they're just down the road, and I guess the member just lost that map of rural Manitoba I gave him because he doesn't even know that.

The fact is, at least today he's acknowledged that we're spending, spending and spending more—in fact, 600-and-some million dollars more than the NDP ever did on health care, Madam Speaker. So at least the member got with the program and understands that today. It's about time.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

### Laid-Off City of Winnipeg Employees Assistance with Pandemic Response

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, of course I know where Grandview is on a map. It's right between the other emergency room that they closed and the jail that they closed. And that's only this year.

But what's even more concerning is that this Premier does not appear to understand the functions that doctors and nurses perform in emergency rooms as opposed to what they do in personal-care homes. That's probably one of the reasons that we're struggling to respond to this pandemic.

We also know that the economic recession that has been caused is creating a ton of hardship. Right now, the City of Winnipeg has put out a call for help. They're on the verge of having to lay off several hundred staff. They've asked the Premier, who clearly has a staffing shortage on his hands, to redeploy these people to help respond to the pandemic.

Rather than putting them out of work right before the holidays, will the Premier commit to hiring these hundreds of city workers to help us respond to COVID-19?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I think the member is more than a little confused, Madam Speaker.

We have an acute-care need in the personal-care homes that's going to be addressed by professionals who have the training to address acute-care needs. No one's going to be unemployed. In fact, people will be better employed because they'll be able to help people who have a genuine need for their services—in the same community, in fact, of beautiful Grandview.

And so, Madam Speaker, I think what the member is demonstrating is a lack of understanding of how care is delivered, and how care especially needs to be delivered in an unprecedented situation like the one we're facing together.

So I encourage him to get on team Manitoba and remember the NDP record of closing emergency rooms in Teulon, Whitemouth, Vita, Gladstone, St. Claude, MacGregor, Pembina, Manitou and Emerson, and remember that none of them ever reopened, and remember that Grandview's will.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Kinew:** It's remarkable to see a government long in the tooth after only four years, Madam Speaker.



They're out of ideas. Nor do they even appear to understand how health-care-service delivery works in the province of Manitoba. So, it's a remarkable combination of incompetence and lack of imagination. But it was also the lack of preparation that has dealt us such a heavy blow in the second wave of the pandemic.

The question that the Premier dodged there was about jobs. There is a request in front of him right now, from the City of Winnipeg, to help him address the staff shortage that he's caused through his cuts, by redeploying several hundred City of Winnipeg employees. It seems like a win-win situation. It would help keep people working in the lead-up to the holiday season. It would help to address the staffing shortages that we've seen across all the different government departments under their reign.

Will the Premier simply do the right thing, pick up the phone and call the mayor and make sure that these folks can keep working to help us respond to COVID-19?

**Mr. Pallister:** I understand there may be an opening for that job fairly soon. I expect the member may wish to put in an application.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, the jobs that I want to fight for are the jobs of the people of Manitoba. The jobs that I come here each and every day to stand up for are for those working Manitobans; whether they live inside of the city, whether they live in rural Manitoba. And right now, while this Cabinet would rather high-five each other at the prospect of people going out of work right before Christmas, what we're asking them to do is a very simple thing: do their job. Pick up the phone.

There is no relationship more important between different levels of government in Manitoba than the relationship between the Premier and the mayor. And yet, we know that this Premier is incapable of picking up the phone to call the mayor, to call municipal leaders and work it out so that they can keep Manitobans working. There is a simple proposal to address their staff shortage by redeploying City employees.

Will the Premier simply put his ego aside, do the right thing, and keep these Manitoba workers working?

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Pallister:** Madam Speaker, we value working people having the chance to work, but the NDP has attacked us incessantly for actually having the most generous supports for small business in the country. They've attacked us for actually leading the country in economic recovery.

They've tried to link people going back to work with COVID exploding when there's no scientific basis for doing that. They called on us to shut down the economy, and then we had to introduce restrictions, which the member now says he doesn't support.

He's flip-flopping, Madam Speaker, like a pancake at the July 1st picnic. He has no idea where his positions are. He changes them daily. He has no principles, he has no rudder and his party is lost under his leadership.

Now, the fact remains, Madam Speaker, we are facing this challenge head on. We are providing testing, tracking, staffing. We're making hundreds of decisions to face this pandemic as part of team Manitoba. I encourage the member to join the team.

#### **Laid-Off City of Winnipeg Employees Assistance with Pandemic Response**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** Madam Speaker, the Pallister government laid off 10,000 people from across government this year, and the Minister of Municipal Relations marched in lock step with that decision at every step, because she sent a letter to the municipalities across the province asking them to do the same. What a mistake that has been, and one that has compounded the misery of this pandemic.

After a few days of reflection, the question to the minister is: Does she now feel differently about these measures that have been directed by the Premier, or will she be content to go along with his failed plan?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations):** I'm always happy to take a question about the money that we are committing to municipalities.

Let's just review some of the facts right now for the member's benefit. This year alone, we are projected to send \$315 million to the City of Winnipeg in operating, public safety and capital dollars that we have worked very collaboratively with our counterparts at the City of Winnipeg to negotiate and ensure this money is available.

I'd also like to point out that I did provide this money on operating up front at the onset of the COVID pandemic so that municipalities that were

facing revenue deficits could have that money right up front to address their cash flow problems.

I'd also like to share with the member that we gave \$72.2 million to the City of Winnipeg after we successfully negotiated with the federal government—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Concordia, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Wiebe:** Madam Speaker, hundreds of people were laid off this spring by the Pallister government and the City of Winnipeg, and now 600 more people with the City are facing layoffs once again. And rather than hire those people to fill staffing needs that the Pallister government has, they had the audacity to go out and urge Manitobans to volunteer in these staffing shortages—the ones that they created.

Now the minister can't even say how many people that she has recruited.

Will the minister commit to hiring City of Winnipeg workers to do the jobs that need to be done?

**Ms. Squires:** I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to continue to share information with the member that—about our funding commitment to municipalities.

As I was saying, we've also given \$72.2 million to the City of Winnipeg through the federal restart program and we have also provided an additional \$132.7 million to the City of Winnipeg under the Manitoba Restart Program and disaster prevention and climate resiliency program to advance very high-priority projects.

We are working very closely and collaboratively with our municipal partners. In fact, this year, we're projected to flow \$623 million: a 25 per cent increase to municipalities than the NDP ever committed in—during their time in government.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Concordia, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Wiebe:** And still no commitment from this minister to protect those jobs. The minister's holiday present to those 600 City of Winnipeg workers is to lay them off while there's essential work that needs to be done at the front lines: notifying contacts, supporting testing sites—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Wiebe:** —supporting our PCHs. But the minister would rather put people out of work than to fill those

staff shortages that her and her government have created.

Why is this government using every excuse in the book rather than just do the right thing? Hire more staff, protect those jobs and support municipalities across this province.

**Ms. Squires:** Throughout the—since the onset of this pandemic, our government has been supporting municipalities and ensuring jobs are protected throughout the entire province. That is why we freed up our budget to address the cash-flow problems that all of our municipal partners were having at the onset of the pandemic. That is why we have made several millions of dollars available to municipalities to address their cash-flow challenges and to also offer programs to their ratepayers to address cash-flow problems throughout the pandemic.

So we'll take no lessons from members opposite, who sat back, forced an amalgamation on municipalities and called them howling coyotes at their greatest need.

#### **Laid-Off City of Winnipeg Employees Assistance with Pandemic Response**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Madam Speaker, yesterday we found out that the City is laying off hundreds of employees amid the most recent restrictions.

It would seem like an easy solution to hire these laid-off City employees to work as needed to fight this pandemic, but not to the Premier (Mr. Pallister), Madam Speaker. Instead, the Premier is soliciting for volunteers in the midst of a global pandemic. He can't tell us how many are deployed, and he can't keep up with the growing needs of this COVID fight.

Will the Premier commit to hiring up those needed for COVID response?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Municipal Relations):** We certainly have been working towards ensuring that all Manitobans have a job and protecting the workforce throughout the entire province, whether they're municipal employees or provincial employees. That is why we have had some of the most generous programs in the country to support our economy and to ensure people are back—are able to keep their jobs and are back to work whenever possible.

It—the 600 jobs at the City of Winnipeg are something that our government is working with at the officials level, but it's disappointing that the mayor had never proposed this to me directly, and that we

have to read about it through the media at the same time all other members of the community had to receive this request.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns, on a supplementary question.

**Ms. Fontaine:** It's clear that the Premier is trying to do this pandemic on the cheap.

He's run down rural hospitals and personal-care homes with sky-high vacancy rates, relying on agency staff just to meet their basic needs, Madam Speaker. Then, with thousands of people that are out of work, the Premier goes looking not for paid work for those that could use it, but for volunteers, when he himself can't even do the same.

The Premier and his Cabinet are still late to the game, nickel-and-diming when we need more people than ever on the front lines, Madam Speaker.

Will the Premier commit today to hiring the staff necessary to fight COVID-19?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, we are doing that, Madam Speaker, in every category, whether it is in terms of adding callers for active case monitoring—we've added more than 100—contact tracing, we've added more than 100 people there.

More than 300 nurses have been added since June. We're hiring in every necessary category, Madam Speaker. We'll continue to do that. And so, the member's presuppositions are of course based on preconceived biases and are false.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Johns, on a final supplementary.

**Ms. Fontaine:** The government is not actively recruiting workers in this fight. In fact, Madam Speaker, they have recruitments up for private companies, including the Morneau Shepell mental health services that the Province is actively recruiting, on behalf of a private company.

\*(14:10)

But certainly, this is what we've come to expect from this Premier. He—instead, he wants to have everyone's free labour and encouraging people to volunteer. We've even heard of qualified contact tracers being denied positions and redirection of employees from essential work because this government is caught short.

Will the Premier commit today to hiring up to deal with this global pandemic?

**Mr. Pallister:** Well, I think the member reveals a bit of flawed thinking, Madam Speaker, in trying to make an old political ideological battle land in the middle of COVID when she speaks against using private companies.

Private health care was utilised by the NDP government on many, many, many occasions. In fact, the majority of services are provided by private health providers. And I don't think decrying the work that private sector companies are doing in assisting us is useful at any time, certainly not during a pandemic when, in fact, our test backlogs are being addressed significantly by Dynacare, which is a private company. We thank them for their work, as we do the people at Cadham lab.

Our private and public sectors need to work together, Madam Speaker, not against one another. And tired old ideologies like the member is espousing and like her party holds on to aren't helpful at any time, and certainly not during a pandemic.

#### **Francophone Affairs Advisory Council Government Consultation Requirement**

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** The Francophone Affairs Advisory Council was established under The Francophone Community Enhancement and Support Act in 2016. The role of the council is essential. It advises on the services, programs and policies which touch upon the lives of our francophone community in Manitoba. Yet, the Pallister government doesn't believe they need to consult with the council. Instead, they're ignoring concerns about cuts to services like the bureau d'éducation française that hurt the francophone community.

Why is the minister refusing to listen to francophone voices, and why is the minister ignoring her own law?

**Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs):** Merci beaucoup, Madame la présidente, pour la question.

#### **Translation**

*Thank you very much for this question, Madam Speaker.*

#### **English**

Our government is very proud to be working with our francophone community and very proud to be working with the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council, and I'd like to congratulate all the members

who let their name stand and who are contributing to this important advisory council.

I'm pleased to share with the member that our council met earlier this fall, and we had a very good collaborative discussion, and they're providing a very vital role in their capacity as advisory council members, so I do want this opportunity to thank them for their contributions.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. James, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Sala:** This government says one thing but they do another in reality. The documents obtained through FIPPA show what the Pallister government really thinks. The minister claims she has no obligation to consult with the Francophone Affairs Advisory Council, even when she makes cuts to services like the BEF.

Community members spoke loudly when the government cut the bureau d'éducation française and gutted Translation Services. The role of the council was supposed to ensure community voices are part of these decisions, but the minister is refusing to listen.

Why is the minister refusing to listen to the council and refusing to follow her own law?

**Ms. Squires:** So, Madam Speaker, I understand that the member had a prepared question that he felt obligated to read, but I can assure him that our council did meet earlier this fall.

We had a very robust meeting, in fact it was a couple of hours in length, and I've had several points of contact with members of the advisory council throughout the entire year. And I'd like to say that we are delivering service to the francophone community in ways never before. In fact, I'm happy to share with the member that, as of April 1st of this year, we've translated 2,687,000 words in French, which is a 43 per cent increase over the same period last year.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. James, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Sala:** Well, that's an impressive number of words that were translated, but it doesn't do away with the fact that her government doesn't seem to believe that they have an obligation to consult with the committee as established in the law.

Madame la présidente, la note que j'ai déposée—  
[interjection]

### **Translation**

*Madam Speaker, the memo that I tabled—*

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order. Order.

I would—because I had difficulty hearing the member, I'm going to ask him to start his response again.

**Mr. Sala:** La note que j'ai déposée déclare que le gouvernement ne croit pas qu'ils ont une obligation de consulter avec le comité sur des affaires comme les coupures aux services tel du bureau d'éducation française.

Ce n'est pas qu'est-ce que la Législature a prévu, non ce que la communauté francophone s'attend. La ministre ne devrait pas être satisfaite de la façon dont leur gouvernement a fait des coupures aux services.

Pourquoi est-ce qu'elle n'arrête pas les coupures aux services francophones, ni défend les voix francophones en Manitoba?

### **Translation**

*The memo I tabled says the government does not believe they have an obligation to consult the committee in regards to matters such as cuts to services at the Bureau de l'éducation française.*

*This is not what the legislation states, nor what the francophone community expects. The minister should not be satisfied with the way her government has cut services.*

*Why does she not stop the cuts to francophone services? Why does she not defend the francophone voices of Manitoba?*

**Ms. Squires:** Merci beaucoup, Madame la présidente pour la question.

### **Translation**

*Thank you very much for this question, Madam Speaker.*

### **English**

Let's be clear. Our government has enhanced the vitality of the francophone community in ways that were ignored under the NDP administration. We brought in a bill that would ensure their vitality of—and their ongoing growth and development as a community and that their rights would be protected and enshrined in legislation, something the NDP government never did in 17 years.

We're also working very collaboratively with our federal partners to ensure that French language services are protected in the province of Manitoba. We've also made sure that every Crown and every department in government has French language services plans that are active.

### **Internationally Educated Nurses Certification and Licensing Barriers**

**Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** Madam Speaker, last week I asked the Health Minister about internationally educated nurses who had completed their bridge training at Red River but could not accept nursing job offers due to expired CELBAN English test scores.

The minister said he was working with the college to ensure that these qualified, internationally educated nurses would be able to work as nurses in Manitoba. However, we have yet to see or hear about any progress on this. Instead, we are hearing about the closures of hospitals in rural Manitoba due to lack of staff.

Will the minister explain why, when we need nurses right now, there is still a delay in getting internationally educated nurses working in Manitoba?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I'm pleased to provide this update to that member and all members of this House and indicate that the blockade has been removed and that we worked effectively with the college, and those nurses have now been designated with the proper credentials and are entering the workforce.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Notre Dame, on a supplementary question.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Even before the pandemic, Manitoba's health-care system has been suffering from staffing shortages. These are not new issues.

We also know that internationally educated nurses have to spend, on average, four years and \$10,000—not including lost wages—to have these qualifications recognized in Manitoba. Many internationally educated nurses have been going to other provinces, qualify for their nursing licence within a year or less, and then using the endorsement process to get their licence back here in Manitoba and come back home to their families who live in Manitoba.

Now the nursing college has put up extra barriers and increased the amount of supervised hours required for them to be able to work as nurses in Manitoba.

Will the minister commit to addressing these barriers to get more nurses working in our health-care system?

**Mr. Friesen:** I thank the member for the question.

I know these issues well because, when I was first elected to this House in 2011, I served for a time as the critic for health care. And at that time, I questioned three different NDP ministers about the same issues that were unresolved.

But, Madam Speaker, the good news is we are resolving these issues, finding ways to work effectively with the college and moving these nurses into practice, where they want to be, serving Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Notre Dame, on a final supplementary.

**Ms. Marcelino:** Madam Speaker, internationally educated nurses have to spend more time and more money to receive their RN or LPN here in Manitoba than in any other province.

These nurses get one shot at the clinical competency assessment, or the CCA, which is impossible to prepare for. And then, if they fail, they have either to go and get a four-year college nursing program or never practise nursing in Manitoba. And if these nurses get their certification in a different province, they now have to complete an unreasonable amount of hours to have that certification recognized in Manitoba.

These nurses don't want an easier process, Madam Speaker. They want a fair process.

Will the minister commit today to making the out-of-province endorsement process more fair and equitable for internationally educated nurses in Manitoba?

\* (14:20)

**Mr. Friesen:** Pleased to answer the member's question, and I'm confident that that member would understand the autonomy and the appropriate authority of the College of Registered Nurses in Manitoba and how they would have authority over the rules and the rule changes that the member is proposing.

Nevertheless, I would be happy to facilitate a conversation. If the member has anything good to add or good recommendations, we would be happy to work together on them. In the meantime, this government remains focused on helping nurses get into practice to be able to assist on team Manitoba in fighting COVID-19.

### **Redeployment of Civil Service Employees Assistance with Pandemic Response**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** We've heard that junior Crown attorneys and articling students are being asked to do contract tracing. We know that Crown attorneys are overworked and underfunded as it is, and we have been working with victims of crime who've faced extraordinary delays and disruptions in court proceedings and even charges being laid. This could all make those delays worse.

We've also heard that people at MPI are being paid to work at contact tracing.

Now, we all know it's critical, but whose idea was it to pull people away from other essential jobs they're already doing instead of hiring new?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** We are moving people, as we mentioned earlier in response to the Opposition Leader's question. We are making sure—and our staff wants to be deployed in areas of greatest needs. So, yes, there are people moving from one position to serve in another role. That's absolutely true.

But as I also mentioned earlier—and the member failed to adapt his question, because he didn't need to ask the question about additional hires—we're hiring hundreds of new people as well, Madam Speaker. So both those things are happening.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for St. Boniface, on a supplementary question.

### **Timing of Health-Care Reorganization Government Priorities During Pandemic**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** Of course, we're seeing similar problems in Westman, because of—instead of new hires, we're seeing shutdowns and shuffling people from jobs to other work in labs, ERs and now the health centre in Grandview.

Now, we warned this government three years ago they were sowing the seeds of a disaster with rural health-care cuts, but half the time the government complains about the mess the NDP made and the other half they spend justifying their own mistakes by saying they're just doing what the NDP did first.

I table a document where Shared Health and the minister, from September 17th, say they were proceeding with firing 50 people and asking hundreds more to reapply for their jobs. They admit it will be disruptive from a period of September 2020 to early 2021.

Why did anyone in this government think that a disruptive overhaul of health care was a priority during the second wave of a hundred-year pandemic?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** The member's fond, in his preambles, of whacking the NDP, Madam Speaker, and he's justified in that. But he's not justified in attacking this government.

So I'll have to say, during the time the NDP were in government, the health-care supports from the federal government were rising on an annual basis. In fact, over two thirds of the years that the NDP was in government, the health supports from Ottawa were greater than they are now in the middle of a pandemic.

That's why the NDP joined in supporting us, belatedly, on a resolution to call on Ottawa to actually resume their rightful position in supporting health care in our country. All premiers, including NDP and Liberal premiers, support this position.

The only opposition leader I'm aware of, Madam Speaker, who does not support this unified, non-partisan goal, this quest to restore the stability in funding for health care in our country, is in this House right now leading the Liberal Party.

### **Rapid COVID-19 Testing for Teachers Use of Sick Time and Holiday Hours**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Teachers are being forced to take time off because of the long delays in testing. As a result, their workloads continue to pile up while their mental and physical health continue to suffer.

Will this government commit to bringing in rapid testing immediately for teachers and not force teachers to use their regular sick time and holidays if they have to self-isolate?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education):** I thank the member for the question.

There is no doubt that our teachers, along with EAs, bus drivers, everyone in the school system, is doing incredible work under difficult circumstances. Like many different sectors in society, they are dealing with a lot of stresses and a lot of challenges.

The issue of rapid 'testing' has been raised a number of times. We've been working with the federal government to ensure that that supply is made available to Manitoba. And, certainly, teachers and others in the education system are being considered for that support.

But the overarching message is we appreciate the great work teachers and others in our education system are doing in helping our kids during this difficult time.

### **Contact Tracing Government Update**

**Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East):** It's time for a good question, and I'm wondering if the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living could inform the House on the status of improvements Manitoba has been making on the COVID-19 contact tracing.

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** I thank the member for Brandon East for the question, and I can update all members on the progress this government continues to make in contact tracing.

We have right now an average total turnaround time for testing that—44 hours, under the established target of 48 hours. We've added 30 per cent capacity in contact tracing in just one month's time. Over 125 people have been on-boarded to assist with various aspects of contact tracing; 200 callers from Statistics Canada have been trained to handle contact notifications; and 130 new persons are starting this week to support active monitoring.

While other provinces like BC are saying they're losing ground on contact tracing, we're gaining it.

### **Education System Staffing During Pandemic Placement of B.Ed. Students in Classroom**

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** We know our teachers are doing incredible work, but they need some help to get that work done, and so far they have not had the support they need from this minister or this Premier (Mr. Pallister). Instead, the minister continues to sit on a pool of federal money instead of hiring more teachers to keep our schools functioning and open.

We brought forward a plan yesterday for the minister to look at moving some of that money in a way that benefits all.

Will the minister today implement our plan?

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Minister of Education):** Well, in fact, Madam Speaker, the member opposite is wrong. There has been \$180 million allocated accommodation money from the savings from the spring, provincial support, federal support. That money is being spent and it is being spent on hiring new teachers.

No question that there is a challenge getting teachers in this time and having enough substitutes, but the money has been made available. It is being spent. It's been used in the classrooms. Doesn't diminish the fact that there are challenges, of course, as there are in many places society, but this government has provided funding and will continue to provide that support, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Transcona, on a supplementary question.

**Mr. Altomare:** Let's continue to talk about some of those challenges.

One of them is, of course, the critical shortage of teachers, substitute teachers, EAs and other classroom supports in our schools. And instead of addressing this, we have a minister that makes announcements that fail to address the direct need of a lack of staff in our schools.

Now we have come up with a plan that will get this moving in the right direction. It will put teachers-in-training in our school system, and make sure our kids get the education that they need.

Will the minister make sure our schools can stay open and function, and support our plan today?

**Mr. Goertzen:** Well, Madam Speaker, I'm saddened that the member would diminish a plan of \$10 million to support those students who are learning at home. And there are many who are learning at home, whether because they're cohorting and they've been sent home, or because they've been doing home-schooling.

Those students deserve support as well, Madam Speaker, and I would hope that the member opposite would reconsider his question and understand that a student that is at home is as valuable as a student that is in school. They both deserve support, and I hope he'll reconsider his view that those who are learning at home shouldn't have that support.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Transcona, on a final supplementary.

**Mr. Altomare:** I'm also saddened that this current minister is diminishing our plan. We're asked to be part of team Manitoba. Well, here it is. Here is the plan that gets us working forward and making sure that we have support in our schools.

There are over 500 students in education in the final year of their degree here in Manitoba. I'm not sure why the minister wouldn't want to support a plan

that would provide substantial relief to our classrooms. It's a move that helps teachers-in-training, helps educators and assists our kids.

So I'll ask again: Will he implement our plan today?

**Mr. Goertzen:** While I am pleased that the member indicates that he wants to now be part of team Manitoba, I hope that he would have an opportunity to meet with those in his own caucus and encourage them to do the same as well, Madam Speaker, and to try to bring forward ideas that are helpful and not to simply criticize.

\* (14:30)

When it comes to the idea the member opposite brought forward, we have certainly looked at it. We've been working with the Department of Education and also, of course, the Faculty of Education. I had an opportunity to speak to representatives of them this morning, Madam Speaker. There are opportunities to have those students go into the classroom and provide that support.

So I'm glad he's now on board with team Manitoba. I hope he can bring the rest of his caucus with him, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for oral questions has expired.

### Speaker's Ruling

**Madam Speaker:** And I have a ruling for the House.

On March 16, 2020, the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) raised a matter of privilege alleging that the government intentionally withheld information about the amount paid by the government and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to KPMG for the implementation of their phase 2 review.

The member argued that by preventing him from having access to factual and detailed information, he was denied the ability to perform his duties. The member concluded his remarks by moving, and I quote, "that the government be condemned for refusing to reveal how much money it is paying KPMG for the second phase of the health-care review and a committee be struck to examine the issues of consultant pay in our province." End quote.

The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) and the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) both spoke to the matter of privilege before the Deputy Speaker took it under

advisement, and I thank all honourable members for their advice to the Chair on this matter.

As the House should know, in order to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege, members must demonstrate both that the issue has been raised at the earliest opportunity, and also provide sufficient evidence that the privileges of the House have been breached.

Regarding timeliness, the honourable member suggested that the criteria for determining the earliest opportunity should be interpreted in a, and I quote, holistic or contextual manner—matter—pardon me, end of quote, to allow for members to consult the relevant authorities, speak with or study various experts on the matter, as well as review the evidence that has been compiled on the matter at hand.

The procedural authorities give guidance on the matter. Bosc and Gagnon House of Commons Procedure and Practice, 3rd edition, advises on page 145 that, and I quote, "the matter of privilege to be raised in the House must have recently occurred and must call for the immediate action of the House." End quote.

On the same page, Bosc and Gagnon state that, and I quote, the member must satisfy the Speaker that he or she is bringing the matter to the attention of the House as soon as practical after becoming aware of the situation. End quote.

It is therefore essential for the member to give the Speaker an accurate explanation of the contextual reasons to be taken into consideration when undertaking the timeliness analysis. The simple reference to the need to gather correct and accurate information is not enough to reach the threshold required by the procedural authorities to satisfy the Speaker. Accordingly, I am ruling that the condition of timeliness was not met in this case.

Regarding the second condition, the honourable member stated that by failing to provide important factual information, the government fundamentally undermined the ability of Legislature to have accurate information and that is equivalent to providing misleading information to the House.

First of all, I would like to remind the House that, as Joseph Maingot states on page 241 of Parliamentary Privilege in Canada, and I quote: To allege that a member has misled the House is a matter of order not privilege. End quote. In addition, it has been ruled by several Manitoba Speakers that a member raising such an allegation must provide proof



of intent. The rulings of previous Manitoba Speakers have been very clear and consistent. Speakers Walding, Phillips, Rocan, Dacquay, Hickes and Reid have all ruled that in order to find allegations of deliberately misleading the House as a prima facie means proving that the member purposefully intended to mislead the House by making statements with the knowledge that these statements would mislead.

The burden of proof is placed on the member to demonstrate this by absolute proof, including a statement of intent to intentionally mislead the House by the member so accused. Showing that some facts are at variance is not providing proof of intent to mislead.

As explained by Speaker Hickes in a 2011 ruling, a burden of proof exists that goes beyond speculation or conjecture, but involves providing absolute proof, including a statement of intent by the member involved that the stated goal is to intentionally mislead the House at—as it is possible members may have inadvertently misled the House by unknowingly putting incorrect information on the record. In 2007, Speaker Hickes also ruled that providing information showing the facts are at variance is not the same as providing proof of intent to mislead.

Therefore, based on the procedural authorities and the rulings of previous Manitoba Speakers, and with the greatest of respect, I rule that the prima facie case of privilege has not been established in this case.

## PETITIONS

### **CancerCare Closures at Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals**

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly, the background to this petition is as follows:

On September 4, the provincial government announced that CancerCare outpatient services will be cut at the Concordia Hospital and Seven Oaks General Hospital, effective December 2020.

(2) Closing two CancerCare sites in Winnipeg will mean a third of existing sites are lost, with increased burdens placed on outpatient CancerCare services at Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital.

(3) The cut of these outpatient services has provoked concerns from health-care workers and CancerCare nurses alike, who have stressed to the

provincial government that the cut is contrary to CancerCare Manitoba's goals of patient care and would most certainly increase the burden for people they are trying to help.

(4) CancerCare nurses have also noted that this decision has more to do with saving money, rather than what is in the best interest of patients. This is further highlighted by a 2019 consulting contract bid, which shows that this cut has been made purely in the interest of fiscal performance and will not improve the quality of patient care.

(5) Patients who do not have access to a vehicle or reliable transportation will be hit the hardest by this cut, with the burden falling largely on seniors and Manitobans on low incomes.

(6) Cuts within the WRHA, including the provincial government's closure of the Concordia emergency room and Seven Oaks emergency room, have already compromised health-care access close to home for residents of northeast and northwest Winnipeg; and

(7) The 'tederiation' of health care within Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has meant increased wait times, compromised patient care and worsened health outcomes. This cut will only continue to deteriorate the quality of care for patients, while forcing more demands onto health-care workers.

Therefore, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to halt its proposed closure of CancerCare sites at Concordia and Seven Oaks General Hospital, while guaranteeing access to high-quality outpatient CancerCare services in northeast and northwest Winnipeg.

This petition is signed by Frank [*phonetic*] Podzuck, Caitlin Kemp, Kelley Sutherland and many more Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** In accordance with our rule 133(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

### **Dauphin Correctional Centre**

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

To the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, the background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27th, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

\* (14:40)

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the following—sorry—proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This has been signed by Mindy Rickards, Wendy Bouvier, Norm Fraser and many Manitobans.

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

### **Personal-Care Homes—Pandemic Response**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

There has been a dramatic increase in COVID-19 infections in Manitoba during the second wave of the pandemic, to the extent that Manitoba quickly rose from one of the lowest to having the highest number of cases per capita of all provinces.

The resurgent in cases is worse because the provincial government was not prepared for the pandemic, resulting in very long wait times for COVID-19 tests and people waiting for up to seven days to get results.

The seven-day delay for test results led to a further delay in contact tracing which, in turn, led to greater uncontrolled and undetected community spread.

The cases are spreading in personal-care homes because the provincial government did not adequately prepare to prevent and address personal-care homes' COVID-19 infections.

The provincial government did not institute full testing of all staff and residents in a personal-care home when the first COVID-19 case was detected in a home.

When, in May and June, Manitoba Liberals repeated calls for a rapid response team for seniors homes to prepare for a second wave, the provincial government ignored the idea and brushed it aside.

In August, the provincial government ignored the calls for investment in infection control and better staffing to prepare seniors homes for a second wave, putting the health and safety of residents and staff alike at risk.

The provincial government failed to act to address reports of poor care at the Parkview Place personal-care home, including a March 2020 report detailing concerns with the state of repair of the facility. Its cleanliness and sanitation practices included issues with cockroaches, dirty toilets, grease-laden dirt in the kitchen.

The Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living has been undermining public health fundamentals by downplaying the need for masks, which are known to prevent the spread of contagion.

The provincial government's wishful thinking and failure to get ready for the second wave of the pandemic has imposed tremendous costs and hardship across Manitoba, including schools and businesses. The provincial government's failure to take basic steps to control outbreaks has led to further shutdowns, and businesses have had to close or reduce their capacity without receiving any financial government assistance.

The provincial government's own accounts show that support for business is among the worst in Canada. Businesses continue to face 'bankruppy'-bankruptcy and operating risks because the provincial government refused to step up with financial support or PPE so that they could continue to safely operate. Businesses and workers alike have been forced to choose between getting sick or growing broke.

The provincial government has been saying one thing and doing another: calling for fundamentals while urging people to go back to work, shop and encouraging behaviour that increases the spread of COVID-19.

When the Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living was asked about preventing deaths at personal-care homes, he responded, these deaths were unavoidable. Dr. Nathan Stall, who specializes in geriatrics and internal medicine at a Toronto hospital, called the notion that deaths are unavoidable ageist and urged the minister to reconsider. Outbreaks like the one in Winnipeg's Parkview Place are avoidable tragedies, as we have seen in other jurisdictions such as Singapore.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to call a public inquiry into the mishandling of the second wave of the pandemic and into the outbreak at Parkview Place personal-care home.

To urge the provincial government to replace the current Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living as a result of his failure to support personal-care homes and his failure to adequately prepare the province for the second wave of the pandemic.

Signed by Francis Dinoy, Nenita Dinoy and Hans Divoy [*phonetic*] and many other Manitobans.

**Vivian Sand Facility Project–  
Clean Environment Commission Review**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Vivian sands project is a proposed silica sand mine and processing plant to be built in the RM of Springfield. The overall project includes mining claims of over 85,000 hectares, making it the largest claim ever given to a single company in Manitoba's history. It is larger than the city of Winnipeg, which is 46,410 hectares.

The amount of dry, solid sand mined and produced per year according to the EAP is 1.36 million tons, and much of this sand will be used in fracking.

A major concern of the proposed mine and plant is that, if developed, it could contaminate the Sandilands aquifer which covers much of south-eastern Manitoba. It has excellent water quality and is the water source for tens of thousands of Manitobans, including many municipal water systems, agriculture, industry, private wells and an abundance of wildlife and ecosystems. Further, people in the Indigenous communities that are potentially affected by this were not afforded the required Indigenous consultation from either federal or provincial officials.

The sustainable yield of the combined sandstone and carbonate aquifers has still not yet been established by provincial authorities.

The mine could cause leaking of acid and heavy metals and pollute the aquifer, as it will go down 200 feet into the Winnipeg formation of the sandstone aquifer. There is concern that the shale will separate the carbonate and sandstone aquifers when exposed to injected air from the CanWhite Sands extraction process, turn to acid.

An additional concern with the proposed mine and plant is the potential to pollute the Brokenhead River and the aquatic food chain leading to Lake Winnipeg.

Residents in the area have also expressed fears of being overexposed to silica dust during production, as there has been a demonstrated lack of safety and environmental procedures by the CanWhite Sands Corporation during the exploratory drilling phase. Signage and fencing has been poor; identifying and required mine claim tags were missing; there were no warnings for silica dust exposure and no coverings to prevent exposure of the silica stockpiles to the elements.

Residents' concerns included the fact that boreholes, which should have been promptly and

properly sealed, were left open for a year. The drilling of hundreds of improperly sealed boreholes yearly create significant risks of surface contamination, mixing of aquifer waters and drainage of surface fecal matter into the aquifer.

There is also a risk of subsidence around each borehole as a result of sand extraction.

There are also potential transboundary issues that need to be addressed as the aquifers extend into Minnesota.

This project should not proceed, as no licensing conditions and mitigation measures will alleviate the risk to all Manitobans and the environment since CanWhite Sands Corporation plans to use an unprecedented mining technique with no established safe outcome. The corporation has gone on record indicating that it does not know how to mine for the silica in the water supply and need to develop a new extraction methodology that has never been done before.

\* (14:50)

Contamination of the aquifers and the environment is irreversible and there are many surface sources of high purity silica that can be extracted without endangering two essential regional aquifers.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to undertake a combined review of the Vivian Sand Facility processing plant and the mining/extraction portion of the operation as a class 3 development with a review by Manitoba's Clean Environment Commission to include public hearings and participant funding.

To urge the provincial government to halt all activity at the mine and plant until the Clean Environment Commission's review is completed and the project proposal has been thoroughly evaluated.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey). We have the honourable member for Flin Flon?

We'll move, then, to the honourable member for Elmwood.

#### **Dauphin Correctional Centre**

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This petition has been signed by many Manitobans.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre in May 2020.

The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This has been signed by Kevin Ferris, Donna Ferris and Karen Smythe, as well as other Manitobans.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre in May 2020.

(2) The Dauphin Correctional Centre is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy; and

(4) As of January 27th, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

This has been signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** The honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Sandhu). The honourable member for The Maples?

The honourable member for Point Douglas.

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition as follows:

(1) The provincial government plans to close the Dauphin Correctional Centre, DCC, in May 2020.

(2) The DCC is one of the largest employers in Dauphin, providing the community with good, family-supporting jobs.

(3) Approximately 80 families will be directly affected by the closure, which will also impact the local economy.

(4) As of January 27, 2020, Manitoba's justice system was already more than 250 inmates overcapacity.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Justice to immediately reverse the decision to close the DCC and proceed with the previous plan to build a new correctional and healing centre with an expanded courthouse in Dauphin.

And this has been signed by many, many Manitobans.

### **CancerCare Closures at Concordia and Seven Oaks Hospitals**

**Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

(1) On September 4th, 2020, the provincial government announced that CancerCare outpatient services will be cut at the Concordia Hospital and Seven Oaks hospital, effective December 2020.

(2) Closing two CancerCare sites in Winnipeg will mean a third of existing sites are lost, with increased burdens placed on outpatient cancer services at the Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital.

(3) The cut of these outpatient services has provoked concerns from health-care workers and CancerCare nurses alike, who have stressed to the

provincial government that the cut is, quote, contrary to what the CCMB's goals of patient care are and would most certainly increase the burden for the people they are trying to help.

(4) CancerCare nurses have also noted that, quote, this decision has more to do with saving money, rather than what is in the best interest of patients. This is further highlighted by a 2019 consulting contract bid, which shows that this cut has been made purely in the interest of fiscal performance and will not improve the quality of patient care.

(5) Patients who do not have access to a vehicle or reliable transportation will be hit the hardest by this cut, while the burden—with the burden falling largely on seniors and Manitobans with low incomes.

(6) Cuts within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, including the provincial government's closure of the Concordia emergency room and Seven Oaks emergency room, have already compromised health-care access close to home for residents of northeast and northwest Winnipeg.

(7) The deterioration of health care within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has meant increased wait times, compromised patient care and worsened health outcomes. This will only continue to deteriorate the quality of care for patients, while forcing more demands onto health-care workers.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to halt its proposed closure of CancerCare sites at the Concordia Hospital and Seven Oaks hospital, while guaranteeing access to high-quality outpatient cancer services in northeast and northwest Winnipeg.

\* (15:00)

And this petition, Madam Speaker, is signed by many Manitobans.

#### **MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

**Madam Speaker:** I have been notified that a member wishes to bring forward a matter of urgent public importance, so I will recognize the honourable member for River Heights.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park, that under rule 38(1), the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance.

I ask that the regular business of the day be put aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance; namely, that the sudden, shocking and inappropriate closure of the Grandview hospital is depriving people in Grandview and vicinity, including the Tootinaowaziibeeng First Nation, the ability to get care close to home given by doctors and nurses with whom they are familiar.

**Madam Speaker:** Before recognizing the honourable member for River Heights, I should remind all members that under rule 38(2), the mover of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance and one member from the other recognized parties in the House are allowed not more than 10 minutes to explain the urgency of debating the matter immediately.

As stated in Beauchesne citation 390, urgency in this context means the urgency of immediate debate, not of the subject matter of the motion. In their remarks, members should focus exclusively on whether or not there is urgency of debate and whether or not the ordinary opportunities for debate will enable the House to consider the matter early enough to ensure that the public interest will not suffer.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, it was a shock to hear that the government is closing the Grandview hospital. I raise this at the first possible moment.

The excuse that is being given is that the people who work at the hospital are needed at the personal-care home. Yet we understand that there are a number of people in the community of Grandview and nearby who have the capability and the potential to do the work that needs to be done in the Grandview Personal Care Home and that others could have contributed with a modest amount of training.

It is almost certain that if there were not central control in Winnipeg and in the Prairie Mountain RHA, that the local health district could have resolved this issue quickly in a way that would have addressed the needs of the personal-care home and at the same time ensured that the hospital stayed open.

We also suspect that under conditions where there was a local health authority, there would likely have been better preventative measures put in place in the personal-care home at Grandview, such that the 'outbreak'—break would not have become as severe as it has become.

It is also true that if the Province had put in place the rapid response team, as the Manitoba Liberals had called for in May of this year, that there would have

been the extra trained human resources to address the outbreak of COVID-19 in the Grandview Personal Care Home quickly, without the need to call in hospital personnel and to close the hospital. The overall closure of the Grandview hospital shines a light on the problems with the overly centralized system of health care and health-care decisions in Manitoba.

Manitoba Liberals have called for ending the regional health authorities as they exist today and putting in place a system with much more local autonomy so that we can have better local decisions and better local health care. This includes both better preventive care to optimize health and decrease illness, and better clinical care to address and treat illnesses and sicknesses when they occur.

The decision to close the Grandview hospital is sudden, shocking and inappropriate. There were many other options to addressing the situation at the personal-care home, both in terms of spread of the COVID-19 pandemic to the personal-care home and in terms of the actions to address the outbreak better once the first case was identified in the care home.

As one example, the Province of Manitoba chose to be very selective in using recommendations coming from Ontario to address the situation of personal-care homes in Manitoba. One of the central recommendations coming from Ontario was to immediately test all residents and staff for COVID-19 infections when the first case of COVID-19 was discovered in the staff or the residents of the personal-care home.

This recommendation was made in Ontario on June 9th, 2020, five and a half months ago. Yet this critical recommendation was not implemented in Manitoba, in spite of the Ontario recommendation and in spite of calls from the Manitoba Liberals to implement it.

Full testing of all staff and residents in a care home has been found to be critical, as work reported in the Iron Ring report from Dr. Samir Sinha has made clear. The Iron Ring report emphasized the importance of putting an iron ring around personal-care homes during the pandemic to ensure that infections do not further devastate personal-care homes in Canada as they did in Ontario and Quebec in the spring.

Dr. Sinha and his colleagues report results of studies which show that 50 to 75 per cent of cases in staff and residents of personal-care homes are asymptomatic and therefore testing is the only way to

detect them early. Other centres are also doing regular full testing at intervals after the first case is detected until the home has been clear of COVID-19 positive cases for four weeks.

I will now come back to the need for more local consultation and more local decision making. I understand from residents of Grandview that there's been far too much secrecy in Grandview about what's happening and the reasons for decisions being made and far too little local consultation.

This is, quite frankly, a terrible state of affairs. I remember a number of years ago, during a leaders debate in Brandon, when the then-Conservative leader—I think it was Hugh McFadyen at the time—made it very clear that a Conservative government would never close rural hospitals. He made this point very strongly and very passionately. Clearly, the Conservative government of today has lost its roots in rural Manitoba and is no longer sensitive to the needs of rural Manitobans.

I want to point out that it was not just the approach of not testing all staff and residents that was missing in Grandview. I understand that there were also critical delays in contact tracing which may have contributed to the COVID outbreak at the personal-care home in Grandview.

We have repeatedly called for results of tests to be available within 24 hours and that the contact tracing be completed within the next 24 hours in order for the testing and contact tracing to be effective in better controlling the COVID-19 pandemic.

These are standard benchmarks which are accepted as critical to the effective use of testing and contact tracing to stop the spread of COVID-19, indeed, because individuals can transmit the virus on day 4 after exposure. When these markers are not met there is considerable potential for ongoing viral transmission.

In this matter of urgent public importance we use the words sudden, shocking and inappropriate to describe the government's action. No one can dispute that this was sudden. No one can dispute it was a big shock that the Pallister government has done a complete about-face on previous commitments by Conservative leaders and MLAs that they would not close hospitals.

We use the word inappropriate because the process which was used to undertake this measure was inappropriate in that there was no local consultation and no consideration of alternate options and

opportunity for people in the community to present options. The ham-fisted, not-listening-to-people-in-rural-communities approach that the Pallister government is using is inappropriate.

Manitoba Liberals have already called for a public inquiry into the lack of preparedness of the Pallister government for the second wave of the pandemic. This inquiry needs to include consideration of the situation at Grandview and why the situation has been so badly mismanaged that the hospital has been closed.

Madam Speaker, it's apparent every day in the Legislature that the government needs to be held to account for its bad actions and for its lack of good actions. We need this debate today to hold the government to account and to have the discussion so badly needed to overcome the government's secrecy in what's happening in Grandview and why the hospital has been closed without any consultation with people in Grandview about alternatives to the severe and sudden shock of depriving people in Grandview of the availability of the excellent hospital and hospital care which has been present in their community up until the hospital's sudden closure at 8 a.m. this morning.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Thank you very much for the opportunity to reply to this matter of urgent public importance.

The member opposite, the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), didn't refer specifically, of course, to the requirements that are needed to meet the standard of a matter of urgent public importance in our Legislature, and I will, briefly, because it's important for the context of your decision, Madam Speaker.

\* (15:10)

The first, of course, being that it must be—the matter raised must be of such important public interest that the public interest would suffer if it were not debated immediately, with all the other matters put aside. And certainly I would not argue that this is an important matter. Of course, there are many things that are happening in the context of the pandemic that are very important, and nobody would say that it's not important to the residents of Grandview or those who are living nearby. Of course, it is important.

The question that also has to be answered, however, is whether or not there are any other opportunities for the debate to occur so that the matter

can be discussed and brought forward. And, of course, in our legislative calendar there are a number of opportunities, the most obvious being question period, Madam Speaker.

And I notice that the independent members of the Legislature used question period not to focus on this issue but rather to talk about articling students and ask education questions—also important questions, but not the matter of the MUPI which the member for River Heights now argues should set aside all the rest of the business of the House.

Of course, independent members could have raised a grievance on this issue just prior to the MUPI being called. You offered them that opportunity and they did not use that opportunity either. This afternoon, there'll be bills that'll be debated, and I suspect that there might be some context that could be used while still being relevant to the bills, to raise questions and legitimate questions about the utilization of health-care resources, Madam Speaker.

So while the issue is certainly important, I do believe there have been and will be other opportunities for the member for River Heights to debate it this afternoon.

Just a couple of quick issues on his raising of the matter. We need to be clear, as was made clear earlier, that this hospital is not closing permanently, as the member seemed to insinuate in his comments, and that shouldn't be put or left on the record unchallenged because it could have a lot of detrimental effects if that is not corrected, Madam Speaker.

What is happening, of course, is that there are challenges on health resources throughout Manitoba and throughout the system as a result of this unprecedented—or at least unprecedented in 100 years—global pandemic, and so health officials are having to make the difficult decisions to move health resources from the most—or from some places to the most critical places.

Those decisions aren't always easy and they're not always perfect and they don't always satisfy everybody, Madam Speaker, but I don't think that the member opposite should question health officials who are trying their best to meet the most acute and the most urgent needs in the best way that they can.

I know it's easy for him to come and criticize their efforts and their work without knowing all the different factors that they're having to weigh into this, but I do think we have to have some understanding and reliance on those health-care officials.



It is often the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) himself who says we should rely on health-care officials, and now he wants that ignored and wants it directed politically. So the hospital is not being closed as he insinuated, Madam Speaker, despite the fact that the NDP did close 20—at least 20 over their time in office.

It is the context of the global pandemic and moving resources into an area that desperately needs resources, and I think all of us look forward to the end of the pandemic—the reopening of the hospital, of course, might happen much sooner than that—but that a more normalized time and system of operations both in the health-care system and society can be achieved, Madam Speaker.

Thank you for allowing me to put these words on the record.

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** I appreciate the opportunity to be able to put a few words on the record and in support of this MUPI that was brought forward by the member for River Heights.

I'd like to actually start by addressing a comment the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen) just made, and I think it's a theme. It's a narrative that the minister is engaging in, that members of the government's side are engaging in, the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has been amplifying, the Minister of Health has been amplifying as well, and it's this notion that members—you know, in our caucus; Liberal members—are somehow questioning the actions and decision making of public-health officials.

Madam Speaker, that's a really—it's a false narrative and I'm, quite frankly, tired of hearing it and seeing it.

I'm really disgusted, to be quite honest, at the ways in which the Premier, Minister of Health, Minister of Education now, many members of the PC caucus, have essentially used public health and public health officials as a shield. They have repeatedly thrown them under the bus. They've used them as a human shield during this pandemic. They have used them to—as a shield to try and deflect criticism from—totally valid criticism of this government's failing during this pandemic. And it needs to stop.

People aren't being critical of public health officials and their expertise, people are being rightly critical of this government and the Minister of Health and their failures during this pandemic.

And so I would encourage the Premier, Minister of Health, Minister of Education, all members of the PC caucus, to start practising some accountability and maybe start stepping up and answering the questions that people are putting forward and stop using public health as a shield and as a means of deflecting any level of accountability that they should actually be engaging in.

So specific to this MUPI, Madam Speaker, you know, I think what it shows—and I am glad it was brought forward today and I think that it's timely that it's brought forward today, given the fact that it's—at 8 a.m. this morning, Grandview loses their acute services. They lose their emergency room. They lose their hospital services.

And all of their dedicated resources, their expertise are going to be, you know, supporting long-term care because this government failed to do what it needed to do and plan and prepare and build capacity and equip these facilities with what they need in order to provide the care that is required during this pandemic.

That is a failure on this government. It's a failure of the Minister of Health. And, at this point, I actually feel tired saying that. It is sad, Madam Speaker, that at this point in the pandemic—Manitoba being one of the later jurisdictions to see our first positive COVID case, having all of the research and data and recommendations from other jurisdictions—that this is where we're at today: that residents, that constituents of Manitoba living in that region, in that area, late last night would have been informed that they no longer have access to an emergency room.

We're in winter at this point now. We know that at any point, you know, there are car accidents. There are strokes. There are heart attacks. There are all kinds of things. People have accidents. They cut their tip of their finger off, all kinds of things. And those folks don't have access to the health care they need close to home because this government failed to do its job and plan.

That is disgraceful, Madam Speaker, and it's even more disgraceful to try and spin it somehow and condemn and criticize people who point out that shortcoming and that failure.

You know, it is concerning for me as somebody who, you know, reads legislation, in my capacity as critic for Health. You know, I read pieces of legislation, like Bill 10 for example, and I read that in this piece of legislation, the minister is going to have

greater authority and greater power to make decisions and reach further into these regions.

And, to me—I think to everybody—to everybody, Madam Speaker, it is glaringly obvious that the Minister of Health is absolutely not equipped to do this job—just isn't—isn't equipped, doesn't know enough about health care, doesn't care to know enough about health care.

The Premier (Mr. Pallister) stood up today in this House and actually made the comment—which, now it really lands for me because it's actually something similar to what the Minister of Health has said before, and I'll get to that. But the Premier actually stood up in the House and said today, oh, those—the doctors and nurses, they're going to do what they do. They're going to go and they're going to jump into an acute situation and provide acute care. They're just going to do what they do.

The Premier, in all of his ego, in all of his unwillingness to be accountable, speaks of the expertise of folks who work in emergency rooms and hospital settings and devalues their expertise and devalues their training and minimizes what they bring into those spaces that they've dedicated their careers to learning about and just says, they can just do that anywhere else.

As if it's not a significant shift. As if it's not something significant to those doctors and nurses and workers, to have them now redirected, doing work that they shouldn't actually be have to be doing. They should be providing their expertise in the settings they've trained for, they've dedicated their lives to, they've built their infrastructure in their life around.

\* (15:20)

And it's funny because it cued for me a memory of the Minister of Health, in question period, in this Chamber, making comments that, after firing hundreds of nurses, saying that there's a job for every nurse who wants a job, as if nurses who have trained and specialized for years in, let's say, for example, ICUs, can just pick up and go work in any other setting. Nurses are brilliant. They can, but again, they built their life infrastructure around those positions.

You know, the minister made those flippant, dismissive, disrespectful remarks repeatedly in this House, while cutting health care, cutting ICU beds, and now we're in the midst of a pandemic, Madam Speaker, where we see increased need for what? Oh, my goodness, wouldn't you—the same nurses. The

same expertise that the Minister of Health so flippantly said, they can go get a job somewhere else.

Now they're scrambling to train nurses to do critical care. Now they're increasing nurse-to-patient-care ratios in ICUs because the minister had the attitude and has the attitude that the Premier has, that, whatever—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Asagwara:** —a doctor is a doctor.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I'm just going to ask the member to bring her comments back to—

**An Honourable Member:** Their comments. Their comments.

**Madam Speaker:** Pardon me. I'm sorry.

I would ask the member to just reflect that this is a matter of urgent public importance, and the debate should be around the urgency of whether or not to debate what is before us. So I would ask them to please bring their comments back to whether or not this is urgent for debate today, and not get into the actual debate about the issue, but about the urgency of that discussion. Thank you.

**MLA Asagwara:** Yes. I'm absolutely happy to do that.

I think about how flippant the Premier and the Minister of Health and the members of the PC caucus are in terms of the ways that they devalue the expertise in our health-care system, and what that's resulted in now—you know, lack of capacity in the health-care system, unfortunately, and lack of preparation during this pandemic and the lack of capacity that generated.

And I think about the community—and I'm going to make sure I get this right—I think about the community of Tootinaowaziibeeng, or Valley River, and how they're going to be impacted by this government's failure to ensure that there's capacity in the health-care system. *[interjection]*

And, you know, I appreciate the member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski) right now just correcting my pronunciation of the name of that community. That is the first time I've heard that member speak up for communities that he represents. It's the first time I've heard the member for Dauphin use his voice and advocate for the communities, the constituents he

represents. That's amazing—amazing. He has a voice, Madam Speaker.

I hope that he supports this matter of urgent public importance, because it is urgent. The constituents of Grandview, the folks in communities surrounding, deserve to have access to acute health care close to home. We're talking about access to health care that seconds and minutes can make all the difference in someone's health-care outcomes in acute situations.

And it's shameful and just another reflection of the failure of this government during this pandemic to plan and resource adequately, and it reflects the fact that the government has little regard for the health-care expertise that are now going to be forced to shift their resources elsewhere to fill in the gaps that this government has created during this pandemic, and it's deplorable.

**Madam Speaker:** I thank the honourable members for their advice to the Chair on the motion proposed by the honourable member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) regarding the matter of urgent public importance.

The 90 minutes notice prior to the start of routine proceedings required by rule 38(1) was provided, and I thank the honourable member for that.

Under our rules and practices, the subject matter under this rule requiring urgent consideration must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention. There must also be no other reasonable opportunities to raise the matter.

I have listened very carefully to the arguments put forward. Although access to health care and hospitals, particularly during a pandemic, is indeed a serious matter, members have had other opportunities to raise these matters, including earlier today during oral questions or during members' statements or as a grievance.

Therefore—the purpose of today's House business, I do not believe this matter needs another forum for debate, and with the greatest of respect, I rule this motion out of order as a matter of urgent public importance.

\* \* \*

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Yes—

**Madam Speaker:** Oh, pardon me. There is somebody standing. On House business?

### House Business

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader):** Pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing that the next private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Thompson (Ms. Adams). The title of the resolution is Call on the Provincial Government to Support Manitobans on Employment Income Assistance.

**Madam Speaker:** Pursuant to rule 33(8), it has been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Thompson. The title of the resolution is Call on the Provincial Government to Support Manitobans on Employment Income Assistance.

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**Madam Speaker:** Orders of the day, then government business.

**Hon. Kelvin Goertzen (Government House Leader):** Yes. Thank you again, Madam Speaker.

Could you please call for debate this afternoon second reading of Bill 41, the fair registration practices in regulated professions act and, following that, Bill 68.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 41 this afternoon, followed by debate on Bill 68.

### SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 41—The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Amendment Act

**Madam Speaker:** I will therefore call second reading of Bill 41, The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Amendment Act.

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Economic Development and Training):** I move that Bill 41, The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions—

**Madam Speaker:** Before we proceed—order. Before we proceed, can the member turn his camera on?

I think we have the minister on, and I would ask him to continue or to start over.

**Mr. Eichler:** Yes.

**Madam Speaker:** To start over.

**Mr. Eichler:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), that The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Amendment Act be now read for a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

**Madam Speaker:** Can the minister also table the—or make reference to the message from the Lieutenant Governor. And I would ask the member to just refer to his script.

**Mr. Eichler:** Yes. Thank you. Her—and we refer to—Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor has been advised—the bill, and I table the message.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Economic Development and Training (Mr. Eichler), seconded by the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 41, The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

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

**Mr. Eichler:** I'm pleased to speak to the House today about Bill 41, the fair registration practices regulated professionals amendment act.

Since the act was passed in 2009, a lot of progress has been made by working with 30 regulated professions to make sure that internationally educated applicants are treated fairly when they apply for a licence to practise their professions in Manitoba. It is important because many newcomers into Manitoba are highly educated with in-demand skills and experience. When these individuals can't work in their professions, their skills become out of date, which makes it harder for them to rejoin their profession and to fully contribute to our economy.

Despite the progress we've made so far, there is still some barriers that remain to be making sure that qualified international educated applicants are able to achieve registration in their professions quickly and fairly. This bill will help remove many of those

barriers by requiring regulated professionals to take steps to improve their assessment and recognition process.

\* (15:30)

One important change that the bill makes is to make sure that regulated professionals are not asking people licensed in other provinces for additional requirements to register here in Manitoba.

Asking for extra requirements unless they are 'pecific' government-approved reasons is not allowed under Manitoba's labour mobility agreements. The issue is important enough that we made fixing a promise in 2019, and we will fix it by adding language to the act to require regulated professions to comply with domestic trade agreements.

Another change this bill will make is to strengthen the options available to government to make sure regulated professions comply with the act. Changes to the act will allow the minister responsible for the act to issue compliance orders for serious issues of non-compliance with the act. This change will encourage reluctant professions to take action to improve the fairness of their practices and bring our legislation to line with Ontario, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Alberta.

Madam Speaker, another change this bill makes is to allow the government to make regulations under the act and set standards for the time it takes a qualified applicant to start working in their profession. This may not be getting a full licence, but it can include opportunities of practise with a limited scope or under the special development licence.

*Mr. Greg Nesbitt, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

We think it's important to—step to reduce the amount of time it takes to get internationally trained applicants out there and working and to make sure that their skills are not being lost before they can use them here in Manitoba. Of course, regulated professions would be consulted on any regulations made in this area to make sure that any timelines set are realistic and achievable for them, that they have enough time to comply.

Another key change the bill makes is that it sets expectations that any registration or assessment requirement set by regulated professions must truly be needed for individuals to practise the profession. If a requirement isn't needed, then all of—it is doing is creating another barrier that keeps qualified people

out of their trained professions. We don't want that to be the case here in Manitoba.

We know that regulated professions do not set out to create unfair requirements for internationally educated applicants. However, we also know that despite best intentions, sometimes barriers are created anyway, and in order to make sure that regulated professions do not inadvertently create barriers, this bill will also require regulated professionals to make any changes in their registration practices. This way, we can flag anything that may create a barrier for internationally educated individuals before it comes into effect.

Lastly, I want to mention this bill will also make some changes on administration's side of the act. We're going to create a new fair-practice office housed in immigration, which is a division in my department, to administer the act. This will provide new office with new policy and administrative support, create a more one-stop shop for all of our immigration-related programs and services.

I am very pleased with this bill. I look forward to the passage through this House.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Questions

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** A question period of up to 15 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the minister by any member in the following sequence: first question by the official opposition critic or designate; subsequent questions asked by critics or designates from other recognized opposition parties; subsequent questions asked by each independent member; remaining questions asked by any opposition members. And no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** My question—first question here, is to ask: This bill gives the minister power to issue compliance over regulators. Is this a step for the minister taking over control of some of the regulated professions and could, you know, potentially overstate some of the interests of that profession that it might have to self-regulate?

**Hon. Ralph Eichler (Minister of Economic Development and Training):** Thank my critic for the question.

Compliance orders would only be used for situations of intentional and non-repeated-compliance. We will not penalize professions if there

were legitimate reasons for non-compliance, such as needing more time or lack of resources.

This has been an issue that we felt that we should move it over into the minister's position. It's a position of authority and one that would have to be respected by professions, and we feel this is the right thing that we need to be doing after our consultation with our groups.

**Mr. Moses:** In terms of that compliance order, the folks who you said—as you said to him, it's going to be issued if it's a very serious repeated offense, but many individuals who are trying to go through the colleges would've already been disenfranchised by not having the correct application of the procedure.

Is the minister going to go back to those individuals and allow them to be made whole and have a right process so that they can be treated fairly?

**Mr. Eichler:** Actually, this has nothing to do with those that already had their applications.

This is about the professions being able to be licensed and meet the requirements sought out by that professional organization. So that's what the compliance is about; it's not about the applicant that makes the application. This is about making sure the standards are there so that the profession is in line and in tune with what others are, and that's why we referenced the other provinces that we did that's already in line with this.

So we're wanting to get these new immigrants into their professions which they come. Most of them come with a skill set and we want to make sure that they have all those things that they need in order to meet the professional requirements that it does have. And that's really critically important for the professions that they have—cause no harm as well. So that's why we want to work with the professions and—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** The minister's time has expired.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question for the minister is: What is this government going to actually do over the next few months or by year-end to help assist immigrants entering the workforce past your—and to help out with COVID?

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Order. Would the member from Tyndall Park please ensure the microphone is down closer to her mouth. Thank you.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** Sorry about that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

My question for the minister is: What is this government going to actually do to ensure that, over the next few months or by year-end, new immigrants are going to be assisted in getting involved in the workforce with respect to COVID?

**Mr. Eichler:** I want to thank the member from Notre Dame, I know she's been working very hard with her constituents in order to make sure they get good-paying jobs and use the skills they actually trained for. So I'm glad that those 12 nurses that she's been campaigning for actually now are part of the system and really critically important.

There's many, many more out there that are also trying to get work, so we're going to work with all these immigrants and skill sets, not just nurses. There's 30 different sectors. That's critically important that they be able to practise the skill set and what they were educated to do.

We know there's some things that might come up that we're not able to be able to deal with, but certainly we want to try to work with those associations—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** The minister's time has expired.

The member for Turtle Mountain, do you have a question?

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** No, I don't, because we aren't supposed to ask questions as a—as—to government members.

**Mr. Moses:** The minister mentioned that there's a process where the regulated profession, the colleges, will have to notify the minister before any changes so that the minister is aware of them, the department is aware of them.

Why is that happening before? Is that just adding an extra level of red tape for these organizations, for it to actually happen? Why couldn't it happen after the colleges self-regulate and decided to go ahead with the change and just make sure the minister and the department are aware after the fact?

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the member for the question.

It's critically important that the minister is aware of if anything changes prior to. We can't have roadblocks put up when we have international

students or international people, immigrants, come in and have that—that's kind of sidelined.

So, critically important that we're aware of any changes so that we can work with post-secondary and other institutions to make sure they have the right thing, the right educational tools, in place to make sure they don't get sidelined once they go to all the hard work of—make sure that they're there.

That would be an absolute disaster if we were blindsided by a profession and not have those checks and balances in place for these next workers just coming through the—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Member's time has expired.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I was wondering, how will this bill support regulated professions to collaborate with education providers and employers in the development of programs for applicants to meet registration criteria?

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the member, and she's a strong 'advodiv' for her community as well. And I know that she's so passionate about this. We've had lots of conversations, even when I was in opposition, about this particular issue.

One that I think is really important that post-secondary work with these professions in order that we get some of the red tape out of the way. This is critically important that post-secondary work with the professions, hand-in-hand, and that's—that comes back to why we need to see these regulations or any changes to the professions before we start these courses.

So, really important that we work in partnership, in tandem, and I request the member's support on—from her area and her party, to move this forward in a very timely manner.

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** Member's time has expired.

**Mr. Moses:** You've said—explained it in necessary—the need, as you claim, for the minister to be able to issue compliance orders.

Would that role of being able to issue compliance orders fit better with the position of directors, since they are an independent position that is to oversee all the regulative bodies? Why give them compliance order responsibility to the minister and not to the director?

**Mr. Eichler:** As I suggested earlier to the member that ministers have some authority. A director would have to draft a regulation in order to give them authority to be able to do that. Much easier if it's under the minister's department because we already have the authority. So we feel this is the right place for it to be.

And to be honest, we have—as the minister, I have the authority with post-secondary and others, in order to prepare them and help them get the funding in place through my department as well. So, it's the right place for it to be.

**Mr. Moses:** The minister mentioned collaborating with post-secondary institutions.

I think that's important, but since this new requirement is going to be there for them to make best efforts to collaborate with these institutions, are there going to be additional funding to colleges and to post-secondary institutions so that they can actually accomplish that goal?

**Mr. Eichler:** Well, as the member knows—and I thank him for the question—critically important that we have the funding in place.

We're just under \$1 billion in funding for post-secondary now, which includes a number of upgrades for international trained professionals. They adapt. Each institution's kind of on their own. But that's why it's so important, this partnership that I talk about, in order to make sure these international trained applicants have the resources they need.

Many of them come here with a skill set that's already there, that just needs to be trained to—a little bit to our standards, and we look forward to working with the professions in order to be able to make this happen for them in a lot faster time, as—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** The member's time has expired.

The member—sorry—the member for St. Vital.

**Mr. Moses:** I want to go to the minister's consultation. He did mention that he did consult with some regular professions.

Can you outline that? And also, were you able to consult with actual people who have been through the process of getting licences, actual international educated nurses, for example, or other people from out of province to go through the process? What did that consultation tell the minister in terms of feedback for this bill?

**Mr. Eichler:** We had several consultations. We had them with regulated professionals in May of 2020.

A discussion paper was circulated with clarification that helped initial step in the legislative process. Discussion paper included key items under consideration for amendment to the act. And any feedback from all key stakeholders informed the way the bill was written.

A second consultation was held on October the 14th, and we want to make sure that we do get this right. It's so important that we have these trained professionals and—especially during this COVID time that we take advantage of these internationally trained workers and professionals that we're able to take advantage of—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** The member's time has expired.

**Ms. Lamoureux:** I was hoping that the minister could share with us an actual number figure that the province is going to spend to support and develop the program.

**Mr. Eichler:** We don't have a budget line, per se, but it's in our post-secondary budget.

As I talked about, post-secondary is just under \$1 billion, so we look at all these programs on an annualized basis in order to make sure that they have the needs and skill set that they need to have in order to get these international professionals up to speed. It's not something new, it's not something we have to reinvent, it's about making sure we're in line and making sure the professions are in step with these international-trained professionals, and really critically important that we have that dialogue—that—together.

**Mr. Moses:** We've heard from members—on our side of the House, we've heard from many members of the community who've tried to go through this process and found difficulty getting licences in many regulated professions.

Is there—does the minister think that it would be appropriate to have an ombudsman that could help to work with some of our individuals trying to get licensed, and work on their behalf to review cases where there've been barriers put up from some of the colleges, for example?

**Mr. Eichler:** I thank the member for the question.

I think that the director—the way we have this set up, the director working through immigration will be able to handle that type of a discussion if need be.

But, again, that comes back to what we talked about at the very beginning. As a minister, I will have the power to tell the professionals and work with the professionals in order to get what they feel they need and still have the safety. This is all about being trained right and have the safeguards in place for those professionals, whatever trade they're going to be going into, of the 30 professionals that they all work hand in hand together and I would ask the member's support in helping us get that done.

So immigration's a large part of our—

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Moses:** With the minister's new ability in this bill to both be able to see the college's decisions before they make it and also change and bring down a compliance order if it's not to the minister's liking, how does that jive with the college's, you know, natural ability to self-regulate?

Isn't that going counter-intuitive to the ability for a college to self-relegate—regulate its own industry, its own profession?

**Mr. Eichler:** Well, we don't advocate for just individuals. We advocate for the association of the profession of which they're in and work with those professional organizations in order to make sure that there's no miscommunications.

It has to be clear, it has to be factual and the last thing we want to do is have these new professionals go to a different province because of our standards not being right. In order to ensure that we have those professions work with post-secondary, in order for them to make sure they have everything in their toolbox to be able to make that happen—critically, critically important.

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** The time for this question period has ended.

#### Debate

**The Acting Speaker (Greg Nesbitt):** The floor is now open for debate.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** I'm looking forward to speaking unto this bill today, and I do thank the member—the minister for bringing this bill in, because it does attempt to take some steps to break down some barriers for individuals who are seeking to come into

this province to work and to have a good-paying job in a professional career, one where they're bringing in the skills and experience already.

\* (15:50)

But we think that this bill could go a lot further and do a lot more to assist individuals in those situations while at the same time maintaining independence and self-regulation for colleges and ensuring that the public is protected with highly trained individuals in their regulated profession and skilled people who are going to come and work and provide economic benefit to our province.

I do want to share a story in regard to this. And when I think about international education, people who are coming to our province for the first time, looking to start a career, start a life and build a life here, I can't help but first begin with my own story and my own family's story. You know, my parents immigrated and moved to Manitoba here, looking for opportunities to educate themselves, to build careers. They both came from Trinidad and Tobago.

Now, they didn't actually—as it turns out, they didn't know each other before. They both lived in Trinidad and Tobago, both moved to Winnipeg separately and met here, introduced by mutual friends. They came and met here and decided to build a life and get an education together.

Now, their career paths were very different, as I'm sure it is for many newcomers to Manitoba. My father came here after some stops in America—brief stops in America—and chose to come to Winnipeg because he was accepted into the faculty of engineering at the University of Manitoba. And that's a notable choice—choice for him because his father was an engineer in Trinidad, and so he was following in his father's footsteps practising engineering.

And I think that, for him, it was important to go into a career like that, as it was not only what—he had grown up seeing that type of work done, but also knew that it provided a significant amount of value into an economy and to a community. And knowing my father, my dad, he is always a guy who wanted to find ways to give back to community.

He obviously went through the progress—the program of educating himself and getting his degree and practising, finding work in his field, and for him, I'm—he, you know, as he tells me the stories, he was fortunate to have the—relatively few barriers when it comes to actually getting his education to finding careers. Of course the job hunt part of it was a



challenge, but when it came to getting his university degree he went through that process.

Now, I think about, fast-forward, you know, some 40, 50 years today—to-in—a newcomer to Manitoba, the challenges that they face. And I've already heard stories in my, you know, just over a year in my role as MLA, from international individuals who are in Manitoba now, looking for work in a profession where they've previously worked and hearing the frustration in their voices and knowing if they've had a wonderful career in their home country, whether it be in health care, whether it be in education, whether it be in agriculture or a variety—any number of industries, and struggle to find that same level of work here in Manitoba.

And it's—and I will also draw attention to the point that many of these people, as they come to Manitoba and to Canada, are often asked, as a part of their immigration to Manitoba, what their education is, what their skills are, what jobs do they have and what are they going to bring to Canada and to Manitoba when they get here.

That's part of the deal of them coming to Canada. That's part of the arrangement of them choosing to live here. And so, for them to come here knowing that the reason they got here is because of their skills, their training, their education, their knowledge, and have provincial roadblocks put up in place to make it nearly impossible for them to actually achieve and find a career and work in those fields is extremely frustrating and completely disheartening. And it is part of our role to break down those barriers.

While Bill 41 takes some steps in that regard, it certainly doesn't go far enough. There are a whole host of challenges and barriers that many individuals will still face, regardless of whether this bill moves forward or not.

And so, like, you know, my parents' story. As they met here and worked here as new immigrants to the country, found their way, you know, had to work many part-time jobs in between until they found that career role, so do many of the immigrants and newcomers to our province face those challenges today.

Now they face those challenges of having to pay for their immediate needs, also pay for schooling, maybe care for family that they have here. And also, in their mind, they have to take care of the family that they have back home and send remittances—or money,

whatever you want to call it—back home to their family and friends from their home country.

And that's an important part of being an individual from an international country, and I think that almost every newcomer to our province—that I've heard—has a similar story; that they are expected not just to work and make a life for themselves but help those folks and family members and friends back home in their home country. I know my parents have done and continue to do that same thing today. And I know that newcomers to our province do the same thing.

And so, for our minister to say that, you know, a compliance order that he could give if a college is making it too difficult for someone to get a licence, that a compliance order would encourage a college to act differently after multiple times of not following that, doesn't help the person who's already been disenfranchised by that college or by that barrier, right.

These people who come in and are looking for a fair path—not an easier path but looking for a more fair path—to get a career and get licensed in their profession, when they get faced with a barrier, they don't always have the luxury or the ability to go and complain to a director or to a fairness commissioner. They don't always have that luxury. Why? Because they—they know the realities of their situation: that they need to have a job. They need to have a job to feed their family, to feed themselves, to put a roof over their head and to be able to send something back at the end of the month to their family back home.

And so, for a compliance order that might take several weeks or months or years to come from a minister's office to then change the action of a regulated professional college, to then change their action and remove a barrier, is little solace for an individual who's already lost out, who's already been stopped, been barred by a barrier—by an unjust barrier.

And so, as much as this bill may make steps to break down some barriers, it really doesn't go far enough to actually proactively encourage a clean and smooth path for folks to come here and live.

You know, I say that it's also—it's often very much kind of a bargain, kind of a deal, that we, as a provincial or federal government, perhaps, would make with newcomers into our province or our country, respectively.

\* (16:00)

We invite people to come in. They go through the immigration process. We say we want to bring in more people who are trained in health-care, or trained in engineering, or skilled in technical fields. We come and we bring them in.

Well, that's—they bring in the skills. They bring in the talent. They bring in the knowledge. And what do we have to do? We have to provide them opportunities, and provide them avenues to actually be successful in those areas.

We can't have people trained as doctors and as nurses, as just—working just as cashiers. That is, it's—for those people who've gone through their skills that—in training back home, it is simply demoralizing and it is very disheartening, because that's not the deal that they signed up for when they came here. They signed up to come here and work in health care, or in engineering, or in tech, or in agriculture, and if they can't do that, then why did we make the requirements for them to come to our country so high? Why was it that they had to have the skills and knowledge, and come here, and they can't use it?

And so, it's not just that we should look at some steps to find ways to make our colleges, our professional fields a little bit better, smooth it out a little bit. It's needed. It's a necessary step that we need to take because it's part of a deal that these people are signing up for when they come here. It is not, let's see if we can take one step now and a couple steps later. It's something that is needed, because there are people right now, today, who are making the choices: do I come to Canada, or not? Do I settle in Manitoba, or not? Do I even look at getting back into this career, or not?

And we know that every barrier that's put up makes it more challenging for these people, and it's our job to break down those barriers, not just because it's part of the deal of those individuals coming here, and not just because it's the right thing to do by them, not just because it is economic benefit to our province, to our country, but because it's our jobs. It's our jobs to serve people of Manitoba. It's our jobs to help them out when they have barriers and when they face challenges.

And so I appreciate the intention of this bill, but I certainly would want it to go a lot further. I will bring up a few specific issues I have with some of the wording of the bill.

Now, I did mention in my questions to the minister, I asked him about the control that the

minister takes, the over-control to do a couple of things, you know, kind of at the minister's discretion. One is to issue compliance orders. There's a description in there of when a compliance order should be issued, but I think it could need a lot more clear definition, because what would spur the minister to bring forward a compliance order?

Is it a complaint from the director position that he wants to create? Is it a complaint directly from a member of the public that would spur a compliance order? What time frame with which does the minister have to respond to issue a compliance order as a result of an issue from one of these individuals? Could a—is there any person in that, within that professional field, that could contact the minister about a barrier that they've seen with getting licensed?

It's very subjective, and—in terms of which—what would cause the minister to issue a compliance order to a regulated professional body. And that subjectivity has some concern on my end. And the reason is because we've seen a track record of these types of application of the rules be put in place that advantages one certain group of people and disadvantages another certain group of people. And I'm talking about, quite frankly, issues that will affect minority groups in our province, minority groups of people who are coming into our country and our province and looking for opportunities to work.

We know that as many barriers as we try to break down, there are still some challenges that will—that minorities will face when they come into our province and so it is—it should be clear and obvious as to how people can actually overcome these barriers without it be—just subjective. Because at that time when it is just a subjective rule, then it can become who has access to the minister more gets the—gets more preferential treatment, who has the ability to write a stronger-worded letter to the minister's office or to the director.

And maybe those sorts of people are ones who are going to be current Manitoban citizens, who have been educated in Manitoba and can voice their opinion. Maybe it won't be the person who is a newcomer to Manitoba and doesn't know the processes and maybe has English as not their first language. The barriers to even contact the minister and suggest that he should make a 'pliance' order is more difficult for a newcomer who would be the person who needs that compliance order the most.

And so the minister must consider these issues before he says that his bill is fantastic and is something that is going to solve and break down barriers in our

system for getting out-of-province individuals here in Manitoba working. There's a whole host of other barriers that the minister, I think, sadly has failed to consider in this bill. And I think this bill, although it takes some positive steps, must be made stronger if it has—if it ever intends to achieve its goal of breaking down barriers for individuals who are seeking employment in regulated professions.

The other aspect I wanted to draw attention to is the process of timeliness, which the minister states—the timeliness for the process of registration for internationally educated individuals. And the minister says that they're going to be setting timelines based on what is appropriate for each regulated profession, each field. And that could make sense that, you know, a person comes in and, say, wants to get a licence as a nurse, they know that the process, as instructed by the minister or director, is going to take so many months.

Well, there are other challenges that the minister should also investigate if he wants to truly make this a process that is easy for newcomers to Manitoba. And if the minister's going to go so far as to suggest that it must take so much time, why doesn't the minister go ahead and also say what the maximum fees could be for some of these individuals? There are huge cost barriers to going through some of the steps of getting yourself licensed, and these are unnecessary barriers in many situations.

For example, in someone—profession—in nursing, I know that nurses have to take an English test. But, in some cases, that English test is only good for two years until—they must fully get their licence within two years of taking that test. Well, there are so many barriers that once these individuals take their test, they're on the clock now. There's so many barriers put in place, whether it be spots within a post-secondary institution that they're qualified to get into but the government hasn't funded enough spots for people to actually get into their post-secondary institution, whether it be the fact that there's, you know, temporary pauses in programs or changes in programs or hours to work within that profession.

\* (16:10)

But that two years goes by like that, in a snap. And so, many individuals are forced to, even though they passed this English test once, they have to take it again. And not just take it again, but pay for it again. And the minister and other members must really grapple with the fact that those barriers may not be removed. And they must work with these colleges and regulators to ensure that those types of barriers which

aren't mandatory must be looked at and see how they can be removed to streamline it and, frankly, make it not just easier from a timeliness standpoint that the minister has tried to address in this bill, but also from a cost standpoint.

And, as I mentioned from my own personal family experience, but also from number of conversations with newcomers, they—the cost barrier is huge. They can't—many newcomers aren't able to just work here and go to school without also having a job, right? Finding that balance between working and maintaining your livelihood and your family, paying for schooling or licensing and also sending that money back home is chief—is a chief concern and top of mind for folks.

And if, for many people, sadly, when the choice comes between supporting family back home, supporting yourself here and getting your education, sometimes education is the third rung—is the lowest one, and sometimes, sadly, the cost barrier to getting licensed in a profession is often too high for many people to take. And so the minister should strongly consider, you know, adding an amendment to this legislation or perhaps working directly with colleges to eliminate some of these cost barriers so that they can truly show that they're looking at the newcomers to Canada's best interests in terms of being able to work in professions here in our province.

I—my next point is I'd like to also bring up the relationship between these professional colleges and our post-secondary institutions. And the minister, in this bill, has said that they should be working more closely, as best they can, together. But we've already seen this year, and in previous years, the reduction in funding for our post-secondary institutions. We've seen it at UCN. We saw that there was a cut to funding there. We saw 1.5 per cent. We saw at University of Manitoba, the faculty was asked to reduce by 2.5 per cent. We know that universities and colleges are being funded less year over year from this government.

And, when asked today in questioning, the minister said that there's no budget item, there's no budget line dedicated for this bill; that there's no specific budget item that will actually fund the creation of a minister's role, the creation of staff for that—sorry, the director role, staff for that director. All the extra work that a college might have to go to to provide additional paperwork to the minister or potentially deal with compliance order, and there's no budget line, as the minister said just now, to allow

more collaboration between the colleges and the post-secondary institutions. This is noteworthy because if any significant change is going to be made to streamline the process between the requirements of a college and the educating post-secondary institution, it's going to need financial resources.

And so ask yourself, if the minister has said there's no budget line for this specifically—if the minister said there's no budget line for this specifically and the colleges and the post-secondary institutions are now required to do this in this law, where are they going to get the money from? Where are those dollars and cents? Where are those financial resources going to come from?

Well, I'll tell you where. They're going to come from two places. The colleges have more expenses, they're going to come from the fees that those professionals pay. So that means you're now taking money out of the pockets of doctors, of nurses, of audiologists, of speech-language pathologists. You're taking money out of their pocket because the Province hasn't put any—hasn't put a budget line for this item, making their lives more difficult for all these regulated professions.

The second spot it's going to come from is from post-secondary education for any changes that they have to make at the college at the—for example, Red River College or the University of Winnipeg or Manitoba from their level. And so what does that mean? It means that those extra fees and extra cost burdens are going to be put on the backs of students.

So, again, this is another way for this minister—and it's a trend that we've seen across this government, for them to download the costs of running the government onto the backs of everyday Manitobans, that—on the backs of nurses, on the backs of doctors, of other regulated professions, on the backs of university and college students who are just trying to start off their career and get an education and come and add to our economy here. They're going to be faced with higher fees, higher tuition because this minister didn't put a line item in here to support this bill which should, in theory, be breaking down barriers.

The last point I'll raise in this is the idea that I proposed to the minister in my questioning, the idea of the ombudsman. An ombudsman is a role that can provide advocacy for individuals who have been unfairly treated. It's a role that is, you know, unique and has authority to provide reports on how systems can be done and completed more correctly. And it

already exists in Manitoba in many areas. Ombudsman is available for other organizations right now and so it is completely realistic to see how that role of an ombudsman could be added to our regulated colleges, regulated professions, our colleges that are serving our professional regulations.

And that idea shouldn't just be sat with the director's position, who doesn't have an advocacy role on behalf of individuals or doesn't have that necessarily reporting role. Now that it's being brought into the department with the minister, is going to have further less independence than the current Fairness Commissioner.

And so I would strongly consider—the minister to consider that idea of a way for there to be additional support for individuals who are seeking to ensure that their regulated profession is doing—is creating a fair and level playing field. Like has been mentioned, many international-educated individuals who are coming to work in a profession here are not looking for an easier path. People who come into Manitoba are not looking for an easy path. And, as my father can attest, he wasn't looking for an easy handout. He was looking for a fair shot. People who come here today are looking for a fair shot, and I think it's our jobs as legislators to ensure that anyone who comes into our province gets a fair shake.

Bill 41 takes some steps but not nearly enough and we need to make sure that we hold ourselves to the same level that the people of Manitoba are expecting of us.

And I think, deputy minister, thank you for the time to speak to this bill today. Thank you.

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** I just am so honoured to put a few words on the Bill 41, the fair registration practices in regulated professional act.

\* (16:20)

And the importance of this bill is so important for newcomers that come to Canada. You know, I was in the financial world for many years, and one thing that I've always sort of read up on and was very interested in is demographics.

Literally, demographics is what, you know, where the people are, what's the aging of our population, and I really do believe that when it comes to demographics, we got to be ready for what's to come, and what we're seeing right now is that we're actually at the stage of baby boomers. Baby boomers right now in Canada, in Manitoba, are—the youngest baby

boomer, which was born in 1966—I'm just outside that—my brother was a year older than me, was born in 1966, and I was born in 1967, but he'll be turning 55, and that's when majority of early retirement is going to be for people like any baby boomer who is born between 1948 to 1966. They will be retiring soon in the next 20 years, and it's so important that immigration is important to our country and to our province.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

Right now the birth rate, I believe, in Canada currently is at 1.5 per cent—well, no, 1.5 kids per family. The US is probably doing a little bit better. They have actually around two kids per family, so it's only that we have to bring in population to our country to take up, sort of, the retirees. Right now, what we rely on for immigration is that—our aging population. We have a lot of seniors now who are going to be taking retirement, taking money from the Canada Pension Plan. We got to make sure that we have a workforce who can actually sustain that pension plan, who can contribute to premiums and bring a younger population into our country.

And what I found, too, was very interesting. My wife took a course. She took a university course, and I actually read most of her books, because one of the issues that was plaguing our society is that—we're creating an opportunity for—to come to Canada and to have a new life in Canada and the opportunity that we can provide for newcomers from other countries.

And one of the things where it was—that we found in this book that I read, was that there were so many immigrants that would come to Canada who were very professionally—they had professions like doctors and lawyers and dentists and doctors and nurses—they would come to Canada and then they'd find out that they had to—they weren't certified properly, and they would have to take certain courses.

And already they spent all their money to come to this country to cost the expenses of, you know, flying here, to set up an apartment or buy a house, and they find out now that they have to work at entry-level positions like cashiers, driving taxi-cabs, you know—people who are dentists or doctors. And it said in this book that right now the Canadian economy is losing millions and millions of dollars—billions of dollars—for having to need these skilled workers, but the fact is we couldn't place these people because of certifications.

And what this bill is going to do here is it's going to create the opportunity to streamline these

individuals who have the credentials, who have the experience, job experience, and, again, if they don't have the full credentials, then they can be sort of be entry-like, they can be part of the same occupation but be articling under somebody who has more credentials until they get that credential.

One thing I also found out about this issue that my—like the subject my wife took was that there was a lot of situations there, too, was that even when these people—when the individuals came to Canada, they felt that they couldn't certify because they were in entry-level jobs and they couldn't afford to pay for these courses or upgrades that they were required to certify here in Canada.

And I think what we have to do also in Canada, we have to work with—be in internationals, be in different associations and different occupations and professions and making it more uniformed all across the world and so that when we get these people coming in, individuals, they are qualified better. And I think this is a great step because I think a province like—I read that provinces in—Ontario, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Alberta have already been doing this.

I know the member from St. Vital says that it's not good enough, but, you know what, where was his government for the last 16—when they were in power for 16 years and they never did anything like this, you know.

And so we were—it was our—our PC party and our—my colleague that I—when I first started, Bonnie Mitchelson, who was the MLA for River East, she was the one that was—who was the one that was the first minister who started the nominee program. And, I think this basically adds to it, this bill really adds to it.

So my colleague, the Minister of Economic Development and Training (Mr. Eichler), you know, he's been great at this role, he—bringing this bill forward is going to be a big help to our economy.

Like, I have a very good connection with the business community and one of the things that the business community wants is that we really, especially during this pandemic, we got to make sure that we streamline immigration because those individuals will be needed, especially during this pandemic when we need more professional nurses and health-care workers, doctors. This is what this bill will be able to streamline those individuals. But we also need to have, you know, making sure that we, you know, by streamlining this opportunity, it's going to bring these people in.

But we also have to get ready for what's post-pandemic and that's what we have to feel that this is—the vaccine is right around the corner, we've got to get ready for—to rebuild this province after COVID-19 and we were on a good—we were on a very good track with getting outside investment capital. With that outside investment capital that we, you know, Roquette pea plant, we have Simplot right next door which is on a quarter section of land, has created \$1.3 billion of investment capital this province.

And when we have those people, we—when we have this investment coming into this province, these are creating new job.

And I remember one day I was out to Notre Dame, it's a new community that I was—and I went to the employment centre there and they were actually hosting African–French–African immigrants who came to Canada and they want to attract these individuals to work at the Roquette pea plant, and the town of Notre Dame being a French community, they were wanting to attract those individuals to come live in their community and to be part of the community and to prosper as new Canadians.

And I wish I had more time to speak, but I'm going to pass this on to the next speaker who wants to give some more information about this bill. And I support this bill a hundred per cent, its timing, and we've got to pass it through.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to put a few words on the record regarding this bill.

As—in my previous life, when I used to work in the schools and in education, we—I had a ton of exposure to internationally educated teachers and was regularly in conversation with them, because many of these internationally trained teachers and educators were working sometimes in my lunch program.

If they were lucky enough, sometimes they were working in—as EAs in our schools. And we were talking about some of the barriers earlier from the—that the member from St. Vital brought up, and there are some real barriers that continue to exist to getting these internationally trained educators and others into professions that allow them to become part of our Canadian fabric.

I could think of nothing more satisfying than, when a person does immigrate and decide to make Manitoba home, that we need to do everything in our

power to make sure that we tear down the barriers to individuals and their families so that they can feel welcome here.

My experience is a lot like the previous member's statements in the sense that we're sort of around the same age and my parents decided to come to this country and, when asked why they decided to come to this country, you know, you would think that they would say, oh, the opportunity, oh, we came to work and stuff. But you know what their answer was? When I ask my mom, my mom says to me, Nello, I came to this country for the adventure.

\* (16:30)

Now, think of that, right. Think of that and what courage it takes to come for the adventure. And I think of many of our newcomers that come here for the adventure: for the adventure of starting a new life; for the adventure of contributing not only to Canada, to Manitoba, but to their communities.

I think of growing up in my little part of—section of Winnipeg here and how vibrant that time was when I was a little boy. And believe it or not, there was quite an immigrant community that sprung up in the Transcona area and right now, 50 years later, the same is coming true. They're here for the adventure but they're also here to add to our economy so—and not only our economy, obviously, to our cultural diversity.

So when we continue to talk about some of the barriers that are in place, this bill does begin to address some of those pieces but it needs to go further, right. We have—as a province, have been debating this piece in the Legislature for quite some time and we need to find ways to ensure that these barriers that are faced by newcomers are broken down.

What is it going to take to make Manitoba an inviting place, right, and continue so that our newcomers can share their qualifications, their expertise, their desire their—make our place a better place to be. Right, I can think of no higher pursuit than to raise a family successfully, to contribute to your neighbourhood, to contribute to the cultural fabric of this province.

But what we need to do is we need to make sure—and when we look at some of the numbers, we're seeing out-migration from this province by a large number of newcomers that originally wanted to be here in the first place. And what do we have? We have up to 10,000 people that left Manitoba for other

provinces last year. It's one of the worst net out-migration pieces.

So you have to ask yourself: what is it that we're doing that's not working, that's not keeping people here, that's having them move to other parts of Canada, right? And sometimes introspection, reflection—you have to ask some of those difficult questions.

Hopefully in committee we will have the opportunity to flesh some of these pieces out so that we can come up with answers to stop that net out-migration, because that's a real concern. Because I will tell you, although my parents came here for the adventure, and many come for the adventure, they do not like the prospect of leaving because of lack of opportunity, of lack of having the ability to contribute to the place that they want to call their home.

So let's get on that. Let's get on that by looking at qualification recognitions. That takes a lot of work. We don't want to diminish, of course, our own educational and employment standards but what we want to do is we want to have some real dialogue so that we can get internationally trained people sharing their skill set, right.

I look at my own caucus members. The diversity within our own caucus is a reflection of exactly what we want to see and what we want to have happen for our province, bringing so much to our table as caucus members. Not only do we cause to reflect on many of our pieces that we hold dear but actually causing us to think how can we do it differently, how can we be better at this, because there are areas where we can certainly improve.

And we want, Madam Speaker, to make and take real investments in our economy that will keep people in our province. This current Pallister government has cut; let's not, you know, mince words about that. They can talk about, oh, spending this much more than the previous government.

Well, let's remember this government's been in here since 2016; inflation does occur. Priorities change, but our priority needs to make sure that we work for all Manitobans, including newcomer Manitobans.

And we will, during committee and during further debate, ensure that we take those ideas into account so that we can make this bill better. Newcomer Manitobans, current Manitobans, expect us to do that, because just like the member previous said, we are aging; we are going to need this expertise; we are

going to need people to contribute to our economy, to be part of our fabric, right?

I will tell you another story, my own personal story, of the pride my own mother took when she had the opportunity to apply for a Canadian pension, right, her country—and the pride even to this day that she takes to show her Canadian immigration card; oh, flips it over; it's her Canadian citizenship card on the other side. That's why people come to this country, right? How proud they are to feel a part of this fabric and a part of Manitoba. So let's take down those barriers and make sure that that continues to happen.

A few things that I'm a little concerned about. One of them is this: some of the punitive powers that the minister will have afterwards to address credential recognition. You know, this Premier (Mr. Pallister) likes the hammer, the stick: we're going to find everybody that doesn't comply instead of building consensus, right, instead of having dialogue. That power that'll then reside in the minister's office can't be used in that same fashion; you're going to turn too many people off.

Many Manitobans right now are turned off, I'll tell you that, with the Premier that goes on national TV on a weekend and starts scolding an interviewer just wanting answers to a question. That's not how you lead a province. We need to lead with humility.

We need to provide bills—that hopefully that we can, with Bill 41, make it inviting and make it a great place to live, work and be part of community. I can tell you I don't know how many immigrants really feel that they can do that in Manitoba when we have an out-migration.

I remember the member from Burrows telling me that a number of people that he knows have left this province; came here with the full intention of being part and contributing, but have left, have left for British Columbia, have left for other places because of the frustration that they felt in getting their qualifications recognized.

We talk about this province being a province of great diversity; we hope that this bill, when it's adjusted and made with some of the extra pieces that we want to bring, will make that diversity occur every day, will make that diversity a real part of who we are, part of our fabric here in Manitoba.

Now, I just want to talk a little bit about some of the credential pieces because we do have many newcomers that come to our province that have some very impressive credentials, but we need to be able to

find quicker avenues to have them certified in their professions once they arrive here in Manitoba. We have to ensure that people who choose to move can still pursue their passions, right, their goals, their want to be who they trained and who—and have the ability to get that done in the fashion that not only maintains the credibility of a profession but also recognizes all the international pieces and training they've had before.

\* (16:40)

There's a couple of, you know, some very interesting statistics that I've come across that among our working-aged immigrants, age 25 to 54, 43 per cent that hold a bachelor's degree or higher had a difficult time maintaining and acquiring the same profession—or same jobs as a person that is trained in Canada with less education. And, you know, that's a fairness issue that we need to address and—going forward, I'm hoping that we have the opportunity to close some of that earning gap, right, some of that potential that an internationally trained person brings, right. Because getting them out of entry-level jobs needs to be our goal so that they can truly contribute to our economy, right, contribute to being a part of this fabric and piece that we call home here in the middle of the continent and country.

And so, in closing, Madam Speaker, there are some pieces that we do like about Bill 41 but we will in committee and moving forward in debate add some piece—we want to see some pieces added to make this particular bill even better.

Thank you very much.

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** I did just want to get a few short words on the record pertaining—Bill 41, The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Amendment Act. We recognize that this bill makes a number of changes but I believe that this government should be providing some clarification and assurance on the financial side of the bill.

You know, during the question portion of this bill, I asked for a number figure that the Province is planning to spend for the implementation of the bill. And the minister responded by saying we don't have a budget line, per se. And clearly this was noticed, Madam Speaker, because not only myself but the NDP are also mentioning it and elaborating on it and expressing their concerns.

So, Madam Speaker, where is the money coming from, exactly, and how much is being spent with

regards to the collaboration requirement between regulated professional associations and education or employers to develop these programs?

Madam Speaker, this bill speaks to repealing the provisions related to the fair registration practices commissioner, instead providing for the appointment of the director of fair registration practices and assigning responsibilities to the director. Currently, the Fairness Commissioner reports directly to the minister. It is being changed so that the director reports up through immigration Manitoba but with that said, individuals who need assistance will still be able to speak with the director.

This bill further requires regulated professions to take reasonable steps to collaborate with education providers and employers in the development of programs for applicants to meet registration criteria.

Madam Speaker, this is awesome but we all know that Manitoba could be doing a much better job at recognizing credentials and providing opportunities for people to contribute to our economy. As many Manitobans and many members of this House are aware, there are hundreds and thousands of immigrants here in Manitoba who are qualified in their country of origin to practice medicine or to be a certified engineer and these are just a couple of examples. Yet, here in Manitoba, their education and experience is not carrying over through the system.

*[inaudible]* professions are meeting *[inaudible]* I believe there is a way to do this and ensure that credentials are being recognized in a more organized and thorough way. Currently, some individuals wait years only to find out that they have to go renew certain parts of their education or, in some cases, start from scratch. This lengthy process is taking away from our economy and everything people have to offer.

And, you know, I really appreciated the member from St. Vital's remarks. He shared some excellent examples, some real stories and examples that—of people he knows and his own family members who have gone through this and, Madam Speaker, we see right now how much this delay has hurt us during the pandemic.

We literally have thousands of trained nurses and doctors and care providers, educators who are exceptionally skilled and trained individuals, yet they're not being allowed to work. So we need to be doing what we can to better regulate and better understand situations and individuals' scenarios,



review on a case-by-case basis, to ensure that we are furthering our economy the best possible way we can.

And specifically, right now during a pandemic, Madam Speaker, we should be trying to ensure that all hands are on deck. We have these trained individuals. Let's make sure that they can contribute to the economy the way in which they want to.

So with those few words, Madam Speaker, I am looking forward to debating this further in committee, but I would strongly urge this government to provide some supports to regulated professional bodies to fulfill their mandate because we are the—big, big red flag going up with respect to the money and provide clarity on why the day the act comes into force is by proclamation.

Again, we're looking forward to learning more about it in committee and we'll go from there.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak):** It's an absolute honour to be here today, as the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak constituency, to put a few words on record—few facts on record and to share some my own experiences in regarding Bill 41.

Madam Speaker, we know that Manitoba needs well-trained workers and we support efforts to improve qualification recognition, but let's be clear. Bill 41 introduces some process changes that, on its own, will not address the challenge of timely qualification recognition.

Bill 41, Madam Speaker, puts new responsibilities onto regulated professions, allowing the minister to issue regulations and compliance orders onto professions with regard to the processing of qualification recognition.

But in reviewing this legislation, the question we are asking ourselves today is this: Why is Bill 41 actually do—will Bill 41 actually do what the Pallister government says it will do? Namely, I quote, helping qualified internationally trained applicants to get working in their professions. End quote. Faster. Well, just like so much with the Pallister government, this—the answer is no, unfortunately.

Madam Speaker, Manitoba's not going to solve the challenge of credential recognition by giving the minister a new ability to threaten regulated professions with sanctions. Instead, what is required is a sustained focus and significant new resources, both to recognize, train and co-ordinate new applicants with Manitoba's labour market.

However, Bill 41 does one thing for the Pallister government and that is to check off a box on a list at priorities and planning labeled as, Madam Speaker, I quote, election commitments. End quote. The presentation provided to us listed in this bill status as an election commitment multiple times.

Madam Speaker, what we should be asking ourselves is this: What is going—what is it going to take to make Manitoba an inviting place to come to and when—and what is it going to take to ensure those with qualifications from elsewhere get what they need to live to their full potential here in Manitoba?

Clear—on this score is failing miserably. On a net basis last year, nearly 10,000 people left Manitoba for other provinces. That's the worst net out-migration to other provinces in over 30 years. Qualification recognition, Madam Speaker, is part of that problem.

The real challenge is one of opportunity, though. Under the Pallister government, more and more young people are finding their future opportunities in other provinces and more and more newcomers to this province, having first come to Manitoba, are now looking elsewhere for their permanent Canadian home. As I said, a net interprovincial migration of nearly 10,000 people last year. That's the worst such performance of this province.

\* (16:50)

Madam Speaker, the minister is kidding himself if he thinks that this is going to stem this overwhelming tide with the kind of tinkering that is contained within Bill 41.

Madam Speaker, in specific to Bill 41, giving the minister new punitive powers against regulated professions aren't, on their own, going to address credential recognition. It requires collaboration and it also requires investment.

There are also some other changes within the bill which we hope the minister will provide further insight at committee and in further reading. For example, Madam Speaker, Bill 41 removes the position of the Fairness Commissioner. The department tells us that this position will be replaced by a director within the department. After 4 years of consolidation and cuts by the Pallister government, we really need to see more from the minister to reassure us that this change isn't about trying to cut positions and reduce costs. I encourage the minister to provide more evidence to this effect.

And in regards to diversity and our newcomers, Madam Speaker, Manitoba is a province of diversity. In this province we welcome everyone for who they are, including the skills and gifts they learned somewhere else in the world.

Many immigrants in Manitoba have gained impressive credentials where they lived before coming here, but find themselves unable to be certified in their chosen profession once they move here. We need to do more as a province to ensure people who choose to move to Manitoba can still pursue their career, their profession once they move here.

Madam Speaker, between 2015 and 2017, more than 3,000 internationally educated professionals applied for registration in a Manitoba-regulated profession, but only 16 per cent, or 488, of these applicants resulted in full registrations in their professions.

Among working-age immigrants aged 25 to 54, only 43 per cent hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with only 26 per cent of those born in Canada, which makes it significantly higher there. Immigrants aged 55 to 54 with a university degree who were born in Canada—oh, sorry, let me back up. Our newcomers—oh, sorry, let me begin again. These—this earning gap costs the Canadian government an estimated \$50 billion per year.

Now, Madam Speaker, in regards to diversity I wanted to share a personal story about what diversity is. I've always—before I came to this world as an MLA, I was the Representative Workforce Co-ordinator for the University College of the North and basically, the University College of the North believes—basically the policy of the University College of the North has everything to do with what Bill 41 is about, about diversity breaking down barriers, okay.

I wanted to read you the policy statement, something that I held close to my heart each time I entered an interview room, when it was my job to be an advocate to ensure Indigenous people, our newcomers and people with disabilities had a fair shot at an interview and to be screened in and to have that opportunity to compete in jobs and contribute to our economy here in northern Manitoba.

As the RWF co-ordinator, we always went in with this policy on our mind. So, I just wanted to read you what this is: The University College of the North believes it is of the utmost importance to ensure that

its staff complement is built on a foundation of a representative workforce with particular reference to ensuring a representative number of Aboriginal staff, which also includes our newcomers and persons with disabilities.

So, UCN places a high value on responding to the needs of our communities and people and is committed to building and maintaining a representative workforce. UCN is situated in the heart of northern Manitoba where at least 65 per cent of the population are of Aboriginal ancestry.

UCN's mission will ensure northern communities and people will have opportunities, knowledge and respectful—oh, and skills to contribute to an economically, environmentally and culturally healthy society inclusive and respect of—respectful of a diverse northern and Aboriginal values and beliefs. In order to ensure that UCN's programs and services meet the unique needs of our population, the knowledge and contribution of representative workforce staff are required in all areas of UCN.

There were many opportunities, once again, where I'd be—sat in many interviews and the common theme that I have 'accountered' with interviewing our newcomers that have moved to Canada, Manitoba, and the Pas, and it was quite frustrating.

Like, for example, I was doing an interview in Thompson at the UCN northern campus there. We were interviewing for a position, a cashier position, at a restaurant within the UCN campus. So we get many qualified or unqualified resumes, cover letters, submitted our way, and our job is to screen in and screen out.

And, of course, with my job that I was very, very proud of, and still am—unfortunately, that position is no longer there at UCN—so what my job was to do was to ensure our applicants will be screened in. And I recall this one example that really got me frustrated, was when an individual had moved to Canada, moved to Thompson with his family, and in India he was an accountant.

So when he moved here it was hard to, if you will, go through the process of the credentials and what not. So what does he do? In order to work for his family—work very hard to provide for his family—he applied for that cashier position at the Pita Pit in Thompson. And I was surrounded with other folks that were screening in, and guess what? This individual was

screened out. And guess what the reason was? Too overqualified.

What? I never understood that, not at all, especially when it comes to where folks who are coming here, especially what the topic is, here today, is about. This individual probably had a hard time going through the process to get his credentials and now he's being screened out for a cashier position.

So, Madam Speaker, because of my advocacy I pretty much put my—slammed my fist on the table and I said, I'm tired and sick and tired of hearing of our folks being too overqualified. So I gave my reasons why he should be screened in, and guess what, Madam Speaker? He was screened in and he was hired.

So this is why it's important to get—break down these barriers, but unfortunately, many of our

newcomers have to face exactly what this man had to face in applying for a cashier job when his profession, his education and training is as an accountant.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I think this is why Bill 41 should go further in ensuring that these barriers are broken down for the families that I've dealt with and the people that I've interviewed throughout my career in human resources at the University College of the North.

And it was always great to see The Pas and Thompson become—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 16 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m. this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. on Monday.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, November 26, 2020**

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