



Second Session – Forty-Third Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Tom Lindsey
Speaker*



Vol. LXXIX No. 70A - 10 a.m., Tuesday, October 7, 2025

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Third Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CORBETT, Shannon	Transcona	NDP
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie, Hon.	Assiniboia	NDP
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINEW, Wab, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
KING, Trevor	Lakeside	PC
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike, Hon.	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
PERCHOTTE, Richard	Selkirk	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
ROBBINS, Colleen	Spruce Woods	PC
SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu, Hon.	The Maples	NDP
SCHMIDT, Tracy, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
SCHOTT, Rachelle	Kildonan-River East	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SIMARD, Glen, Hon.	Brandon East	NDP
SMITH, Bernadette, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
STONE, Lauren	Midland	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	Ind.
WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

The House met at 10 a.m.

The Speaker: O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire that—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, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and 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 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

The Speaker: The honourable member for—so I have received a letter from the Deputy Government House Leader (MLA Pankratz) indicating that the government caucus has identified Bill 210, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended), as their first 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.

In accordance with this letter and rule 25, the question will be put on second reading motion of Bill 210 at 10:55 a.m.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 210—The Indigenous Veterans Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended)

The Speaker: Therefore, we will now resume second reading debate of Bill 210, standing in the name of the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. King), who has seven minutes remaining.

Is there leave for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Lakeside?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no. I hear no, therefore leave has been denied and the bill will not remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Lakeside.

So we will now resume debate on Bill 210. The floor is open for debate.

The honourable member for Spruce Woods (Mrs. Robbins)—the honourable member for La Vérendrye.

Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye): Thank you for the opportunity to speak on Indigenous Veterans Day and the act that's been brought before us.

I think, on our side of the House, we all agree in the importance of recognizing those that had fought and protected for—our country here in Manitoba.

When I was last able to speak to this bill in the past session, I had the opportunity to speak about some of the veteran—Indigenous veterans that I had the honour of personally working with, knowing and becoming friends with. These are people that stepped up for their neighbours, they stepped up for their province and they stepped up for their country.

These are people like Richard Hayden, the Roseau River First Nation. This individual has learnt, through his experiences serving in the Canadian military and serving our country, the value of protecting and working for his neighbours, his friends.

And he's brought those values back to his home, and that has been the guiding light to him and for him throughout his life. This is somebody that has then

gone on to work at building his community, growing and prospering his personal life and his family's life.

The military personnel in our country in general have always been respected and recognized for the work that they have done to provide the life that we all enjoy today.

Indigenous veterans are no different. They had walked alongside non-Indigenous soldiers, not only in the wars that had shaped the country that we're able to enjoy today, but they've also served in the military, to be there as a force to protect our country and defend the rights that we all enjoy.

So I'm happy to stand today, I'm happy to stand with my colleagues in this Legislature to speak about the importance that Indigenous veterans played on shaping the Canada that we enjoy today.

Indigenous veterans have served in the defence of Canada since the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 between Great Britain and France, in what was a time new—in the time of New France—present day Quebec City in Quebec. It's estimated that as many as 12,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit people served in the wars of the 20th century, and at least 500 of them lost their lives according to Veterans Affairs Canada.

The first Indigenous Veterans Day took place across Canada on November 8, 1993. And Manitoba proudly was the first province to recognize Aboriginal Veterans Day on November 8, 1994. It speaks to the guidance that Manitoba has been able to provide on recognizing the value that Indigenous people have played in the military presence of our country.

It's unfortunate that Indigenous people in these times that I mentioned were not recognized the same as other Canadians and Manitobans. I think it's important to recognize that all friends and neighbours come together in this province to defend who we are, what we are and what we stand for.

* (10:10)

And those of Indigenous background are no different. And I think, as Manitobans, we've recognized that for a long time, but I'm proud to stand today to support The Indigenous Veterans Days Act and put this into legislative law.

The Manitoba Legislature unanimously recognized Aboriginal Veterans Day by private member's resolution to honour the contributions of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people who served in the Canadian military.

This was done by George Hickes, and Indigenous veterans have served Canada during times of war and international conflict, as well as in peacetime, serving with honour and distinction in all branches of the Armed Forces.

And I think that's also important to recognize, is the importance that not only those who've served in wartimes and in conflict, but the valuable presence that Indigenous soldiers have played in peacekeeping efforts, peacekeeping efforts that have not only made Manitoba and Canada a better place, but has also brought peace and consistency to the political structure and economy of many countries across this world.

And I think we need to all stand together and recognize the contributions that Indigenous veterans have made to this country.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Prior to recognizing any further speakers on the bill, I have to clarify my comments at the start of this. There was a mistake made. The bill did remain standing in the name of the honourable member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth), who just spoke, contrary to what I'd said at the member for Lakeside (Mr. King).

So the member for Lakeside retains his spot in the rotation to speak.

The honourable member for Waverley.

House Business

MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader): Considering that we have guests in the gallery today, I would ask for leave from the House to have a recorded vote today at 10:55 a.m. to then allow for the bill to pass to committee for consideration tomorrow evening. So I would ask for leave for those two things from the House.

Thank you.

The Speaker: Is there leave for the House to call this bill to a vote at 10:55 a.m. and—[interjection]

The deputy House leader, please restate his request.

MLA Pankratz: If today there is a recorded vote requested, I would ask for leave from the House to make that recorded vote happen at 10:55 a.m. today, and then allow for the bill to pass to committee tomorrow evening for consideration, Wednesday, October 8.

Thank you.

The Speaker: So—is there leave that, if a recorded vote has been requested, that the vote take place at 10:55 this morning, and then is there further leave to ensure the bill goes to committee on October 8?

Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I heard a no.

* * *

The Speaker: And now we will resume debate—*[interjection]*

Order. We will now resume debate on Bill 210.

Mrs. Colleen Robbins (Spruce Woods): As the critic for military affairs, it is an honour to rise in support of Bill 210, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act.

This legislation is a solemn and meaningful recognition of the 'extranory'—extraordinary contributions, sacrifices and enduring legacy of the First Nations, Inuit and Métis veterans who have served our country with courage and distinction. *[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

I would caution both members that are hollering back and forth to stop it because I won't tolerate it anymore. I've said that, and today you don't want to be the first ones.

Mrs. Robbins: Every November 8, Manitobans join together to pay tribute to Indigenous veterans, a day first recognized right here in Manitoba three decades ago. It is fitting that our province, the birthplace of this national day of remembrance, is now on the path to enshrining it in law through this bill. And it is equally fitting that this House stands united in doing so.

The legacy of Indigenous military service is one of bravery, loyalty in the face of profound inequity. From the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 to the peacekeeping missions of today, Indigenous men and women have stood in defence of Canada, not for recognition or privilege but for the duty, honour and community.

It is estimated that as many as 12,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit people served in the wars of the 20th century, and at least 500 never returned home. These are not just numbers. They are family members, knowledge keepers and leaders who carried with them the strength of the nations and the hope of their people.

Honourable Speaker, during the First World War, more than 4,000 Indigenous soldiers answered the call. Many brought with them exceptional skills of patience, endurance and marksmanship, rooted in generations of lively—closely with the land. These gifts made them remarkable scouts and snipers. And many earned decorations for braving on the front lines of Europe.

Again, in the Second World War, Indigenous Canadians answered the call of duty. They served not only on the battlefield but also as code talkers, using the Cree language to secure radio communications the enemy could not decipher. Others contributed on the home front, donating funds, clothing and food to support the war effort and 'eving'—even allowing reserve lands to be used for airports, training grounds and defence installations.

And when war broke out in Korea, Indigenous soldiers again answered the call. Sergeant Tommy Prince, an Ojibway man from Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, exemplified that service—a descendent of Chief Peguis. Sergeant Prince became one of Canada's most decorated Indigenous war heroes, earning 11 medals for his service in the Second World War and the Korean War. His legacy continues to inspire generations of Canadians, a reminder that courage knows no boundary of race or background.

Indigenous veterans did not stop serving when they came home. Many continued their leadership in their communities, building schools, founding organizations and advocating for their fellow veterans: names like Rufus Prince of Long Plain First Nation, who went on to become chief and help found the Dakota Ojibway police force, Canada's first Indigenous law enforcement agency; Leon Fontaine of Sagkeeng and who fought for equality and fairness for Indigenous veterans; Randi Gage, an Ojibwe woman from the Winnipay *[phonetic]*, whose advocacy helped establish Indigenous Veterans Day itself. Their stories are a testament not only to the heroism in uniform but to 'prosep' in peace.

Honourable Speaker, it must also be acknowledged that the path home for Indigenous veterans was not an easy one. Many returned home to discrimination and broken promises. They were denied the same benefits, land grants and supports extended to non-Indigenous soldiers. Some even lost their treaty rights as a condition of military service.

* (10:20)

Yet despite these injustices, they serve—continued to serve their communities, their country and the cause of remembrance. They kept faith even when the faith was not returned. This is why this bill matters. The Indigenous Veterans Day Act is more than symbolic; it is an act of reconciliation. It is a statement that their sacrifices will not be forgotten, that their service is woven permanently in the fabric of Manitoba's story.

Honourable Speaker, this bill also builds upon important moment in this Legislature: the rules committee. All of the Manitoba legislation assembly with the unanimous consent of all parties, passed a rule enduring that the House will no longer sit on digit—Indigenous Veterans Day. That decision was not taken lightly; it was a deliberate act of respect and recognition that some days transcend politics. It was brought forward by our members on the rules committee, and we are proud to have stood together in the moment of unity.

Honourable Speaker, by pausing the work of this Chamber on November 8, we honour those who gave their lives so that this Chamber and the democracy it represents could endure. It ensures that every member, regardless of party, has the opportunity to stand their communities, at ceremonies and memorials to reflect and to give thanks.

Today, First Nations, Inuit, Métis Canadians serve in the Canadian Armed Forces in uniform, at home and aboard. They carry the spirit of their ancestors with them, a legacy of courage, service and pride that stretches back centuries. They serve in the Arctic as rangers, protecting Canada's north with skill and local knowledge. They serve in the peacekeeping missions around the world and in humanitarian efforts here at home.

From flood relief in Manitoba to wildfires in British Columbia, we owe them and all Indigenous veterans our deepest gratitude.

Bill 210, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act, ensures the future generations of Manitobans will continue to remember and honour those who served. It ensures that the courage and sacrifice of Indigenous veterans are recognized not just in ceremony, but in law. It is a small step but a meaningful one, a step forward: remembrance, understanding and respect.

As Manitobans, we are bound together by many things: our love of community, our connection to the land and our shared history of service in defence of freedom. Indigenous veterans are part of that story, and service strengthens that bonds that unite us all.

On November 8—and every day—may we remember them with humility, with gratitude and with pride.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker. It is my—

The Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Is there leave, should there be a recorded vote on Bill 210, that the vote occurs today at 10:55 a.m.?

The Speaker: Is there leave that, if a recorded vote is requested, that the recorded vote take place today at 10:55 a.m.? Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Minister of Families): I just want to put a couple of words on the record this morning in respect of Bill 210—so when I see the clerks start to do things, I always stop here.

So, first and foremost, I actually just want to acknowledge my colleague, the member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz), for bringing forward this bill. I know that this is an important bill to all of us on this side of the room. But I also just want to acknowledge our colleague and the dedication and commitment that he's taken since assuming his role and really trying to lift up and honour all veterans. But obviously, this is also near and dear to his heart, to ensure that Indigenous veterans are recognized formally here in law in our beautiful province.

To that end, I want to acknowledge our guests that are in the gallery today. I'm not entirely sure, I think this is maybe their third or fourth time that they've been here to watch the debate on Bill 210. I think that they've—I can't speak on their behalf, but I would imagine that it's quite disappointing to see members opposite routinely, every time that we've got guests in the Chamber, speak out this really, really important bill.

So, on the one hand, members opposite get up and they, you know, talk out of both sides of their mouth when they say, like, yes, we want to honour Indigenous veterans and we care about Indigenous veterans. And then every opportunity that they have to just sit down and allow this bill to go to second reading, they just continue to talk it out, or when they're given the opportunity to allow a recorded vote to happen and—so that we can get this vote done today and that we can get it to committee tomorrow and start

the process for third reading—they also decide that it's in their best interest to say no again.

So I want Manitobans to know that that's what members opposite routinely do in this Chamber. They're not a serious caucus. In fact, they just had a member, just a recently new member elected who's a residential school denialist, and so they thought that this morning, while we have guests in the gallery that are the children and grandchildren and nieces and nephews of residential school survivors, that it was a good idea to put up a residential school denialist, who has not stood in this Chamber yet, to apologize for her remarks in respect of residential schools.

And somewhere along the lines that the architects—*[interjection]*

The Speaker: Order, please.

Second caution about members hollering back and forth across the way. There won't be a third caution. Action will follow.

MLA Fontaine: Again, so the member opposite hasn't stood in this House in her place to apologize for the comments in respect of residential schools—which, again, the crux of the comments were that the architects of residential schools had good intentions; they had good intentions of the establishment and development of residential schools.

She has not apologized, and they've just asked her to speak for 10 minutes or nine minutes as she did. It's incredibly disingenuous for the member or any member opposite to get up in this Chamber and say, on the one hand, that they support Indigenous veterans, and then in the next—on the next hand get up and deny leave and continue to talk out this bill

I want to just say this: several people have mentioned Randi Gage; Randi Gage is in the gallery. Randi Gage is a matriarch that I've known for many, many, many years. And you know, every year, as folks know in this Chamber, or may not all know, she puts on a memorial every year in honour of Indigenous veterans. And she puts it on in Riverton.

And the Opposition House Leader will show up there and, you know, try to feign some type of respect and honour for Indigenous veterans, and yet, in the presence of Randi Gage will say no to allowing this bill to go forward. It is the quintessential example of hypocrisy and politicizing something that shouldn't be politicized.

We shouldn't be politicizing the right for Indigenous veterans to have law—to be fully recognized for their

contribution to ensure that Canada is free. So I want to acknowledge Randi Gage; I have an enormous amount of respect for the work that she does and has been doing for so, so many years and all the years that I've known her.

And I just want to acknowledge all of the veterans that are in the gallery today for their service, and for all of the veterans that are not here with us today, those that have gone, those that, when they came back, were afforded some of the worst conditions in the country that they just fought for.

And I want to acknowledge my grandfather. I know I've spoken about my grandfather, Henry Charles Fontaine. And, actually, the member for Spruce Woods (Mrs. Robbins) talked about Leon Fontaine; that is my uncle. I want to acknowledge both of them. In Sagkeeng, we have a monument in honour of all of our veterans, and my grandfather's name is on there; Leon's is—name is on there as well.

* (10:30)

And I just want to, as the granddaughter and the niece of so many of our veterans in Sagkeeng, I just want to lift them up today and say that, in their memory and all of our Indigenous veterans' memories, we're fighting for them to get the recognition that they are so—deserve right now.

Miigwech.

The Speaker: The honourable member for Brandon West.

Mr. Wayne Balcaen (Brandon West): On a point of order.

Point of Order

The Speaker: The honourable member for Brandon West, on a point of order.

Mr. Balcaen: I think it's been a rule in this House, and I know this Honourable Speaker has made mention of it many times, using the word lying or accusing others of lying is not parliamentary and is not acceptable in this House.

And you've also ruled, Honourable Speaker, that talking out both sides of your mouth is akin to lying, and during the speech from the minister we heard exactly that, that members of this side talk out of both sides of their mouth.

So I would request that the minister be called on that point of order and apologize to this Chamber.

The Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader (MLA Fontaine), on the same point of order.

MLA Fontaine: Quite honestly, Honourable Speaker, it's not my fault that members opposite keep trying to play politics with what is a non-political issue, here. It should not be a—you know, Indigenous veterans and honouring the contributions that Indigenous veterans have done for Canada shouldn't be something that members opposite say, again, on one side we support it and then on the other side get up in the Chamber and routinely speak out this bill, do not grant leave so that we can have—

The Speaker: Order, please.

I just caution the member that she should be addressing her comments specifically to the point of order.

MLA Fontaine: I appreciate that, Honourable Speaker, and I am trying to just point out that every day in this Chamber, members opposite have the audacity to claim that they are victims of some conspiracy from folks on this side of the House. We are just simply pointing out their actions that they do, day in and day out. And so the member for Brandon does not have a point of order.

The Speaker: I thank both parties for their comments. The use of both sides of their mouth has been previously cautioned by the Speaker and I would caution members again. It hasn't necessarily been ruled as unparliamentary, but it has been cautioned as becoming dangerously close to becoming unparliamentary. So I would caution all members to be mindful of the language they use. And I would ask the honourable Government House Leader to apologize.

An Honourable Member: Honourable Speaker, if it's a caution, why am I being requested to apologize if it's not breaking the rules?

The Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader does have a point. In the spirit that I'm trying to get us to treat each other more collegially, I did ask for an apology. However, because it wasn't deemed to be unparliamentary, the honourable Government House Leader does have a point. I think it would still be nice if an apology came; however, it's not a requirement.

And the honourable member for Brandon West (Mr. Balcaen) did have a valid point of order.

* * *

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Honourable Speaker, we saw it right there. This NDP House

leader—this failed NDP House leader, this failed NDP Families Minister takes all the time she wants in debate on Bill 210—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Guenter: —but then castigates the opposition for putting a few records about Bill 210, a bill that we support.

Honourable Speaker, this same minister, this same NDP Families Minister—[interjection]

The Speaker: Order.

Mr. Guenter: —blocked Indigenous reporters from her social media this summer.

The Speaker: Order, please.

Two things. I would caution the member to keep his comments relevant to the bill we're discussing. And I would caution other members not to be hollering how the Speaker should be doing his job.

Mr. Guenter: I was responding to remarks put on the record by the Minister of Families (MLA Fontaine) in her debate.

But I will just say, I would encourage that NDP Families Minister to do Manitobans—and, frankly, her own government—a favour and resign.

The Speaker: Order, please. Order.

I've asked the honourable member for Borderland to keep his comments relevant to the bill we're discussing. I shouldn't have to ask him twice, and I won't ask him three times.

Mr. Guenter: Speaker, it's my pleasure to rise to rise this morning to put a few words on Bill 210, a bill that we support, a bill that would formally recognize November 8 as Indigenous veterans day in Manitoba. And I appreciated hearing from my colleagues on this side—the member for Spruce Woods (Mrs. Robbins) as well as the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Narth)—and appreciate their comments in support of Bill 210.

It is an important piece of legislation and one that we feel is a worthy initiative. The first Indigenous Veterans Day took place across Canada on November 8, 1993, and Manitoba was the first province to recognize Aboriginal Veterans Day on November 8, 1994. And so it's fitting that, here we are, the first province to reckon—formally recognize—to put forward this bill to formally recognize November 8 as Indigenous veterans day in Manitoba.

And my colleagues have put words on the record about those who have served, and I know as someone who appreciates Canadian history and recall the debate—a couple of years ago, I believe it was—a resolution this House put forward calling on the federal government to put Sergeant Tommy Prince on the \$5 bill, which is something that I support and I think all Manitobans and all Canadians could get behind.

Sergeant Tommy Prince is an outsized figure in Canadian history and one that I enjoyed—you know, whose biography I enjoyed reading, and one that we can all be proud of as Manitobans. He was an Ojibwe from Manitoba; he served with Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry in Korea and he was the second-in-command of a rifle platoon and he drew upon his extensive infantry experience in the Second World War.

He also took part in the bitter Battle of Kapyong in April of 1951, which saw his battalion subsequently awarded the United States Presidential Unit Citation for its distinguished service, a rare honour for a non-American force.

And so, Honourable Speaker, there are other figures such as Tommy Prince strewn throughout Canadian and Manitoba history, and ones that I think we need to bring out of the shadows and we need to highlight. And to have that opportunity each year on Indigenous veterans day in Manitoba, I think is very important.

The reality is—and others have said it as well—that, you know, despite putting their lives on the line, Indigenous veterans were not always treated as heroes upon their return to Canada. And that's a shame. Many returned home with nothing; some were forced to give up their treaty status and were not eligible for land grants offered to non-Indigenous soldiers, while others were denied jobs and access to full veteran benefits and support programs. This discrimination made their transition to life back home even harder.

* (10:40)

And so it's for us today—those who are alive and who remain—to honour their memory, to do what we can to rectify the wrongs and honour their sacrifices.

Many of them served in World War I. Throughout our history, as colleagues have said, in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, they served in the defence of Canada; in the First World War, from 1914 to 1918, more than 4,000 Indigenous people served.

Many Indigenous men brought valuable skills with them when they joined the military. Patience, stealth and marksmanship were well honed traits and helped many of these soldiers become successful snipers and reconnaissance scouts to gather information on enemy positions. Indigenous soldiers earned at least 50 decorations for bravery during the war.

In the Second World War, just 22 years later—21 years later, when the Second World War began, many Indigenous people again answered the call of duty and joined the military. By March of 1940, more than 100 of them had volunteered, and by the end of the conflict in 1945, over 3,000 First Nations members, as well as an unknown number of Métis, Inuit and other Indigenous recruits had served.

While Indigenous soldiers again served as snipers and scouts, they also took on interesting new roles such as code talkers, disguising and translating sensitive radio messages into Cree so they could not be understood if they were intercepted by the enemy.

On the home front, Indigenous people contributed significantly to the war effort, donating large amounts of money, clothing and food to worthy causes and also granting the use of portions of the reserve lands to allow for the construction of new airports, rifle ranges and defence installations.

One hundred and twenty-five Indigenous people from Manitoba made the ultimate sacrifice and lost their lives during the Second World War.

And I indicated in the beginning of my remarks, Honourable Speaker, that I enjoy Canadian history and—as a young man, one of the subjects I really appreciated was the War of 1812 and I always thought it—you know, it's a real shame that more attention isn't placed on that particular conflict and the actors, the figures in that particular conflict, especially given the dynamic, shall we say, between United States and Canada today.

And I think that there are so many things as Canadians that we can be proud of and even draw our identity from that come out of the War of 1812 from people who said, you know, we have a different way of life. We have a different set of values. We believe in a different system of governance. And they said no to American offers to take over Canada at that time and they took up arms, Canadians did.

And so what's interesting, though, as well, and what I appreciated reading about as I read through that whole—Pierre Berton has some great books and, of course, there are others on the War of 1812—but the

contribution of Canada's Indigenous communities, of the Indigenous people of Canada, chief among them Tecumseh, who is a giant in Canadian history.

And so you know, I would just call on all my fellow Canadians and Manitobans to take the time to reflect on our history and to appreciate the contributions of Indigenous Canadians and Manitobans, to our history and to the defence of our liberties, of our democracy and our freedom.

So with that, thank you, Honourable Speaker.

House Business

Mr. Mark Wasyliw (Fort Garry): On House 'beesness,' Mr. Speaker—or, Honourable—

The Speaker: Order, please.

Honourable Speaker.

Mr. Wasyliw: I apologize.

Could you please canvass with the House to—for leave to waive rule 25(2) to allow myself to have two selected bills this session.

The Speaker: Is there leave of the House to waive rule 25(2) for the honourable member for Fort Garry to have two selected bills this session?

Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

* * *

The Speaker: The honourable member for Midland.

Mrs. Lauren Stone (Midland): Thank you, Honourable Speaker, and—

An Honourable Member: Honourable Speaker, I was standing first. You did not recognize me.

The Speaker: Please sit down. There is a rotation of speakers, and I apologize for not recognizing that member.

The honourable member for Seine River has the floor.

MLA Billie Cross (Seine River): I hope that didn't sound rude. It wasn't meant to, I just wanted to get your attention.

Honourable Speaker, should a recorded vote be requested, I would ask for leave to have the recorded vote today at 10:55 so that our guests in the gallery may be present for that recorded vote.

The Speaker: Is there leave, if a recorded vote is requested, to have the vote at 10:55 this morning so

that the members in the gallery can be present? Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no.

MLA Cross: Honourable Speaker, I'm only going to take a few minutes because I don't want to speak out this bill. This is a very important bill to so very many people.

This is not a political issue. Members opposite seem to be playing games with it. One moment they say they're supporting it, yet they don't want to support it in way that we can move it to committee in a timely manner.

One thing I did want to say and put on record, I want to acknowledge my uncle, Bill Miller, who passed earlier this year, who was a member of the Princess Patricia's light infantry and even into his years of retirement came back and helped with training for our young soldiers out of Shilo.

And so I love you, Uncle Bill. Thank you for your service, and I wish you were still here to see this happen.

Mrs. Stone: This is the first opportunity that I have had to stand up and speak to the importance of this bill. And I do want to thank my colleague, the MLA for Waverley, for bringing forward this bill to formally recognize November 8 as Indigenous Veterans Day in Manitoba.

So I am pleased to put just a few words on the record in support of this bill, as November is just a few short weeks away. Where we recognize those veterans that served our country, we reflect and we honour the courage and the sacrifice of all the men and women who put their lives at risk in the name of freedom.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in Manitoba and across Canada have a long and proud tradition of military service in our country and have always played a part in the defence of Canada and the principles for which our country stands for.

Manitobans should be very proud of our province's Indigenous veterans who have served our country and our freedoms in uniform. Many things unite Manitobans, and common service to our country in times of war and conflict is one of the bonds that ties us together very strongly.

Both my grandfathers served in World War I and World War II; in World War II, one as a pilot and one as a mechanic. So I recognize the importance of recognizing our veterans and Indigenous veterans, not just on November 8 and November 11, but every day of the year so that we can stand in this free country.

This bill also does serve as a reminder and a step forward in reconciliation, acknowledging Indigenous veterans that served our country while facing prejudice and obstacles.

The day of November 8 holds significance, as it was chosen in 1991 when First Nations were denied permission to lay a wreath at the National War Memorial on Remembrance Day.

For the more than 4,000 Indigenous peoples who served our country during the First World War, and the thousands who bravely served in the Second World War, it is estimated, as my colleagues have point out, that as many as 12,000 First Nations, Métis and Inuit people served in the wars of the 20th century and at least 500 of them lost their lives, according to Veterans Affairs Canada.

Today, nearly 3,000 First Nations, Inuit and Métis Canadians serve in the Canadian Forces, both at home and abroad. Indigenous women also contributed overseas, often as nurses, while women at home supported war efforts to raise money and aid in the manufacturing of key materials and supplies required by Canadian troops.

* (10:50)

The first Indigenous Veterans Day took place across Canada on November 8, 1993 and Manitoba was the first province to recognize Aboriginal Veterans Day on November 8 in 1994. In fact, Winnipeg was also the first municipality to mark November 8, when former mayor Susan Thompson signed an official proclamation in 1993.

So November 8 is more than just a date, but a recognition; a memory to honour those Indigenous veterans who served our great country. For generations, Indigenous peoples have answered the call to defend our country and the country that we all call home.

Despite answering this important call, they experienced discrimination and racism, and many were not treated as heroes when they returned home. They were denied fundamental rights like the right to vote, denied jobs and denied access to benefits and supports that other veterans received. They faced

barriers just to enlist, yet they continued to answer the call to serve.

They bravely put their lives at risk, leaving behind their families, their homes and their culture to serve in the name of freedom. Indigenous men and women in service faced significant obstacles that others in uniform did not face. While many Indigenous veterans served with honour and distinction, their contributions often went unrecognized for many years.

This is why the bill that the MLA for Waverley has put forward is so important to mark that recognition and bravery that for so long was forgotten and ignored.

Two memorials of significance that are important are the National Aboriginal Veterans Monument in Ottawa, that honours the contributions of all Indigenous peoples in war and peace operations from the First World War until today.

There is also the Sergeant Tommy Prince Memorial in Winnipeg that is dedicated to the memory of Sergeant Tommy Prince, one of Canada's most decorated Indigenous war veterans. He was awarded a total of 11 medals for his service in World War II and the Korean War. Prince, initially from Brokenhead First Nation, he left to serve during the Second World War and the Korean War.

During the Second World War, he would gain experience in missions like snatch patrol raids, which would later benefit his service with the Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry during the Korean War. Prince was second in command of a rifle platoon and courageously led his fellow soldiers into enemy camp, where they seized two machine guns.

He also took part in the bitter Battle of Kapyong in April of 1951, which saw his battalion subsequently awarded the United States Presidential Unit Citation for its distinguished service, a rare honour for a non-American.

Alongside that, he was awarded the military medal, American Silver Star, for gallantry in the Second World War, the Korean medal, and United Nations Service Medal for his service in the Korean War and the Canadian service medal for voluntary service.

There are also many ceremonies that will mark November 8 across our province and I just want to draw attention to a couple of them.

This year, Indigenous veterans Manitoba will be hosting their very first annual Indigenous Veterans

Day powwow at Sergeant Tommy Prince Place here in Winnipeg.

And the week leading up to November 8, Southern Chiefs' Organization will be hosting its third annual First Nations Veterans Summit to celebrate, honour and support First Nations veterans. I believe that is taking place on November 2.

Many more gatherings and ceremonies will take place across the province on November 8 to honour Indigenous veterans.

So to all the Indigenous veterans, those who are watching today, whose families are watching today, both past and present, thank you for your sacrifice and your courage to defending the freedoms that we all cherish today here in Manitoba and across our great country.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

The Speaker: Order, please.

In accordance with rule 25 and as previously announced, I'm interrupting debate to put the question on second reading of Bill 210, The Indigenous Veterans Day Act (Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months Act Amended).

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

Mr. Derek Johnson (Official Opposition House Leader): We request a recorded vote, please.

The Speaker: Recorded vote has been requested.

Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader): Again, would—I'd like to see if there's leave of the House to have the recorded vote today?

The Speaker: Is there leave to have the recorded vote today when the rules presently state that a recorded vote, having been requested in accordance with rule 24(7), the division will be referred to 11:55 a.m. this morning? Is there—*[interjection]*—Thursday morning, I'm sorry.

Is there leave to have the recorded vote now?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Speaker: I hear a no.

Therefore the—*[interjection]* Order. Order. Order.

The recorded vote will be held on Thursday.

The time for private members' business is now private—*[interjection]*—at 11:55 on Thurs.—*[interjection]*—the Speaker is still standing.

House Business

The Speaker: So the hour is not quite 11 yet, so I do have a letter—I'm advising the House that I've received a letter from the Government House Leader and the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv) indicating that they have identified the following two bills as selected bills for this session for the honourable member for Fort Garry: Bill 211, The Local Elections Voter Eligibility Act (Various Acts Amended); Bill 230, The Grocery Store Food Waste Prevention Act.

As a reminder to the House, rule 25 permits each independent member to select one private member's bill per session to proceed to a second reading vote. Leave was previously given on October 7, 2025 to increase the number of selected bills for this session for the honourable member for Fort Garry to two.

I have therefore been advised that the question will be put on Bill 211 on October 14, 2025 at 10:25 a.m., and the question will be put on Bill 230 on October 14, 2025 at 10:55 a.m.

* * *

MLA David Pankratz (Waverley): Is there leave to see the clock as 11?

The Speaker: Is there leave to see the clock as 11? *[Agreed]*

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 20—Commending the Provincial Government for Committing to Reopen the Victoria Hospital Emergency Room

The Speaker: The hour now being 11, it's time for private members' resolutions. This morning, we will be talking about resolution 20, Commending the Provincial Government for Committing to Reopen the Victoria Hospital Emergency Room, brought forward by the honourable member for Lagimodière.

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton),

WHEREAS the previous, failed PC Provincial Government closed three major emergency rooms in Winnipeg, including the Victoria General Hospital, resulting in cuts to vital services to Winnipeg communities; and

WHEREAS the closure of the Victoria Emergency Room resulted in South Winnipeg families and seniors losing access to the community emergency care they depend on; and

WHEREAS the closure of the Victoria Emergency Room exacerbated pressure on other Emergency Departments in Winnipeg, driving up bed block, emergency room overcrowding, and wait times; and

WHEREAS the previous PC Provincial Government cut rural emergency services, resulting in reduced hours and closures, including in Ste. Anne and Carberry; and

WHEREAS the previous PC Provincial Government's approach to healthcare was disrespectful to staff and damaging to patients' health outcomes, resulting in mass resignations, worse services, and a toxic culture in our health care system; and

WHEREAS the current Provincial Government has begun rebuilding health care, with a focus on restoring emergency services, including rebuilding the Victoria ER; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government reopened Carberry ER within the first year of its mandate and have committed to building a new Eriksdale ER; and

WHEREAS the new Victoria ER will be complemented by the reopening of the Mature Women's Centre, which was also closed by the failed PC Provincial Government, and the creation of the Anne Oake Family Recovery Centre, ensuring wraparound care for women and families in Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government's plan reflects the values of Manitobans by prioritizing timely access to care, reducing emergency wait times, and restoring trust in the health care system,

THAT IT BE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the provincial government for its commitment to restoring emergency health-care services, beginning with the commitment to reopen the Victoria ER, and urge the provincial government to continue its effort to rebuild emergency care across Manitoba, reversing the damage caused by the previous PC provincial government's closures.

The Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko), seconded by the honourable member for Tuxedo (MLA Compton), that whereas—that

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the provincial government for its commitment to restoring emergency health-care services, beginning with the commitment to reopen the Victoria ER, and urge the provincial government to continue its efforts to rebuild emergency care across Manitoba, reversing the damage caused by the previous PC provincial government closures.

* (11:00)

The honourable member for Lagimodière—just before the honourable member begins his comments, as I had called it 11 a.m. at 10:58, the noon recess will be called at 11:58.

Mr. Blashko: It's an honour to get up today and speak to this resolution.

The closure of the Victoria ER in 2017 by the previous PC government was a devastating blow to south Winnipeg families, seniors and front-line health-care workers. And truly, anyone who was paying attention at the time around what the PCs were doing around health care, around their austerity, their long-term vision for health care, you could anticipate the impacts, you could see the domino effect that we would see year after year because of the decisions they made.

One of the most important decisions or most impactful decisions they made was the closing of ERs. So in 2017, they decided to close three ERs in Winnipeg. A total of three; it's pretty impressive. There's the ER, obviously, of Victoria, Concordia and Seven Oaks. But there were also rural ERs that felt their impacts. Carberry and Ste. Anne both faced closures or reduced hours.

These closures, one of the domino effects that we could have anticipated, led to longer wait times, overcrowded emergency departments and increased bed block across the system. This led to—this approach that the PC government took created a toxic culture in health care, driving mass resignations and worsening patient outcomes.

And so this is the situation the we're working from as a government. We're two years in, we're happy to be doing this work and we're happy to be making investments at the Victoria Hospital and across the province.

The reopening of the Victoria ER is a beacon of hope and community for south Winnipeg residents who lost access to timely emergency care. It will

relieve pressure on other emergency departments, helping reduce wait times and improve patient flow across Winnipeg.

Let me tell you about a few of the amenities. The new ER will include high observation—a high-observation unit, more inpatient beds and expanded diagnostic capacity, allowing for higher acuity care and better outcomes. Victoria Hospital will continue to operate during construction during—ensuring continuity of care while building for the future.

For those who spend time in Winnipeg, this isn't new information, but south Winnipeg is one of the fastest growing regions in Manitoba. And so reopening this ER ensures that community—that the community's health-care infrastructure keeps pace with its population. Seniors and family will no longer need to travel long distances driving by the general, the—sorry—by the Victoria general en route to another hospital for emergency care, restoring peace of mind and local access.

And I know me and many of my colleagues were at community consultations while we were envisioning this new ER, and the passion that folks in the community—parents, seniors, educators—but also the folks who work at Victoria ER—the nurses, the health—the doctors and those working in administration—they were passionate about what their hospital provides and what it could provide with a new ER. So it was really wonderful to see the community coming together determining what the community needs.

The ER will be reopening as part of a wrap-around care model that includes the Mature Women's Centre and the Anne Oake Family Recovery Centre, creating a hub for women and family health.

The Mature Women's Centre, closed in 2017 by the PCs, provided specialized care for menopause, gynecological issues and post-hysterectomy recovery. This closure was called an unprecedented attack on women's health.

And for those who are familiar with the history of medicine and women's health, we know that women's health has never been taken seriously historically by the broader health-care system. And so the fact that we had this centre, this centre for mature women, and it was closed by the PC government, just reinforced that idea that women's health isn't a serious issue and shouldn't be taken seriously.

So the reopening of the centre reflects a commitment to gender-responsive care and ensures older

women and gender-diverse people receive dignified, expert care. This investment addresses a long-standing gap in women's health services and affirms that women's health matters at every stage of life.

Mrs. Rachelle Schott, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

The Anne Oake centre will provide addictions treatment for women, allowing children to stay with their mothers during recovery. We've been working with Scott Oake to make this vision a reality and we are well on our way.

And so we're talking quite a bit about infrastructure right now, but our government early on knew that staffing was the key piece to rebuilding the health-care system. I remember early on hearing—and I always remember this—a hospital bed without a nurse is just really expensive furniture. So we took that to heart and we really focused on the staffing side to ensure that we could rebuild the capital side of a health-care system.

So when I first heard our initial target for staffing, 1,000 new health-care workers, net-new health-care workers, that sounded—I won't speak for my colleagues, but for me—that sounded ambitious. I was like, can we do this? This is an intense timeline; we care about Manitobans, we're going to try our best.

Well, I have good news for folks: two years in, we have far surpassed that 1,000 net-new health-care workers, and we've actually reached 3,400 net-new health-care workers. And these folks play all kinds of roles across the system. We have 1,100 nurses within that 3,400 net-new health-care workers, and also 285 doctors.

So that's the staffing piece that we continue to be committed to. We know we're not—we haven't attained perfect staffing. We continue that work, but we recognize that there's infrastructure projects that we can take on as we continue that work.

So we put \$635 million towards capital projects, including the Victoria and Eriksdale ER, new primary-care clinics and diagnostic upgrades. The Carberry ER was reopened in May 2024 after being closed by the PCs, and three new doctors were hired to restore services. The Eriksdale ER is in active planning with community consultation underway.

And some of our team went to the Ste. Anne Hospital a few weeks ago and we really appreciated the energy and enthusiasm that the leadership team there met us with and they recognized a government

willing to hear their concerns and work with them, so we're excited to continue that work.

French spoken

Respecter les travailleurs de la santé ne consiste pas seulement à réparer les dommages causés par les Conservateurs dans le passé, mais surtout à instaurer un futur durable. Lorsque nous donnons la parole aux travailleurs de première ligne, que nous investissons dans leur santé mentale et que nous leur offrons une rémunération équitable, nous envoyons un message clair : le système de santé du Manitoba ne sera plus jamais guidé par l'austérité au détriment de la population.

Lorsque ceux qui prennent soin de nous se sentent valorisés et soutenus, c'est tout le système qui s'en trouve renforcé, et c'est ainsi que nous offrons aux Manitobains les soins de santé qu'ils méritent.

Translation

Respecting health-care workers is not just about repairing the damage done in the past by the Conservatives: more importantly, it is about building a sustainable future. When we give front-line workers a voice, invest in their mental health, and offer them fair compensation, we send a clear message: Manitoba's health-care system will never again be guided by austerity at the expense of the population.

When those who care for us feel valued and supported, the entire system is strengthened, and that is how we provide Manitobans with the health care they deserve.

English

All of these pieces I've mentioned: the mess this government inherited, the investments we've made in staffing, the role of front-line health-care workers and their experience have led us to this point where we're building a new ER at the Victoria Hospital.

French spoken

Le rév – la réouverture du service d'urgence Victoria ne se résume pas à la restauration d'un service, mais aussi à celle de la confiance des familles du sud de Winnipeg qui, pendant des années, ont dû se passer de soins d'urgences à proximité.

Le Vic ER soulagera à la pression exercée sur les autres services d'urgences de Winnipeg, réduisant ainsi la surcharge et les temps d'attente. Avec des milliers de visites aux urgences et aux soins d'urgence chaque semaine à Winnipeg, la réouverture d'un service d'urgence complet dans le sud de

Winnipeg signifie un triage plus rapide, des temps de trajets plus courts et de meilleurs résultats lorsque chaque seconde compte.

Translation

The reopening of the Victoria Hospital emergency department is not just about restoring a service: it is also about restoring confidence among south Winnipeg families, who have had to do without nearby emergency care for years.

The Victoria Hospital emergency department will relieve pressure on other Winnipeg emergency departments, reducing overcrowding and wait times. With thousands of visits to emergency rooms and urgent-care centres each week in Winnipeg, the reopening of a full-service emergency department in south Winnipeg means faster triage, shorter travel times and better outcomes when every second counts.

English

Reopening the Victoria ER is more than restoring a service; it's restoring confidence for families in south Winnipeg who have gone without nearby emergency services for years. The Vic ER will relieve pressures on other Winnipeg emergency departments, reducing overcrowding and wait times.

* (11:10)

With thousands of emergency and urgent care visits happening every week in Winnipeg, adding back a full-service ER in south Winnipeg means faster triage, shorter travel times and better outcomes when every second counts. This ER will not stand alone but be part of a broader vision for integrated care.

After years of closures and chaos, reopening the Vic ER signals a clear commitment to reversing past mistakes and prioritizing timely local care for Manitobans.

This important shift is only possible because of the leadership of our Minister of Health, their amazing team—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order. Order.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held, and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask

one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): ER wait times throughout the city of Winnipeg are worse today under the NDP than they were two years ago; that is a fact. With wait times—the median wait time is now 3.87 hours across the city with much higher wait times at Grace Hospital, Seven Oaks, Victoria.

If the NDP won't keep their promises and won't actually make improvements to ER wait times in Manitoba, can the member for Lagimodière stand today and promise that his government would at least stop making it worse?

Mr. Tyler Blashko (Lagimodière): Clearly, the member for Roblin wasn't listening, because I listed a whole bunch of promises that were kept over these past two years.

We know emergency and urgent care wait times remain too long and that is frustrating for patients, families and staff. Manitobans deserve timely access to care, and that is why the lower wait times and systems improvement team was created, bringing together front-line providers and health system leaders to reduce bottlenecks, speed up admissions and discharge and strengthen alternatives to emergency care.

What the members opposite need to understand is that emergency rooms are one part of a larger system. If they had understood that while they were in government, they may have thought twice about closing personal-care-home beds.

Of the 222 personal—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for Southdale—the honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Training.

Hon. Renée Cable (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): I'm so thrilled to stand up and ask my colleague a question on this really important resolution. And I'd like to know, after seven and a half years of the former failed PC government, hundreds of vital health-care worker positions cut and closures that really caused chaos in our system, can you please share how many net-new health-care staff our government has hired and how will they help the new Victoria emergency room?

Mr. Blashko: Thank you for that wonderful question.

Our government has hired 3,400 net-new health-care workers, including 1,100 nurses and 285 doctors since 2023, and these workers will be helping to bring timely and quality emergency care back to south Winnipeg. They are an integral part of building capacity in health services right here in Manitoba. They are the people who are going to staff our hospital beds, our rebuilt ERs and our new minor illness and injury clinics.

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): The president of the Manitoba Nurses Union recently shared things are not rosy in health care. Despite what's being said, we are in a terrible crisis. She noted that the NDP ignored the MNU when it comes to decision making.

My question is, when did the MLA meet with the MNU to share his resolution?

Mr. Blashko: I appreciate the question from the member from Dawson Trail.

We are regularly meeting with all groups when we're discussing legislation, when we're 'discussing' private members' bills, private members' resolutions.

And that's really a difference the community really sees in our government: we're willing to meet, we're willing to talk and hear their perspective and really work that into the plans we're putting in place for this—for the work of the government but also for the province.

Because this a collaborative project we're all working on. That's what I always like to tell students. It's almost like a class project that everyone contributes to and we're all doing our best to bring the best stuff forward.

So we've been working closely with—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

The honourable member for l'Agassé [*phonetic*].

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): So my question is to the member opposite. Has he ever had to drive in rural Manitoba to access health care in—outside of the Perimeter or, heaven forbid, seek ER services?

He did mention in his preamble there that people would have to drive shorter distance to access ER services.

I'm just wanting to know from the member opposite how this helps those living in rural Manitoba and what benefit this is in rural Manitoba.

Mr. Blashko: Thank you for that question. And yes, I was happy to talk about, like Eriksdale, Carberry, Ste. Anne during my opening speech but I'm happy to speak a little bit more.

So planning for a reopened ER in Eriksdale is under way. So I believe that would support the health of folks in rural Manitoba. And also, Carberry was a wonderful ER that our Minister of Health did a ton of work reopening. So we're doing work in the Perimeter, we're doing work across the province.

And I just want to thank again the team from Ste. Anne, who met with our team and really spoke about the care and quality of care that they provide to their community and those surrounding Ste. Anne.

MLA Cable: The victory—oh, Victoria ER isn't the only health-care services that the PCs cut.

Can the member from Lagimodière please fill us in on some of the other devastating cuts that were made under the previous administration?

Mr. Blashko: Thank you to the member from Southdale for the question.

We are also committed to reopening the Mature Women's Centre that the PCs cut—that'll be at Victoria Hospital, and that was cut back in 2017 by the previous government—along with funding to build additional health-care infrastructure across the province, bringing in thousands more health-care workers and continuing to provide support to our workers so we can retain them.

We also introduced universal birth control, which I don't believe was ever on the PCs' radar when they were in power. We've also brought in more hip-and-knee surgeries in Manitoba, 800 new surgeries, mostly out of Selkirk—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I just want to know if the member for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko) actually consulted with his colleagues, the member for Agriculture, the member for—Minister for Justice, about the Selinger days when they actually commissioned the Peachey report, spent tens of millions of dollars on the report but didn't do nothing.

They were—all the hospitals were jack of all trades but master of none. We actually utilized that report like other cities across the country. And the fact is, has he consulted when it came to their—the previous

NDP government when it came to commission the Peachey report?

Mr. Blashko: Thank you so much for that question.

I'd like to thank the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe) for all of the work that they're doing not only in their departments but also across government. This is a team that works together. We use the experience of those who've been around longer than us.

But maybe I'll take this opportunity to highlight some of the work of the Lower Wait Time and System Improvement Team. So we're talking about transitional care units that are opening up to access block tied to personal care homes, admissions, helping patients move more quickly from hospital to the right level of care. We've also increased physician assessments that are now happening in waiting rooms so patients begin receiving care sooner and even before they're admitted. In-patient work—

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Member's time has expired.

MLA Cable: I'd like to ask the member from Lagimodière one of my favourite questions, and one of my favourite things to talk about is training new health-care workers for the system.

So how are we going to keep training more health-care workers to fulfill the need caused by the PCs that exist in the system?

* (11:20)

Mr. Blashko: Thank you so much for that question, and it's a part of the health-care system that I'm so excited about, and I know you've done really important work in this area, as ensuring the next generation of health-care workers see a future in the system, see a government willing to work and support them in their work caring for Manitobans.

So I know we've expanded seats in nursing programs across the province—in paramedic programs, also, like, medical seats. So I know this is happening in Manitoba, this is happening in Brandon, this is happening in different centres across the province. And so we're talking about staffing today, but we're also talking about staffing two, five, 10, 15 years down the line.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): So as we've already heard this morning that the advanced education minister really has done nothing in regards to training. All the training spots, all the new doctors

and nurses are thanks to the former PC government for putting in those extra new seats into our post-secondary institutions.

So I'd like to ask the member today, who brought forward this resolution: How many years does it take to become a doctor and a nurse, and why are you patting yourself on the back for those extra professionals in the health-care profession?

Mr. Blashko: Thanks for that question. I'm not patting myself on the back. I'm just really thankful for all the people willing to work in the health-care system after seven and a half years of the PC government. And so I'll spend this time just thanking the health-care workers because, ultimately, we can build a great new ER. I'd of—we have a beautiful building, but it's really about the people who are working there.

So I want to thank the people who've returned to their fields of work after years of PC government. We know we've had different retention programs that have been successful. People have come back. People from the US are coming to Canada. People from all across the world are utilizing our recruitment and retention office to ensure that they can work in the fields that they have studied for.

So I'll end it there and just say thanks—say thank you to all the health-care workers who make this work possible.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The time for questions is complete.

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): The floor is now open for debate.

Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin): I just want to pick up on something my colleague from Lac du Bonnet touched on in his last question, and the member for Lagimodière's (Mr. Blashko) response.

By my count this is now the fifth private member's resolution put forward by the NDP asking for their gold stars. Previous resolutions called on the Legislature to applaud them, to affirm them. This one wants us to commend them. My goodness, this NDP government needs a lot of affirmation and validation to feel good about themselves.

They want their pats on the back. They want to hang the mission accomplished banner, and that hubris is insulting to Manitobans who are waiting longer than ever for the care that they need.

Manitobans are rightly offended that members of the NDP caucus want to spend precious time in this Chamber patting themselves on the back, hanging the mission accomplished banner, when they should be focused on addressing the issues that matter to Manitobans.

This is also just laziness. The members opposite recycle the same tired talking points, churn out yet another resolution asking for a pat on the back, slap a new title on it and come in here and play politics, rather than getting down to the real work that matters to Manitobans.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Wiebe)—[interjection]

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order.

Mrs. Cook: —is heckling me—[interjection]

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order.

Mrs. Cook: I would like to know—[interjection]

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order. Order. Order.

I'd like to remind all members to not be hollering across the floor. It's a general reminder. Thank you.

Mrs. Cook: I think it's worth noting that if a male member of our caucus got up and heckled a woman of the NDP there would be such hue and cry from that side of the Chamber, but they seem to think it's perfectly fine for their Minister of Justice to heckle me.

And I hate to do this to the member for Lagimodière, whom I respect, but so much of what he put on the record this morning was just incorrect, and I think it's important that we get some facts on the record—my apologies to Hansard for covering the mic.

To get elected, the NDP made all kinds of promises, but two years into their mandate it's clear: the Premier (Mr. Kinew) and this Minister of Health are in over their heads. They said whatever they needed to say to get elected and now, when Manitobans try to hold them to account for their promises, they can only engage in political spin and deflection. There is no accountability from the NDP.

And you don't have to take my word for it. Front-line health-care providers have spoken out about this. You know, the member for Lagimodière talked about staffing. So let's hear from front-line health-care workers about just that.

Manitoba Nurses Union president Darlene Jackson told the Winnipeg Free Press earlier this year,

quote: Our nurses tell us continuously that things are not getting better in health care, that, in fact, there are areas where things are deteriorating. Nurses are frustrated. We were promised a change. Unquote.

Health care is, first and foremost, about people, because without people there is no health care. Even the most advanced surgical robot, as cutting edge as it may be, needs a highly trained physician to operate it, and we know a bed is just a bed without a nurse to staff it.

So since the NDP wants their gold stars today about staffing of all things, let's put some facts on the record about health-care human resources. Here in Manitoba under the NDP, morale is low, burnout is high, nurses are being forced to work mandatory overtime despite the NDP promising to eliminate it. Paramedics are stretched thin across the province, health-care workers are dealing with dangerous and increasingly severe violence in their workplaces.

Again, front-line health-care workers are the best source of information about what the situation is really like in the health-care system under the NDP, so I'd like to read some of their quotes into the record again.

I'd again like to quote MNU president Darlene Jackson who told CBC in February of this year that nurses are not seeing an increase in staff and continue to be overworked.

She said of the NDP's claim to have hired new health-care workers, quote: The day that announcement came out, I had messages from members asking me, where are they? Unquote.

In an interview with The Carillon earlier this year, Rebecca Clifton of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba was asked about the NDP's dismal failure to keep its promise to hire 90 new-net-new paramedics last year.

She said, quote: It was such a big discussion at election time, so have they forgotten or have they struggled to find the appropriate measures to increase staffing? I don't know, but from our purview nothing has really changed and nothing has really improved. Was it just an election pawn? Unquote.

And more comments from Darlene Jackson about staffing, and nurses would know, she said, quote: Whether that's net-new or just new hires, I don't know. In order to be very accurate, we need to know how many nurses have retired, how many have left the

system, the profession, the province or gone to a private agency to know whether that's new.

What we monitor is vacancy rates, agency nurse use and the amount of overtime, both mandated and voluntary, worked. Until we see some definitive change in those numbers, it's very difficult to say with accuracy whether that measure has been a benefit.

So members opposite can get up and crow about numbers all they want. Front-line health-care workers are saying they're not seeing the impact. Still more from The Globe and Mail, quote: The Manitoba Nurses Union said despite the new hires, its members have yet to report any noticeable relief.

The union said it would like to see improvements in the working conditions for nurses, including a reduction in mandatory overtime. Without addressing the working conditions, no matter how many nurses they hire, we will continue to struggle with retention, said Jackson. Unquote.

And it's not just nurses, it's allied health as well. In a recent survey of MAHCP members, 48 per cent of respondents reported losing people in their department in 2024, 59 per cent said morale has dropped and 62 per cent said their workload had increased.

MAHCP president Jason Linklater told PembinaValleyOnline earlier this year, quote: It's depleting, absolutely depleting. We had full expectation that fixing culture in health care, fixing the health system, was a priority. Unquote.

Nurses, doctors, allied health staff, have told us over and over again that they feel unheard by this government. They don't feel supported. They feel left behind by a government that promised better but delivered worse. And, honourable deputy Speaker, it's worse by almost every metric.

This is the same government that spent the whole first year of their mandate on a quote, listening tour, that failed to produce so much as a briefing note or a report on what they've heard, and has certainly failed to result in any meaningful changes.

In fact, time and time again, this NDP government is actually silencing front-line health-care workers. The culture they have created is one where health-care workers are afraid to speak out. I hear all the time from health-care workers who reach out to express their concerns about what's going on on the front lines, but they are scared to have their name out there because they fear retribution from this NDP government.

* (11:30)

A really good example is the home-care scheduling fiasco, and that's directly related to the way our ERs function and ER wait times, because when hospitals can't discharge patients to receive home care in the community, then the wards get locked—it's called bed lock and it's a well-known, well-documented phenomenon. ERs can't move patients into the hospital and then the waiting room can't move patients into the ER.

So the NDP's decision to centralize home-care scheduling services in the WRHA earlier this year resulted in an absolute disaster for home care in the city of Winnipeg. I heard about it all summer long and I'd venture to guess most of the members across the way heard about it from their constituents as well.

Front-line health-care workers raised concerns about that back in March. I brought their concerns to the floor of this Legislature in April, only to be told that I was wrong and that I was fear mongering.

And then this NDP government ignored those concerns all summer long. In July of this year, over 20,000 home-care visits were cancelled by the WRHA, leaving families scrambling to care for their loved ones, not to mention the impact this had on morale for home-care workers.

I can't even tell you how many home-care workers I spoke to this summer who were absolutely in tears and feeling unheard by anyone at the WRHA, anyone in the minister's office, anyone in the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) office.

It's absolutely shameful and this government calls themselves a listening government but they're not, honourable deputy Speaker.

I want to touch on a couple of other things that the member for Lagimodière (Mr. Blashko) said when they were—during his comments.

He talked about women's health. But this is the same government that made empty promises about improving access to breast health screening almost a year and a half ago, and have done nothing since to improve access to breast cancer screening for women under the age of 50. Every other province in Canada has moved on this issue. This NDP government has refused to.

If your cancer is caught early and treated early, your chances are so much better at survival. But women in Manitoba are at a disadvantage, and they don't have the same access to care that women across the rest of Canada do.

That's shameful, and the only ones who have the ability to change that right now are, unfortunately, the NDP, and they're doing nothing.

So if the member wants to get up and talk about women's health, he should bear in mind that his government is dropping the ball right now on a critical issue for women's health in Manitoba.

We all know women who are dealing with or who have dealt with a breast cancer diagnosis, and an increasing number of those women are under the age of 50.

That is an—a moral imperative that the government address this issue and stop avoiding it and stop just standing up in this House and saying what they need to say to make the issue go away and then ignoring it.

Thank you, honourable deputy Speaker.

House Business

MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader): Honourable Speaker, pursuant to rule 34(11), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliw). The title of the resolution is Manitoba Needs to Address the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Pursuant to rule 34(11), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the member for Fort Garry. The title of this resolution is Manitoba Needs to Address the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

* * *

MLA Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): A hundred days have come and gone, and health care is not better. In fact, it's now worse. So let's talk about the failure of this NDP government. Something that matters to every Manitoban: their health care, and that in the growing crisis in surgical and diagnostic wait times under the current NDP government.

One of the very first actions the NDP took when they came into office was to fire the top doctors and professionals leading the effort to reduce Manitoba's surgical and diagnostic backlog. These were experts behind the diagnostic and surgical recovery task force, the team that had successfully cleared the pandemic

backlog and had been expanding access to care right here at home.

Instead of building on that progress, the NDP chose to throw dynamite into it and cancel dozens of critical contracts that had been signed with the public and private providers, both in Manitoba and out of province, that were helping patients to get care faster. These cancellations didn't just stall the momentum; they cut it—they cut down our surgical capacity and left patients with fewer options, even forcing some to pay out of pocket to get the care they needed in a timely manner.

And now, we are seeing those results. Surgical and diagnostic wait times in Manitoba are skyrocketing, some of the worst we've seen outside of the pandemic. CT scan wait times are now as high as 32 weeks at Health Sciences Centre, and 25 weeks at Concordia and Seven Oaks.

MRI waits are climbing too. Over 56 weeks at HSC and 31 weeks in St. Boniface. Hip and knee replacement waits are now the longest they've ever been in at least five years and worse than during the pandemic, and I personally can attest to that as someone who's waiting for a replacement.

And cataract surgeries at Misericordia have nearly doubled in wait times since last August with over a thousand fewer surgeries performed at western surgical centre this year, compared to 2023.

These aren't just numbers; they represent real people, grandparents who can't walk without pain, workers sidelined from their jobs, and patients waiting in fear for a diagnosis.

Before the NDP scrapped it, the task force had made real progress—opened a fifth OR at Grace Hospital, allowing a thousand more hip and knee replacements, expanding surgical services at Grace, Victoria, and Ste. Anne's, creating a centralized surgical wait information management system to better co-ordinate the care, and sign key contracts, including with top tier providers like the Mayo Clinic, to offer Manitobans timely, fully paid care when local times became unsafe.

The NDP cancelled those contracts. They dismantled the system that was working, and now Manitobans are paying the price in longer wait times and greater uncertainty.

And this isn't new for the NDP. Their track record shows a pattern. Under their previous government,

16 rural emergency rooms were closed. That's right, 16—and now we're seeing the exact same thing.

In the summer of 2024 alone, hospitals in the Prairie Mountain Health region were closed for a total of 391 days. The Carberry ER, which the Premier (Mr. Kinew) held a flashy press conference in to reopen, was closed more than half the time between June and September. The NDP promised better health care, but what Manitobans are getting is fewer services, longer wait times and empty promises.

We need to return to a system that puts the patient first, one that expands access, empowers medical professionals and gives Manitobans real choice for timely, quality care. That's what DSRTF was doing, that's what Manitobans deserve and that's what we should be fighting to restore.

The Ste. Anne's hospital is currently facing a serious challenge: a shortage of doctors that has forced its emergency room to close for extended periods. This has left families in the region that I represent without timely access to critical care, putting additional pressures on nearby hospitals and risking patient outcomes.

Residents who once relied on their local ER are now being forced to travel long distances for urgent medical attention, a situation that is not only inconvenient, but dangerous in time-sensitive emergencies.

This just isn't a staffing issue; it's a symptom of a broader problem. Rural health care in Manitoba has been under-supported and overlooked. The solution is clear: by designating Ste. Anne's hospital a regional hospital, it would become eligible for expanded funding, services and recruitment support.

Regional designations comes with more robust infrastructure, better access to specialists and a stronger ability to attract and retain physicians who want to work in a fully equipped and supported environment.

Acting quickly on this designation is critical. Delays will not only deepen the staffing crisis and continue to jeopardize health outcomes with the surrounding communities; a regional hospital in Ste. Anne's would not only establish—not only stabilize ER services but also expand care options for the entire southeast region of Manitoba.

* (11:40)

It's time to invest where it's needed most, and to ensure rural Manitobans receive the same levels of care and access to those in larger centres.

During our time in government, we made historic investments to strengthen our health-care system. We committed \$400 million to recruit, train and retain health-care professionals, and that was an investment that paid off.

Over two years, we successfully hired more than 2,000 health-care workers, we cleared over 80,000 surgeries and diagnostic procedures from the backlog—work that directly improved people's lives. We added over 400 nursing seats and 80 new physician seats to Manitoba's education system.

That wasn't the NDP. That was our plan, our investment, our results.

We also launched the Philippines health-care worker recruitment program, an initiative that brought qualified professionals to Manitoba to fill critical gaps. The NDP—they've since cut that program.

On the infrastructure side, we committed to over \$1.2 billion in capital spending across the province, including renovations to the St. Boniface ER, ICU upgrades at the Grace Hospital and increased surgical capacity at HSC and Concordia.

Major rural investments like the new hospital in Portage la Prairie, in Neepawa—and upgrades in the Brandon, Flin Flon, Dauphin and more.

And we didn't stop there. We started the process of the largest ever capital investment in Manitoba's health-care system: a \$1.5-billion redevelopment of the HSC. With the new patient rooms and an expanded medical campus to train more future doctors.

We also signed the historic doctors service agreement in 2023, leading to record doctor recruitment, something the NDP now claim credit for but did not create.

Now let's talk about the NDP's claims and the reality. They say they're hiring record numbers of doctors and nurses, but front-line workers are sounding the alarm.

Emergency rooms are overwhelmed. Grace Hospital's ER has been described by a doctor as catastrophic, with patients overflowing into hallways, some waiting nearly 12 hours for care.

Promised beds haven't been delivered, promised clinics that are delayed and underperforming, the

Brandon minor injury clinic, which the Premier (Mr. Kinew) claimed would be functioning like an urgent-care centre, is not open daily, not fully staffed, and does not—doesn't offer basic diagnostics. It's not accepting walk-ins despite the Premier promising you could be in and out in 20 minutes.

And with that and much more to say, I'm going to turn this over to other of my colleagues who would like to speak on this topic.

Thank you.

MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader): I ask for leave to hold the vote on Bill 210 today at 11:55.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Is there leave of the House to have the vote today at 11:55?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): I heard a no.

Ms. Jodie Byram (Agassiz): Before I get to speaking to this resolution, I do want to put a shout-out there to all the health-care providers: the doctors, the nurses, allied workers, other support staff that go in and show up, day in and day out, to provide health care to all of us here in Manitoba. Not always a healthy or a safe work environment these days, I understand that, but you show up and you are there to help heal, help protect and to make Manitobans well on a health journey. So a big shout-out to all the health-care professionals in Manitoba.

I want to start off—obviously here—talking about the NDP's failure to provide safe environments for those that are working in health-care fields. They went out and campaigned on fixing health care, made big promises throughout that campaign and have failed. The minister has failed in delivering all those promises, and while Manitobans expected much better from this NDP government.

When the NDP took office, and I know some of my colleagues here on this side of the House have already raised this, but the first actions that they took was to dismiss the top medical professionals responsible for addressing the surgical and diagnostic procedures here in our province.

This decision had far-reaching consequences. Instead of building on momentum established by the previous government, which was—successfully cleared some of the pandemic-related backlogs and expanded in surgical capacity—the NDP chose to cut

these critical contracts with both public and private sectors—providers. And this has still had significantly—or has significantly reduced the surgical capacity available here to Manitobans.

The results of those decisions were stark and are stark. The wait times for CT scans and MRIs have skyrocketed. At Health Sciences Centre, for instance, the wait times for a CT scan has now exceeded 32 weeks, honourable deputy Speaker. M-R wait times at the facility have climbed over 56 weeks.

These figures are not just statistics; they represent real people who are in pain, waiting for care that they desperately need. These are soaring surgical diagnostic wait times under this current NDP government.

We're witnessing some of the longest wait times for these vital procedures—knee and hip surgeries in the last five years, and this isn't something that we can—be ignored. Families are being impacted by the decisions of this NDP government.

Our health-care workers, especially those represented here in Manitoba by the Manitoba Nurses Union, have voiced their frustrations. They feel unheard and disrespected by this current government. It's a troubling sign of the system that is not functioning as it should or the way that this NDP government tries to lead Manitobans to believe.

Instead of acknowledging the concerns of the health-care workers, the NDP seems more focused on self-congratulations than on making tangible improvements to the health-care system. Like we—I know the member from Roblin brought that forward, that they bring all this resolutions forward to pat themselves on the back, honourable deputy Speaker, looking and seeking for validation.

Let's consider some of the promises that have been made. The NDP claims to be hiring record numbers of health-care professionals, but the reality is many of these positions remain unfilled. Reports indicate that wait times in ER are—ER rooms are longer, almost longer than anywhere else in Canada. The Manitoba Nurses Union has highlighted a crisis in our health-care system and one that the NDP continues to address and fails.

Furthermore, NDP's history of closing emergency rooms is concerning. And under the previous government we saw significant investment in rural health care, yet the current government closed numerous emergency departments leaving many communities without access to essential services.

For example, the Carberry ER was closed—and I know the member from Dawson Trail referred to this as well—was closed for over half of the summer, honourable deputy 'speake,' which is unacceptable for residents who need it in a timely manner.

And just so members opposite are well aware, the Carberry ER is closed today. So there are no ER services in Carberry today.

The previous government—and they want to go and talk about the good work that they did to reopen the Carberry ER services, well, I'll tell you, honourable deputy Speaker, it was the hard work and the dedication of the Health Action Committee in the community of Carberry that worked, that invested and committed to seeing that that doctors recruitment and nurses and getting health-care workers to the community was successful. That was because of the health action community—or Health Action Committee in Carberry. So big shout-out to the Health Action Committee in Carberry.

* (11:50)

You know, I want to just reiterate some of the things that our government did when we were in office, and we laid the groundwork for many of the health-care initiatives that this NDP government still wants to go out and get credit for.

We invested \$400 million to recruit and retain health-care workers, cleared over 80,000 surgeries from the backlog and expanded medical training opportunities. These efforts have been crucial in addressing the challenges that we face here today.

Right now we have a new hospital being constructed in Neepawa, and that was our PC government who got that introduced and started. It will be exciting to have that day in our town and see it serve many Manitobans.

It would be great to see a CT scanner put into the Neepawa Hospital; an MRI in the Portage hospital would certainly help alleviate some of the backlog under those diagnostic services that this government is failing to take the pressure off, in terms of wait times.

Honourable deputy Speaker, the NDP government has created some of the longest wait times, like I have mentioned, for the hip replacement. It's the longest it's ever been in five years. People are suffering because of this, losing mobility.

And you know, that adds to pressure that we see show up in our doctors' offices and our ER wait times.

We all know that the wait times in these ERs is escalating, and, again, that is a growing concern; it's the highest it's ever been. I know colleagues have had family members show—having to go to the ER and spent hours and hours waiting.

Again, we can talk about the unsafe work environments in many health facilities, leaving many of these health-care professionals feeling like their safety is compromised. We need not look too far.

The Health Sciences Centre's been greylisted by Manitoba Nurses Union. This is telling us it's an unsafe working place and should be a clear sign to this government that things have not gotten better, but they continue to get worse under this NDP government.

It is essential that we focus on creating health-care system that truly serves the needs of Manitoba. The government must prioritize expanding surgical capacity and addressing the staffing crisis in our health-care system. This means not just hiring more health-care professionals but ensuring that they are supported and respected in their roles.

The soaring surgical and diagnostic wait times under the NDP government is a serious concern for all Manitobans. It affects all of us. We must advocate for a health-care system that prioritizes patient care, respects health-care workers and delivers on its promises. And this NDP government continues to fail on any of those promises.

But I want to work together to ensure that the health-care system we build is one that we can all be proud of, one that meets the needs of our communities, provides timely and accessible care for everyone here in Manitoba.

Thank you, honourable deputy Speaker.

Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain): I'm glad to put some words on the record when it comes to the—basically the private member resolution that was passed by the member for Waverley (MLA Pankratz)—or wanted to be passed by member for Waverley.

I have to say, you know, health care, since they took over in the last two years, has gotten worse. The fact is my wife had just retired from health—the health-care industry, and she says right now that she was a manager; she was executive director of a department for ERS for the Province of Manitoba.

And the—when it comes to demographics, we are in a crisis when so many people are retiring. She—we're seeing very few baby boomers right now in the workplace, and we're going to see more of them

retiring—all of them retiring—in the next few years. We're starting to see Generation X retiring.

So where is this government going to get resources to man another hospital? They were—actually had seven ERs in Winnipeg, honourable Speaker—deputy Speaker. And the fact is they—the wait times in these hospitals were—is atrocious.

They commissioned the Peachey report. They didn't do anything to act on it because they knew that the unions would go against them, and that was what their issue was right now, is that they're trying to satisfy unionized individuals.

But at the same time, it's all about—should be about the patient care. And the fact is, if you don't have the resources to actually man—when it comes to the ER at Health Sciences Centre, it's for trauma and strokes.

When it comes to centre of excellence for the heart surgery, is in St. Boniface. These hospitals are now dedicated for teams of people to make sure that our loved ones, even in rural Manitoba, are going to be rushed, and knowing that darn well, they're going to get to St. Boniface if they have a heart attack.

The paramedics right now have—are equipped with the technology they have. They can triage a patient in their own living room to see exactly where that patient should go. Are they going to go to the Victoria ER and make—there's the false sense of security, thinking that there's a well-equipped ER? No, they're going to be rushed back to St. Boniface when it comes to heart attacks.

This is exactly what this Preachey [*phonetic*] report was all about, that we acted on. And we made the health care—improved the health care. Because it—during COVID, if we didn't have that system in place with Shared Health, we would be in a lot—difficult issues when it came to COVID, honourable deputy Speaker.

And the fact is, to look at another hospital, I know my—a lot of my wife's colleagues said this is backwards, this is go—this is basically going backwards. We do not have the resources to equip for this. They have to make sure that they actually have the equipment and the people, because right now, demographics are showing that there's going to be a lot of retirees.

And then the philosophy of this government when it comes to doctors, wanting doctors to come to Manitoba, when they're actually taxing them higher

now. They're actually take—doctors who will make over \$200,000 when it comes to—easily, and now the personal exemption is going to be eroded from them. So they're going to be paying more taxes than if they go to Saskatchewan, Alberta.

And then if also at the same time, their property taxes on a bigger home are going to go up. So what is the advantage?

Like, right now Saskatchewan and Alberta are already trying to attract those professionals, and we're seeing that right now in rural Manitoba, especially at the Saskatchewan-Manitoba border.

A lot of those professionals are going into Saskatchewan because they are more prepared, they have a better financial situation and they actually focus on the economic activity that helps pay for health care. And this government is basically saying,

join a union, become a part of the middle class. But where is that investment going to come to pay for health care, to actually have another ER that they can equip and have valuable people working in those locations.

This is ludicrous. This is actually going backwards. And the fact is, if you talk to a lot of health-care workers, professionals, especially in the industry, they will tell you that they are—they don't have enough people in the hospitals that they have already.

The Acting Speaker (Rachelle Schott): Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Piwniuk) will have six minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 o'clock, the House is recessed and will stand recessed until 1:30.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 7, 2025

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Questions	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS		Cook	2818
Speaker's Statement		Blashko	2818
Lindsey	2805	Cable	2818
Debate on Second Readings– Public Bills		Lagassé	2818
Bill 210–The Indigenous Veterans Day Act		Byram	2818
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks and Months		Piwniuk	2819
Act Amended)		Ewasko	2819
Narth	2805	Debate	
Robbins	2807		
Fontaine	2808		
Guenter	2810		
Cross	2812		
Stone	2812	Cook	2820
Resolutions		Lagassé	2822
Res. 20–Commending the Provincial Government		Byram	2824
for Committing to Reopen the Victoria Hospital		Piwniuk	2826
Emergency Room			
Blashko	2814		

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.manitoba.ca/legislature/hansard/hansard.html>