

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

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**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

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

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

**Madam Speaker:** Good afternoon, everybody.

Please be seated.

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 219—The Health Care Accountability  
and Timely Access Act  
(The Health Care Act and Amendments  
to The Health Services Insurance Act)**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Tyndall Park, that Bill 219, The Health Care Accountability and Timely Access Act (The Health Care Act and Amendments to The Health Services Insurance Act); Loi sur l'accès à des soins de santé dans des délais raisonnables et le principe de l'imputabilité (Loi sur les soins de santé et modification de la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Gerrard:** Madam Speaker, this bill establishes the health care act and amends The Health Services Insurance Act. It acts to—adds the fundamental principle of accountability as a principle, which will be taken into account in the delivery of health care. In addition, all Manitobans are provided the right to timely access to quality health care based on the best scientific evidence, and also they are given the right to be fully informed about their medical situation.

Thank you.

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

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Standing Committee on Justice  
First Report**

**Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, I wish to present the first report of the Standing Committee on Justice.

**Clerk (Ms. Patricia Chaychuk):** Your Standing Committee on Justice—

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Madam Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your Standing Committee on Justice presents the following as its First Report.*

**Meetings**

*Your Committee met on November 30, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.*

**Matters under Consideration**

- **Bill (No. 9) – The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act/Loi sur le recouvrement du montant des dommages-intérêts et du coût des soins de santé imputables aux opioïdes**

**Committee Membership**

- *Hon. Mr. CULLEN*
- *Ms. FONTAINE*
- *Ms. GORDON*
- *Mr. MICKLEFIELD*
- *Mrs. SMITH (Point Douglas)*
- *Hon. Mrs. STEFANSON*

*Your Committee elected Mr. MICKLEFIELD as the Chairperson.*

*Your Committee elected Ms. GORDON as the Vice-Chairperson.*

*As per the Sessional Order passed by the House on October 7, 2020, Rule 83(2) was waived for the November 30, 2020 meeting, reducing the membership to six Members (4 Government and 2 Official Opposition).*

**Bills Considered and Reported**

- **Bill (No. 9) – The Opioid Damages and Health Care Costs Recovery Act/Loi sur le recouvrement du montant des dommages-intérêts et du coût des soins de santé imputables aux opioïdes**

*Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.*

**Mr. Micklefield:** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Southdale (Ms. Gordon), that the report of the committee be received.

*Motion agreed to.*

## TABLING OF REPORTS

**Madam Speaker:** And I do have a report to table.

I am pleased to table the following report: A Proposal to Modify the Voting Process Under Section 28.1(1) of The Elections Act, titled Vote Anywhere in your Electoral Division on Election Day, dated November 2020.

Ministerial statements?

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Siloam Mission

**Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière):** As a very challenging year winds down to a close, the Christmas season is upon us. With the struggles we are currently facing as a society, most of us can turn to our families for love, comfort and solace. There are many in our communities, however, who do not have that stability and not only face loneliness and lack of supports, but also poverty.

Thankfully, there are a number of compassionate, goodwill organizations in our city who exist solely to help those desperately in need. Siloam Mission is one such organization whose mission, as a Christian humanitarian organization, is to assist those affected by poverty and homelessness, and help them through their most difficult times by giving them opportunities that they could never have found on their own. Those with nowhere else to turn find themselves in a place that gives them hope, starting with a warm meal and includes clothing and shelter.

Siloam Mission, and similar organizations, rely on donations in order to exist. These donations are crucial, to assist them in maintaining their daily operations and giving them the ability to expand their services. Donations of clothing provide their guests with essentials to keep them clothed and warm, especially in the most bitterly cold winter months here in Manitoba. Food donations are the lifeblood that feed those in daily need of nourishment.

I have volunteered for Siloam in the past by delivering donations of food and clothing, as well as serving food to their guests. This year, more than ever, I urge you to do your part to help those in need. In order to assist this in our community, I have partnered with Siloam Mission and have set up a food-clothing donation bin—an accessible location.

We'll be accepting new canned, boxed and packaged non-perishable items, as well as winter clothing items such as coats, sweaters and blankets. Your contribution is one that will help many this Christmas season, and beyond.

Last Friday, I spoke with Jim Bell, the CEO of Siloam Mission, and he wishes the best to all of our members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

In closing, I wish all of you a safe and blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### Premier's Leadership Record During Pandemic

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** In times of crisis, who a person truly is and how they choose to lead is laid bare for all to see.

So let's continue our review of how the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has responded in the time of COVID: cut inclusion supports for students; interfered, again, with the U of M collective bargaining; knowingly gave out thousands of expired masks to child-care centres, nurses, correctional centres, PCHs and schools; told child-care centres they had to prove that the masks were expired; hoarding \$85 million in federal funding for schools; hasn't hired enough teachers and EAs despite educators being exhausted—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:**—cut home-care supports; closed the Grandville hospital; closed the Roblin ER; closing the IV clinic—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:**—in Transcona; refuses to take over the Maples Personal Care Home and the—Parkview Place, despite rising deaths still; closing Concordia CancerCare this week; cut five senior health-care positions from the Southern Health region; shames small businesses while turning a blind eye to a church blatantly breaking code red restrictions; leaves out photographers, DJs and other wedding businesses from the Bridge Grant and refuses to include them; asks volunteers to do their contact tracing; today, raises Manitoba Hydro rates for all Manitobans; blames Rosemary Barton.

Madam Speaker—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Fontaine:**—my message to Manitobans is that, when somebody shows you who they are, believe them, because this is who the Premier of Manitoba is.

Miigwech.

### Divya Sharma

**Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley):** Today, I have the great pleasure of delivering a private member's statement

to honour grade 11 student and Waverley constituent Ms. Divya Sharma for her positive work in the community.

When Manitoba schools went into lockdown during the onset of the pandemic, it became a time of reflection for Divya, a 16-year-old Fort Richmond Collegiate student. She wanted to use the extra time the pandemic awarded her to demonstrate her deep-found appreciation for Manitoba's essential workers.

This led Divya to reach out to her local banks to fund her new initiative to create care packages for police officers and truck drivers with the help of her family and friends. With the success and gratitude of this initial venture, Divya applied for a \$750 grant from the #RisingYouth organization to create care packages for the front-line health-care workers of Victoria General Hospital and the Health Sciences Centre. Through her donations, she was able to show solidarity to our community's hardest working heroes by creating and delivering over 250 care packages.

Divya's idea was inspired by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which she had learned about in her social studies class. The past summer, the UN SDG action campaign launched a call for stories of solidarity, and I am proud to announce that Divya was one of 50 individuals around the world who were recognized for their heart-warming and impactful acts of humanity, inspiring resilience and hope in the ongoing health crisis. For this she has been recognized by many, including her school division, CTV News and the Winnipeg Free Press.

Seeing the smiles on people's faces of all immense gratitude, she was inspired to go even bigger. Looking to expand her project on a national level, Divya was recently awarded a grant from the #RisingYouth organization. She plans to use the \$5,000 grant to create 1,800 additional packages for front-line workers all over Canada in every province and territory. She remains, however, firmly rooted in south Winnipeg and Pembina Trails.

While Divya appreciates the recognition, her heart is truly in the right place.

Madam Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honouring Ms. Divya Sharma for her positive work in the community and for all the lives she has touched through her care package project.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Westman Families of Addicts

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** Watching a loved one battle addiction is one of the hardest things that a family can go through. Madam Speaker, 23-year-old Tyler Lalonde lived with addiction for more than four years. After many attempts in seeking help, including moving to B.C. to access treatment, Tyler has been in recovery for over two years. Tyler is currently employed supporting others living with addictions: truly an inspiration.

\* (13:40)

In 2017, Tyler's mother, Danielle Lalonde Smith, founded the Westman Families of Addicts out of a need of support to deal with the trauma of addiction crisis within families. What Danielle thought would be a small coffee group turned into a support group helping over 350 families with advocacy, resources and fighting for the supports they sorely need.

I met with the group where they shared their struggles with me. They shared the pain that they felt at the loss of a child, the expenses they've endured—many mortgaging their homes to access timely addictions—for their loved ones—and how they continually advocate for a medical treatment centre.

The Pallister government has failed to provide a continuum of care for Manitobans struggling with addictions. There is currently only 28-day treatment, which can be increased by only one week. This is not nearly enough to support people recovering.

Westman Families of Addicts want to see safe consumption sites that are medically staffed, with a six-month treatment centre with supported housing for a further year. They also want naloxone to become an 'unsched' drug. Finally, the group would actually like to hear from either of the MLAs from Brandon, who have yet to contact them.

These mothers want—what these mothers want more than anything is addiction treatment services so that no other families have to go through what they have.

The Pallister government needs to stand up and implement these calls to action immediately.

What if this was your child?

### Provincial Parks

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Provincial parks are an essential public service. They were a lifeline for many Manitobans this summer during the pandemic. Our parks provide access to nature and its gifts, from

vigorous canoeing to calm reflection, from a glimpse of history to a sampling of Manitoba's biodiversity, from fishing in summer to cross-country skiing in winter.

Naomi and I had three days in the Whiteshell Provincial Park this year. We hiked part of the Mantario Trail. It is a great place for nature, when— which Oscar Wilde defined as a place where birds fly around uncooked. There were eagles, loons, pipits, rusty blackbirds and many more, all flying free.

Sadly, the Pallister government has severely cut the staff who support our parks and who address ecological issues like climate change. Sadly, the Pallister government has commissioned a major study of our parks with the primary objective to increase visitor spending, revenues and cost recovery.

While I'm for wise spending, our 'primere' objective in parks should be enhancing health and learning about history, the natural world and the physical exercise we get in our parks gives extraordinary health benefits.

John Ratey, in his book, *Spark*, highlights science, showing that physical exercise builds and conditions the brain. Putting exercise first can be— Florence Williams, in her book, *The Nature Fix*, reviews science showing that forests and lakes decrease stress, help our mental well-being and increase our immune-boosting cells. Richard Louv, in his book, *The Last Child in the Woods*, shows how our parks can decrease the symptoms of ADHD and save our children from nature deficit disorder.

I call on our Province to focus on parks as nature, health, beauty and wonder, and not as just another place to monetize and privatize. *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please.

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Grandview District Hospital Staffing and ER Services

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, people in Grandview and Tootinaowaziibeeng and other surrounding communities have continued to reach out with their concerns about the closure of the hospital in Grandview.

Now, they were told that this closure was temporary, but after meeting with some of these folks, I have to say that they are very, very concerned that they are never going to see that hospital or emergency

room reopen again. It doesn't look like the Premier will keep his word on that front because at the Premier's direction, all of the staff, all of the equipment, all of the drugs were moved out of the hospital. But why? And to where?

Why did the Premier take all of the prescription medication needed for patients out of the Grandview hospital?

**Madam Speaker:** Could we just pause for a moment, please. There appears to be a problem with one of our screens.

Just for information of the House, there has to be a computer reboot, and that is currently happening right now, and until that happens, it will just pause.

Okay, apparently, we're ready to go again, and we'll ask—I'll call on the honourable First Minister to respond.

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** I want to thank the front-line workers at Grandview for being adaptive in this situation and supporting the folks who are in a PCH in Grandview. That's great work, and we thank them for that, and we'll continue to make sure we adapt in response to the challenges of COVID.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Well, Madam Speaker, it is very concerning for people in Grandview and Tootinaowaziibeeng that the Premier would move all the prescription medication out of the hospital. Doesn't really make a lot of sense if this is, in fact, a temporary closure.

Again, not many of those prescription meds are going to expire in the next few weeks, so why, in fact, would they move all those important life-saving medications out unless they were planning to close the hospital on a permanent basis?

Again, it seems like so much effort to move all of that stuff over to the PCH if they're then going to move it all back to the ER in just a few weeks' time. So much effort, in fact, that it probably would've been easier just to hire people to go work into the care home directly.

Madam Speaker, why is the Premier and his Minister of Health—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —so intent on closing emergency rooms and hospitals in rural Manitoba? *[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** So much effort on the member's part to conjure up fear and start conspiracy theories, Madam Speaker, when, in fact, it would make eminent good sense to, I think, most people to suggest that when patients are moved that the medications they need move with them.

I would suggest to the member, he not being a health expert, he might like to consult with Lanette Siragusa, who is one of our health team leaders, who said that this was an essential move, and I would also re-emphasize to the folks at Grandview, a temporary closure of their ER and their hospital, not as the NDP did, a closure of 17 different facilities, most in the Parkland area, and never any of them reopened, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** I'm just going to advise the members, although they would've all received some—an email about it, but we are being videotaped right now for educational and public relations purposes.

So I'm just going to ask everybody to please be on their best behaviour, because you are going to live for a very long time on videotape.

The honourable—[*interjection*]

\* (13:50)

I'm hoping everybody just listened to what I just said.

**Mr. Kinew:** You know, the people of Grandview have had a fear for many years that their emergency room would be closed, that their hospital would be closed. Unfortunately, under the directions of this Premier, those dark fears have come to pass.

Again, we know that there were alternatives. To take just one alternative solution, why did the Premier refuse to call in the military to staff up the personal-care home? We saw in the Opaskwayak Cree Nation that the military made a difference there. They stabilized an outbreak. And yes, they saved lives. Had the military been called in to Grandview, you could have staffed up the personal-care home while still ensuring that the emergency room and hospital were there to save the community.

Why is the Premier's answer always to cut first instead of thinking of new and innovative approaches that would actually help people get through the pandemic?

**Mr. Pallister:** A pretty ironic response, coming from the NDP, who called on governments to defund the

police; whose position, federally, has always been to reduce funding support for the military itself. Madam Speaker, cut, cut, cut, that's all the NDP ever do when it comes to the military or police forces in our country.

Madam Speaker, the NDP closed the facilities in Shoal Lake, Winnipegosis, Reston, Rivers, Baldur, Wawanesa, McCreary, Erickson, Rosssburn—and that's only a fraction of the facilities they closed. We'll reopen Grandview. In the meantime, our leading health-care authorities are advising that the best use of our front-line resources is to protect our seniors in Grandview, and that's exactly what we're going to do.

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

### **Home-Care Services Staff Shortages**

**Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Madam Speaker, the Premier's statements just don't match the reality that seniors are seeing across the province. If you want to protect seniors, not only do you need to be able to adequately staff up a personal-care home, you also have to have home-care services in the community. Have they provided this needed service, these health-care services to keep people healthy at home? No, they have not.

I'll table some freedom of information documents that prove, that illustrate in stark detail the cuts that this Premier has ordered at the Cabinet table. Before the pandemic, earlier this year, right here in Winnipeg, there was 14 per cent positions empty in home care. What happened during the pandemic? It actually increased. At the most recent data point that we have, 15 per cent of positions for home care were empty.

Why is the Premier cutting home care in the middle of a pandemic?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Well, let's give the member just an unfortunate illustration of the record that the previous government had and what we've had to face up to, Madam Speaker.

In terms of personal-care homes, they didn't build any new ones. In fact, the wait times to get into personal-care homes were as long as they had ever been in Manitoba history. We've whittled those wait times down. We've got our seniors now into accommodation in personal-care homes. And we've increased our Health budget over two thirds of a billion dollars more than the NDP ever invested in health care, right now in Manitoba.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Manitobans, especially Conservative voters, are frustrated with this government because they're spending more and getting less. Even though there's more nominal dollars going out the door, Madam Speaker, there's less health care actually being delivered to Manitobans.

The document that I tabled shows that 15 per cent of home—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Kinew:** —care positions are empty in the Winnipeg Health Region. When we go outside the Perimeter, it's even worse. In the Southern Health Region, they're 27 per cent short-staffed when it comes to home care. When we go to Prairie Mountain, they're 26 per cent short-staffed when it comes to home care.

There's more money being spent, but there's less care at the bedside, less care in the community. That is an indictment of this government's failure to get it right when it comes to health care, failure to get it right when it comes to the second wave of COVID-19.

The question is simple: How many home-care patients aren't receiving health-care services because of the Premier's cuts?

**Mr. Pallister:** I note the change in narrative, as do my colleagues. The member now talks about spend, spend, spend when it comes to health care. He's right, we are spending more than any government in the history of Manitoba. And we are getting better results. We're the only province that shortened our waits.

The NDP ran waiting rooms—they called them emergency rooms, but they weren't, they were waiting rooms—the longest waits in the country, Madam Speaker—the longest waits: hours and hours and hours.

One province, only one in the federation has reduced its wait times in emergency services, Madam Speaker, and that's Manitoba under this government.

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

**Mr. Kinew:** Madam Speaker, let's bring it back to seniors. Let's bring it back to the question that the Premier refuses to answer.

We're talking about seniors who are not getting help taking their needed medication. We're talking about seniors who aren't able to bathe for days on end.

We're talking about seniors who, under this minister's watch, under this Premier's watch, under this Cabinet's watch, are not able to change their clothes for weeks.

That is the very nasty, ugly truth of what happens when you cut home care. That's the reality of what seniors have to live with.

We're talking about approaching 30 per cent vacancies outside the Perimeter, 15 per cent vacancies inside the Perimeter. That is shameful. The record when it comes to personal-care homes is shameful.

Is there anyone on that side of the House that will actually stand up, speak truth to power and stand up for Manitoba's seniors?

**Mr. Pallister:** What would be truly shameful, Madam Speaker, is an attempt to achieve some kind of phony, temporary political advantage on the backs of fear mongering that would especially impact negatively on Manitoba seniors.

The member is desperate and now wants to reference polls. He should remember and look within his own caucus as to the cause of a fundamental rebellion that occurred within the NDP government concerning polls, Madam Speaker.

The poll we care about—[*interjection*]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pallister:** —is serving the people of Manitoba, and that's exactly what we're doing.

We're focused on fighting COVID. The members opposite are focused on fighting among themselves.

### **Internationally Educated Nurses Barriers to Accreditation**

**Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** Madam Speaker, last week I again urged the Minister of Health to take action to get internationally educated nurses onto the job. I explained that, because of expired English test scores, dozens of otherwise qualified nurses are not able to work.

The minister responded, and I quote: The blockade has been removed and those nurses have now been designated with the proper credentials and are entering the workforce. End quote.

That's not true. And dozens of internationally educated nurses remain off the job.

Why has the minister misled this House?

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** The member has erroneous information and she should check her facts.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** Madam Speaker, there are dozens of internationally educated nurses who have completed bridge training. However, their test scores have expired. They have job offers in hand and are ready to work. I have asked this minister now many times to resolve this. He tells the House this issue is resolved, but I assure you, it is not.

Nurses sought clarity, and the response they received, which I table, was, quote: Unfortunately, there is no further information to share. End quote.

Dozens of internationally educated nurses cannot get on the job.

I ask the minister again: Will he directly intervene to ensure that these nurses can get to work now?

**Mr. Friesen:** This government was proud to work collaboratively with the Manitoba College of Registered Nurses to be able to facilitate exactly what that member is referring to. I ask that member: pick up the phone and phone the college and see exactly where this is at.

But I will take this opportunity to say, Madam Speaker, on the subject of getting things done, I would also note for all members that today, after first promising to do so and then working hard to get it done, today becomes day No. 1 for the College of Paramedics of Manitoba.

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

**Ms. Marcelino:** Madam Speaker, Manitoba is actively driving nurses away with its barriers to accreditation and unfair out-of-province licensing processes. I urge the minister to help resolve these challenges, because health staffing shortages have been identified as our chief vulnerability in this fight against this pandemic.

Right now, we have qualified nurses stuck, waiting to challenge that test so they can accept a job. We also have licensed out-of-province nurses wanting to work here, mired in red tape. We're in an emergency situation and we really need the Pallister government to take exceptional actions to ensure that fully qualified nurses can work.

\* (14:00)

I ask now, for the ninth time: Will the minister take urgent action to ensure we get internationally educated nurses and licensed out-of-province nurses working in Manitoba?

**Mr. Friesen:** The member forgets that I was, at one time, the critic for health care—as were you, Madam Speaker—and we both saw, for years and years, the NDP government do nothing to facilitate the entrance of internationally educated nurses to Manitoba. We were proud to work with the college, resolve these things.

That member has only to lift the phone and contact the college to get the assurances she wants. However—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order.

**Mr. Friesen:** However, on the subject of getting things done, I note, as well, it's the best day in seven days for the Health Links-santé-Info Santé, where 273 calls were answered and the wait times are lower.

#### **Transfer of COVID Patients to Selkirk Mental Health Centre Safety Concerns**

**MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station):** It's disappointing for the minister to call this the best day when, unfortunately, 16 families are mourning the loss of their loved ones due to COVID-19 today. And we send our condolences to those families.

Madam Speaker, this government is opening an isolation unit for COVID-19-positive mental health patients at Selkirk Mental Health Centre because existing capacity at Health Sciences Centre is reaching capacity.

We've heard from families of patients at Selkirk Mental Health Centre, as well as staff, who are concerned with this decision. As they put it, why would the government decide to deliberately introduce COVID-19 to a facility which is currently virus-free? The decision is putting the safety of staff and other patients at the centre at risk.

Will the minister listen to the concerns of staff and—at Selkirk Mental Health Centre and reverse the decision to put COVID—

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

Order.

**Hon. Cameron Friesen (Minister of Health, Seniors and Active Living):** Well, Madam Speaker, there they go again. The NDP is trying to play Chief

Provincial Public Health Officer in the province of Manitoba. Only, Manitoba already has one of those, who is doing an exceptional job of keeping Manitoba safe.

It's time for the NDP to stop trying to undermine the health leadership in a global pandemic and get on board and be part of team Manitoba.

When will this minister—when will this member commit to doing exactly that?

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Madam Speaker, forcing staff who are trained in psychiatric care to work in an—acute care at a moment's notice shows a lack of foresight on the part of this government and the minister, and it shows how out of touch they are with the realities of an acute-care environment.

The staff at Selkirk Mental Health Centre do not feel they've been adequately prepared to provide the acute care needed for COVID-19 patients, and they're worried that this decision will expose themselves, their families and other patients to the virus.

Instead of forcing mental health care professionals to expose themselves to COVID, will the minister commit to hiring and training more nurses to work in acute care right now to fight COVID?

**Mr. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, there they go again, reflecting on the work of our system leaders in a global pandemic.

Madam Speaker, it is clear that there is a plan for Manitoba that relies on everyone working together to redeploy resources, to redeploy workforce. When these things are done, they are done well. Patients are cohorted; there are plans for safety; there are plans for infection prevention and control.

But, Madam Speaker, I don't think they're really interested in that. They're just interested in trying to undermine the health leadership during a global pandemic. We think that's regrettable.

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

**MLA Asagwara:** Madam Speaker, we're reflecting on the failures of this minister, and the facts are simple: had this government planned ahead to appropriately hire nurses and staff up our acute-care facilities and put proactive restrictions in place, we wouldn't be facing this capacity issue right now.

The staff at Selkirk Mental Health Centre are concerned that their health is being put at risk, and they have every right to be concerned. Not only are they being asked to provide acute care, which they don't feel prepared for, they're also not receiving adequate communication from this government about the type of care they're expected to provide and what additional measures are going to be taken to ensure the health and safety of everyone at the centre.

Will the minister commit to hiring and training more nurses, rather than shifting the pressure onto other health-care facilities?

**Mr. Friesen:** Madam Speaker, today, all across Manitoba, there are system leaders, front-line workers, system planners, doctors, nurses, allied health workers, working collaboratively, working together to put the focus on keeping Manitobans safe, even while the NDP still serve—or choose to focus on their narrow self-interest.

Madam Speaker, today is about two weeks since the time when the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) made accusations about front-line workers, nurses in Steinbach. Will today be the day when she rises in her place and apologizes to the House?

#### **MPI Conciliation with Brokers Release of Conciliator's Report**

**Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** The government interfered with MPI, forcing it to give a massive deal to the brokers. That cost Manitobans money. To cover up their interference, they ordered a conciliation process in July 20, 2019, but there has been no information since then.

When will the minister show Manitobans the conciliator's report?

**Hon. Jeff Wharton (Minister of Crown Services):** Unlike the NDP, we will not mingle in the operations of MPI or any Crown corporations, Madam Speaker.

We—the conciliator was hired to do a job and that's exactly what the conciliator's been doing for the last several months. We're looking forward to that report.

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

**Mr. Sandhu:** The Pallister government's interference in MPI is costing Manitobans tens of millions of dollars. The conciliation process was supposed to be completed by now. The agreement with the brokers will expire in February.

Will the minister tell the House: has he—has the conciliation finished, and when it is, will he release the report?

**Mr. Wharton:** Again, this government will not get intermingled with the issues at hand. That's why a conciliator was hired by—by the way, Madam Speaker—by IBAM, by MPI, chosen in collaboration to ensure that a deal would be struck and a deal would be the best for Manitoba ratepayers. And that's exactly what they're working on.

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

**Mr. Sandhu:** The minister and the Premier's (Mr. Pallister) interference are costing Manitobans tens of millions of dollars. The government said it was bringing in a conciliator in order to address the conflict of interest this Premier has with the brokers. This would be open.

Will they release the report and when will they do so?

**Mr. Wharton:** Certainly, we were very pleased to announce yesterday, in collaboration with MPI, Madam Speaker, that the ratepayers of Manitoba will be receiving another \$69 million in rebates. That is approximately \$100 per ratepayer.

In a time where Manitobans are suffering through this pandemic, Madam Speaker, MPI and our government are helping.

#### **Caregiver Wage Support Program Equitable Distribution Concerns**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** The \$5 wage enhancement isn't being applied equitably in Manitoba. We've heard from another front—a number of front-line health-care workers, who are voicing their concerns.

One such worker tells us workers in hospitals are ineligible for the benefit, even if they are seconded to work in a personal-care home or work solely with our seniors, Madam Speaker. This is inherently inequitable when so many front-line health-care workers are putting their lives at risk every day, just to come into work.

\* (14:10)

Will the minister reconsider this and ensure the work of our front-line health-care workers is rightfully rewarded?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families):** Well, Madam Speaker, I was proud last week to announce a \$35-million program for—our new Caregiver Wage Support Program, providing \$5 wage—a top-up for more than 20,000 front-line workers in care settings in Manitoba.

I guess I would ask the member: does she say that those 20,000 Manitobans don't deserve this wage increase, Madam Speaker, during this very difficult time?

Madam Speaker, we will stand up for front-line workers while members opposite seem to be wanting to stand down. Shame.

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

**Ms. Fontaine:** Obviously, the minister didn't hear the question.

The top-up is being applied inequitably, Madam Speaker, and is being focused on areas that her government has allowed to fall in despair. And as our NDP team has repeatedly shown, vacancy levels in personal-care homes are at—such as those in Prairie region—were bad before the pandemic and have gotten only exponentially worse. Proper human resource planning would have required filling those vacancies and meaningfully addressing the concerns of workers.

Will the minister review the application of the wage top-up and reconsider rewarding health-care providers?

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, Madam Speaker, is the member opposite saying that those people who work on the front lines in Child and Family Services group homes, those individuals who work on the front lines of community living and disability services, shift staff group homes, those that work in emergency placement shelters and CFS, those who work in family violence prevention shelters, those who work in our homeless shelters, those who work in our personal-care homes, our retirement residences and our supportive housing residences—is that what she's saying, that these people don't deserve that wave—wage increase?

I would say we are out supporting those front-line workers who are helping the most vulnerable people in our society. Members opposite should get on board.

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

### **Manitoba Bridge Grant for Small Business Expansion of Eligibility Requirements**

**Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns):** Unfortunately, the Pallister government's other programs are also not working equitably for Manitobans.

We've heard from dozens of other Manitoba small businesses that the Bridge Grant excludes too many businesses and makes funding taxable. It's simply not enough to help small businesses through the second wave of this pandemic, like photographers, DJs, caterers, et cetera, Madam Speaker.

I ask the minister if he's willing to reconsider this program to ensure that the many impacted small businesses get a lifeline.

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families):** Well, Madam Speaker, we have among the generous—the most generous supports available for those small-business owners in Manitoba.

But the member opposite is talking about the—helping wage earners and our front-line support workers in Manitoba, so let me talk about just in the last week alone what we've done for those front-line workers. Not only did we announce the \$35-million program for—new Caregiver Wage Support Program, Madam Speaker, we also announced \$10 million for the Pandemic Staffing Support Benefit, providing disabilities, CFS and child-care agencies with funding for overtime, staff replacement and sick leave.

Madam Speaker, we also announced a new 138-bed isolation 'sate'—isolation site in Winnipeg for the homeless Manitobans—

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

### **COVID-19 and Education System School Closure Decisions**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** When the Premier said that his government would not protect Manitobans from COVID, Manitobans have picked up the slack. Reporting has been so slow, especially of cases in schools, that parents created their own online dashboard, which I table digitally.

It shows 906 cases in 331 schools; 216 of those cases are not yet up on the government of Manitoba's website, and there is a reporting lag of 6.4 days. I also table digitally a chart showing the source of a quarter of cases is unknown.

Now, teachers and principals are hearing about cases and they are having to make the decision as to whether students go home or not.

Why are principals and people in the education system having to make public health decisions?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Our health-care needs have never been higher and Ottawa's share of health-care funding has never been lower, so now is the time to rebalance our national health-care partnerships. And I am pleased to let the House know that the Prime Minister has agreed to have a meeting with premiers to discuss Canada's health transfers, a week this Thursday, December the 10th, which gives us the opportunity to advocate, as we have continued to do, for a restoration of the federal government's meaningful supports for health care in our country.

This was a commitment that the Liberal Party ran on in 2015, that they would have this meeting, and although it is half a decade late, Madam Speaker, I do thank the federal government for finally agreeing to have the meeting. Of course, having a meeting isn't the same as actually taking action on restoring funding for health care, and so that's what the premiers are united in wanting the federal government to do and that's what we hope to achieve a week this Thursday.

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

### **COVID-19 and Small Business Accessibility of Support Programs**

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I'm still hearing from many small businesses they cannot access any provincial programs for support—not the gap program, not the bridge program. The government's own fiscal update, which I table digitally, admits that the PBO numbers are wrong.

Now, Canada's statistics on insolvencies for the third quarter of 2020 shows that Manitoba stands out in the very worst way. We're the only province where consumer insolvency proposals are up by 11 per cent, business insolvency proposals are up by 125 per cent and corporate insolvency proposals are all up by 500 per cent. That's from September before code red.

Is the Premier going to recognize that what he's doing isn't working and act now to bring in new programs to cover income and revenue losses for people and organizations to keep them from going broke?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** We have the most generous programs to support small business in Canada.

Many other provinces' programs have already expired. Many others already had exceptional red-tape

requirements, which businesses cannot meet. They're formidable. Alberta's programs, for example, are a quarter of ours, in terms of supports. British Columbia is much the same.

So I would remind the member that the actual supports being offered by our government to our small business community, developed in partnership and consultation with those businesses themselves, are the most generous in the country.

### **Caregiver Program and Bridge Grant Expansion of Eligibility Criteria**

**Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park):** Yesterday, I submitted a letter to the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and ministers responsible requesting an expansion for criteria of those eligible for the Caregiver Wage Support Program and the Manitoba Bridge Grant. Since then, I've received more feedback from individuals who are truck drivers, security guards, caregivers and hygienists. These are just to list a few, Madam Speaker, who should also be included.

Now, I'm actually optimistic, because when I did this with the Risk Recognition Program the government listened and they did expand the scope for applicants.

So will this government consider expanding the scope of the Caregiver Wage Support Program and the Manitoba Bridge Grant?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, we're a government that listens to Manitobans, and that's why we design important programs like the bridge support program, also the Risk Recognition Program, that you may recall over 80,000—or close to 80,000 Manitobans were supported to the tune of close to \$1,300. That represents close to 12 per cent—12 per cent of our workforce, plus the additional supports that the Minister of Families (Mrs. Stefanson) announced yesterday.

That's why we're one of the broad-based supports of all the provinces in Canada.

### **Caregiver Wage Support Program Government Announcement**

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** Our government continues to support our front-line workers who serve vulnerable Manitobans every day.

Can the Minister of Families update the House on the latest supports we are providing to the heroes who are providing care in our personal-care-home and other group-care settings?

**Hon. Heather Stefanson (Minister of Families):** Well, I want to thank that member. At least she's in support of our Caregiver Wage Support Program, like many, many Manitobans.

\* (14:20)

But last week I was proud to announce \$35 million for the new Caregiver Wage Support Program, providing 20,000 front-line workers in residential care with a \$5 top-up wage.

This investment, Madam Speaker, recognizes extraordinary dedication and sacrifice of our front-line workers in group homes, working with people with disabilities, in our homeless shelters, personal-care homes, our CFS group homes across our province.

We know the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) doesn't want to help those workers, Madam Speaker. We know that members opposite don't want to help those people. But members on our side of the House, members of our government, are happy—

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

### **Labour Relations Amendment Act Request to Withdraw Bill 16**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** The Pallister government has attacked workers ever since it got elected, and now they continue with Bill 16.

I've heard from so many front-line workers that Bill 16 and—how it attacks their rights. This bill makes it easier for employers to fire workers, removes binding arbitration. This will lengthen strikes and lockouts, and it'll make it easier to decertify unions.

Will the minister quit attacking workers and actually stand with them and withdraw Bill 16 today?

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Our legislation is important legislation that really balances the rights of employees and employees and provides accountability, Madam Speaker, accountability in the legislation.

We think it's important to have accountability for the union leaders, to make sure that members have the same information as employers that have had their salaries distributed or known for over a quarter of a century. We would anticipate that union leaders would want the same sort of an accountability for the union leadership.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** Of course, they anticipate it because they never actually talk to union people, they never actually talk to working people.

Bill 16, make no mistake about it, Madam Speaker, is an attack on workplace rights and public sector unions, public sector workers. This government is out of touch with the needs of working Manitobans, and they're actively working to weaken workers' rights.

The fact that this bill was introduced by this government just after their wage-freeze legislation was struck down, shown to be unconstitutional, proves they're not willing to listen, not even to the courts, Madam Speaker.

Why has the Pallister government continuously undermined the rights of working people, and will this minister finally do the right thing for once and withdraw Bill 16?

**Mr. Fielding:** Well, Madam Speaker, we know what the NDP's rules are in terms of consulting people, insulting working people, where they jacked up taxes after they promised not to do it, making life a lot less affordable. Our government is putting \$700 million of tax relief to Manitobans here.

In terms of this legislation, Madam Speaker, it seems like the NDP want a two-tiered type of system of accountability: one set of accountability for their members that have their salaries distributed and for the public to see, and one set of rules for the union leaders that don't want their salaries put to the public.

That's the type of NDP government that you had for 17 years. We're not going to make mistakes, Madam Speaker. We're here to provide a balanced approach in terms of labour.

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

**Mr. Lindsey:** Madam Speaker, this government is ignoring recommendations that were actually made by unions, workers and the Labour Management Review Committee.

This legislation shows the government's disdain for working-class Manitobans. Many front-line workers are risking their lives during this pandemic to provide essential service to Manitobans, and they deserve to have strong workplace rights; they deserve to have a government that stands up and supports

them. They do not deserve to be attacked constantly by this minister and by this government.

Will this minister commit to supporting Manitoba workers for once and withdraw Bill 16 today?

**Mr. Fielding:** Our government is very proud to stand up for working Manitobans by providing more tax relief for Manitobans.

They're paying the same taxes that the NDP jacked up time and time and time again, Madam Speaker. We know what the NDP did in terms of their labour legislation, in terms of a secret ballot—*[interjection]*

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Fielding:** They were opposed to that, Madam Speaker. What this legislation is about is about balancing the acts for workers as well as management and ensuring their accountability.

My question to the NDP is: Why don't they want their members to know what the members of—the leadership are, Madam Speaker?

#### **COVID-19 Financial Assistance Small-Business Support**

**Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry):** Madam Speaker, Manitoba small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and I know many Manitobans are afraid that their favourite local restaurant, store or service will not be around after the pandemic is over.

This government has failed to provide any meaningful financial support for small businesses over the course of the pandemic, and they continue to show Manitoba just how out of touch they are with the real needs of small-business owners.

The Bridge Grant program is simply not enough to get small businesses through the challenging time, and the criteria for what little financial assistance they are offering is just too narrow.

Will the minister commit today to providing a real plan for keeping Manitoban small businesses open?

**Hon. Brian Pallister (Premier):** Madam Speaker, the NDP failed to defend small businesses against Prime Minister Trudeau's comments about tax evasion among small businesses. We rose and defended Manitoba small businesses.

The NDP promised they'd raise small business tax exemption amounts, but they never did. We did, Madam Speaker. They opposed a PST reduction that helped small businesses. We reduced the PST they

raised. They opposed the reductions in property tax, which we brought in. Small businesses benefit and support those changes.

They built up a piggy bank at the Workers Compensation Board and claimed they could manage other people's money better than they could. We rebated that money back to small businesses, Madam Speaker.

They stood in blockades and supported those who would hurt small businesses and the people who depend on industry.

Madam Speaker, we will not join with the NDP in fighting against small business. We will work with our small businesses and support them in a way that the NDP government never did.

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

### Speaker's Ruling

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

On March 17th, 2020, the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) raised a matter of privilege regarding misstatements by the government of what is called the strategic infrastructure budget and how that relates to flood mitigation and flood fighting leading into the spring.

The member alleged that the government's misstatements have obstructed the member in his ability to do his job as an MLA and that they constituted misleading information. The member concluded his remarks by moving, and I quote, "that this matter be referred to a committee of this House." End quote.

The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) and the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) 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 this requirement cannot simply mean the next immediate moment in time in which any one member has the ability to speak in the House. In the

member's opinion, he should be given the opportunity to study and to consult the various experts on the matter, as the case may be, as well as to review the evidence that has been compiled on the matter at hand, before raising the matter in the House.

The procedural authorities give guidance on the matter. Bosc and Gagnon House of Commons Procedure and Practice, third 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.

\* (14:30)

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 and after—pardon me—as soon as practical after becoming aware of the situation. End quote.

It is the duty of the member raising a matter of privilege to give the Speaker an accurate explanation of the 'contextual' reasons to be taken into consideration when undertaking an analysis of timeliness. A general reference to research and consulting with experts does not satisfy the requirements of timeliness. Accordingly, I am ruling that the condition of timeliness was not met in this case.

Regarding the second condition, the honourable member stated that the government gave misleading information about the way strategic infrastructures have been counted and regarding accounting practices. 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, Phillip [*phonetic*], 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 Hickee 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, as it is possible members may have inadvertently misled the House by unknowingly putting incorrect information on the record. In 2007, Speaker Hickee 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

### 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.

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 Wyatt Shemeliuk, Pam Komar, Ray *[phonetic]* Goossen, Devon Wight and many Manitobans.

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

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** 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 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 active cases per capita of all provinces.

The resurgence 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 of COVID-19.

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 including issues with cockroaches, dirty toilets and 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 shut-downs, 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 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 going 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 like Singapore.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) 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.

(2) 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.

\* (14:40)

This is signed by Vanesha [*phonetic*] Schmidt, Raquel Gonzalez, Jack MacAulay and many, many other Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** And my apologies to the honourable member for Keewatinook. I should have called him prior to the last member, but I will recognize him now.

The honourable member for Keewatinook, on his petition.

### Quality Health Care Access

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** Thank you for the apology, Madam Speaker.

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's program of cuts and restructuring in health care have had serious negative consequences, reduced both access to and quality of care for patients, increased wait times, exasperated the nursing shortage, and significantly

increased workload and the reliance and overtime from nurses and other health-care professionals.

(2) Further cuts and consolidation are opposed by a majority of Manitobans, and will only further reduce access to health-care services.

(3) The provincial government has rushed through these cuts and changes and failed to adequately consult nurses and health-care professionals who provide front-line patient care.

(4) Ongoing cuts and changes appear to be more about saving money than improving health care.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government reverse cuts and closures that negatively impact the patients' ability to access timely quality health care.

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will improve the timeliness and quality of care for patients by increasing the number of beds across the system, and recruiting and retaining an adequate number of nurses and other health professionals to meet Manitoba's needs.

This has been signed by many 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 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 government officials.

The sustainable yield of the combined sandstones and carbonate aquifers still has not yet been established by the 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 a concern that the shale will separate the carbonate, and sandstone aquifers will, 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 include 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 risk 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.

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.

#### **Dauphin Correctional Centre**

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is—

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Could the member move his mic down so we could hear him? Thank you.

The honourable member—

**Mr. Lindsey:** Sorry about that, Madam Speaker.

**Madam Speaker:** Oh, there.

The honourable member for Flin Flon.

**Mr. Lindsey:** I wish to present the following petition 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 27, 2020, Manitoba 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 petition, Madam Speaker, has been signed by many Manitobans.

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

The background of—to this petition is as follows:

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

\* (14:50)

(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.

#### **Quality Health Care Access**

**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's program of cuts and restructuring in health care have had serious, negative consequences, reduced both access to and quality of care for patients, increased wait times, exacerbated the nursing shortage, and significantly increased workload and the reliance on overtime from nurses and other health-care professionals.

(2) Further cuts and consolidation are opposed by a majority of Manitobans and will only further reduce access to health-care services.

(3) The provincial government has rushed through these cuts and changes and failed to adequately consult nurses and health-care professionals who provide front-line patient care, and

(4) Ongoing cuts and changes appear to be more about saving money than improving health care.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

(1) To urge the provincial government to reverse cuts and closures that negatively impact patients' ability to access timely, quality health care, and

(2) To urge the provincial government to make real investments in Manitoba's public health-care system that will improve the timeliness and quality of care for patients by increasing the number of beds across the system and recruiting and retaining an

adequate number of nurses and other health-care professionals to meet Manitoba's needs.

This has been signed by Natacha Syganiec, Trevor Broesky and Edward Espino.

#### **Dauphin Correctional Centre**

**Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

To the—number one—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 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.

**Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry):** I wish to present the following petition 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 27, 2020, Manitoba 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 Manitobans.

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

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

And 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 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 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 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 with low incomes.

(6) Cuts within the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority, including the provincial government's closure of 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 regional–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.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

And this petition is signed by many Manitobans.

**Madam Speaker:** Grievances?

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **GOVERNMENT BUSINESS**

**Hon. Cliff Cullen (Deputy Government House Leader):** We're going to call Bill 211 for concurrence and third reading, followed by Bill 18.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider concurrence and third reading of Bill 211, to be followed by second reading of Bill 18.

### **CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS**

#### **Bill 211—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists)**

**Madam Speaker:** I will therefore now call concurrence and third reading of Bill 211, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists).

**Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley):** I move, seconded by the honourable member from Riding Mountain, that Bill 211, the employment standards code act, unpaid leave for reservists; Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé non payé à l'intention des réservistes), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable member for Waverley, seconded by the honourable member for Riding Mountain (Mr. Nesbitt), that Bill 211, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and

Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

**Mr. Reyes:** Today it gives me great pleasure to rise on the third reading of Bill 211, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists); Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé non payé à l'intention des réservistes).

Madam Speaker, this bill will amend the current Manitoba legislation in order to align with the federal law and create coherent leave rules for reservists taking part in military training.

\* (15:00)

Canadian Armed Forces reservists play an integral part and role in Canada's military assisting the regular force. Some reservists may volunteer and be deployed on operations if there are positions available, and that's where Bill 211 comes into play here, Madam Speaker.

As part-time Canadian Armed Forces members, there may be opportunities for reservists to be deployed on active duty or to participate and upgrade the soldier, sailor or airmen or airwomen skills and qualifications in military training to achieve and eventually earn a higher rank or promotion.

However, in the case of Bill 211, for those that have a civilian employer, this bill would reduce the time that an employee has to be employed at their job and therefore make it easier for a reservist to participate in military training. The bill would reduce the time that an employee has to be employed at their job from seven months to three months and therefore make it easier for a reservist to participate in military training.

With respect to reservists, Bill 211 would certainly appreciate that our province would be at the forefront by aligning our legislation with federal legislation, amending the provincial Employment Standards Code by reducing the length that reservists must have been employed from the current seven months to three months.

Our caucus wants to support reservists and their employers in order to make taking leave of their full-time jobs less difficult. When we had explained to both the Canadian Forces Liaison Council and the labour resource management committee that Bill 211 would allow a reservist to take leave from their current employment for military training without the fear of losing their jobs and that an employer must grant leave

for a reservist to take leave for military training after they have reached the minimum length of employment, and that under Bill 211 that the employer would not be required to pay reservists' wage while they are on leave—although they may, some contracts and collective agreements may speak to this situation—we had no objections from both sets of stakeholder groups, Madam Speaker.

Bill 211 will also include an important addition. With the passing of this bill, reservists will be able to take leave from their full-time or part-time employment in order to access treatment for their mental health and any other physical health problem that they suffer as a result of their service. We know there are risk and consequences when you sign a contract for Queen and country, as I once did, Madam Speaker, and here in Manitoba we want to ensure this addition is also included so reservists who are a valuable asset for our Canadian Armed Forces are taken care of, should they require time off for these services.

*Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

I know reservists residing in Manitoba and who are gainfully employed in Manitoba will benefit from the passing of Bill 211 and as legislatures and as Manitobans, we will be assisting in advancing their reservist careers.

Again, to all the members of the Canadian Armed Forces, in particular, the reservists today and to our veterans, thank you for your service.

Thank you.

**Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon):** Hopefully, my microphone is working better and I'm not blowing everyone's eardrums out at the moment.

We've heard what the members had to say about this particular piece of legislation he's introduced and, you know, he says that they want to support reservists. Well, then, why only go half way? Why not go all the way? Why not ensure that part-time employees can take leave and have their employment status guaranteed to be a reservist. Why is it just for full-time employees? Why has the member and this government made that distinction when we recognize really, in today's economy, a lot of particularly—well, I was going to say a lot of young people, but that's not true anymore either, is it? It's a lot of working people in general now, are part-time workers.

So why does the minute—or the member want to preclude them from trying to upgrade their skills or trying to help out when they're needed? Why has he

left them out of the mix when it comes to guaranteeing them leave?

The other thing that this bill falls a little short on is, if a reservist becomes injured, either physically or mentally, in service or in training, this bill doesn't guarantee them paid sick leave, which, really, when you think about it, is one of the key things that a bill such as this should cover. Well, in fact, we've asked the government to step up to the plate and ensure that all workers have paid sick leave, particularly during these COVID times.

Imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the army's called in, the Canadian Forces are called in to provide pandemic assistance, and we've seen that. Certainly, we've seen it in the North, and we'll probably see it in other jurisdictions before we're through with this.

Now, if some of those folks happen to be reservists that are called into action and they become sick with COVID, there's no paid leave protection for them which really leaves them in a bit of a quandary should they go and help out, should they continue to volunteer or should they say, wait a minute, maybe I better reconsider my options here because I can't afford to not get paid.

Certainly, when we don't recognize how long a person may be off sick with COVID or with any other disease, and certainly when we look at reservists who—and we've seen cases like this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where people just in the training phase have gotten hurt, so they don't get to go back to the reserves to finish up sometimes because they're permanently disabled, but now their employment status isn't necessarily guaranteed either, is it? Because they may be unable to work.

So I think, you know, I recognize that the member has a strong link to the reservists and wants to try and do the right thing for reservists in this province, but he's just come up a little short. And I guess I understand why because, certainly, anything we've seen from this government where they've come out and actually done something that's the illusion of supporting working people really isn't. It's—this bill doesn't cost them any money, it merely confirms what the federal government has said should happen.

But, again, I would suggest that if we really wanted to protect reservists and really show respect for them, as we should—I mean, sometimes they're going into situations that a lot of us have never had to and hopefully never will have to endure.

So let's go all the way. Let's support them fully. Let's guarantee that if they become sick or injured while in active duty of active service for their country, that they get fully paid sick leave, that this bill should actually reflect a true commitment, not just to say that, well, yes, they can have their job back if they wish to volunteer—which is a good thing in and of itself. I don't want the member to misunderstand what I'm saying here. I don't want the general public to misunderstand what I'm saying; that while we support this bill, once again it's just falling short of where it should be.

The member talks about reducing the length of time from seven months to three months before reservists can apply for this leave, and we never really did get a full understanding of why the three months. Why not one month? It really, again, may restrict some people, depending on when the opportunity to volunteer comes up.

\* (15:10)

But the big thing—well, I guess two big things, really, that we see as a failing of this bill. The first one is that it only applies to full-time employees, when in fact the same right should be guaranteed for part-time employees.

Some people work part-time jobs their entire careers. Why should they be excluded when, probably from no fault of their own, that is the job that they can get is a part-time job. And we see a lot of people working a lot of part-time jobs.

If they were guaranteed the leave the same as a full-time employee, they may be able to upgrade their skills, which would then lead them to have a full-time job. Which would be a benefit to the country, a benefit to the employers and a benefit to the workers themselves: a win-win-win.

And I guess the other thing that really is lacking in the bill is the absence of recognition that if a reservist on leave gets hurt, physically or mentally, there's no provision to ensure that they will continue to get paid.

So, you know, again, I just want to say that this bill could have been a first step, and I guess it still can be a first step into doing really the right thing, which is truly to recognize people that go above and beyond; to truly recognize people that put their lives on the line; to truly recognize Manitobans that want to make a difference and show that, as a government, we have their backs.

Really, we had the opportunity that—the member had the opportunity to really show that appreciation wasn't just words, that appreciation could, in fact, have been a real thing that showed people that leave for part-time workers was included, that paid sick leave was included.

The member has missed the mark somewhat in really being able to demonstrate that which I think he believes, that people that join the reserves should be recognized, should be honoured. And he could have made sure that that was a tangible benefit that people could put their hands on and say, yes, yes, that member stood up for me, that member really recognized what it means. And that member really and truly showed respect for people that joined the reserves, and really and truly told his government to stand up and show real meaningful respect.

Unfortunately, the member missed the boat on that. It's a good first step, and maybe we can bring another bill in that really takes the next step and shows support for people that join the reserves. Thank you.

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** The member's time has expired.

**Ms. Danielle Adams (Thompson):** I'd like to put a few words on the record on Bill 211. I do support the bill, as this bill does clarify that the reduced consecutive employment period from seven to three months.

While this bill does cover that, this bill does leave—does not cover Manitobans who are part-time employees or underemployed. If they can't afford to take the time off, it makes it harder for them to access their reserve training.

This, like—this bill, like many other bills from this government, is a half-measure. It's about a headline. It's not actually about supporting reservists, which is a shame.

The members opposite could have made the change to include all Manitobans to support and benefit all Manitobans, but they truly don't want that. They just want the headline to make it sound like they're doing something.

On this side of the House, we value workers. It is clear the PC caucus does not value workers or respect workers' rights. They continue to undermine unions. Let's take a look at what the PCs have done during the pandemic alone. They have laid off civil servants and then called them lazy for collecting CERB.

When it was clear this government needed to handle more—needed more workers to handle COVID, instead of calling back those laid-off workers, they called for volunteers. What is—why—what's important because it shows a pattern of undervaluing workers and thinking that they can take paid time off because you can. It shows members opposite are not—I don't know about members opposite, but when I was working in the service sector I couldn't just take extra time off if I needed it.

The pandemic has changed how we look at essential workers. A lot of essential workers are minimum wage workers, and this government doesn't seem to be concerned; they've made no move to make the minimum wage at least \$15 an hour. That is part of the issue with this government.

This bill is only thinking about how will—it'll impact some people and not all Manitobans, meaning they have kept the wage—they've—the wage freeze despite the court ruling. They continually—continuously interfere in collective bargaining, not because they believe it'll benefit Manitobans but because it benefits their donors.

They delayed bringing in sick leave for Manitobans, and I have no idea why they delayed that; it was being paid for by the federal government. They forced 6,000 civil servants to take unpaid time off. This government takes millions of dollars out of our local economy.

This isn't the first time the PCs have tried to balance the books off of the—after—off of Manitobans. Does anyone remember Filmon Fridays? I know that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) does. He was at the Cabinet table when that decision was made. In fact, he liked it so much he's been trying to do it since 2016; he just used the pandemic as a cover.

In the summer they trouted all the savings that they made from the layoffs and underspending of COVID money. They left daycare centres to figure it out for themselves. They told organizations providing supports for people with disabilities to keep your receipts and we will most likely pay you back.

When child-care centres received their first set of PPE, there wasn't enough. When they received their second set of PPE, it was expired masks. Who sends expired masks to daycares and personal-care homes? This government does. That's—that just shows a pattern of not truly caring about Manitobans and what impacts Manitobans.

It is clear this government doesn't support small business. The small—the bridge funding leaves so many small businesses out, it's unreal. They can't call it bridge funding; they should call it selective funding.

The NDP have continued to show how this government policies are hurting Manitobans, and they don't seem to care. Manitobans are struggling, and they need a government who is going to support them, not demean them.

They've questioned doctors. They've still not said anything about the winter break for the kids. Are they going to provide extra supports for families or child-care centres with their increased costs?

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** Order, please. I would just remind the member of the bill before the House this afternoon and encourage all members to keep comments relevant and tied into that bill and to make sure that you're making those connections regularly so there's no question that you are discussing that bill which is before the House this afternoon.

**Ms. Adams:** Thank you, Deputy Speaker, for that guidance. And I was bringing it back around to why this is relevant to Bill 211, because it just shows a pattern of going half measures, and that is something we've seen from this government. It's not about supporting and valuing all Manitobans, it's about supporting certain Manitobans. And that's all I was trying to highlight.

While two bill—while Bill 211 does—is about unpaid reservists, what about our elderly veterans that need support? We've seen what's going on in the personal-care homes. So many of our deaths from COVID have been attributed to personal-care homes and their underfunding of personal-care homes. They're understaffed, they're underpaid, and this government has undervalued them. We've seen—this government hasn't built a single personal-care-home bed since 2016. And these half measures are costing Manitobans—or costing Manitobans' lives.

This government needs to stand up and truly show support for Manitobans. If this bill was truly about supporting reservists, where is it for underemployed and part-time employees? This—as the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) said, what if somebody gets hurt while going into the reservists and are injured while there? Are—there's nothing for them. They're federal, so do they qualify for WCB? Does—are they getting paid sick leave? None of that is involved in this bill.

And, once again, that highlights that this government only truly cares about half measures and good headlines. They want to say, we're supporting reservists, without actually doing the work to support the reservists.

\* (15:20)

This government has abandoned many people. I'm in northern Manitoba and there are so many underemployed people up here in northern Manitoba and this government doesn't seem to care. They are trying to privatize infrastructure and transportation; they're trying to privatize snow clearing; and it just goes on and on about the half measures that this government is doing and making it harder for Manitobans.

They have cut ICU beds; they're cutting CancerCare units; they're cutting IV clinics, and how is that benefiting Manitobans? Once again, this all shows a pattern of half measures.

We, on this side of the House, are calling on this government to stop with their half measures, stop with their cuts and attacking workers and actually truly invest in Manitoba, truly invest in this wonderful, amazing province, and actually invest and show reservists how much they mean and the support.

And what I don't think this government realizes is, as they're attacking the workers, a lot of the reservists who are in—fully employed are being attacked and undermined by this government.

And I don't see the government talking about how they're going to be supporting workers. They just say that if you collected CERB because you lost your job, you're lazy and it's your fault you're unemployed, and that's not the case. And it's your fault you're underemployed and, for many people, part-time employment is just the option. There's so many people, especially in northern Manitoba that are working two or three part-time jobs.

So, if you're working two or three part-time jobs, that equates to full-time employment. And if you're a reservist, you don't get to go to access that training because you're not fully—you're not employed at one full-time job. You have a job and you have three part-time jobs and you don't get to experience that much-needed training. And that, once again, highlights the half measures this government is taking in abandoning Manitobans during this time, and they have continued to make cuts to Manitobans' everyday lives and have done half measures and these half measures need to stop. This government needs to truly

make investments and show Manitobans that Manitobans are their priorities and not their donors.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask members opposite to start thinking what is in the best interests of Manitobans and not in the best interest of their donors, and we have seen from this government's own mandate letters that the cuts—cutting programming in Manitoba is their priority and they've continued to do that with the cuts to post-secondary education. Their interference in all of this and they—any time they find something they don't like, they just cut it and give it to the private sector.

Well, we've seen what happens when the private sector gets involved. Take a look at our personal-care homes. Once again, it's proof of the half measures. They're trying to say they're doing great things for Manitobans but if they really, truly cared about Manitobans, they would take over the personal-care homes and get the private sector out of personal—take over, at least temporarily, for the personal-care homes and make sure that Manitobans are cared for. These are some of our most vulnerable Manitobans and many of them are veterans themselves.

So, for this government to say that they're caring about reservists and caring about military members, they need to actually show up and do the job and actually show up and do the job they were elected to do.

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** The member's time has expired.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Just a few words about this bill which is now at third reading. I want to begin by recognizing the tremendous contribution of those who served in our armed forces, both the regular armed forces and the reserve forces. It's been a tremendous contribution over many years.

Of course, recently, not long ago the war in Afghanistan and the peacekeeping mission in Mali, floods and fires and, this year, in personal-care homes in Ontario and Quebec and, most recently, Opaskwayak Cree Nation in Manitoba, the—our Armed Forces, regular and reserve, made a tremendous contribution—continue to make a tremendous contribution. It's very valued and it's incredibly important and I just want to recognize that first and foremost.

Second, I want to say that I'm pleased to support this bill. I thank the MLA for St. Norbert for bringing this forward—or, for Waverley—and just say, this is needed, it's timely and I think it's a good measure. I

agree that it could have considered part-time workers and it could have considered the possibility of paid sick leave, but at this point, those will have to wait another day and this is a step forward, bringing Manitoba similar to the federal legislation and having leave for mental health or physical health reasons also covered.

So let us move forward with this bill. Let us get it passed and put into effect, and thank all the members for the work that's being done on behalf of reservists from Manitoba as they support good work that our Armed Forces do, not just in Canada but all over the world.

Thank you.

**Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples):** It is my pleasure to be speaking on Bill 211, the employment standards code amendment act.

It is important that we all recognize the incredible contribution that our Armed Forces have made, not just in Canada but all around the world. The Reserve Force is an integral component of the Canadian Armed Forces. Reservists are mainly part-time service—adjacent. They may volunteer for full-time employment or deployment on operations.

They typically serve one or more evenings a week and/or during weekends at locations close to home. Reserve units are located in hundreds of communities across Canada and the world. The majority of the reservists hold civilian jobs or are students enrolled in post-secondary programs. For these reasons, they are sometimes referred to as citizen soldiers.

The Reserve Force has four sub-components: Primary Reserve, Canadian Rangers, Cadet Organizations Administration and Training Service, and Supplementary Reserve. Reservists can be employed on three classes of services. They are Class A, Class B and Class C, and they may serve on more than one type of service at various times throughout their time in the Reserve Force.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Primary Reserve is largely made up of part-time soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen who work in armouries. They are members who have full-time civilian employment or who attend school and who dedicate themselves to the military on a part-time basis. The Primary Reserve has approximately 28,500 members.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all Manitobans value and appreciate who serve—who have served our country. Many of our older veterans are particularly at high risk

during the COVID-19. While no one could have predicted a pandemic, unfortunately, this government did not set up for success, this disproportionately harming older Manitobans, including veterans.

\* (15:30)

We are seeing devastating effects in our PCHs, and also the government continues to fail to act. The deaths, sadly, continue to rise at the Maples PCH. And the Province continues to ignore calls to bring military help for our PCHs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it was heard on Friday, November the 6th that what is happening at Maples PCH—I just went there on Saturday evening. Seeing the family members standing outside, you can feel their pain. They were—just want to know how their family members are doing inside. Whenever someone, employees, come from inside the PCH—Maples PCH, all they were wondering, how their family members are doing. And I have seen some family members even standing outside the windows and watching their loved ones.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'll bring it back to the Bill 211. Primary Reserve serves in communities across Canada. Though reserve units are supported by a Canadian Armed Forces base or wing, many are not physically close to those establishments or the service that they provide by them.

The Primary Reserve is made of the naval reserve, approximately 4,000 reservists in 24 naval reserve divisions; the Canadian arm reserve, approximately 19,000 part-time and full-time reservists in 185 units located in 86 cities; the Royal Canadian Air Force Reserve, approximately 2,000 employed in total force establishments throughout Canada; Military Personnel Command, which includes the Canadian Forces Health Services Reserve—[*interjection*—sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker—16 reserve field ambulances across Canada and the 1 Canadian Field Hospital in Ottawa and the National Defence Headquarters Primary Reserve List, approximately 1,500 members; the Canadian Special Operations Forces Command Reserve and the Judge Advocate General Reserve, approximately 60 legal officers employed on Class A, short-term Class B in various supporting legal roles.

The Supplementary Reserve is comprised of Canadian Armed Forces members who have previously served in the Regular Force or another 'subcomponement' of the Reserve Forces or did not have previous military experience when they enrolled but who do have special skills or expertise for

which there is a military requirement. The purpose of the Supplementary Reserve 'subcomponement' is to augment the Regular Force and the other 'subcomponement' of the Reserve Force.

The Commander, Military Personnel Command, commands, controls, administrations—administers the Supplementary Reserve 'subcomponement.' The Supplementary Reserve has about 67,000 of members. Members of the Supplementary Reserve forces are not required to undertake military training or duty unless they voluntarily transfer or are placed in active service in times of national emergency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, members of the Reserve Force participate in domestic and international operations. Members of the Primary Reserve have made important contributions to CAF operations and continue to participate very actively on the international front.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a question was even earlier raised, why this is three months? Why can't it be two months, one month or one week? Why do we need it three months, here and there? Why there is only for full-time workers? What will happen if a part-time worker wants to do a volunteer service too?

Well, as earlier indicated by the member from the—Thompson, this is only thinking of certain people. This doesn't go—think about all the people. Recently—like, this government is just putting a burden on people that want to do their day-to-day jobs.

Recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had a five class—class 5 driver school training people came and they said they are not qualified to Bridge Grant program. So we are leaving some people behind. Well, there were—they are being told to—not provide the training for class 5, but they are not giving—they are not qualified to have a bridge program—Bridge Grant program. So this is a half measure.

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). Oh, the member for Elmwood's video is not on, and so cannot be recognized.

**Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate being recognized and having the opportunity to speak to Bill 211 this afternoon.

Now, first, I want to begin by expressing my complete appreciation and gratitude for all the service members who are working and serving our military in Canada.

I know, personally, and I've chatted with many people serving in our military, and I know how hard they work, I know the sacrifices that they make to spend time away from their family and friends when they're off in deployment or whether it's being posted around various parts of the country or around the world. And that takes a toll on their individual lives. And I know that it is all because of their deep commitment to serving our country and our national interests and protecting the people of Canada. And so I'm grateful for the efforts that they've put in to making our country a safe place, and thankful for their sacrifice.

Now, in regards to Bill 211, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do think that it's good that it was introduced. And I do still have to echo the comments that have been made by members before me and, quite frankly, express my displeasure and, frankly, disbelief that this bill could be put forward to ensure protections and options available for full-time employees and not share those same benefits with part-time employees. I think that's simply incredulous that, in today's day and age and the atmosphere that we live in, that something like that would be even considered.

And I say that because we are in a huge local, national, global recession where there are people who are struggling to find work. Individuals who are seeking to gain employment sometimes aren't able to go straight into a full-time position. They are relying on part-time work to get them through this difficult economic time.

\* (15:40)

And so, if we have a reservist here in Manitoba who is trying to get any sort of employment and take a part-time employment, and get called to go to military—whether it's a training course or an emergency, they now have to make that choice, make that decision, whether it's to continue working or give up their duties serving as a reservist.

And, you know, I appreciate the member from Waverley bringing in this type of bill but, quite frankly, I wonder if he went and found out how many reservists are out there in Manitoba who work part time, who are, frankly, going to be disadvantaged because they don't seek and aren't able to get the same benefits that full-time reservists are going to get with this bill? Did he find out that information to see how many people are going to have to choose?

Now, any time a bill is being introduced, I like to find out and like to ask the question, who does this

help? Now, if we look at this situation, we have a reservist who's working part time. Well, their employer has hired them because they're a highly trained and skilled individual.

If they get called in and they're part-time person, the employer might be losing their highly skilled and trained worker. The military, if the person has to make a choice, the military might be losing reservists if they choose that it's important for them to have that part-time job.

So neither of them really benefit if they're put in that situation, and, worst of all, either way, the reservist is going to lose. Because either way, they're going to risk losing their part-time job or risk having to give up serving our country as a reservist.

So, quite frankly, I'm—it's shocking that this could be put forward in a time where there's such pressure on our workers and our labour force to find employment. And there is such high unemployment right across our country.

And so I do think that, while I appreciate the sentiment of this bill, there is so much lacking in it. And what—quite frankly, the way the world—you know, when we're looking at presenting bills right now, I think that it's important that we don't just look at the individual merits of each individual bill, as if COVID didn't exist.

You know, you can't separate the introduction of this bill from the time and the place where it's being introduced. And it's being introduced right now where there is large unemployment and it's very difficult for folks to get work. And not having this benefit being applied to part-time workers is very disappointing.

I would also extend to say that studies are showing that right now, our recession that we're in is really what they're calling a 'she-cession,' where females are disproportionately negatively affected by the economic downturn, which means that women are often working more so in part-time work. Which means that if—that female reservists may be disproportionately negatively affected by this bill because it's only benefiting full-time employees.

And, you know, we're in a world where we should be passing legislation that shouldn't just be accomplishing one thing. It shouldn't just be seeking to help some reservists or one area. We can do more than that with the bills that we put forward. We should be helping as many people as we can at one time.

And so we should be looking at ways to help all types of workers who fit into full-time categories, part-time categories, and I think that something that will be put forward to help and not, you know, not spread additional gender gaps between men and women in any field, whether it's reservists or any other type of worker in our economy, which I think this bill unfortunately does.

I do want to also highlight that you look at the role that reservists play. Now, I do remember the member from Waverley's comments when this bill was brought in a few weeks ago, spoke about how positively about his time as a young individual serving in the military, and I appreciate that.

And I wonder how many young individuals today are willing to give up a part-time job, knowing how hard it is to find work? I wonder how hard it is and the choice, and how they might struggle making that decision? And I wish that this bill would be able to actually support those people. It doesn't, but I wish it would.

I also consider, thinking about the people that I know personally in the military right now, that if they chose to give up their active regular duties to go and become reservists—you know, maybe they're looking to slow down their career, have more time, you know, at home with family or friends—that those people, while they might not be prepared for a full-time working position, might feel very comfortable in a reservist, as a reservist, in a part-time employment situation. That might be fitting their needs at the time if, you know, they've worked several years in the military in active duty and choosing to go into a reservist position, looking to take on some part-time work.

Now, after all that time and being—putting in that service to our country, working as a, you know, part-time job in the private sector, not being allowed to take time off their part-time private sector job to go serve in the military is very disappointing and disenfranchising those folks from something that they've worked so hard for.

Now, those are some key points that I made as to highlight this effort to make things a little bit better. And it does make things a little bit better, but we're in a place in our world where we can't just take little steps. You know, this is a great, great challenge that we're facing here with COVID-19, and every bill that we bring forward in this day and age must be up to that challenge. We know that as things go, we make

great changes only when we're faced with great challenges.

And so I would encourage all members, including the member from Waverley, to consider how we can improve all of our bills to help the most people right now because we are facing such a great challenge.

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** Member's time has expired.

The member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith). *[interjection]* Oh, it's not—we have some technical challenges, as I need to see whose video is on or not on.

But I now call the member for St. James, apologies. The member for St. James.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** Yes, apologies for running in there, thought I had a little more time. Still, happy to be here and have an opportunity to speak a bit to this act, the employment standards code amendment.

We know that this amendment will allow for reservists to take an unpaid leave of absence from their employment for purposes of active duty or training. The bill will help to clarify when a leave can be taken, and it will reduce the minimum consecutive employment period from seven months to three, and I think that that's generally a good direction to be moving, and it's pleasing to see that the government has considered to make these small changes.

So, while I am generally in support of these changes, certainly have some thoughts that I'd like to share about this government's record in supporting workers and many of their failures and attacks on labour.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's really important that we value workers in this province. It's really important that we do what we can to ensure that workers are compensated for their work and that workers are protected from employers who do not treat them fairly and that they're protected, ultimately, from governments who seek to erode their rights and their ability to be safe and to be compensated as needed in their jobs.

We have a government right now that is consistently working to erode workers' rights in this province and, frankly, we have a government that just simply does not value workers. And, you know, we know that this government has, over the last several years, had a long track record of cutting public sector jobs, interfering in collective bargaining, continually

trying to ram down unconstitutional wage freezes down the throats of Manitoban workers, forcing them to take thousands of dollars worth of unpaid days off and just a government that continues to erode workers' rights in this province.

\* (15:50)

You know, thinking about some of the mandate letters that went out to our Crown—

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** Order, please. I just would like to remind the member, as I have previously all members, to keep their remarks which remain to the bill before the House and to tie them in frequently if they could give the appearance of wandering. So I would encourage the member to make sure that the member stays on track and keeps in tune with the bill before the House this afternoon.

**Mr. Sala:** I think that the comments that are being made are important. I think that they relate directly to this government's failures in protecting labour and I think that, as a bill that seeks to improve protections for workers, I think it's pretty important that we spend some time talking about the failures of this government in protecting workers and why this bill does not cover many of the gaps that have been left through the failures of this government.

So, I'd like to still—I will do my best to continue to bring it back as I can, but I think it's important that we continue to talk about those gaps that have been created.

You know, looking at some of this government's actions and their failures on the—in terms of ensuring that we respect workers' rights, we can also look at their record in attacking U of M negotiation processes. In 2016, we initiated a strike due to government interference in those labour processes. And they not only did it then; they did it again recently in interfering in negotiations, and another strike was barely averted as a result.

You know, Manitobans need a government that is there for them, they need a government that supports them financially in difficult times, and Manitoban workers need to know that the government is there for them to protect their jobs. They don't need a government that's going to continue to attack them and to undermine workers.

And while this bill, again, proposes changes that I think are generally positive and offers individuals, reservists the opportunity, I think, to get back to service or to serve more quickly and to have additional

protections in those positions. Look, it's not fooling anyone to suggest that this legislation in any way makes this government a champion of Manitoban workers.

You know, thinking about some of the other gaps from this—in this bill, gaps that clearly have not been filled here, we can look at some of the unwanted, unpaid leaves that have been forced down the throats of Manitoban workers in this province. Over 6,000 civil servants were forced to take unpaid days off, 500 not—non-unionized workers were forced to take unpaid days off and that was all to support the government's austerity agenda. You know, they're taking money out of the pockets of Manitoban workers to pay down a deficit and, as usual, are doing this work on the backs of everyday Manitobans.

You know, it's not the first time that the government's tried to balance the books on the backs of Manitoban workers. This is a government—or, this is a Premier (Mr. Pallister) who, of course, was previously in a Cabinet with the previous Conservative government.

And everyone here has, of course, heard of Filmon Fridays. These unpaid days off that this Premier has forced are precisely the same tactic and that is forcing the little guy—forcing everyday Manitobans to bear the brunt of the weight and bear the brunt of the suffering for this government's, you know, attempt at trying to pay down the debt, pay down our debt. And they're forcing this upon Manitoban workers.

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** Order, please. I would, again, remind the member that all comments need to be tied clearly to the bill under consideration this afternoon, and I'm struggling to make the connections. I am listening quite carefully, and I'd be grateful if the member would spell out the connections between this bill and the comments that he's making this afternoon. *[interjection]*

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** The member for St. James (Mr. Sala). I didn't recognize you. My apologies. The member for St. James, please go ahead.

**Mr. Sala:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** And, clerks, if we could give the member an additional 15 seconds in light of my error, that would be, I think, fair.

**Mr. Sala:** Thank you so much for that generous increase in time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate it.

So, again, I do appreciate what you shared and I do want to just reiterate the importance of talking about this government's failures to protect Manitoban workers as it relates to a bill that ostensibly is being put forward to create more protections for Manitoban workers.

It's really important that we talk about the gaps that Manitoban workers are facing when we're talking about a bill that seeks to increase protections for them. So, if we're going to talk about the need for this bill and the validity to it, I think it's really critical that we consider those things as we're having a discussion about improving protections for workers in this province.

You know, we have a lot of Manitobans who are struggling right now. They are struggling to pay the bills. They are struggling to get by. And we've got front-line workers who are really struggling right now. We've got doctors, nurses and other health-care professionals who are having to take time off work if they're showing symptoms or if they've been exposed to somebody who is COVID-positive. That is weakening our ability to care for Manitobans and, ultimately, leaving front-line workers in a very difficult position, workers who should be protected and ultimately able to—not have to make a choice between their incomes and protecting the health and well-being of Manitobans.

You know, talking about the importance of protections for workers, the kind of protections that are being put forward in this bill, most other provinces have decided to do something about that issue, about the lack of protections, and I'm talking about provinces like BC, Quebec, New Brunswick, PEI, Saskatchewan. All of them cover their medical workers for lost income from required self-isolation or illness.

Only Manitoba, Alberta and Ontario are leaving those workers unprotected, and I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there's a clear commonality between those three provinces. They all, of course, share one thing in common, and that is a Conservative government. And, unfortunately, Manitoban workers are suffering as a result.

So, you know, the Province continues to allow this to take place. We haven't contributed a single provincial dollar to paid sick leave in Manitoba and, you know, taking care of our workers, especially in

these kinds of settings, is the bare minimum we should be doing—it's the bare minimum. We should be ensuring that workers, especially in those settings, are protected.

So, you know, talking about the importance of increasing protections for reservists, putting forward these changes again, generally supportive of these changes. I think that they are needed, but if we're going to be making improvements to legislation that is going to do more for everyday Manitobans, for working Manitobans, we should be going much further than this bill does. We should be going much further. We should be looking at closing the gaps, many of which I've identified here today, and I appreciate the opportunity to have put a few thoughts on the record.

Thank you.

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** It gives me pleasure to put a few words on the record in regards to this bill, Bill 211, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists), brought forward by the member from Waverley.

Currently, the Employment Standards Code permits a member of the reserves to take an unpaid leave of absence from their employment for active duty or training. This bill also clarifies when a leave can be taken and reduces the minimum consecutive employment period required for leave from seven to three months.

I want to extend, also, my gratitude to all of those reservists and military personnel. I'm very grateful for their sacrifices and the sacrifices of their families as well when they, you know, are working full-time jobs, are reservists part time, and are often deployed to different parts of our country. We've certainly seen that in the past few months amidst COVID-19.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's also important to value our hard-working Manitobans. Manitoba workers deserve to be compensated for the work that they do and these include our reservists. They deserve to be financially protected if circumstances arise that they can no longer go to work.

\* (16:00)

But, sadly, we have a government that doesn't value our workers and their rights. What if one of these reservists gets hurt while on the job? They're not covered. This Pallister government has not gone far enough in this bill to ensure that those reservists that

are doing this on a part-time basis to serve our country are protected.

The Pallister government is known for continually cutting public sector jobs and interfering in collective bargaining, unconstitutionally freezing wages and forcing thousands to take unpaid days off. And these can include reservists that work in these positions, Deputy Speaker.

This is why it's important to raise these issues—because these are people and folks who aren't covered under this act, this bill. We need to ensure that they are properly compensated for the work that they are doing and this government is not showing that they value workers in Manitoba.

Corporations and post-secondaries received mandate letters to cut staffing positions, and they threatened to lay off thousands more during a pandemic. And again, these could be reservists; reservists that may be working full time now find themselves without a job and are working as a reservist part time. That's not enough to, you know, support their family. They may not be getting benefits. And again, if they get hurt on the job while being a reservist they are not covered under this bill.

So there's a lot further that this bill can go to ensure that workers are protected, especially reservists who we're asking, you know, to go and make the ultimate sacrifice for us. And, you know, we're not, you know, not going to compensate them when they get hurt on the job and we're going to cut jobs for them all at the expense of, you know, people in Manitoba and services?

And we've certainly seen this government and this Premier (Mr. Pallister) that, you know, makes every excuse or every opportunity to get rid of good paying jobs and, of course, you know, cut funding that organizations and people rely on.

This government also requested all government provincial departments, Crown corporations and post-secondaries devise a plan to cut 30 per cent, and none of those savings were going to fight the pandemic. And as we know, a lot of our reservists are also students that are accessing these very, you know, services in these places, these institutions, these, you know, schools.

And this government delayed bringing forward paid sick leave legislation that, you know, was to provide Manitobans with the federal funds that they needed most. This wasn't even provincial funds. This was federal funds. And these, you know, funds

perhaps would support reservists who are working full time that may have to take a sick leave from their full-time job.

But again, you know, this government isn't protecting these reservists while they're on the job being a reservist. And it's part time, I get it, but they're also working full-time jobs while probably managing a family, going to school. You know, every month they have to go and do training. So they're making a lot of sacrifices.

And there are, you know, as we know, when you're training to be a reservist, it's pretty rigorous and there is a potential to get hurt, but yet we have no safeguards to ensure that if they do get hurt that there's anything for them to fall back on, especially if they've lost their job or, you know, they're on—maybe a family member's on a paid sick leave and that's part of the income and then all of a sudden they find themselves without.

So Manitobans really need a government that's there for them, that makes the sacrifices that these reservists make each and every day. But we see a government that aren't making the same sacrifices that, you know, Manitobans that are making each and every day, especially our reservists.

We—you know, this bill will make some important and notable changes to the Employment Standards Code, but it doesn't include part-time workers or sick leave for those who get hurt on the job. And it's important, you know, that we as Manitobans recognize that reservists in Manitoba are ordinary working people, just like all of us. You know, they're not walking around in their uniforms so we can't, you know, identify them. So, you know, it's really frustrating when you have a government that continually devalues workers in Manitoba. And as the member from St. James was speaking about and, you know, was called to order on making this relevant.

Well, these are jobs in Manitoba that are probably filled by some of these reservists and do impact them and, you know, having—making sacrifices part time to be a reservist while working full time is certainly something that this government needs to recognize and, you know, institute sick leave for these workers and ensure that they are taken care of if they ever get hurt on the job.

The Primary Reserve is largely, you know, compromised—comprised of part-time workers. They're soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen who work in armouries. They're also members who, like I

said, have full-time employment or who attend school. So, when I was talking about, you know, this government raising tuition, forcing, you know, institutions to have wage freezes, it has an effect on these reservists because they are actually using these services here in Manitoba.

They have, you know—they dedicate themselves to the military for the greater good of Canada, but right here in Manitoba, you know, we have the Minto Armoury. We have an armoury right on McGregor and Machray, and, you know, that's a place, when I was a kid, I would go and play. They have quite a few pieces of equipment out there and we would go and climb on it, and I knew quite a few people who actually were training to be reservists. And, you know, it's not an easy thing to do, but people make that ultimate sacrifice for, you know, to make sure that we as Canadians can live a life of freedom.

And I think about, you know, when we had a flood, you know—how, you know, they came out and they sandbagged and spent hours upon hours every day without complaining or, you know, for them that was their duty.

And I think about just this past couple of weeks—the military going out to OCN, Opaskwayak, and they had a personal-care home there that every single member in that personal-care home was infected with COVID-19 and even some of the workers. And the military came in and, Deputy Speaker, you know, I'm happy to say that all of those residents are all COVID-free and the staff are COVID-free and I want to thank the military for all of their work.

So, miigwech, Deputy Speaker and you need to go further on this bill.

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** The member's time has expired.

**Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame):** It's my pleasure to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 211, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists).

I understand that the purpose of Bill 211, the employment standards code amendment act, is to make sure that unpaid leave of absence from the employment for active duty or training, and that this bill would clarify when a bill—when a leave can be taken and that it reduces the minimum consecutive employment period required for leave from seven to three months.

I did get a chance to take a look at this Bill 211, and on my end, I didn't feel like there was anything egregious about it that needed to be opposed vehemently. From what I understand, it's just trying to keep up the standards that we have from the federal government and making it easier for reservists to do their job.

\* (16:10)

And I think that's something that we would need to support, and so I commend the member from Waverley for taking care of that on behalf of reservists, on behalf of the efforts that they need to make for their lives to make their lives easier, so that they can do their job and so that they can serve their communities and their country.

It's one of those—like, Bill 211, for me, is one of those bills that are actually non-partisan, that you could just do for the betterment of the community. And so I would support this bill without any real reservation.

I did have a chance myself to visit HCMS Chippawa on 1 Navy Way downtown, close to Broadway. I was actually interested in the recruitment process for myself to join the reserves, and I was interested in finding out more about what it would take for me and if I would be up to the job and up to snuff, even physically. There's a test you have to—a physical test you have to take.

And so, I remember for a while I was practising. I never got to practise with, like, a medicine ball or carrying anything heavy because I think you have to carry—you have to be able to carry something like 50 pounds back and forth, running back and forth in a gym. Once a year, everybody would have to do that if they—to qualify for the physical qualifications.

But I did practise running around the neighbourhood in preparation for that physical exam because I am—I was interested in joining the reserves. And it's still something that I hope, like, as a mom, that my children would consider one day to serve their country, and also because of the skills that you get to learn, as a reservist.

I do commend the member for Waverley (Mr. Reyes) for this kind of bill, anything to help facilitate the actions that reservists would need to take, and members of the military would need to take. But I would hope that the member for Waverley would, you know, in his desire to give back to the military and desire to give back to the people that have served Canada and our community, you know, so willing to

give their lives and a great sacrifice to their families, that he would also maybe consider taking a look at what his government can do to help veterans that are homeless.

This is something that actually disproportionately affects Manitoba veterans. Homelessness here in Manitoba is higher than the national average, and while efforts like Bill 211 are needed to update—to keep in—keep updated with federal regulations, I would also wish to see more support for those who have served in the military, especially our veterans, especially our seniors, and also that high percentage of homeless veterans in Manitoba.

We know that the Employment and Social Development Canada conducted a study in March in 2015. It identified 2,250 former soldiers who use shelters across Canada on a regular basis. And while we don't have exact provincial numbers here, we do have data on shelters for self-reporting, and it shows that shelters in Thompson, there's 4.8 per cent that identify as former veterans and 3.6 per cent here in Winnipeg that identify as veterans, whereas the national average is at 2.7 per cent, according to the Employment and Social Development Canada.

So, for the member of Waverley, I applaud your efforts to support our reservists, but I would also encourage you to continue that support and maybe look into and consider the questions of our homeless veterans because it is a problem that we have here in our province and I know that you do care about the lives of these veterans and the work that they've done on our behalf so selflessly over the years.

We know that many ex-soldiers, you know, they've faced things that the rest of us probably don't even have an idea of what they've faced, and because of that, you know, some of them have gone into alcoholism and drug addiction, mental health issues, and certainly those kinds of circumstances would lead to homelessness and, again, the homeless veteran issue that we have here in Manitoba.

There are some homeless veterans and veteran advocacy groups that are currently working for specific supports and shelters for homeless veterans and they're currently looking for support from all three levels of government. They're hoping to find—hoping to plan for a drop-in centre for homeless vets here in Winnipeg, and that one veteran who's spearheading this effort, his name is Trevor Sanderson. He was a former homeless veteran himself, but now he's off the street and he's looking for government support.

And so it would be great if the member for Waverley, in addition to his efforts to support reservists in this form, like using Bill 211 to make their lives easier, would take it a step further and reach out to those homeless veterans. I don't know if he has but it would be nice to see it on the Order Paper for a bill that would directly support veterans, similar to how Bill 211 supports reservists with their unpaid leave requests. Something like that we would certainly welcome and it would be passed unanimously here in the House.

For me, as a stay-at-home mom, I was interested in taking part-time work and that was why I did take a look at HMCS Chippawa, there. Number 1, it was close by compared to the other types, because my husband had asked me, well, why the navy? We're not near any water here in Manitoba. But, for me, it was going to be a little bit more convenient compared to going to the other bases which are outside of Winnipeg and so—

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** The member's time has expired—*[interjection]*

The member's time has expired.

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** The Reserve Force is an integral component of the Canadian Armed Forces. According to the federal government, reservists are primarily part-time service positions. Reserve units are located in hundreds of communities across Canada and the world. The majority of reservists hold civilian jobs or are students enrolled in post-secondary programs.

During the Second World War, my own mother served in the Canadian air force. My father, who was several years younger, was a reservist in the air force while still a student near the end of the war. I wish my parents were still here today because I think they would have a lot of wisdom about living through these strange times and the sacrifices that we've all been called on to make in order to keep our neighbours and strangers and loved ones safe.

\* (16:20)

Currently, The Employment Standards Code permits a member of the reserves to take an unpaid leave of absence from their employment for active duty or training. And this bill clarifies when a leave can be taken and reduces the minimum consecutive employment period required for leave from seven to three months.

With respect to Bill 211, the employment standards code amendment act, I agree that Manitoba workers deserve to be compensated for the work they do and financially protected if circumstances arise that they can no longer go to work. This must include part-time workers, not just full-time workers. In fact, while this bill is well intended, based on the data from the federal government, it would seem that the majority of reservists may not be helped by this bill.

Sadly, we have a government that doesn't value our workers and their rights. We have seen that so clearly throughout the pandemic, with the Pallister government cutting public sector jobs and interfering in collective bargaining, unconstitutionally freezing wages and forcing thousands to take unpaid days off and also laying off thousands of education assistants.

While we contemplate this change to the employment standards act, I'd like to take some time to reflect on the legislative history highlights pertaining to employment and labour standards. I don't know if everyone in the House is aware that under Ed Schreyer, Manitoba's first NDP premier, back in 1970 The Employment Standards Act was amended to reduce standard hours of work from 44 to just 40 hours per week and provide for paid general holidays for the first time.

The Payment of Wages Act also passed that year, and it provided administrative procedures for the collection of unpaid wages. In 1972, The Labour Relations Act was amended to address unfair labour practices. And still under the NDP government, in 1973 The Vacations With Pay Act was amended to provide for a three-week vacation after five years of service.

And a few years later, under the next NDP government and Premier Howard Pawley, in 1984 The Labour Relations Act underwent major revisions, including changes to the certification and collective bargaining processes, as well as conciliation and mediation. In 1985, The Pay Equity Act addressed the wage gap between men and women doing comparable work in the public sector.

Now, I'm going to jump ahead a little bit to the year 2000 after Manitobans elected Gary Doer to be their next NDP premier. In 2000, The Labour Relations Act was amended to address such matters as automatic certification, reinstatement after a work stoppage, alternate dispute settlement and collective bargaining and successor rights where a business transfer is from federal to provincial jurisdiction. Changes also made most provisions of the act

applicable to public school teachers. The Employment Standards Code was amended to increase parental leave from 17 to 37 weeks and reduce the qualification period for maternity and parental leave from 12 to seven months.

In 2001, the Manitoba ethnocultural advisory and advocacy act established the Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council to advise the government on matters of importance to the ethnocultural community, and The Pension Benefits Act was amended to provide, finally, for the recognition of same-sex partners.

In 2002, still under the NDP government—for 17 years, The Workplace Safety and Health Act was amended extensively in relation to duties of employers and supervisors, safety and health programs, duties of committees, the right to refuse dangerous work, discriminatory action, administrative penalties and other matters. Also The Fire Departments Arbitration Act was amended to address the compulsory binding arbitration provisions applicable to paramedics employed by the City of Winnipeg, and the act was renamed The Firefighters and Paramedics Arbitration Act.

In 2003, The Employment Standards Code was amended to provide for up to eight weeks of unpaid compassionate-care leave to employees to care for a gravely ill family member, and enhance job protection for workers who are pregnant or take maternity, parental or compassionate-care leave. And I imagine that particularly in the area of COVID-19 that that compassionate leave has been incredibly important to families.

In 2004, The Immigration Council Act provided for the establishment of the Manitoba Immigration Council to provide information and advice to the government with respect to immigration matters. The Workplace Safety and Health Act was amended to allow for the making of regulations under The Non-Smokers Health Protection Act which prohibited smoking at workplaces and the assurance of improvement orders in the case of contraventions. The Labour Relations Act was amended to provide expedited procedures for the settlement of work stoppages that have continued for at least 60 days. And it's scary to think that some of these labour amendments could be rolled back under this current government.

Still under the NDP, in 2005 The Pension Benefits Act was amended to permit the transfer of up to 50 per cent of certain locked-in benefits to an income fund that is not locked in to revise portability

provisions and allow for phased-in retirement. The unlocking provisions were proclaimed in force May 25th, 2005.

In 2006, The Workplace Safety and Health Act was amended once again to require the use of safety-engineered needles in medical workplaces, and The Electricians' Licence Act was amended to eliminate the helper category of worker, as well as three categories of licences to specify who may perform certain types of electrical work and to accommodate the introduction of compulsory certification under the apprenticeship program.

That same year, The Workers Compensation Act was amended to expand presumptive compensation for firefighters who contract certain cancers, increase permanent injury benefits, eliminate benefit reductions for workers 45 and older, and provide a 100 per cent of wage replacement for minimum wage earners, and to enact other changes based on the report of the review committee on The Workers Compensation Act.

I'm going to have to jump ahead; there's just so much that was done, and I'm going to run out of time. I will say that also, in—that same year—sorry, in 2007, The Employment Standards Code was amended to provide job protection for members of the Reserve Force of the Canadian Forces, and it gave them a right to an unpaid leave to participate in training or active duty in the reserves.

And that is exactly what we are exploring and stretching with this new bill. To add that also The Statutory Holidays Act was amended in 2007, establishing the third Monday in February as a statutory holiday, the day that we call Louis Riel Day.

In 2008, The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act received royal assent on June 12th, requiring the following to be licensed: employment agencies, individuals involved in recruiting foreign workers and anyone involved in recruiting or representing children under the age of 17 who perform as entertainers or models. The act also requires employers who recruit foreign workers to be registered and children who are represented by child talent agencies to have work permits.

Now, we're getting closer to present day—

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** Order, please.

**Ms. Naylor:** —and unfortunately, I will be running out of time soon—

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** Order, please.

I just would encourage the member, as I have several times this afternoon, to tie the comments into the bill at hand and make sure that the member is making those connections so that listeners have no doubt in their minds about how what the member is discussing relates to the bill before the House.

**Ms. Naylor:** Absolutely. Thank you for that reminder. I think it's important that we have a good understanding of previous changes to The Employment Standards Code. And so that's what I've been attempting to review.

We know that the essential services health-care and related amendment acts were passed in June 2011 to provide for new essential service requirements in the health-care sector during a work stoppage. And this new act provides a process for employers and unions—

**The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield):** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill and put a few words on record.

First of all, I would like to appreciate the member from Waverley to bring forward this important topic in the Chamber. I have great respect, as all of us have great respect, for the people of our country who work—choose to work—in defence services, maybe on a regular basis or a part-time basis as reservists.

\* (16:30)

I remember my childhood days, when we used to see two faces on the back of the trucks, on the back of the trailers, that represent a soldier and a farmer: farmers who feed us; soldiers who defend us, fight for us, protect us, save us from dangers. And whenever we would see an army truck passing by our school and we were playing in the playground, we would wave at those soldiers and they would wave back at us, and we would go, like, soldier-uncle.

So that's the connection the populations have with these defence personnel. So, a great respect for all those who served, who sacrificed their lives in the past, who continue to serve today—all men and women in the army and other defence forces. There should be a motivation, there should be more benefits to go in this direction, and that's what this bill does.

This bill brings about some amendments to The Employment Standards Code act, which currently allows the reservists an unpaid leave of absence when they're working for their employer. They can be called by their unit—the defence unit—and they can have unpaid leave of absence, but there is a condition: that they have to have served at least seven months in their present job.

What this bill does is it reduces that minimum employment period to just three months. Good move. Appreciate it. But I'm just trying to understand how the member came to this number, three months. Why not four, two, one, or a few weeks? Because, again, those people who choose to be reservists, they have a great respect for these services. They are passionate to serve the country; they're passionate to protect their fellow citizens; and I think what they're getting in return is not enough.

We need to bring more amendments which motivate more people to join these services. We need to bring some changes that really adds respect to the respect they have today.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

I was talking to one of my friends, who told me about how to get into this position as a reservist while you would be working on your present job. And I'm told that he would be working as a reservist on the weekends.

It takes a lot of sacrifice to do this. You have to spare a great number of hours away from your kids and family, and I don't think that this act has enough provisions to balance that sacrifice that is required to serve as a reservist.

And I was thinking, the other moment, that there's so many people in Manitoba who do not even know about this option. If I think about new Canadians, a greater segment of new Canadians, they do not even know that they can work as reservists.

I think we need to make an effort, we need to put in some budget, we need to put in more resources to educate, especially our next generation, about this option, because I'm sure once they know, many of them, boys and girls, they would like to choose this option to serve their country.

We are going through a pandemic right now, and as we know, that so many people have been laid off—in Manitoba particularly, thousands of people in schools, in other departments. So what happened to these people is some of them, they're totally out of

work. Many of them, they have reduced hours, so presently they are working part-time. This bill should have included those part-time workers because it's not fair for those who are working part-time as of today but want to be a reservist.

There is something that stops them to go that way. There is something that stops them follow their dreams to be in the army or defence services. Because I know a very—one of my close friends, he has served as an army officer in India—actually, we were classmates—and I know how it feels, like, to be an army officer, how much respect we, as his friends and as fellow citizens, we have for him. And I also know the dangers and the challenges and the adventures that our men and women in service, they face.

So, during this pandemic we have seen the situation—

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

**Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry):** Good afternoon, again, Madam Speaker. I'm pleased to be able to rise and put some final comments on the record for Bill 211, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists).

And maybe I'm in a cynical mood, maybe it's, you know, the nature of the place, but it's sort of strange how this bill got here.

\* (16:40)

This was, you know, a private member's bill, which generally don't get this far, and certainly most of them don't pass, yet it's being sponsored by the government without the Finance Minister taking ownership of this, and that certainly tells me that this government is very much interested in having the member from Waverley being the face of this bill, and that's good.

But what we've learned from this government is that they don't do things for altruistic reasons, that the cynicism is very high, that they do things entirely for, you know, political gain, and there's always a calculus here. And one has to wonder out loud whether or not the reason this act was brought forward was to assist their electoral chances in south Winnipeg.

As you know, I have the neighbouring riding to Waverley, and we have seen over the past year an increasing amount of casework coming from both Fort Richmond and Waverley, and we hear constant complaints from those residents that they feel abandoned by this government and they're looking for some representation.

So, this is a government, and I've said it before and I'd say it again, that very much is based on press releases; that they do things not because it's the right thing to do or the best thing to do or it's in the interests of Manitobans, they do it so that they can grab a headline somewhere to advance some cynical, political goal. And I'm worried that this bill falls under that category, and I want to spend a little time going through it to show, Madam Speaker, exactly why I'm concerned and why I think this is not how we should be making laws in Manitoba in 2020.

This is a government, as you know, that has not been kind to workers. I think that's probably about the nicest thing you can say. I think most people would say that it's been downright hostile and has gone after Manitoban workers. And it is a little surprising, then, to see them bring out any sort of changes that could be potentially favourable to workers in Manitoba.

But it's very narrow. And I think when you go through, sort of, the history of The Employment Standards Code in Manitoba, you'll see that, that they're picking reservists, which is one of those sort of apple-pie issues—like, we all have a great deal of respect for the military.

My late father-in-law actually served in World War II. He lied to get in. He enlisted at 17 years of age and was part of a Lancaster bomber crew. And it's such a significant event in his life. And I know, when he was alive, we certainly spent a lot of time at the Legion and were part of that world. And he didn't talk about the war. It obviously had some lasting toxic impacts on him, but it certainly was one of his proudest moments. And certainly we're all very proud of the military, and I don't think anybody would begrudge providing better labour protections to those that serve to protect us.

So, the problem is, with this bill, it's very modest. It's modest to the point of just more or less being symbolic. The major change appears—and my colleagues have talked about this in some length—reducing the minimum consecutive employment period required from seven to three months. That is not groundbreaking legislation, and, of course, as other people have commented, it's done nothing to assist part-time workers that find themselves in here.

So it excludes a great, large population of people that would actually need assistance from The Employment Standards Code, which highlights my point that this is a public relations exercise, that this is cynical, that this is really, like, the bare minimum. I—you know, you'd be hard-pressed for a government to

put in a bill that does less than this and that, in many ways, is very disrespectful to our military—certainly disrespectful to reservists, and certainly this government could and should do more.

So, I know our Premier (Mr. Pallister) likes to criticize our side of the House for things that happened 17 years ago. I think the irony when he riffs like that is that I think there's only two people in our caucus who were actually part of the previous government, and both of them, if my recollection is correct, neither one were Cabinet ministers and were not responsible for any of the decisions of the previous government.

When the previous NDP government was thrown out, one of the benefits like this—and your government's going to experience it shortly and soon, we hope—is that when you lose a lot of seats, you have mass turnover and it gives the party a chance to renew itself and bring in new people, more diverse people, new ideas.

And thankfully, we've done that and we're continuing to do that and rebuild as a party. And it's certainly given us a new energy, but as somebody who has only been an MLA for a year, it's strange, this whole sins-of-the-father thing that we spend so much time talking about in our Legislature.

**Madam Speaker:** Order. Order, please.

I would just ask the member to bring his comments back to the bill that is on the floor for debate right now. He's straying a bit from the content of what this bill is supposed to be about, so I would ask him to bring his comments back to the bill, please.

**Mr. Wasyliw:** Well, thank you very much for that direction, Madam Speaker.

So, I want to go back to the history, just to show, sort of, the cynicism here. If you look back at the year 2000, this is the start of the previous NDP government. The Employment Standards Code was amended to increase parental leave from 17 to 37 weeks and to reduce the qualification period for maternity and parental leave from 12 to seven months.

Then in 2003, it was amended again to provide up to eight weeks of unpaid compassionate-care leave to employees to care for gravely ill family members and it enhanced job protection for workers who were pregnant and who take maternity and parental or compassionate-care leave.

Then we go to 2007. It was amended again to provide job protection for members of the Reserve Force of the Canadian Forces, what we're talking

about here. It actually was a sea change in the law and it gave them the right to unpaid leave to participate in training and active duty. And this legislation is a tweak in comparison. It also established Louis Riel Day in that same year.

And then we moved to 2010, where it was amended again for unpaid leave for absence for the purpose of living organ and tissue donation and employees are given the opportunity to take up 13 weeks of unpaid time off while they prepare for or undergo the recovery from transplant surgery. And then this was extended for an additional 13 weeks if recommended by a physician.

Then we go to 2011, and it was amended again, increasing flexibility of work hours, just cause standard for termination. In 2012, it was amended again. There was critical illness of child protection for unpaid leave and death or disappearance of a child. In 2013, it was extended again to repeal a provision that allowed certain employers to pay people less than minimum wage who had disabilities, and the point is—and in 2015, it was again.

Since the Pallister government came into power, it has only been one employment standard revision and it was to comply with federal paternal leave provisions. And now we have this.

So you can just weigh the two about which party cares and protects workers in this province and, unfortunately, I think this is a very cynical piece of legislation.

So I want to thank you for that, Madam Speaker.

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on the record in regards to Bill 211, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists).

Much like—maybe I'll echo some of the comments that there were made by my colleagues on this side of the Chamber in regards to exactly how, once again, another piece of potential legislation brought forth by this government, in fact falls short—falls short, isn't complete, attempts to kind of isolate certain demographics of Manitobans to make it look like this Conservative government is, in fact, speaking up and representing that demographic that the legislation of the day that they seem to bring forward is trying to help.

So, when we talk about—the government also talks about non-partisan, non-political issues. So when we

talk about being able to recognize our reservists, recognize our military and thank them for their accomplishments and thank them for their service, not only during times of deployment but also during times when they're not deployed, when they're at home, and their sense of security that they should feel in all aspects of their service to our country, in their service to our country to things that we take for granted perhaps every single day.

And we don't—I can't begin to imagine exactly what a reservist goes through or somebody serving in our military goes through just on a daily basis. For example, if they were in wartime or just on a peace deployment, what they go through and what they're thinking.

And what should be at the top of their mind, first and foremost, while they're either abroad or while they're at home, they shouldn't have to feel that they, in fact, have to worry about their employment or have to worry about things that are going on back home and a sense of security back home, because in the moment, for example, if you're being deployed, they should be able to go and worry about, first and foremost, their own health, their own safety.

But coming home and coming back, we can see these kind of things and these kinds of pieces of legislation—and I'm referring to Bill 211 which, again, I'm sure the intent of it was in good faith and good—had good intentions but, once again, it falls short and it falls short in regards to exactly how it clarifies exactly what is going to be done to assist, and this piece of legislation, meaning Bill 211, I feel—as my colleague just echoed—is just there for show.

And you do question why, potentially, a bill that does have financial implications was not even spoken to by the Finance Minister in any regard. So it begs the question, exactly what was the purpose of this? Is this to perhaps just kind of create a wedge issue and perhaps call out members on opposite sides of the Chamber to say, what do you mean you don't support the military by not supporting this piece of legislation?

And it's not something that's not supported on this part—on this side of the Chamber, it's just something that's simply, again, like other pieces of legislation brought forward by this government, it's just simply not enough.

When the Premier (Mr. Pallister) gets up and he speaks about reservists, in this case, for example, when one comes to Bill 211, refers to them as hard-

working Manitobans, hard-working Canadians—which nobody doubts. Nobody doubts that reservists put their lives on the line and are willing to pay the ultimate price—the ultimate price meaning with their lives for what we may take for granted every day.

So they are some of the hardest working Americans—the hardest working Canadians and North Americans that are out there, and that's something that, on this side of the Chamber, we appreciate. So we would like to see them thanked [*inaudible*] as a cause of the day, not just in this simple piece of legislation, meaning Bill 211, and exactly what's done for them today, what's done for them tomorrow, because there is previous Conservative governments that have been in—I don't like to use the word power, but in government in Manitoba and this just simply falls short.

I had the opportunity in a PMR last week, I believe it was, to speak about Sergeant Tommy Prince, and—Sergeant Tommy Prince and the sacrifices that he made for Manitobans, for Canadians, for his community for his people and, specifically in Tommy Prince's case, for Indigenous people. And what was there for him while he was gone? What was there for him when he came back? And the fact of the matter is there was nothing. There was nothing there for him.

So it's similar to my colleague from Fort Garry when he talked about his family member having to lie to be able to go and fight for something he believed in; so did Tommy Prince.

So the fact of the matter is these people in our military, and there is certain individuals in our military—and it's not limited to the member from Fort Garry, his family or Tommy Prince, by any means—there is a large number of Manitobans, Canadians who have served in the reserves, who have served in our military, and with no thought of exactly what the appreciation was going to be for them.

So when we talk about Bill 211 and being able to show our appreciation, I think it's an appreciation that has to go way beyond Bill 211, and being able to exactly show our appreciation to what they do in wartime, what they do in peacetime, what they do while they're home, what they do while they're abroad. So there's a lot of thank-yous that need to be given out to our members and exactly what they need to do.

So, when we talk about being able to show our appreciation, I think we need to show our appreciation

with full force and be able to say this is how we're going to support you. We're not going to support you with a simple matter of, you know, here's some unpaid days or here's some paid days, you don't have to worry about your job, worry about your career. When in fact, how do you support our military and how do you support them going forward and how do you support them when they come home? How do you have some kind of economic support for them? And not just a matter of a paycheque.

How do you support our—coming back and exactly what they're going to come—and exactly what they're going to do when they come home, and where's that support for them? And I find Bill 211, while it addresses it to a certain capacity, it doesn't address it to its full potential that we should be.

So when we get into talking about Bill 211 and being able to say this is what we're going to do, I find that, on behalf of this government, it's just a token piece to say that—a box they want to check and say, okay, you know what, we support our reservists, we're being—done; I'll check that box. But exactly have you truly explored at exactly the capacity of what this bill can do and what it can do for everybody in that regard? And again, I feel it falls short.

And when we talk about our military and our reservists, as Bill 211 reflects—and there's a number of aspects of that that there could be reflected on. What about our reservists that have come home, that have been home for some time that are maybe—no longer be deployed, that are retired, what's there for them?

And I absolutely have to make reference to my passion and my Indigenous issue in this case is to relate that Sergeant Tommy Prince and what didn't happen for him while he was abroad, what didn't happen for him while he came home, and what wasn't there for him.

Is showing our appreciation to a reservist when they return from active duty, when they return from protecting our way of life, is our way of showing appreciation to make them homeless? To have them look to the street and look to a mission to be able to take care of themselves, feed themselves, let alone feed their family? And it's something that's not able to be done quite easily.

So again, I feel this legislation in fact falls very short, and it's unfortunate that this legislation that's brought forth by this government, meaning Bill 211,

the employment standards code amendment act, and exactly what that does, it's unfortunate.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to place a few words on the record here today, and I appreciate the opportunity.

Miigwech.

**Madam Speaker:** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Madam Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 211, The

Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists).

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

**Hon. Scott Fielding (Minister of Finance):** Madam Speaker, is the will of the Legislative Chamber to call the clock 5 o'clock?

**Madam Speaker:** Is there leave to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

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

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 1, 2020

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Internationally Educated Nurses	
		Marcelino	1176
		Friesen	1177
Bill 219–The Health Care Accountability and Timely Access Act (The Health Care Act and Amendments to The Health Services Insurance Act)		Transfer of COVID Patients to Selkirk	
		Asagwara	1177
		Friesen	1177
Gerrard	1171	MPI Conciliation with Brokers	
		Sandhu	1178
		Wharton	1178
<b>Committee Reports</b>		Caregiver Wage Support Program	
Standing Committee on Justice		Fontaine	1179
First Report		Stefanson	1179
Micklefield	1171	Manitoba Bridge Grant for Small Business	
		Fontaine	1180
		Stefanson	1180
<b>Tabling of Reports</b>		COVID-19 and Education System	
Driedger	1171	Lamont	1180
		Pallister	1180
<b>Members' Statements</b>		COVID-19 and Small Business	
Siloam Mission		Lamont	1180
A. Smith	1172	Pallister	1180
Premier's Leadership Record During Pandemic		Caregiver Program and Bridge Grant	
Fontaine	1172	Lamoureux	1181
		Fielding	1181
Divya Sharma		Caregiver Wage Support Program	
Reyes	1172	Morley-Lecomte	1181
		Stefanson	1181
Westman Families of Addicts		Labour Relations Amendment Act	
B. Smith	1173	Lindsey	1181
		Fielding	1181
Provincial Parks		COVID-19 Financial Assistance	
Gerrard	1173	Wasyliw	1182
		Pallister	1182
<b>Oral Questions</b>		<b>Speaker's Ruling</b>	
Grandview District Hospital		Driedger	1183
Kinew	1174		
Pallister	1174		
Home-Care Services			
Kinew	1175		
Pallister	1175		

**Petitions**

Dauphin Correctional Centre	
Asagwara	1184
Brar	1184
Personal-Care Homes–Pandemic Response	
Gerrard	1184
Quality Health Care Access	
Bushie	1185
Vivian Sand Facility Project–Clean Environment	
Commission Review	
Lamoureux	1186
Dauphin Correctional Centre	
Lindsey	1187
Maloway	1187
Moses	1187
Quality Health Care Access	
Sala	1188
Dauphin Correctional Centre	
Sandhu	1188
Wasyliw	1188
CancerCare Closures at Concordia and Seven	
Oaks Hospitals	
Wiebe	1189

**ORDERS OF THE DAY****GOVERNMENT BUSINESS****Concurrence and Third Readings–Public Bills**

Bill 211–The Employment Standards Code	
Amendment Act (Unpaid Leave for Reservists)	
Reyes	1189
Lindsey	1190
Adams	1192
Gerrard	1194
Sandhu	1194
Moses	1195
Sala	1197
B. Smith	1199
Marcelino	1201
Naylor	1202
Brar	1204
Wasyliw	1205
Bushie	1207

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings  
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