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Legislative Assembly of Manitoba DEBATES and PROCEEDINGS

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTOMARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
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GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
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GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
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JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
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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	Wolseley	NDP
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PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
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SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP DC
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC NDP
SMITH, Bernadette SMOOK, Dennis	Point Douglas La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	
	Riei Tuxedo	PC PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.		
TEITSMA, James WASYLIW, Mark	Radisson	PC NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Fort Garry Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Concordia Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC PC
Vacant	Kirkfield Park	rC
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 13, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): It is my duty to inform the House that the Speaker is unavoidably absent. Therefore, in accordance with statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to please take the Chair.

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

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of the treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Speaker's Statement

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I'm advising the House that the Speaker has received a letter from the Official Opposition House Leader (Ms. Fontaine) regarding her caucus's second selected bill for this session. As a reminder to the House, rule 25 permits each recognized party to select up to three private members' bills per session to proceed to a second reading vote.

The Official Opposition House Leader has advised that her caucus has selected Bill 202, The Louis Riel Act, as the second of their three selected bills for this session. In accordance with the Official Opposition House Leader's letter, the process on this

bill will proceed as follows: debate at second reading will resume this morning at 10 a.m. immediately following this statement; the question shall be put on the second reading motion this morning at 10:55 a.m.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS-PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 202-The Louis Riel Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In light of that, we will proceed with debate on second readings, as announced; second reading of Bill 202. The honourable member for Radisson has the floor with 10 minutes remaining.

Mr. James Teitsma (Radisson): Appreciate the opportunity to put some words on the record on this bill. I believe I've started, briefly, last debate, but really didn't have an opportunity to say very much. And so I do plan on taking some time this morning to speak about this bill. There's a lot in this bill that I greatly appreciate.

I just want to say to the member, to the Leader of the Opposition, you know, especially the part about the curriculum in our schools, and making sure that our curriculum has a fulsome and truthful explanation of the role that the Red River Métis has played in the founding of our province and the role Louis Riel himself has played in the founding of this province.

I think we've publicly acknowledged—as a legislative body—we've acknowledged Louis Riel as the founder of Manitoba and that's appropriate to do so. Indeed think—I think all members of this House would agree that he, by the grace of God, was the founder of Manitoba. And those are his own words as to his role in establishing our great province. And it's—there's certainly a measure of gratitude that we, as legislators, can express towards Louis Riel for the role that he played and for the firm stand that he took.

I think it's striking that Manitoba, to the best of my knowledge at least, is the only province to join Confederation with an Indigenous leadership component in place right from the get-go. And that's something that certainly we can be grateful for.

And I think, just as you walk around these Legislative grounds and in this area, you can just see the history woven into the landscape and woven into the architecture. It's too bad that Louis Riel himself could not see this great edifice that we get to serve in as

MLAs. I think he would be incredibly proud and in a sense, in awe of what Manitoba aspired to be and what Manitoba is. And, you know, already more than 100 years ago, this great building represented a lot of that.

Now, as I was mentioning, on the grounds, it's actually one of my favourite things to do when I have friends or family that are interested in getting a little bit of exercise and also learning a bit of history, is to bring them here to the Manitoba Legislature to tour the Legislative grounds.

And then we do what we call the Louis Riel walk. And so we go out to the—past my favourite fountain in the back of the Legislature here and to the statue of Louis Riel, the one that makes him look like a real statesman, the statesman that he was, strong and profoundly influential in the establishment of our province.

And from there, we typically walk along Assiniboine or along The Forks or along the river path towards The Forks. We pass Upper Fort Garry. We take note of that. We get to The Forks and note the history that's in that place where not just for hundreds of years, but for thousands of years, people have gathered and come together there. And Louis Riel was one of the people who were doing that. And the steps that we walk are the steps that he walked, in a sense.

Then we'll often make our way over the pedestrian bridge to St. Boniface Cathedral. That's where, I'm told, one of the grave sites of Louis Riel. There's some dispute, I guess, as to where he's actually buried, but the one that I'm familiar with is at St. Boniface Cathedral Cemetery.

And then we continue on because just in behind there, as some of you may know, is another statue of Louis Riel, one that is not quite so statesman-like and shows more the vulnerability and the, you know, some of the mental health challenges, frankly, that this elder statesman had as well.

And then we come—we loop our way back and we end up back at the Manitoba Legislature. It's a wonderful walk and I'd commend it all members of the House, not just for the exercise, but also for the opportunity to see the history in motion.

Now, the parts of the bill that I don't like as quite as much, and that's—you know, I think when we talk about reconciliation, we need to be careful. We need to be serious about it. We need to take a—we don't—certainly don't want to be politicizing it.

And I think it's especially important that that word reconciliation is often paired with another word. It's not just reconciliation, it's truth and reconciliation because it's the truth. It's the stories of what happened in history. It's an acknowledgement of the facts of history. It's not a whitewashing. It's not a cover-up. It's a—it needs to be fulsome.

And truth, for me, is not something that you make. It is something that is and, you know, perhaps needs to be discovered and brought to light, but truth is absolute.

* (10:10)

And so I think that's where this bill is a little, perhaps, askew. The fact of the matter is, is that Louis Riel is the founder of Manitoba, acknowledged to be that; that's a self-claimed title, but one that we will also gladly agree with here as legislators.

He was a president of a provisional council. And that, I think, is acknowledged on-right here in this Legislative Building as well. But as a-as to being a premier, of even as an MLA, he served in neither of those roles, nor did he seem to desire to do so.

He was elected, as may-most of you, I hope, would be aware. He was elected as a Member of Parliament. And that's, I think, where his political aspirations directed him, is to serve on a national stage, at a federal level. And he was actually elected three times as the Member of Parliament for Provencher.

And as he attempted to serve in that role, he also rightly feared for his life. And I think that should give us pause. You know, this is not even 150 years ago that a democratically elected individual in a, you know, properly constituted province and confederation, couldn't make his was to Parliament Hill, couldn't take up his role in the Legislative Assembly—or, the Parliament, sorry—in Canada's Parliament, out of fear for his life.

When he did go to Parliament to, you know, do his—do whatever paperwork was required of him, he would have to do so in disguise to protect his own life. Certainly that is—that's a sobering thought to consider. And it's not something that we should gloss over either. That's part of the truth of Louis Riel's legacy and the legacy of our country. And it's sad, frankly.

But as I said, federal politics is where Louis Riel's political ambitions lay. He is the founder of this province, this we all agree. You know, I, you know, one concern that I have, and I do hope the members

opposite do take time to, you know, assuage the concerns that I might have, is, what I don't want to see is a cheapening and a politicization of reconciliation. And I just, I think of last month, you know, I'm the legislative assistant to the Minister of Labour, and as such I've been able to see some of the feedback that we get from residential school survivors about how we should recognize Orange Shirt Day.

And, you know, as that feedback has changed over the months, and as some of the nuances and the details of the legislation that needs to be brought forward are worked out, one thing was very clear. And that is that residential school survivors did not want Orange Shirt Day to simply be a statutory holiday. And that was very clear.

But just a few weeks back, I think we saw the NDP essentially ignore those voices. That saddens me. And then, try to score political points on the back of residential school survivors. I don't think we should be going there. And I hope they're—I hope that's not happening today. I hope we can have a, you know, good discussion about the merits of the bill and maybe ways that it could be changed. Certainly, I think about the curriculum that some of my high school colleagues had received when they were in Ontario. They were taught that Louis Riel was a rebel and a murderer.

So thankfully that's not taught anymore, and that's something we can be grateful for. And we can continue to advocate for improvements in how that curriculum is developed and delivered so that it can bring about reconciliation. And I just remind all the members here that reconciliation doesn't stand on its own. It's paired with truth. And it's truth and reconciliation that we must seek, and we need to make sure that we're prepared to deal with the truths, to be proud when we can and ashamed if that's what's needed, but to commit to truth and reconciliation

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): It's a pleasure to put some words on the record about this bill, and talk a bit about Louis Riel. It's extraordinary, really, that over 150 years later, we are still only beginning to appreciate the impact that Louis Riel had, not just on Manitoba but on Canada.

The conflict that sparked the founding of Manitoba as a province was a conflict about the kind of country Canada would be. There was a, sort of, agreement that Canada had two founding peoples: sort

of, English Ontario, and French Quebec and the Maritimes. But it was always an uneasy marriage because of a continual expectation of what I'll call British Protestant supremacy, and Indigenous people being left out.

When Canada sought to expand outward to the western provinces, there were already French Catholics, Métis and First Nations living there as well as Scots, Protestants. The expectation in Ontario, especially among Protestant Orangemen, was that the west would essentially be a colony of Ontario: British, Protestant and English-speaking.

And Louis Riel's been called a rebel. He's been painted as a violent revolutionary. But that's really a reflection of the bigotries and entitlement of the day and not of the history. What happened at the time was not a rebellion. It was not an uprising. It was an assertion of rights by people who were actually in favour of joining Canada, but they wanted to make sure they did so on their own terms, that they weren't simply rolled over.

And it wasn't Canada. It wasn't the government of Canada that was talking about democracy or voting or representation or rights when this came—when this happened. It was Riel and his provisional government. It wasn't Riel who had no authority or legitimacy in Manitoba. That was the Canadian government. Riel and the Métis did not attempt a violent overthrow of the government.

Phillipe Mailhot has written an excellent Ph.D. thesis about the rebellion and the role of Abbé Ritchot, but in October 1869, the rejection of Lieutenant Governor McDougall, who was coming up from Pembina, was completely peaceful.

The-La Barrière was erected. They ended up putting up a fence across the road just south of St. Norbert and-to block the carriage that was carrying the lieutenant governor, who was known to be a bit of an extremist. And they tried to charge the barrier, which did not work because the Métis at the time grabbed the bridles of the horses and stopped them from running through.

But it was peaceful, and then in the next days when they went to take over Fort Garry, it was likewise completely peaceful. No shot was fired. It was—and then at that point, Riel, Ritchot and others assembled a provisional government. And they assured both Manitobans and the government of Canada in December of 1869 that they wanted rights.

They said, look, we want this to be a democracy. We want to be able to elect our own legislature here in Manitoba. We want to be able to send members of Parliament to Ottawa so that we're represented. We want to make sure that people have language rights—so they were looking for educational rights, civil rights.

They wanted infrastructure. They wanted health care. And they called for treaties—peace treaties, as they called them—treaties to be signed with First Nations and, ultimately, amnesty for the Métis, whose only so-called crime was that they wanted to be able to have some sovereignty in the west.

Now, our history hasn't told us a lot of this because at the time it was very—Canada was a very divided place. And Riel and the provisional government didn't submit Thomas Scott, for example, to a political show trial resulting in his execution. That is what Sir John A. Macdonald and the Canadian government did to Louis Riel.

Riel believed in justice. He was a devout Catholic. He was a rule-follower and not really a rebel, because Riel and the Métis were looking to ensure there would be fair rules to govern them. He thought that the institutions of government and justice in Canada would work the way we say we will—they will. They did not, and sadly, they do not.

And when he sought to negotiate Manitoba's joining Canada, it was a debate about the kind of Canada we would have. And the result of that conflict showed us exactly the kind of country Canada really was. Because ultimately, Riel was denied amnesty, though it was promised, and he ended up being executed by a country that he is a founding father of.

He was sitting on the porch of the Archbishop of St. Boniface's residence when he saw the Union Jack run up the flagpole at Fort Garry across the river. And it wasn't Canadian troops who came to Manitoba. It was imperial troops. It was the last time that British Imperial troops were actually used to try to put down a so-called rebellion.

He had to flee the province he founded. He was elected three times a Member of Parliament for Provencher, though he was not allowed to take his seat.

In 1875, the government of Canada offered Riel amnesty on the condition he leave Canada for five years.

And in 1874, Sir Wilfrid Laurier defended Louis Riel, pointing out that he could not be given amnesty when he never committed a crime. Quote: It has been said that Mr. Riel was only a rebel. How is it possible to use such language? What act of rebellion did he commit? Did he ever raise any other standard than the national flag? Did he ever proclaim any other authority than the sovereign authority of the Queen?

* (10:20)

No, never. His whole crime, and the crime of his friends, was that they wanted to be treated like British subjects, and not be bartered away like common cattle. If that be an act of rebellion, who is the one amongst us who, if had happened to be—happened to have been with them, would not have been rebels as they were?

Fifteen years after Riel set up a provisional government in Manitoba for the Métis, Métis in Saskatchewan sought him out in Montana to do the same for them. Once again, Riel asked for a bill of rights, and the forces sent to defeat Riel and the Métis at Batoche were not just crushing resistance, they were operating out of revenge.

Riel's trial should've been in Winnipeg, where at least the Government of Canada still actually had jurisdiction, which it did not in Saskatchewan. And everything that could be said of the execution of Thomas Scott—Thomas Scott was an individual who led 50 people to try to overthrow the provisional government, and once incarcerated, continued to promise that he would murder Riel if he was released. Which, if anyone had done that to the prime minister of the day, I'm sure would've been dealt with pretty swiftly.

And-but Riel is accused of making a political blunder for actually enforcing the law. But MacDonald is not accused of a political blunder, because it was politically popular. Riel's jury themselves pleaded for clemency, and had a better sense of the history on the ground than many historians and pundits since.

This is from a history: the jury of six men deliberated Riel's fate for an hour. They filed back into the courtroom. The foreman, Francis Cosgrove, crying like a baby, announced the verdict. Guilty, he said, and then added, your honour, I've been asked by my brother jurists to recommend the prisoner to the mercy of the Crown.

Later, one of the jurors would write a letter to a Member of Parliament expressing his mixed feelings about the verdict he helped render. Had the government done their duty and redressed the grievances of the Métis of Saskatchewan, there would never have been a second Riel rebellion, and consequently no prisoner to try and condemn.

On the night before his execution, Riel prayed, wrote letters, thanked jailers and forgave enemies. Asked for a final request, he asked only for an extra ration of three eggs. Shortly after 8 a.m. on November 16th, Riel was escorted from his cell. He prayed with Father André, renounced his heresies, and received absolution. When Father André began weeping, Riel said calmly, "Courage, mon Père." [Take heart, Father.] With a rope finally around his neck, Riel and Father André began reciting together the Lord's Prayer, and when they reached deliver us from evil, the trap fell.

The response to the execution in Quebec was a massive protest. In Champ-de-Mars in Montreal, Wilfrid Laurier, again, spoke to a crowd of nearly 50,000 and reportedly said, if I'd been on the banks of Saskatchewan and the rebellion broke out, I would've taken up arms myself against the government. Riel's execution was a judicial murder.

The fundamental conflict at the heart of the founding of Manitoba was about the kind of country Canada would be. The conflict did that; it showed that Canada, as a country, would make promises and vote them into law with no real intention of keeping or respecting them. Including the Manitoba Act, legal and constitutional rights that the federal government had agreed to were ignored. It showed that Canada would seek revenge and bend the law and kill Riel in order to satisfy the bloodlust of Protestant Orangemen in Ontario.

I do think this is an important bill. The one question I have about it is that—is whether, essentially, that it's historically accurate. That Riel has been so mistreated by history, so maligned, that it can sometimes be difficult to get to the truth of who he was as a human being. So I—my—there is no question he was the founder of Manitoba. There's no question that he was one of the people who created Canada as it is. And there's also no question that he made Canada immeasurably better through his contributions, even though he never lived to see most of them.

The question as to whether he was actually the—I don't think it can truthfully be said that he was the first premier of Manitoba, but I don't think, if we were to disagree with the idea that he were the first premier of Manitoba, that it would any—in any way diminish his extraordinary role in shaping not just Manitoba or Canadian history, but world history.

So with those few comments, I'll yield the rest of my time.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): It's always an honour to get up in this House and put a few words on the record, especially regarding this bill, Bill 202, bestowing the title honorary First Premier of Manitoba on Louis Riel.

Louis Riel is very significant historical figure, obviously in Manitoba, but one that, as an educator and as a person that experienced the education system here in Manitoba, we didn't learn a lot about Louis Riel. I've talked about earlier, in the times that I've risen to speak about my experiences as a child in school here, and I redo recall in grade 1 learning about the Red River cart. And that was about the extent of it

Deputy Speaker, after becoming an educator in this province, we know that some of this is covered at grade 4, grade 6, grade 9 and grade 11. And throughout, again, my career as a student here, we had very little education or teaching about Louis Riel. One of the—or, the commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission said that education got us into this mess and education's going to get us out of it.

And part of this bill asks that the education act be amended to include specific pieces, not only in public schools but also in all schools throughout Manitoba, that talk about the important contribution—not just of Louis Riel but of the Métis nation here in its founding place here in Manitoba.

It's not insignificant, Deputy Speaker, that this weekend, the Manitoba Métis Federation has their AGM. And in bestowing this honorary title of honorary First Premier to Louis Riel sends a clear message that we're serious about reconciliation, that we're serious about our 'eviolution' as not just a province, but as a country. These are important steps to take. We can debate here in the House, which we are doing today, about the merits, but in the end, it's about what we say as a Legislative Assembly and what message do we send.

And we're sending a message clearly with this bill that the important contributions of the Métis people and of Louis Riel himself not only need to be recognized throughout our school system, but also in what this Legislature passes, Deputy Speaker. And I think it's a very important point that has to be made. We know of the important role that the Métis and Louis Riel played in creation of this province.

There are many, many pieces that we can list, we can itemize. We can look at the Louis Riel School Division. We can look at the holiday–or, holiday–we can look at that as more of a recognition day in February that was created and named Louis Riel Day on purpose because of the significant contributions of this individual, not only to Manitoba but to Canada, as many–as some other members have noted here this morning.

So this bill is important, Deputy Speaker. It's one that I look forward to seeing move through the House. And it's something that clearly will send a message that we're serious about reconciliation.

And with those few words, I thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other speakers?

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Good morning, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Can you hear me?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes, we can hear you just fine.

Mr. Lagassé: Okay, perfect. Back to the Zoom thing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a Métis member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, I'm honoured to be here today to be sharing the history and life of the Métis leader Louis Riel, the founder of Manitoba and the father of Confederation.

The history and the—the history, the tragic history, Mr. Deputy Speaker, needs to be shared. With the national day of truth and reconciliation, having just passed, and now the topic of Louis Riel coming up in our Chamber, I think everyone can agree that more needs to be done in the spirit of truth and reconciliation.

Our province, our country, has a dark history, and these tragedies are a reminder that we do need to take time to reflect, listen, to learn.

* (10:30)

I will start off, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with sharing the life of Louis Riel. There is so much history in our province due to his acts, and as mentioned numerous times in this Chamber by my colleagues, educating everyone of this history is of the utmost importance.

Louis Riel was born in St. Boniface in the Red River Settlement on October 22nd, 1844. He was the eldest of 11 children born to his parents, Louis Sr. and Julie Lagimodière. At the age of seven, he was sent to the school—he was sent to school in St. Boniface that was conducted by the Grey Nuns. Louis Riel was a smart man who was always eager to learn, to better

himself and to better the life for his people, and for all people.

In 1858, he was selected by the bishop of Taché to be educated in eastern Canada. His studies at Collège de Montréal were extensive, and showed what a brilliant man he was. His studies ranged from French and English literature, to philosophy, to Latin, Greek and mathematics. He also had a love of poetry, and was known to write a poem or two.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, his political interests started when he accepted a job as a clerk for a lawyer by the name of Rudolph *[phonetic]* Laflamme. It was there that Louis Riel learned a lot about the judicial and political procedures. He attended the college of Montreal until 1865, which is when he withdrew from the college.

Shortly after, Louis Riel left Montreal, and spent the following years in the United States. It was then, in July, 1868, he returned to Manitoba, to St. Vital, where his mother and siblings still lived. In early November, 1869, Louis Riel became known as the Métis spokesman. He led a group from the Red River that prevented McDougall and land surveying party from entering the colony.

Riel gathered support from both Francophone and Anglophone Métis communities. He was aware that his people had to work with more restrained, less organized, and the funds to satisfy their grievances. Local HBC officials remained neutral, but Métis opposition stopped the Canadian government from assuming control of the territory on December 1st, 1869, as planned. This encouraged the rebels who had seized the Upper Fort Garry at the main HBC trading post, at the forks of the Red and the Assiniboine Rivers.

They planned to hold it until the Canadian government agreed to negotiate. The provisional government organized the territory of the Assiniboia in March of 1870. It enacted a law code in April. The Canadian government recognized the rights of the Red River Settlement–settlers in negotiating in Ottawa that spring. But the Red River's victory was limited.

On May 12th, 1870, a new postage-sized province called Manitoba was created by the Manitoba Act. Its territory was severely limited, in contrast to the vast northwest, which would soon be acquired by the Canadian government. Even with Manitoba, public lands were controlled by the federal government. Métis land titles were granted, and 607,000 hectares

were reserved for children of Métis families. However, these arrangements were mismanaged, and later the-mismanaged later by the federal government.

The Métis Nation did not flourish in Manitoba after 1870. Ottawa granted no forgiveness for Louis Riel and his lieutenants. They fled into exile just before the arrival of the British and Canadian troops in August, 1870. The Red River insurrection had won its major objectives. The colony became a distinctive province, with land and cultural rights guaranteed. The victory was a hollow one; the Métis soon found themselves so disadvantaged in Manitoba that they moved farther west.

They made another more violent and tragic attempt to assert their nationality under Riel in the North-West Rebellion of 1885. It was said throughout the rebellion, Louis Riel never carried arms. He was a—he was staunch in his belief that he was chosen to lead the Métis people and that is what he did.

Louis was tried for treason and his lawyers pushed for him to accept a plea bargain of insanity but, with great pride, he rejected.

It was on November 16th, 1885, that Louis Riel was hung in Regina. The noose that was used for his execution is still on display at the historical 'musum'—museum at the RCMP Depot in Regina.

Louis Riel had a dream, Mr. Deputy Speaker. He had a dream for Manitoba to be a province that embraces all people, all cultures, and that is still shared in Manitoba today. Especially now in the spirit of truth and reconciliation, we need to find significant ways to move forward together. It may not be easy, but it is necessary to acknowledge our country's past and work with Indigenous leadership, elders and Indigenous community members.

In 2016, when my role as the MLA for Dawson Trail started, I received a gift from a constituent of mine in my riding. In my riding, there is a charming village named St. Genevieve. It was a small town where French settlers first established their homesteads in the early 1900s. The gift was received from my constituent, author Robert Fayette [phonetic]—Fanette [phonetic]. And the book was entitled, Louis Riel, the patriot.

Robert Fayette [phonetic] studied at Ecole Internationale de Bordeaux, France and studied the art of graphic novel with the masters of art from the Belgium–from Belgium and France. In this book, which is done in a graphic comic book, he has the

most beautiful colour filled with details and illustrations that go alongside the richly documented and faithful accounts of the monumental events in Canadian history.

As the book reads against the backdrop of political intrigue international in scope, a man stands his ground. His people rallied and a country is forged. And as we all know with Louis Riel leading the Métis people, a country was forged.

Early this summer, I was showing constituents of mine the office who happened to have the children insorry, I had constituents come to my office and they happened to have children in tow. Their daughter, who I believe was in grade 3, noticed the book. The cover, the illustrations are captivating. The young girl who is quite advanced in reading for her age was struggling to read the title. So with a little help and guidance from her mother, they figured out the pronunciation together, and I was amazed when she said, I read a book about him at school.

As our children get older, and as it was mentioned by one of my colleagues back in December when Bill 202 was read for the second time, our older children hear the name Louis Riel and the first thing to come to mind is the father of Manitoba.

So we talk about learning, about educating, and teaching our children the history of Manitoba. It is great that the Manitoba government education curriculum lists Louis Riel as a topic of study in our Manitoba schools under the course of social studies. There are even resources in curriculum that can be taught through English language arts and the arts themselves: drama, dance, music and art itself. Though these different subjects—through these different subjects, we can teach our children about all aspects of Louis Riel, from the early years onward.

A meaningful day that gives the opportunity to educate Manitoba-

Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I'm not going to say too much. You know, as a Métis woman that grew up in this community, but actually grew up in a school that wasn't reflective of Louis Riel. Didn't even learn about Louis Riel.

This is a chance for this government to actually take 'reconcili-action' and actually do something and actually support the Métis in this province. As the member from Transcona let the PCs know, this

weekend is the Métis-Red River Métis' national government AGM.

* (10:40)

This is a signal for you guys to say to all of the delegates that'll be there, and I know a lot of you have been to their AGMs and they're well attended, there's people that watch virtually, it's packed in there, you know, there's not a seat that's left open. This is a signal for this government to say to the Red River Métis Nation that they support them, that they acknowledge that Louis Riel was a significant contributor to this province. That he is the founder, but, he is also the first premier.

This is a great bestowance upon not only Louis Riel and his family and, you know, those that are still here, and his legacy, but also to those children that are here that, you know, should be learning this in school. And they learn parts of it, yes. But we have a chance here to really put reconciliation into action. And I continually hear this from the other side.

So again, you know, I implore the other side to do the right thing, to support Bill 202, to let the Red River Métis Nation know that you support them, and stand with us in supporting this bill, and vote in favour of it today.

Miigwech.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): It, you know, it's great to put a few words on the record today, and I share a lot of the thoughts that have already been given. I know that my colleague from Radisson has, you know, talked about some of the things outside that we have in recognition. And being able to take that walk, see some of the history around this beautiful building and, you know, be able to reflect on a lot of the culture and things within. You know, bring our children here; show them the, you know, the number of statues here that have been erected that share this history that is so important to all Canadians.

Our government is working to better reconciliation between settler people and Indigenous people. First Nations, Métis, Inuit and/or Indigenous peoples' perspectives are addressed to some degree at every grade level in Manitoba. And of course, you know, as an educator for 35 years, you look at this and you see the importance, as my friend there, colleague from Transcona, you know, talked about it, having been an educator, the importance of this, you know, and being able to put it forth and sharing these historical moments in our classrooms.

So from kindergarten to grade 12, you know, Louis Riel is specifically addressed in grade 4 to gradeor, grade 4, 6, 9 and also grade 11. The Manitoba curriculum contains distinctive learning outcomes from Indigenous and Francophone students, intended to enhance the development of language, identity, culture, community-and community for students. And I know, right now, you watch TV every day and you see, you know, the Métis Minutes or moments, and you learn a little bit about it every time. And I think all of us really appreciate, you know, watching some of these things. I know that I've seen some people from the Swan River Valley on some of these shows and, you know, and making the pemmican and things like that, and on some of the hunting stories and, you know, they're walking there.

And so they enjoy-and it's always something when you know somebody from your community that is a part of this history, part of this educational experience. You know, First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives are integrated throughout kindergarten to grade 12 social studies curriculum documents, representation Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre and the MMF. In grade 12, current topics in First Nation, Métis and Inuit studies explore the historic traditions, the cultures, worldviews and contemporary topics such as self-determination, self-government and language and cultural reclamation.

Culture is lost, and it's so important to bring it to the front. You know, myself as a Ukrainian, I know that a lot of my culture has been lost. When I used to live in Cowan, we used to, you know, we'd have all the traditional things that happened. And you see that. You're bringing this back into these generations. And Louis Riel fought hard for a lot of these things. And we as all Canadians in every cultural component within the province have to try to maintain this and share it with the people so that it takes a forefront in history.

No doubt, you know, a founder in, you know, of Manitoba and, in 1885, during his trial in Regina, Louis Riel stated: I know that through the grace of God, I am the founder of Manitoba. And many people support him on that.

As the Métis leader of the Red River Resistance of 1869 to 1870, Louis Riel was instrumental in drafting the list of rights that formed the basis of the Manitoba Act passed by Parliament of Canada in the spring of 1870, which brought the new province of Manitoba into Confederation. So we can see right there that there was a very, very important movement

that brought this forth. He was a driving force behind Manitoba becoming Canada's fifth province.

The Red River Settlement was an area inhabited by several First Nation tribes and the Métis, who were people of mixed Aboriginal and European backgrounds. These important groups are now recognized in the House during our land acknowledgement that took place in the Manitoba Legislature for the first time ever.

The Red River Settlement was once a part of a land conflict between what was called Rupert's Land, which was a large stretch of land from present-day Ontario to Alberta that the British Crown alleged was owned by the Hudson's Bay Company.

And there were always things that were happening, you know, in the fur trade. And Louis Riel fought hard, you know, in–so that the Hudson Bay's Company were not in total control of the fur trade. And in 1869, the Hudson Bay's Company agreed to sell this territory to Canada without any consultation with the local tribes and Métis whose livelihood depended on these lands.

Louis Riel had education—had the education, a Métis background and was bilingual, qualities which brought him to the leadership of a provincial—or, provisional government that would negotiate with Canada.

In February of 1870, Riel established a Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia, which had authority to pass laws. And another group called the Red River Canadians led by John Schultz welcomed Canada's takeover and plotted against this provisional government.

The provisional government led by Louis Riel was able to negotiate with Canada and brought out a Métis list of rights, which formed the basis for what was called the Manitoba Act in Canada when then accepted Manitoba into Confederation of May 12th, 1870.

Now we have celebrations. It's so difficult to rewrite history, you know, you can't do that, but you can recognize and show appreciation for people who played such an important role in this wonderful province. And Louis Riel, you know, stands as one of those individuals.

Louis Riel Day, you know, the Métis inquiry project—people, the events and ideas of the past shape the present and influence the future. Peoples of the world, students participate in many activities that illuminate the importance of Indigenous peoples, connection to the land, their culture, past, present and future. The project focuses in on Indigenous peoples from six continents.

Just looking at, you know, Louis Riel. Louis Riel was born in the Red River Settlement, as we heard from our—one of our members here of the modern-day Winnipeg, Manitoba, on October 22nd, 1844. And he was the oldest of 11 children born to Julie Lagimodière and Louis Riel, a local Métis leader who supported a resistance to the trade monopoly of the Hudson Bay's Company that was occurring.

And, of course, taking after his father, the younger Riel identified as a member of the Métis, a mixed group of Aboriginals of European descent who traditionally hunted buffalo and they traded furs. And the French-speaking Red River Métis were also involved in the Roman Catholic Church, as we heard this morning.

At 13 years old, Riel earned a scholarship to study at a junior seminary in Montreal. And Riel, after some time, a brief stay there, he dropped out of the seminary and followed brief employment as a clerk at a law office firm in Montreal.

* (10:50)

And then he made his way back to the Red River, in–Red River Valley here in 1868. His return came at a turning point for the Métis, as the Hudson's Bay Company was preparing to transfer the large swath of territory known as Rupert's Land, as I mentioned earlier, and then, to the newly established Dominion of Canada.

The energetic and well-educated Riel soon formed himself in a position of leadership for his people, whose—who were worried they would be pushed out by an influx of English-speaking Protestants from Canada. He led an 1869 uprising that took control of Upper Fort Garry.

So, you know, around Winnipeg and in the Red River Valley, there's a lot of history out there. And, you know, we all should take the time to go ahead, to, you know, to visit some of these things; Upper Fort Garry and the Hudson Bay headquarters and—oversaw discussion with Canadian commissioners. Riel became president of the Métis National Committee Provisional Government. And then the Métis leader was elected to the House of Commons from the Manitoba district of Provencher in the—in this—or, in the by-election of 1873.

Though he never took the seat, he was elected twice more. The Red River-

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Are there any other speakers?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Louis Riel was a very important—[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

The member for River Heights has the floor.

Mr. Gerrard: Louis Riel was very important to the beginning of Manitoba, and we owe him a great debt of gratitude for all that he did.

There are some questions about the timing of his being in the provisional government. But in fact, for those who are wondering whether or not he was theacting as the premier, we can look at the historical record. Manitoba became a province on July 15th, 1970, at a time when Riel was a head of the provisional government. And he wasn't displaced, as it were, until Wolseley came in on October 24th.

So Riel was the de facto premier for the first month. And what we are doing today is trying to just recognize this historical fact. So, we'll be supporting this legislation.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other speakers?

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): It's—it is great to get up to speak on this Bill 202. And it's about to get an important finger—figure who challenged Canada, you know, at a time when provinces were being created. And it speaks to a person, again, who spoke and challenged Ottawa. And, of course, Manitoba was formed and we still have a rich legacy created by Mr. Riel.

This is a very unique bill, and it seeks to assign and use law to apply an honorary title to a person of 150 years ago and to legally bestow an honorary First Premier title to Mr. Riel. Now it—there's been a number of comments made in this House today about the technicalities of this. And I think with law, we have to be careful that, and cautious, that we—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. In accordance with rule 25, and as previously announced, I am interrupting this debate to put the question on the second official opposition selected bill for this session.

The question before the House, then, is second reading of Bill 202, The Louis Riel Act.

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

All those in favour of the motion, please say aye. [interjection]

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

Some Honourable Members: Agree.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say aye.

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nav.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

* * *

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, please.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested, but I must advise the House that, according to rule 23, subsection (7), a division requested during private members' hour on a Thursday must be deferred to 11:55 a.m. and shall not be further deferred. Therefore, that is when the vote will happen today.

House Business

Ms. Fontaine: On House business.

Pursuant to rule 34(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Redhead). The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Adequately Fund the Construction of a New Aquatic Centre in Thompson.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Opposition House Leader that, pursuant to rule 34(8), the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable

member for Thompson (Mr. Redhead). The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Adequately Fund the Construction of the New Aquatic Centre in Thompson.

* * *

Ms. Fontaine: Deputy Speaker, is there leave to call the clock 11?

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

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 24—Calling upon the Provincial Government to Provide Psychiatry Assessments Close to Home for all Manitoba Children

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time being 11, we move to private members' resolutions. As previously announced, the resolution under consideration this morning is put forward by the honourable member for The Pas-Kameesak.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): I move, seconded by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara),

WHEREAS psychiatry assessments help provide an accurate diagnosis of a child's psychological disorder, which can result in better access to appropriate treatments; and

WHEREAS these treatments can have a major positive impact on a child's emotional, social and mental development; and

WHEREAS without a proper psychiatry assessment, many children's conditions can go undiagnosed, which can have negative impacts on their development: and

WHEREAS lack of proper diagnoses for psychological disorders has been linked to higher levels of physical health issues, incarceration and suicide; and

WHEREAS Northern Manitoba as a region has higher rates of adolescent suicide and self-harm, particularly in First Nation communities; and

WHEREAS these same communities don't have access to mental health supports close to home for children such as psychiatry assessments; and

WHEREAS psychiatry assessments for children in Manitoba are currently only available in Brandon and Winnipeg; and WHEREAS children living in remote and northern areas are forced to travel many hours to Brandon or Winnipeg for psychiatry assessments; and

WHEREAS this travel requirement can be extremely stressful and burdensome for children who need help, especially if they are currently undergoing a mental health crisis; and

WHEREAS having to travel to Brandon or Winnipeg for a child's psychiatry assessment places a financial burden on families; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government should provide access to psychiatry assessments close to home for all children in Manitoba regardless of where they live.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call upon the provincial government to provide psychiatric assessments close to home for all Manitoba children.

Ekosi.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion is in order.

Ms. Lathlin: It's an absolute honour, once again, to stand here on behalf of my constituents for The Pas-Kameesak.

This quest that we are on to seek psychiatric assessments for children on—in northern Manitoba and rural Manitoba is quite important to me. My personal history, as an MLA here for seven years, I've shared many private moments here in regards to my two teenagers not being able to access mental health services. Therefore, we probably went through five medevacs from The Pas to Winnipeg in order for my two teenagers to access mental health services.

* (11:00)

This is absolute insane for parents and families to go through. August long weekend, I want to share here. August long weekend I had four RCMP visits to my home. My 17-year-old was going through a very, very bad phase. And knowing that the member for Union Station, with her background being a psychiatric nurse, I reached out to her immediately. I didn't know what to do, I-oh-[interjection] Yes, okay-them.

And the member for Union Station guided me through what resources that are accessible. However, they were in Winnipeg and I was making this phone call from The Pas, absolutely lost in regards to access to mental health services.

Now, going through those many, many experiences without having to be medevac'd out, these services should be provided at home. We've been medevac'd out on a plane, we even rode in a back of an RCMP truck going 140 kilometres from The Pas to Winnipeg. I've never made it to The Pas—Winnipeg in five hours ever in my life.

During that long weekend, with those RCMP visits, we did secure a bed in Brandon, voluntary only. My 17-year-old, no. The only way we can get her to Winnipeg if the RCMP are involved, which is under The Mental Health Act, part 3, section 7, involuntary assessment and admission. We have to get the RCMP involved in order to get my child medevac'd out. That does not make sense. It shouldn't be this hard for our children to access mental health services in northern and rural Manitoba.

With the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) and the guidance provided, I was able to assess what I was in, assess what my daughter was in. And I was able to bring this forward to the MKO AGM, when all our chiefs in northern Manitoba gathered in Opaskwayak Cree Nation at the Kikiwak Inn. Once again, I was invited, honoured to be invited there and to share what this quest is going to be about, to provide mental health services for our children.

I explained to the chiefs what the problem is. And again, once again, I was honoured that this resolution was put forward by our chiefs from MKO unanimously. So therefore, there is backup to support this resolution, because we want our children to have those access to mental health services.

So right now, the only solution for our children is to go to Brandon or Winnipeg. Now, imagine if families cannot leave their communities, whether has to do for financially or they're just do not want to go. This can lead to further, further damage to our communities in terms of suicide, in terms of giving up and maybe leading a life of crime, in terms of getting apprehended by CFS; you're acting up, you're bad, you're going to get apprehended. You know, there's just many, many consequences that can happen, and are happening right now as I speak, while these services are not provided in areas such as The Pas, Thompson, Churchill.

And we should be providing these services close to home, because these children should not be further impacted when they're already in a mental health distress. And I'm telling you as a parent, in this Chamber, it is absolutely insane to watch our children not have these services, and watch them further deteriorate. And what's more infuriating, that once we get to Winnipeg, imagine a child being medevac'd out in the middle of the night or driven in by an RCMP truck, 140 kilometres per hour, they're tired.

So by the time the assessment happens at 9 a.m. at the Children's Hospital, they're groggy. Those assessments are only 10 minutes. How useless is that—10 minutes? And basically, a few days of being admitted in.

And the back-up plan to come home needs to be really worked on. There needs to be more communication once a child receives care, treatment in Brandon and Winnipeg only. There needs to be a solid plan once these children are released from care and back into their communities.

And, once again, without the member for Union Station, I don't think I would have gotten through that August long weekend. I've never been so terrified of my own child. Imagine other families going through that. It was a child calling out for help, that's what it was, and there was no help that I could provide for her. And I'm speaking on behalf of many, many families that are going through this.

Our children deserve better than this. Many lives can be saved. And imagine the positive impacts, too, once we have these services provided. Imagine the suicide rates going down. Imagine high school graduations going up. Imagine more will, more positive, more hope with our children rather than just giving up.

So as the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak, and as a mother and as an Indigenous woman who personally knows what depression is, it is very crucial that the other side support this resolution. It's very important that they do that because, like I said, it shouldn't be this hard for our children to access psychiatric assessments in northern and rural Manitoba.

Ekosi.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party. This is to be followed by rotation between parties. Each independent member

may ask one question, and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): I want to thank my colleague for bringing this resolution forward and for sharing her comments today.

I know it's not always ideal, but I'm wondering if the member can advise whether or not there's any psychiatric assessments available through video technology, Zoom and such. While not a primary goal, but it is—can at times provide a fill-in.

I'm wondering if the member's aware of any services such as that being provide to her constituents.

Ms. Amanda Lathlin (The Pas-Kameesak): We understand that there is technology currently out there. However, in communities such as Pukatawagan, where we do have Telehealth set up, the problem is maintenance and IT problems. So that's not a solid solution. I believe that we can have—if we can recruit, provide incentive for a psychiatrist to reside, a few of them to reside in northern Manitoba—it'd be very beneficial for our children.

And I do agree in Telehealth in other ways but, however, when it comes to assessments, it should be more than just technology and it's always not trustworthy as well.

Ekosi.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): First, I'd like to thank my colleague, the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak for sharing—not only for bringing this very important resolution forward on behalf of her constituents and many folks facing these challenges, but for having the courage to share her personal story. It takes a tremendous amount of bravery for families to take this step to reach out for help. And it takes a tremendous amount of courage and care to share your personal story to make things better for others, so I thank her for that.

I'd like to ask the member if she's heard other stories from families about their lack of access to psychiatric services and how it's impacted their families.

* (11:10)

Ms. Lathlin: Thank you for that question. Like I said, I have heard many stories about what my family's going through, because I share my story with other constituents. And once that is done, conversation starts and we learn more and more that I'm not the only

family that are left in distress and without those services.

So, just by being an MLA, mingling with my constituents, family and friends, I'm not the only one in this situation.

Ekosi.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): The–I thank the member for bringing this forward. It's an important issue, and clearly we need quick access to mental health services in the North and locally.

Can the member for The Pas-Kameesak talk a little bit more about what she envisions, how many psychiatrists or psychologists in combination would be needed, and whereabouts would they optimally be?

Ms. Lathlin: Thank you for that question about this vision that, on this side of the House, we have. I want to see psychiatrists. I want to see the northern regional health authority providing incentive for psychiatrists to reside in northern Manitoba, such as Thompson, The Pas, Churchill. I envision collaboration, too, as well, with other tribal councils up in the North, you know, with the health departments that we have.

I believe in communication that has to happen, I believe, and providing this information, too, with the education sector as well. Because a lot of our children—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I thank the member for The Pas-Kameesak for her work on this resolution. I'm wondering if the member could talk a little bit more about who she engaged with in the development of this resolution, who she consulted with and so forth.

Ms. Lathlin: Thank you for that question, but I wanted to finish with the member for River Heights. You know, there should be more training involved, perhaps maybe more seats, you know, within the schools, you know, to, in local schools, to provide those services.

And with the gentleman there for-the member for-

An Honourable Member: Borderland.

Ms. Lathlin: -borderline, when I'm actually going through this experience, there's no need to consult, you know, it's within here. When I'm talking to my constituents, you know, when I'm with the Grand

Chief Garrison Settee and sharing with the chiefs this important issue, there's my-that's the way I consult, sharing these stories.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

MLA Asagwara: I'm wondering if the MLA for The Pas-Kameesak can share with us her understanding of what some of the long-term negative impacts of undiagnosed and untreated mental health issues are, especially or specifically in terms of what she's seen in the communities that she represents.

Ms. Lathlin: Thank you for that question. I see this in my community right now: suicide rates; children feeling lost, where they feel accepted, say, joining a gang; you know, children feeling lost where they drop out out of high school; children feeling lost where they cause trouble, you know, in high school or, you know, where CFS has to get involved.

That is the long-term negative impact of undiagnosed and untreated mental health issues. Our children deserve much better than that.

Ekosi.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I, too, want to thank the member from The Pas-Kameesak for bringing this very important topic to the House. I'm very familiar with what happens at the centre for adult—or, pardon me, for what happens at the children's centre in Brandon that she mentioned.

And I'm just wondering, there are more—and I'm not talking about consultations, but there are more jurisdictions across Canada and sometimes it's great for us as MLAs to reach out to those jurisdictions, or to at least find out what they're doing.

And I'm wondering if the member has had the opportunity to reach out to other provinces and find out what's happening in other jurisdictions across Canada?

Ms. Lathlin: Thank you for that question. I'm reaching out to the Manitoba government for this issue.

Ekosi.

MLA Asagwara: Can the member advise, from her perspective, how youth and their families being able to access psychiatric assessments in their own community, close to home, in a timely way; how that might help other issues that folks in her communities are facing, like poverty and/or addictions?

Ms. Lathlin: By providing these services for our children who are calling out for help, such as by causing a ruckus at home for parents, by dropping out of school, by just eliminating anything that's valuable in their life, such as friends and family and community.

By providing these services, you know, if you build, you know, a healthy community through education, that's going to be very beneficial. And you'll see education, graduates, go up. You'll see more young community mentors, you know.

By providing these services, it will build healthy communities and—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Martin: I'm wondering—the member talked about psychiatric assessment, care close to home, and I appreciate that.

I wonder if the member can share, from her perspective, the role of traditional knowledge, in terms of addressing some of the issues she identifies, whether it be suicide prevention or psychological needs of those that she represents.

Ms. Lathlin: There is no psychiatric assessments in northern and rural Manitoba. That's the key focus that we need to concentrate on here. And this resolution is asking that the government provide these services for northern and rural Manitoba children. And it's all about psychiatric assessments.

So, we need those doctors placed in Manitoba with incentives, recruitment and retention from the regional health authorities. That is what's required.

Ekosi.

MLA Asagwara: I just want to say, and emphasize, that, you know, as the member has already indicated, one of the biggest barriers to youth and folks reaching out for help, as it pertains to mental health challenges, is stigma. And the member sharing her story is a way to mitigate that stigma and create safety and affirmation for folks who need help.

So I'm just wondering if the member has a message that she'd like to share with families and for youth who are struggling with mental health challenges and experiences?

Ms. Lathlin: Thank you for that opportunity to ask me what my message would be.

As a mother, as an MLA-especially as a public figure—it is, you know, sometimes invasive when you have to reach out to, you know, be seen in an ER, you know, with a very, very, very upset 17-year-old; a 17-year-old, again, running out of the ER, coming in with RCMP.

As a public figure, I share my story because you shouldn't be ashamed. You know, you shouldn't be hiding this. This is something that's happening every day, where parents and families are suffering in order to help their loved one.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

And just on a point of clarity, I don't believe it was intentional, but we should refer to members by their constituency name and not any other name. And the member for—is the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), not borderline. I think that was an honest mistake but it does fall to me to make that adjustment and correction for the record.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

* (11:20)

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): I do want to take a moment to acknowledge the member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin), thank her for bringing this resolution and this discussion to the floor of the Chamber.

I know the terror that goes through the hearts of parents, and certainly mothers, as they try to support their children through crises. I myself have walked this difficult path back in 2008 and 2009, navigating a system that was very difficult to figure out in the midst of not only my child's struggles and acute crises, but also my own. When your child is experiencing these difficulties, when you are watching a loved one completely transform in front of you, no longer recognizing the caring individuals and just the bright spirits that we know is in there. That is the most terrifying feeling as a parent, as a mother, to watch your child and feel helpless, to not know what's needed in the moment. To use every single coping skill that you have learned throughout your own life and try to help in that situation and then feel completely lost. Who do I reach out to? Who do I ask for advice in this moment? How do I feel calm in order to navigate on behalf of our vulnerable children?

So my heart goes out to the member for The Pas-Kameesak. I'm grateful and thankful that they were able to reach out to colleagues and to others to find a route to help. And a lot of times those journeys can be traumatic in and of themselves. You know you're on the way to seek help and to be around the professionals who can provide those assessments, but that fear sticks with you every step along the way, just adds to the panic, to the disorder, to the uncertainty. So I do want to acknowledge that. That's a very difficult path, and it's lifelong.

The crisis will be over; it will end. Many people do get the help they need; many more don't. And that is another grief journey that I don't wish on any family in Manitoba or anywhere across Canada.

So thank you for bringing this forward to the Chamber. I appreciate you opening the discussion, allowing others who have experienced some of this hard journey and trauma to also share that you're not alone. There are many families experiencing what you are, and I agree, there needs to be more supports, more help and easier to navigate for families who are facing this crisis.

And having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have had an issue with recruitment and retention in northern regions across the spectrum, not just in psychiatric services, but all across the health-care spectrum. And that has been decades long, and I know that the member, when she sat in the previous government, was aware of these issues and advocated for more supports in the North and for solutions on how do we train up local individuals who already have connections within the community who can stay in that community, who have a heart for their neighbours and their friends and who can really make impacts.

And our government absolutely has been meeting with stakeholders, meeting with community members, looking at various ways that we can get creative and be effective in finding people who can fill these positions to stay within the communities.

And I know that the member is heartfelt in today's resolution and has raised the issues of needs in the North multiple times. And if there was a magic bullet, a magic solution, I know that her government would have found it. And certainly, we're searching for many different avenues on how to solve this incredibly difficult situation.

Having said that, there have been movements and investments into virtual care, and although those are limited in terms in how they can address a lot of these situations and certainly in crisis, they are better than not having anyone on the ground for sure. And COVID-19 really accelerated the process of psychiatric and telepsychiatry services in Manitoba. We are looking at expanding those services and certainly reinvesting in those as an interim measure, or to help complement our efforts to try to fill positions that can be on the ground.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we saw a huge–saw a reduction in transfers from northern and remote communities of patients needing psychiatric assessments with this new technology. They were able to come up with care plans to stay in the community, because as we all know that individuals do much better when they are around their surroundings that they're comfortable with, with the people who they have relationships with.

And we strive to keep them within their communities with care plans to ensure their safety, but also to equip family and community members with proper tools. And from my own experience walking through this path, I have made it a main focus of our department to increase supports for families.

When we talk about the moments of crises, those panic moments, once an individual has been assessed and a treatment plan has been provided, it is the family and community members and loved ones who are the 24-7 caregivers to these individuals, that ensure the path to healing and the supports that they get throughout the rest of the day, beyond the one hour appointments with therapists, beyond the 10-minute assessments, as the member alluded to.

It's the family members, community members, those who are in direct contact with these individuals who actually have the biggest impact and determination on the long-term recovery and healing of individuals who are facing mental health challenges.

So, we are looking at ways to encourage organizations who already have plans and programs that help equip family, parents, siblings, community members with coping tools and also learning about these mental health challenges. Because the more you know, the less scary it feels.

You will always be sad by the struggles that our children will face. You always wish that they didn't have to carry these burdens and these challenges. But when you can understand some of the triggers, some of those difficulties they are facing, and then you learn coping tools and also helpful tools that you can

implement on a day-to-day basis, you can make a difference in the lives of those who are struggling.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a few of the various investments that we have made as a government in mental health in general. We've invested \$342,000 to provide more emergency telepsychiatry assessments for the rural emergency departments and—as well as the Indigenous rural communities and northern areas. We've also invested \$853,000 for five new clinical psychologists, two of whom are pediatric psychologists.

And although the member does highlight accurately that many positions are within the larger city centres, these individuals also participate in outreach programs to northern and rural communities. And I would look forward to working with the member from The Pas-Kameesak on creative solutions on how, again, we can really recruit, retain, members who are working within the psychiatry health-care system to stay in these communities or be available for on-site care.

And until that point, we do thank those who already are providing those outreach, those supports. We need to look at other organizations who can be mobile and go to where the crises are happening, and I know that there are many organizations who have visited northern and rural communities when they are in the midst of crises. And we are thankful for those individuals who are providing that outreach and support services.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also had opened up our youth Huddles in Manitoba this year, earlier in the spring, one of which is in Thompson, and I know that they have provided a new service and a welcome service to our adolescent and youth populations in many areas of Manitoba, including Brandon.

And, again, I just want to finish my statement with another acknowledgement of the member's path that she is on. I—my heart goes out to her daughter. I will be keeping them in my thoughts and prayers.

* (11:30)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable minister's time has expired.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I also want to begin by thanking the member, my colleague from The Pas-Kameesak, for bringing forward this very important resolution and for sharing her family's very painful and very personal story in order to illustrate the desperate need for services in the North.

Imagine being as well-connected as an MLA and yet not being able to get what you need to help your child at a critical time. And so then imagine, for everybody else who doesn't have those connections and opportunities, how challenging it must be.

Mental health is an integral part of health care and all Manitobans deserve access to mental-health services in their communities. As legislators, this is our duty. Having access to mental-health care and psychiatric assessments and treatment for children is absolutely critical.

I know that last spring there was a lot of support from all sides of this House for the bill we brought forward on eating disorder awareness, and I'm going to use eating disorders as an example to illustrate some of my experiences in this area.

As someone who worked in community health clinics, providing care to eating disordered clients for a very long time, part of our mandate was to try and provide resources and supports to folks around the province needing this. And multiple times a year, we had calls from nursing stations, from other help providers in northern communities desperately looking for support. They had suspicions that a child may have an eating disorder. They didn't necessarily know how to treat it or have information about that. There was a profound lack of awareness, which we've already illustrated in our discussions last spring.

But what struck me was just how challenging it was for those care providers who, you know, they couldn't even provide an accurate psychiatric diagnosis and assessment of these kids while trying to treat them, getting help over the phone with a care provider somewhere else in the province, who admittedly knows very little about the reality of their day-to-day life. Although I know our team worked hard at that, there's no way we could know that.

When my colleague talks about having psychiatric care with people living in the North, that is an opportunity for psychiatrists to develop an expertise and speciality affiliated with the reality of day-to-day life in northern Manitoba.

You know, systemic issues have a really big impact on mental health, so, of course, there are issues with how the brain functions; there's issues, you know, created by, you know, all kinds of factors. But some of it is truly systemic as well. Children's mental health is profoundly impacted by poverty. It's impacted by racism. For Indigenous children it's—it

may be impacted by what they see and know of the harm that can come to Indigenous people.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Even here, in Winnipeg, I fielded multiple calls last year and emails from youth and children, like young—quite young youth—who were really anxious, like, just a growing anxiety around climate change. So those were calls from well-connected kids living in the city who had family and parents around. But imagine the impact of climate change on the mental health of people living in communities that rely on their communities not melting; you know, ice not falling away into the water when they rely on living off the land and sustenance living and there's a lack of access to that, and poverty continues to grow in the community. And, you know, nutritious food is inaccessible. So, imagine the anxiety and depression and mental health issues that could contribute to that.

And, you know, we've heard some talk this morning about the idea of virtual care. And so my argument is, you know, twofold on that. One is that an enormous amount of families in these communities do not have access to the Internet. This is a hard way for them to access care. Even, you know, back earlier in my career, where we were able to do some work in assessments virtually with people in rural areas, sometimes people would have to drive an hour and a half, two hours to access the ability to use some kind of virtual assessment system through the regional health authority. But imagine being somewhere without, you know, easy road access or a fly-in community, and what that would mean, especially if you don't have access to the Internet. So it's not realistic to expect that for children and families.

And it's not really how an assessment is done. If a psychiatrist or any mental health-care provider wants to do an adequate assessment of a child they need to know that child; they need to understand their experiences at home, in their–at school, in their communities, the whole family background and dynamics. And we know that in the North and on reserves and in many Indigenous communities, family dynamics are a completely different reality than, you know, maybe settler-style family dynamics, right? We know that entire multiple-family systems are involved, and that lots and lots of people have input and say and support into a child's life. That all needs to be part of that kind of assessment.

So we need northern psychiatric services that are delivered by people that can be there, be central in the community, understand that community and provide their care through a really-like, a lens that is completely informed by the reality of life in the North and the distance that it is to services. That makes a difference when you're formulating a treatment plan as well. The treatment plan for a child in Winnipeg is going to—or Brandon is going to look very different for a treatment plan for a child in The Pas, simply because whatever services are available at school or in the community is going to look different.

You know, I heard a reference from the previous minister speaking about that there's no magic bullet for this cure. And I think nobody's looking for magic. I believe that what my colleague is looking for is a commitment, funding, a very serious effort to recruit and to bring in the necessary care to keep her community healthy and safe.

And this is really—you know, early psychiatric assessment and intervention is a harm reduction action, right? Without diagnosis and adequate treatment, many children and youth find ways to self-soothe and self-medicate. Kids are pretty brilliant, and I've worked with a lot of kids in impossible family situations where nobody was even noticing what was going on for them. But they managed to get through their lives by accessing alcohol, drugs, maybe they used food or restricting food or other means that provided them with a sense of soothing and a sense of normality.

Which means that untreated mental health conditions in children are also often a direct route to addiction in young adulthood and adulthood. Untreated mental health in children leads to long-term mental health problems for adults. So a lack of proper diagnosis for psychological disorders has negative impacts on a child's entire development and their future. It's completely limiting for their future.

The current services are simply not adequate. I really hope that the government is compelled by the stories that they've heard today and will really give some serious consideration to the needs that are required for good, healthy mental health in children all across Manitoba, regardless of where they reside, with special attention on the needs of the North, where children have been neglected for far too long by our mental health system and by our health-care system.

* (11:40)

I'm going to leave it at that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I know there are some others that want the opportunity to speak.

Thank you.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): It's always a pleasure to rise in this House and be part of the democratic process. And I always appreciate the opportunity to speak, especially to resolutions put forward by my colleague from The Pas-Kameesak who has consistently, from the moment upon her election in this House has been a very, very strong advocate for improvements to mental health services in her community and in this province as a whole, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This is a—not an easy role. It is not always easy to share these situations, especially very personal situations. So I sincerely appreciate the member's efforts in promoting her resolution today. And I agree, I agree wholeheartedly, that we collectively need to do more when it comes to mental health services for our young people here in this province and for, indeed, for all Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Now I know my colleague, the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) did ask a question about the relationship with Saskatchewan in terms of best practices or actions, but I believe that the member inby myself, the issue there is, in large part, Manitoba. We are a situation of our own geography and population, in that a large and the majority of our population lives in a central area, that being Winnipeg, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And so the provision of services outside that centre can be challenging, especially in communities that are remote not only physically but remote in terms of infrastructure. I know the members opposite have cited deficiencies in terms of Internet access, something that, in large part, I would argue that most of us in this Chamber take for granted. And that lack of access, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is more profound in those remote communities, especially when it denies them not only what we may use, you know, Internet service for, whether it be streaming and such, but when it denies them the fundamental access to these kinds of mental health services.

As well, I think it is worth looking and having a conversation about the situation in Saskatchewan because, again, as I noted, very similar geographies, similar population patterns and that very large, disperse rural population, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it would be worth looking to see whether or not that jurisdiction has been able to incorporate, or how they've been able to incorporate traditional Indigenous learnings into psychiatric assessment, because I do believe there is a role there.

We are seeing more and more Indigenous communities being looked at in terms of dealing with Western medicine and alternatives to Western medicine and some of the knowledge there. But we also need to look at traditional Indigenous teaching when it comes to psychiatric assessment because it is not a new issue. Psychiatric issues have been with our communities since, essentially, time began. Obviously, how we've addressed them both as individuals and governments has evolved.

And I am proud to serve with the member for Pas-Kameesak [phonetic], who is seeking to push that even further to deal with not only the stigma that people have, but the very real need that our young people have in these communities, a need that has only been exasperated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, from the COVID experience that we all had, from the isolation that came from that and from the denial a lot of us had in terms of close, personal contacts.

And that had—and there's no denying that that situation of last two years had a very detrimental impact on the mental health of a lot of people in this province, in particular, young people. I've seen it first-hand, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Unfortunately, I've known two individuals who have made the decision, that final decision, to take their lives in the last year. These are not easy choices to make. They took the family and friends by surprise in these cases. And, again, these are cases in which individuals did have access to assessment services, to mental health services in proportionally far higher than the individuals that the member for Pas-Kameesak is here representing today.

And when we have individuals like that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who have access to the services, who have a family support network, and those individuals are making that final decision, it only highlights the situation that we have in more remote communities that may not have that familiar access surrounding them in a loving and supportive way, or more importantly, direct access to psychiatric assessment.

So it is a necessity, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we work together to ensure that those individuals who have these situations aren't making that very final decision, because it is just that: a final decision.

But we also know other individuals, Mr. Deputy Speaker; a young man, I've spoken about him in this House previously, I've had him in the gallery. Name is Bryan. He used to babysit our children some years ago. He proudly and without shame or stigma, he works with an organization called jack, which is a youth organization working on—obviously, working on mental health for young people; in particular, the L-G-B-T-T-Q-S community, Mr. Deputy Speaker. But Bryan proudly and without stigma, as I said, shares a story and calls himself a suicide survivor. Which again, there is a lot of stigma to individuals who survive a suicide attempt, which, you know, only compounds the situation.

So in this case, Bryan, a young man who was and is a 'susurvidor'—suicide survivor, has heard and seen firsthand the situations that he faced and that his family faced in terms of having to watch him 24-7; in terms of having to literally lock up—his mother was suffering from bone cancer, and having to lock up her medications so that Bryan wouldn't have access to them to cause self-harm, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a family that did, relative to the constituents that the member for Pas-Kameesak [phonetic] is talking about, these are individuals of relative—of means, who were cognizant of what their son was going through, and—through all their resources, both from family and those that they gathered from the community, both professionally and personally.

And we see the tremendous effort that's required in that situation, here just literally on the outskirts of our capital city. You can only imagine the effort required in more remote communities, where you may not have that backbone and that foundation of services, and where more professional services will be required to assist individuals who are seeking that kind of mental health services.

And it is—the key word there is services, because it is, and it has to be, a continuum of services. This isn't—and a lot of people need to come to this realization, that when it comes to mental health, it is not as simple as, say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, breaking a limb; I have a cast, it's very visible, the cast is removed, and then it's promptly healed.

What the member for Pas-Kameesak and what colleagues across this House have sharing are stories of individuals that may not be, in the more traditional sense of the word, healed. It is very much a journey.

And where there are medications and pharmaceuticals that may provide value, again, in discussion and consultation with your medical professionals, there are also other means of therapy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that can be provided. Not just

pharmaceutical, but obviously other therapies that can be provided and that are necessary. Both traditional and non-traditional.

So, with the—with just my time winding down, and I have no doubt that there's 'othe' individuals that would like to speak and share their perspective, again, I just want to thank the member for Pas-Kameesak [phonetic] for continuing to be a strong, strong advocate for her community and for Manitobans when it comes to mental health services.

On this file, the member can be assured that I am one hundred per cent in her corner, that there is simply not enough that we can do as a government, as individuals, as MLAs and as community members, than to reach out to those individuals—I think a member, or the minister earlier referenced in her member's statement yesterday, the—you know, the strong ones.

And it isn't always just the strong ones that we need to look after, Mr. Deputy Speaker. There are many, many individuals in our community that simply aren't capable of asking for that help. I think this resolution is part of that.

* (11:50)

Thank you, Mr.-

Deputy Speaker: Member's time has expired.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Deputy Speaker: At this time, I do want to welcome some guests, some young guests to the Manitoba Legislature. I believe these—this is a grade 6 class from Leila north school in the constituency for the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Sandhu).

Welcome here, grade sixers. Hope you have a great time, and maybe one day, some of you will sit down here and do this work as well. Welcome.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is still open for debate.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I rise to speak in strong support of the resolution from the member for The Pas-Kameesak, and for much better mental health services for people in rural Manitoba, but most particularly for northern Manitoba where there is a desperate and very critical need.

It is sad that we have had a government in power for six and a half years. They have known about this issue for six and a half years. And yet we are barely at the starting point in addressing it. This is not acceptable. It is a sad testament to the incompetence of the current provincial government in addressing a really important issue, which is mental health issues in northern Manitoba.

We have known for many, many years—it's been obvious for people who have been involved in health care in this province and elsewhere—that we drastically underspend in mental health care in this province. We should be spending probably about twice what we are at the moment, and there is room to do much better than we are doing now, rather than having to wait six and a half years and to have somebody from the government's side talk about what might be and talk about the problems more than the solutions.

Yes, we do need a combination of in-person care, which the member for The Pas-Kameesak (Ms. Lathlin) has emphasized, and a better system of virtual video links that can be accessible throughout the North from all communities to access psychiatric and psychological care.

It has been known for 25 years that for many mental health conditions and psychiatric care that video links are every effective. Not in all cases, but they certainly have been widely used and developed elsewhere. But we have not done the development that we should have done here and we have, as the member for The Pas-Kameesak mentioned, we still have unreliable connections in the North.

This is not acceptable. We are living in a world where we should have had good Internet and video link access 20 years ago throughout northern Manitoba and we are sitting today with it still not being reliable and still not being adequate.

There is a need for not only psychiatric care, but also for much more widespread access to psychological therapies. And that is why we have advocated and called for putting psychological therapies under medicare, to give people throughout the province much better access.

We know, for example, that most instances of depression are treated using psychological therapists—therapies given by psychologists or others who are trained, can be as effective as drugs provided by—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. [interjection] Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for River Heights will have six minutes remaining.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS-PUBLIC BILLS

(Continued)

Bill 202–The Louis Riel Act (Continued)

Recorded Vote

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time being 11:55, as previously announced, I'm interrupting this debate to conduct a recorded vote on the official opposition's second selected bill.

Accordingly, the question before the House is second reading of Bill 202, The Louis Riel Act.

All those in favour of the motion [inaudible] Glitch at our end. Sorry, folks.

A recorded vote having been called, please call in the members.

For the information of all members, for virtual sittings of the House, we are required to conduct votes in a different manner than during normal sittings of the House. I say this because we have some virtual members.

For members in the House, the vote will be conducted in a manner similar to our previous practice. For this part of the vote, those in favour will stand to be counted first, followed by those against.

Once the page states the name of the member standing to be counted, the Clerk will acknowledge that the member has voted by repeating the member's name, rather than saying aye.

Once the count in the House is complete, we will conduct an alphabetical roll call of members participating virtually. For this step, the page will call each remote member's name alphabetically, and then each remote member must audibly state their vote, responding with either I vote yes or I vote no. The Clerk will then respond with the member's name, followed by yes or no.

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 202, The Louis Riel Act.

Division

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

Yeas

Altomare, Asagwara, Brar, Bushie, Fontaine, Gerrard, Kinew, Lamont, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lindsey, Maloway, Marcelino, Moses, Naylor, Redhead, Sala, Sandhu, Smith (Point Douglas), Wasyliw, Wiebe.

Navs

Clarke, Eichler, Ewasko, Friesen, Gordon, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Khan, Lagassé, Martin, Michaleski, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Piwniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smook, Squires, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk.

* (12:00)

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 21, Nays 26.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion is accordingly defeated.

* * *

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hour being past noon, this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m. today.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 13, 2022

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