

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 26, 2020

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Speaker's Statement

Madam Speaker: I do have a short statement for the House. I am advising the House that I have received a letter from the Official Opposition House Leader regarding the official opposition's first selected bill for this session.

As a reminder to the House, rule 24 permits each recognized party to select up to three private members' bills per session to proceed to a second reading vote. Accordingly, the question will be put on second reading of Bill 203, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act (Referendum Before Privatization of Subsidiary), at 10:55 this morning.

* * *

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Good morning, Madam Speaker. Would you please call Bill 216 for second reading debate this morning.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 216—The Public Health Amendment Act (2)

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 216 this morning, so I will therefore call Bill 216, the public health amendment act.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I move, seconded by the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara), that Bill 216, The Public Health Amendment Act (2); Loi n°2 modifiant

la Loi sur la santé publique, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kinew: Madam Speaker, during this unprecedented time of coronavirus pandemic, and during this time where all of us are being asked to abide by public health measures, I think that this bill is one that will appeal to all members of the House who want to put province ahead of party, and who want to put public health ahead of narrow partisan interests.

Now, throughout the pandemic, we have heard Dr. Roussin and Lanette Siragusa and others who are engaged in the public health efforts make repeated calls for us to do some very important things: stay home when we're sick during the earlier periods of the, you know, yellow and amber restrictions, and then, to stay home, period, during the more recent code red restrictions.

We've also been asked to, you know, wash our hands, get tested when we're sick. We've been asked also to wear masks in public this fall. All important public health measures that can help to slow the community spread of the coronavirus and the disease that it causes, COVID-19.

However, unfortunately, we've also seen repeated evidence of political interference—whether that be flip-flopping in terms of the introduction of certain measures, whether that be contradiction—in some cases where Dr. Roussin says something and then he's contradicted by the, you know, political officials on the other side of the Chamber, or whether that be orders being watered down after political influence. All of these serve to cause confusion when it comes to the ability of Manitobans to abide by public health orders, and it also undermines public trust. We can't afford that.

At a time where there's anti-maskers, anti-vaxxers, disinformation campaigns under way to try and discredit the advice of public health experts, we need to give them all the support that we can.

One particular instance comes into mind in particular. Earlier this summer, Dr. Roussin, during one of his important public health updates, he said unequivocally that in announcing phase 3, that there would be no more phases. No more phases to our

pandemic response system. However, it was about a week later that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) came out and contradicted Dr. Roussin and said that, in fact, there would be an additional phase. There would be phase 4. And so that is one example of a clear contradiction and contravention of the public health process at work—interference at a political level by this government.

And so this bill offers a simple and straight-forward remedy, which is to remove the politicians' ability to interfere with the public health advice. So when this bill receives unanimous support—or, if it receives unanimous support, from the government's side included—then we would have a situation in Manitoba where, when the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer makes an order, that it stands, that it is no longer subject to ministerial interference and political interference.

Now, of course, you know, some in the media have asked questions about the role of elected officials. That would still be there. There's still oversight of the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer through a variety of means. And, of course, if it does seem extremely important for a government—for whatever reason in their own partisan or political considerations—to go counter to the Chief Provincial Public Health Officer, then they would still have the ability to issue an order under The Emergency Measures Act.

However, that would give greater public confidence in the public health system, because it would be very clear as to what the advice was from public health and what the advice was from the political level. And the average person in Manitoba could very clearly distinguish between what was actually the public health advice abiding by the interests of the public health of Manitobans and what was the political interference that was being added to the equation.

So in order to support public health, in order to support the public health experts, and in order to support Manitobans in general in their ability to respond to the coronavirus pandemic, we're introducing this bill here today, and we look forward to having the support of all MLAs who believe in public health in Manitoba.

Questions

Madam Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the

following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I noticed that there's some—the Leader of the Opposition is now somewhat—seems that this is very important to talk about COVID and make changes, which is kind of in contrast to earlier this year.

* (10:10)

So I'm wondering if the member opposite can explain why his party continues to play political games, such as blocking legislation in the Assembly as they did in the early days of this year.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): You know, I appreciate that the member for Brandon East had a piece of paper in front of him that he's been asked to read from, but I'd ask that he'd engage his critical thinking skills and recall that we, on this side of the House, worked with the government to pass 10 pieces of emergency legislation at the start of the pandemic to help Manitobans be better able to respond to the economic crisis and the public health crisis.

So perhaps I could turn the tables and ask the member for Brandon East why has he's been so silent? Why isn't he opposing the cuts and closures that are taking place across western Manitoba? And why is he putting party ahead of province?

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I'd like to ask, why is it important to separate politics and public health decision-making?

Mr. Kinew: Well, it's such a good question I almost wish that the member would've taken more time to elucidate and flesh out and really, you know, document, you know, his thought process in this case.

But I think that it's important because Manitobans are stepping up and making a tremendous sacrifice. We want Manitobans to have full confidence that the government is matching their commitment. And what we've seen so far in the world in terms of pandemic response is that the calibre of political decision making that you have really makes a difference. When you have politicians who ignore the science, things go badly. But when you have politicians that listen to the public health advice, things go better. This bill supports the latter approach.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet. The honourable member for Lac du Bonnet?

We'll go to the honourable member for Dauphin.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): I listen to the member opposite and he talks about party ahead of the province. And I find that a little bit rich—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Michaleski: I find that a little bit rich. And I would cite, you know, in the middle of harvest time that the member would go to a farming community that's already stressed out, and try to play political games with a rural farming community right in the middle of harvest.

So I would ask the member, why does he deliberately undermine public health and Dr. Roussin and take political advantage of people in rural Manitoba?

Mr. Kinew: The question was so poorly written I would hope that the member for Dauphin goes and shakes it at whoever handed it to him before he came in here.

The question that every single person in this member's constituency wants him to raise in the House today is why is this government closing the emergency room in Grandview? Why have the cuts in this member's constituency led to the closure of emergency medical services in that very important community?

The only question that I have for the member is why didn't he ask that question here today? Is he putting party ahead of province? Is he putting party ahead of the people of Grandview? And will he finally stand up for medical services in his own constituency?

Madam Speaker: The member's time is—the member's time has expired.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, my question relates to the potential for confusion if the Premier (Mr. Pallister) and the minister—or the public health officer are not working together. For example, if you have—as the Leader of the Opposition is proposing—public health orders and emergency measures orders coming out, going two different directions, you could get a very confusing situation.

Mr. Kinew: Really more of a comment rather than a question. So perhaps I'll just remind the member, at all the confusion that we've seen this fall when it comes to public health orders. We've seen the government

contradict the public health officer; we've seen the government contradict itself when they announced a measure one week—or actually, one day, and then two days later, when the actual published text of the measure comes out, that it completely contradicts the text from their press release from earlier in the week.

So clearly the status quo is not working, and the status quo needs to be improved. This bill does just that. It will make it crystal clear to Manitobans which orders are coming from public health expertise, and which orders are coming from politicians.

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): May I ask this to the member that how has this government demonstrated that they should not be involved in approving public health orders?

Mr. Kinew: Well, I'd probably start with the fact that you have a Premier who talks about team Manitoba, but then announces a COVID snitch line and invites team Manitoba to turn in on itself and to have everyone, you know, be looking out over their neighbour's fence.

And then I'd continue with the Minister of Health who has questioned the motivation of physicians, the very people saving lives during the pandemic. And then I'd go on to the municipal affairs minister who can't even tell us whether or not she supports this government's approach to the pandemic.

And then I'd continue with every single MLA on that side of the House who refuses to do the right thing and simply stand up for Manitobans and say that what this government is doing with cutting health care is wrong.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I can't believe the Leader of the Opposition spent his time berating his member from St. James for reading the question off of the paper. But I digress, Madam Speaker.

Our government has followed the advice of Dr. Roussin and the public health officials from day one. The NDP has undermined Dr. Roussin from day one. With this bill, is the member saying that the NDP was wrong for calling for the closure of plants like Maple Leaf, which Dr. Roussin told us should stay open.

Mr. Kinew: Actually, what we're saying is that Dr. Roussin is so well respected on this side of the House that we want his exact advice and orders to become the ones that Manitobans are asked to abide, not the ones that are generated by the

Premier (Mr. Pallister), not the ones that are generated by a Minister of Health who believes in cozying up to the anti-mask movement, not in the ones that are generated by the Minister of Education (Mr. Goertzen) who believes in cozying up to the anti-vaxxer movement.

So the question that this bill is proposing is simple: do you stand with science or do you stand against it? And so the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) will have to ask himself that question, and if he votes no, that means he is anti-science.

Mr. Isleifson: It is an interesting time when people write their own questions out and, you know, it's—they're accused of somebody else writing them. Just like watching the NDP every day give their speeches, word for word off of what somebody else was written, when you can tell they have no idea what they are talking about.

But, anyways, Madam Speaker, I know that when we look at opportunities, we always talk about consultation, and I just—simple question: Who did the Leader of the Opposition consult with in bringing this legislation forward?

Mr. Kinew: Well, first and foremost, we consulted with the countless Manitobans who said that this government is clearly politically interfering with the public health orders in Manitoba. But we also consulted with many legal experts, and we did a cross-jurisdictional scan. And what we uncovered is that what we're proposing in this bill is actually the law in most other jurisdictions in Canada.

And so what we are doing here is we're actually streamlining, we're cutting the red tape, we're cutting out the political interference and we're bringing Manitoba into line with the best practice of public health law in jurisdictions right across the country.

I'm sure if the member for Brandon believes in public health, and he believes in streamlining the—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Sala: I'd like the member to tell us about the dangers of political interference of the type we've seen from this government during a public health crisis.

Mr. Kinew: Well, I think we've seen what happens when you politically interfere with public health orders. It was very clear to everybody in the world that a second wave of the coronavirus was coming. Dr. Roussin, other public health officials, they actually warned us that there would be a second wave and that we should not let our guard down during the

summer months. However, the Premier, his Cabinet, his backbenchers, they overrode that advice. They hung up a banner that said: ready, set, go; get off to the races; everybody let your guard down during the summer months. And now, unfortunately, we've seen what that approach has caused. It has caused Manitoba to be one of the hot spots for the COVID-19 infections across the country. We need to change that. And it starts by removing political interference from public health orders.

* (10:20)

Madam Speaker: The time for this question period has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Good morning, everyone.

I find it very interesting as we proceed forward. And we've heard a lot of comments on both sides of the House, some ridiculing the fact that we need to be a team, others underestimating what the team really means. And the invitation that has been extended numerous times to members of the opposition to join team Manitoba seems to be ignored. And I mention team, Madam Speaker, because that's what it's all about. We need to work as a team. I don't want to use sports analogies as I move forward in describing what a team is, but I will use some analogies in health care.

And I'm sure everybody in the House is very familiar with Murray House, which is a cancer-care residence built in Brandon. It's just off campus of the Brandon Regional Health Centre and down the street from Westman cancer care. And the reason I speak of that, Madam Speaker, is I was privileged and honoured to chair the committee that went forward in the construction phase and then later on the management phase of the operations of Murray House. As the chair of the team, we had weekly meetings and other meetings that were deemed necessary. And at no time did any one single person go out and make a direction. Everything came to the table. We discussed what was going on and what was needed because we have professionals in the industry, and we listened to those professionals.

And we compare that to what this motion is. I mean, we look at the fact that Dr. Roussin is an expert and he is part of the team, along with other folks in public health and other folks within the Department of Health, Seniors and Active Living, including our

minister and including the Premier (Mr. Pallister). So when we talk about responsibilities, we need to have that avenue to have those discussions.

I mean, there are plenty of opportunities in this House for opposition members to stand up in an opposition of what governments do. And if they think there's political interference, then bring it forward. However, creating a bill—some kind of bill. It's got four sentences in it so I don't really think it's much of a bill. But it's a direction that the Opposition Leader wants to put in place so that, again, he's trying to undermine the public health officials in this province. I, too, did a jurisdictional scan, and I looked at all the provinces and territories in Canada. And the majority of them—and if you read all of their public health emergency orders, all, except for maybe—I know the one in BC, I could not find the actual wording—all the other ones were on the advice of government in conjunction with their public health officer.

So I do know, Madam Speaker, that through this pandemic our response here in Manitoba to COVID-19 has been led by scientific evidence and the advice of our public health professionals. Unlike a conversation that was recently held by Dr. Roussin that was recorded and leaked, I think that's what you call undermining our public health officials. Looking at this, though, I mean, we can look at our government is acting on the public health advice from scientists and public health experts. And we certainly do not tend to take direction or guidance from the grand-standing NDP politicians on the other side of the House.

Madam Speaker, our government is committed to protecting health and well-being of Manitobans as we move forward through this pandemic. It is no different than any other area of health, that even in my own profession, prior to being elected in 2016, you know, where again—and I mentioned this last week in a response to one of the members opposite, of my time on the provider advisory council. Again, that council—we had the public health officer from Prairie Mountain Health. We had experts from diagnostic services. We had front-line nursing. We had administration. We had a very vast majority of people on that committee.

And again, they call it a committee for a reason, because we all got together and we discussed the issues in health care, we discussed ideas that were coming out and, of course, we always had the best interests of the public in mind. And recommendations from our committee were simply that:

recommendations put forward to those in the expert positions who could make the final decision based on input, and that's what we find going on here as well.

Madam Speaker, I think if the opposition had really done its homework, they would have understand that no chief medical officer acts unilaterally. And sure, he can put in just little different caveats about—in his preamble—about how the government still has the ability to do this and do that under legislation, when at the same time, he's talking about changing legislation to remove the ability to work co-operatively with our public officer of health.

Again, we could look at a number of issues throughout the whole realm, and I know COVID—just talking to someone this morning—and I agree, it will be nice when the day comes along where we don't hear the word COVID in any conversation. Unfortunately, that day is not going to be for a while.

And we need to look at what measures have been put in place and, as situations change, what more we can do as a government working with the opposition, working with the professionals in health care, on what we can do to help those who live in Manitoba.

I mean, we have taken measures to protect hospitals and care homes from the spread of COVID-19. We introduced PPE requirements and daily staff cleaning, enhanced infection prevention and control. There are a number of things that come forward, Madam Speaker, and it didn't come off the back of a napkin either. These were decisions that were made in consultation with professionals, with experts who bring that science to the table.

And sure, you can sit back—and there's a lot of armchair quarterbacks on social media and, you know, I really open up and I read them all. I believe everybody has an opportunity to express their thoughts and their feelings, and you do, you do get conversations from all different aspects. But again, playing politics with COVID-19 is just not the right thing to do. Dr. Roussin and the Premier and the Health Minister are all on team Manitoba and, again, I think the opposition should be as well.

It certainly does not help, Madam Speaker, when people go out and undermine and falsely accuse things that are happening in the community. I know just last week, the member from St. Johns accused PCH nurses in Steinbach for refusing to wear masks, and I want to assure Manitobans that these claims are false. I want to apologize to those nurses for those false accusations

because, obviously, I have not heard that the NDP have done so.

It's really sad that when the Leader of the Opposition stands up and introduces a resolution so that they can take the politics—or so called politics—out of decision making, that they insert themselves politically in all these different areas.

And definitely, creating panic and hysteria is not the right thing to do at this time. We need to work together. We need to ensure that the information that is going out from public health officials and our civil servants are put out there based on the professional input that we're receiving.

So again, the opposition spews comments that certainly have no realm and basis, and it's certainly something that—you know, we will not take lessons on health care from them. Madam Speaker, 17 years they were in power, and they had the opportunity to do things and, again, I do not believe—and I'm just going back in my memory—is, I do not believe any province in those 17 years spent more money on health care than the NDP did when they were in government with the least amount of results, with the longest wait times and the worst outcomes.

I do know at one time they talked about—when they were in government, they talked about eliminating hallway medicine, and all they did was create highway medicine.

* (10:30)

I know in some facilities all they did was make rooms bigger so they could get patients out of—make those hallways part of departments so that it kind of made it look like there was no more hallway medicine, when in fact, they certainly did not fix the problem.

But let's look at what good governments do, Madam Speaker. And our \$2-billion health-care funding guarantee increased the record-level investment that our PC government provides to health care—which, by the way, and everybody is well aware of this, is already \$648 million more than the last NDP budget.

So I take no concern or—with the NDP standing up and using that four-letter word, cuts. Obviously, the—

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

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I'm very happy to have an opportunity to speak to this bill that's been brought forward by our leader, the—Bill 216.

And, you know, I find it interesting listening to the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) and just hearing how upside-down of a world that he and his colleagues in the PC caucus live in and just how absolutely disconnected he is and their party is from the realities facing our province today. You know, they continue to talk about the incredible job they're doing, and you just have to look at the newspaper on an ongoing basis to understand the challenges we're facing and just how disconnected they are from the realities that are facing folks.

This bill is incredibly important because it recognizes that we, as politicians, are not experts in public health and that we need to ensure that we get out of the way of what's best for Manitobans in the midst of a pandemic and we listen to our public health experts and allow them to make important decisions and don't in any way impede that decision-making.

The first job of any government is to protect citizens, not to ensure that our deficits are reduced. And we see a government right now that, again, continues to obsess over deficit reduction at the expense of the safety and health of Manitobans. It's really unfortunate, in fact, that a bill of this nature needs to go forward. But we, of course, are dealing with a government that has proven over and over again its willingness to interfere and to make decisions that are not in the best interests of Manitobans.

You know, when I think about what I'd like to say in response to the importance of this bill, I think about folks in my community and how they're feeling right now and what they're experiencing. And I can say that, you know, people in my community—and I think more broadly across the province—are feeling scared. They're increasingly worried about people who are vulnerable in their families, people who are working in health-care environments, in our schools, in our child-care centres, and they're extremely worried about the direction that things have been going here.

And it's clear that a lot of that worry and a lot of that anxiety is there because they see a government that does not seem to be making decisions that are in the best interests of Manitobans, that are failing to plan and prepare for the challenges that we are facing.

They see a government that has dropped the ball repeatedly. If we look at the back—how far behind we

were in preparing for testing and you—the need to ramp up our testing capacity in the fall, we saw that second wave coming from miles away. Experts saw this, that we were going to have a significant need to increase our testing capacity. And yet, you know, we were way behind in being prepared for that need to increase our testing capacity and, in fact, only had a handful of sites and had people waiting five, six hours for a test, seniors waiting in line for hours on end and people waiting up to a week for their results. Absolutely and completely incomprehensible that this government would have allowed that to happen.

And of course, when we call them out on that lack of preparation, they accused us of making absurd claims of why—how could it possibly be in any way a reasonable idea to start preparing for these things in the summer. Well, I can tell you, Madam Speaker, we can see the outcomes of that failure to prepare in the case numbers that we're seeing day-to-day.

You know, people in Manitoba are working hard to do their part. They're wearing masks, they're doing their best to abide by public health orders, but they see a government that's just not doing its part and, in some cases, just is not listening to the experts.

And so we need to, unfortunately, do our part to protect Manitobans from the interference from this government. They've been more interested in their bottom line than they are in our health-care response, and this bill will hopefully help to do more to protect Manitobans from some of their, again, constant focus on the bottom line as opposed to the health and safety of Manitobans.

This bill is incredibly important because they've demonstrated their lack of willingness to listen to doctors. We saw the Health Minister call out 200 doctors who are working on our front lines and suggest that they were somehow enemy agents working to undermine the government; clear evidence that this government is not listening to experts. They're not listening to experts on the ground who are bringing forward important perspectives that should inform the way that the government is responding to the crisis.

You know, Madam Speaker, in November when new—early November, when those new restrictions came down, Dr. Roussin told us quite clearly that we needed to stay home and that we shouldn't be socializing with households outside of our own. And we saw, just a day after those orders were put out, that they were reversed by the government, only to be

reinstated the next day, causing massive confusion across the entire province.

And I think about the circles that I—that I'm—I exist within. I think about what I heard from people close to me, and it was just confusion. People didn't understand why the government was backtracking on a commitment that it had made—or, on a public order—and why it was that we were possibly creating all this mass confusion for Manitobans when it was quite clear the first time around.

So these are the kind of challenges that I'm assuming Dr. Roussin might have to contend with more often than he would like to and, ultimately, this mass confusion is risking lives. And when our public health officers put forward orders that are about ensuring that we protect Manitobans, we need to make sure that we support those and we don't risk political interference, and it really speaks to the importance of this bill.

You know, the government has failed on so many accounts in ensuring that Manitobans receive the health supports that they need, that it's tough to know even where to start. And the issues we're facing right now aren't just a function of COVID, these are issues that have been caused by many years of health cuts from this government.

You know, health-care funding in 2018-19, underspent by \$250 million; 2019-2020 budget for funding health care was cut by \$120 million. The government cut 10 ICU beds less than a year ago.

And, you know, I think about the disasters that we're seeing in our personal-care homes and the horrifying realities that are being faced by people living in those environments; the terrifying reality that their family members are facing and thinking about what their loved ones are going through.

And this didn't just start in the midst of this pandemic. This—these are issues that were precipitated from years of cuts from this PC government, and the list of cuts is so exhaustive I don't even know where to start, Madam Speaker. They've also increased the annual cost of accommodation in these homes.

I mean, I think about the number of failures by this government. Never mind the fact that, you know, relating to their failures in our—in taking care of those who live in our personal-care homes. We had mountains of data—literally mountains of data—from jurisdictions around the world telling us about the risks that we'd face in our long-term-care facilities, and this government completely failed to listen to

those experts, to look at that data and to adjust and ensure that we did what was required to save lives in those facilities.

We need to make sure that we listen to our public health experts. We need to make sure that we have protections in place that ensure that the advice and orders that are put forward by our public health experts are not interfered in by this government. And we know that they're going to—that they are constantly looking to interfere and putting Manitobans at risk. And we need to protect Manitobans from that interference.

Now, we need to separate politics from public health decision-making, Madam Speaker. And the first job of any government is to make sure that its citizens are protected. It's not to ensure that the deficit is reduced. It's to ensure that our safety and our health is protected. This is a once-in-a-hundred-year event. It requires a once-in-a-hundred-year response. And we're not seeing a response from a government that's commensurate with the challenge we're facing, that Manitobans are facing, that Manitobans are stepping up everyday to combat, Madam Speaker.

* (10:40)

So I'd encourage this government to strongly consider supporting this bill to protect Manitobans, to ensure that we offer the public more confidence in our public health-care response by getting out the way of recommendations from our public health experts. So I appreciate the opportunity to speak to this bill and I thank our leader for bringing it forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I didn't actually think I was going to get to put a few words on the record this morning but, you know, as usual, the NDP are not only spreading falsehoods across the province but they're also spreading falsehoods right here in this great historical building of ours, here in at the legislative building.

Again, it gives me great pleasure to be able to put a few words on the record, factual words on the record. Looking at this Bill 216, and the member from St. James was supposedly passionately talking about supporting this bill that his leader, the leader of the Kinew opposition party, brought forward, and to me, Madam Speaker, this is just ingenuous here. It's just—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ewasko: Oh, hold on, I'll put my speaker—or my microphone on mute, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder to the member that using anybody's name is not allowed in this House. It is important that you recognize members by their titles. So I would just remind the member that you can't use the member's first name or any part of their name in a debate.

Mr. Ewasko: Okay. So just to be clear, Madam Speaker, so to say the leader of the Kinew opposition party, that's not allowed?

Madam Speaker: I would ask the table to stop the clock. I would—we need to check something, so I'm just going to ask the member for Lac du Bonnet to continue with his debate.

Mr. Ewasko: Okay. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

And, again, it gives me great pleasure to put a few words on the record in regards to this bill that, when asked, the leader of the—well, I'm not sure if I'm now allowed to say this or not, but the leader of the opposition party—I'll just err on the side of safety for now, but I'm waiting for your ruling or suggestion, Madam Speaker, so thank you for that. When he was asked the question on who he consulted with, he said, well, Manitobans.

Well, yes. Well, of course, that's who he was going to say, Madam Speaker, and he says, well, and also the legal beagles to help us put this great piece of legislation together.

Well, Madam Speaker, for goodness sakes, it's three pages, if you give it credit to be three pages. So the amount of thought process that had gone behind this bill is absolutely, definitely not substantial and is actually beneath the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew) because, again, I respect his level of education and all of that, and him and I shared quite a few chats before the 2016 election, and so it's actually interesting that he's actually the leader of the opposition party now.

But I will just give a caution to the member from St. James and all the members on that side of the House, because I know the member from St. James, he actually was a staffer in the Selinger government—and I do believe I can say that: in the Selinger government—and he knows what kind of backstabbing was going on within the NDP party and he knows that he's going to have to watch where he's at because he knows that he was a strong advocate for the—Premier Selinger at the time, the member for St. Boniface. And he knows—I think he's very much aware that he's got to watch his leader of his opposition party.

I find it's hypocritical, Madam Speaker, when this—the leader of the official opposition party stands up and talks about well, the government members, they have to—either they're with science or they're against science.

And, you know, my question was very pointed and very straightforward. And the member from St. James didn't include it into—in his speech, which I'm a little shocked. And—but maybe I'm not shocked, maybe the member from St. James actually doesn't really know what was going on within his own party when he was a staffer for Greg Selinger back in the day, which then got, you know, the knife in the back from the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Kinew).

So my question was that our government has followed the advice of Dr. Roussin and public health officials from day one. The NDP was undermined—has undermined Dr. Roussin from day one with this bill. Is the member saying that the NDP was wrong for calling for the closure of plants like Maple Leaf, which Dr. Roussin told us should stay open? It's a simple straightforward question.

And I was actually waiting because I actually thought the member from—the official Leader of the Opposition would have said—because he's on record stabbing his former premier, Greg Selinger, in the back—he would have absolutely said that he would have disagreed with his NDP party. But nope, nope, he does not believe in science. So don't let this member, the Official Opposition Leader, try to pull the wool over anybody's eyes, because this person is far from believing in science. And with this bill, it just shows that the Leader of the Official Opposition absolutely has no regard for any kind of public safety, does not care about Manitobans and sure as heck, Madam Speaker, does not believe in science.

I've got another question then; unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to say, but I'm looking to the member from River Heights, maybe he's going to stand up and put a few words on the record. So I'm going to sort of plant this seed with him and hopefully he'll continue this on in his speech a little bit too.

So we've got—you know, about a month ago the NDP leader told CJOB about a mass evacuation plan for personal-care homes, which even the Manitoba Liberal Leader pointed out was the same plan that happened in Italy and New York, which spread contagion and led to many more deaths. Why didn't the NDP consult with public health experts before coming up with this reckless plan? It is just amazing,

Madam Speaker, on how hypocritical—like a pickerel on a dock, flip-flopping, flip-flopping all the time, this Leader of the Official Opposition.

And again, I can't believe—and you know what, I'm going to give a little bit of a—I'm not sure if it's credit, but I'm going to give the benefit of the doubt to the member from St. James because I know that his leader, the Leader of the NDP party, the Leader of the Official Opposition, had berated his member from St. James and also other members throughout the House for actually reading questions and putting things on the record that they're reading straight from paperwork. I mean, you can take a look on a daily basis, and the NDP side is constantly reading their diatribe of misinformation that they're being fed from their bureaucrats and whatever else. And don't get me started on the Liam Martin thing, Madam Speaker, because I know that that's a touchy subject with—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. I'm just going to ask the member for Lac du Bonnet to bring his comments back to the relevancy of the legislation that is put forward, and stick to what the bill is supposed to be about.

Mr. Ewasko: And as I believe yesterday, the honourable member from River Heights, who's a statesman here at the Leg., put a few words on the record. And he's said—I'm going to use what he said yesterday was I am going to tie the dots or connect the dots for everybody.

Bringing it back to Bill 216, the bill that we're actually debating today, which again, is a paper-thin bill, three pages long. And the leader of the opposition party—I'm still waiting to see if I can actually use the actual name of the opposition party in any kind of speeches, so I'll wait for the—Madam Speaker to say that. But anyways, he put his name to this bill. And it, again, just totally speaks against everything that the NDP had ever said.

* (10:50)

I did want to reference one other thing that the member from St. James put on the record in regards to the amount of incredible funding that we have put forward as this PC government since we've come into power for the last four and half years now, Madam Speaker.

He says that there's so many cuts he doesn't know where to start, and I quote. And you can check Hansard tomorrow or wherever else, but I think that's hilarious. I tell you why he doesn't know where to start, Madam Speaker: because there are none. More

money in health care is not a cut. It's more money in health care.

So the St. James MLA—I know he's a rookie here as an MLA but he's definitely a long-time supporter of Greg Selinger and, again, I know that he'll learn from today's speech. And I thank Madam Speaker and everybody for the opportunity to put a few words on the record this morning.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Briefly, I completely understand why the NDP are bringing forward this bill at this time. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) has made many poor decisions during the pandemic. He's shown poor leadership and his delay in preparation for the second wave, his closing of the incident command centre and many other decisions have caused a situation where Manitobans' health is now at risk from a booming second wave and our economy also is at risk.

But at the same time, we need political accountability. We need to know where the buck stops. We need the Premier and the public health officer working together to get us through the epidemic. We need the Premier to adequately fund public health orders.

We can't have a situation where there's dueling responses to an emergency, one coming from the public health orders and the other coming from emergency measures orders, where there's a disagreement between the two.

So in spite of my sympathy for the position of the NDP, I—we're going to take a position against this measure. I speak from experience in Cabinet under Jean Chrétien, when I saw that the best results occur when the political head and the lead within the public civil service—including here the chief public health officer—are made within input from both and when the Premier can better listen, when the political lead can better listen to the public health officer, as sometimes does not appear to be the case now.

Controlling the COVID-19 pandemic is essential to improving our economic prospects. We see this this fall. Had the COVID-19 pandemic been kept under better control by the Premier with all the advice that he should've and was receiving from us and from many others, we would've had a much more open economy. The failure of the Premier to put health care first has put our economy last.

We could've had, as we've had in the past, an all-party task force working together. The Premier chose not to do this. That's his decision, Madam Speaker. And the Premier's decision to not listen always to the

public health orders or public health doctor and the team from health care has been shown many times, including when there was a letter from many, many doctors and letter from many nurses bringing out problems with the Premier's approach.

So, in spite of the fact that we disagree very strongly with the approach that the Premier has taken, we still believe there needs to be political accountability so we will not, in this case, be supporting this legislation.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Thank you in giving me the chance to talk about this important resolution about, you know, we are dealing with a global pandemic and it is—it's important for the members opposite to remember that this is a global public emergency.

Public emergency situations that are going on all over the place and then—and most certainly, Manitoba is not working in isolation. So the health of Manitobans and the health of the public health system are paramount at this time.

And I have to congratulate, you know, we've been at this for close to six months plus and I have to say that there's just been outstanding—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Dauphin will have nine minutes remaining.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 203—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act (Referendum Before Privatization of Subsidiary)

Madam Speaker: In accordance with rule 24, and as previously announced, I am interrupting this debate to put the question on the first official opposition selected bill.

The question before the House, then, is second reading of Bill 203, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act (Referendum Before Privatization of Subsidiary).

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Speaker: I hear a no.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Aye.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Recorded Vote

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

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

* (11:20)

The question before the House is second reading of Bill 203, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act (Referendum Before Privatization of Subsidiary).

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

Cox, Eichler, Ewasko, Fielding, Goertzen, Gordon, Guenter, Guillemard, Helwer, Isleifson, Johnson, Johnston, Lagassé, Lagimodiere, Martin, Michaleski, Micklefield, Morley-Lecomte, Nesbitt, Pedersen, Pivniuk, Reyes, Schuler, Smith (Lagimodière), Smook, Stefanson, Teitsma, Wharton, Wishart, Wowchuk.

Deputy Clerk (Mr. Rick Yarish): Yeas 21, Nays 30.

Madam Speaker: The motion is accordingly defeated.

* * *

Madam Speaker: And I have a clarification from earlier in the morning and—to clarify a matter that came up earlier.

Under our practice, members are not allowed to refer to the last name of the honourable Leader of the Opposition in debate, even when referring to the name in conjunction with the word opposition.

This practice has been upheld in numerous Speakers' rulings.

RESOLUTIONS**Res. 7—Recognizing April 17th, 2021 as the 500th Anniversary of the Philippines**

Madam Speaker: The hour now being past 11 and time for private member's resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on recognizing April 17th, 2021, as the 500th anniversary of the Philippines brought forward by the honourable member for Notre Dame.

I will recognize the honourable—the Official Opposition House Leader.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Would you canvass the House to see if there is leave to allow the sponsor of the private member's resolution No. 7 to move an amendment to the resolution.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to allow the sponsor of private member's resolution No. 7 to move an amendment to the resolution? Is there leave? [*Agreed*]

I will now recognize the honourable member for Notre Dame to move her resolution.

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Kinew),

WHEREAS the year long celebration of the 500th Anniversary of the Philippines will commence on April 17, 2021; and

WHEREAS, as of the 2016 Canadian census, there are nearly 80,000 Manitobans of Filipino descent; and

WHEREAS as the Filipino population is now recognized as Winnipeg's largest ethnic minority and Tagalog is one of the most commonly spoken languages in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Filipinos first arrived in significant numbers in Manitoba in the 1950s, many arrived as nurses and healthcare workers then later as seamstresses in the garment industry; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's economy benefits from the many Filipino immigrants that continue to come and work in industries in rural and urban communities; and

WHEREAS many Filipinos in Manitoba will celebrate this five hundred year anniversary next year; and

WHEREAS creating days to honour people from different backgrounds, lived experiences, and faiths connects the people in the province as being part of a global community; and

WHEREAS recognizing this anniversary honours the history, continued contributions, and culture of Filipino Manitobans.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize April 17th, 2021, as the 500th anniversary of the Philippines to acknowledge the contributions of all Filipinos in Manitoba.

Motion presented.

Ms. Marcelino: The year 2021 will mark quincennial commemorations in the Philippines. Similar in spirit to our province-wide plans for Manitoba 150 celebrations, the Philippine government and many folks of Philippine descent around the world, including here in Manitoba, had pre-pandemic plans to commemorate the Philippine quincennial.

But now those plans have been modified, cancelled outright or put on hold. Commemorative events that were scheduled throughout 2021 included parades, academic conferences, and a distinguished lecture series, religious ceremonies, and a jubilee, cultural pavilions, dance and music performances, art exhibits, film screenings and a national memory projects.

These events were planned in cities and provinces across the Philippines as well as abroad in Chile, in Vietnam, in Indonesia, in Dubai, in Spain and Portugal, in England and across Canada.

The quincennial commemorates the first arrival of Europeans to the archipelago, known today as the Philippines. Five hundred years ago, Ferdinand Magellan, the Portuguese explorer, on behalf of Spain, embarked on the first recorded circumnavigation of our ocean planet. It was a voyage that changed the history of the world.

The Magellan-Elcano expedition mapped new routes for European trade and colonization in the name of commerce. Magellan's fleet of ships landed on the shores of Homonhon Island in eastern Samar in the Philippines. This event served as a momentous flashpoint in the would-be nation's history.

At that time there was an estimated half a million people encompassing over 150 ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups and communities spread out over 7,100 islands.

Evidence of first inhabitants in the archipelago dates back to 30,000 years ago. Commerce with Arabic, Indian and Chinese traders dates back to 1000 AD, and the oldest physical piece of writing evidence that has survived dates to the ninth century AD. It was written on copper.

* (11:30)

For centuries, this system of governance that existed was an ancient sociopolitical order that was based on interdependence and alliances between rulers on islands known as thalassocracy.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

After Magellan's arrival, that way of life changed. Much of the Philippines was effectively under colonial rule for the next 400 years, both under the Spanish and then literally sold to Americans in the 1898 Treaty of Paris.

During the earlier years of Spanish colonial rule, indigenous people practising rituals were punished, long-preserved local histories written in bamboo and other materials were burned and cultural artifacts were destroyed. Religious orders of the Catholic church that helped administer the colony and town life was literally and figuratively centered around the church.

During the American years, the Philippines was heavily influenced by American culture, especially the dominant use of the English language for instruction in schools and textbooks, in business, in government. English became the language bridge used by the different regional cultural groups that did not share an indigenous language.

Throughout these years of colonization and foreign occupation, Filipinos organized and fought and resisted in different ways, some through our movements and others through their writing. National heroes like Gabriela and Diego Silang, Andrés Bonifacio, Emilio Jacinto and José Rizal inspired and raised the consciousness of many, and their work led to formal Philippine independence.

Yet, in the aftermath of Spanish and American colonialism, the Philippines, like many other former colonies, grappled with entrenched traumatic legacies of colonialism, including a struggle with strong national identity, poverty, corruption and an underdeveloped economy.

Filipinos today range from celebrating to questioning to deriding this complicated legacy of this 500-year milestone. No matter their stance, this 500-year commemoration compels Filipinos to

examine how the event of European arrival has shaped our history, examine the ways our history has been written and the ways in which our history still needs to be re-interpreted, re-examined, and re-written by and for a new generation of Filipinos.

There are many Manitobans of Philippine descent. According to the 2016 'census', it's 80,000, and the Philippine consul general in Manitoba estimates that numbers are now closer to 100,000. Many Manitobans of Philippine descent, mine included, immigrated to this province for economic reasons. There are few countries that have as many of their citizens living abroad as the Republic of the Philippines, or depends so great on migration for their economic vitality.

According to the government, more than 7.3 million Filipinos or 8 per cent of the country's population currently reside abroad. Official recorded remittances—that's money that labourers send back to family in the Philippines—averaged 5.2 per cent of gross national product—a lifeline for many families living in poverty. And those records for population and remittances are from migrant workers, not immigrants or Canadian citizens, who, I assure you, are—still provide remittances to their families.

The Philippine government set out their labour export policy in the mid-1970s. It was an explicit response to the double-digit unemployment rates, and this continues to this day. From the 1960s to the 1980s, this labour export policy was mostly directed to the export of male Filipino labour. My own father-in-law left his family in order to provide for his family as a heavy equipment mechanic for 23 years in Saudi Arabia.

But now, female Filipino migrant labour outnumbered men with Filipina migrants working as nannies, health-care aides, entertainers and nurses in countries in Southeast Asia, the Middle East. It was bad enough when male heads of households had to leave their families for years to get work, but now that it's the mothers that are leaving their families for long periods of time, the social costs are truly jarring. The Filipinos do what we must to survive and ensure our families will have access to the education they need to thrive.

Compared to how migrants are treated in other parts of the world, in Manitoba, I can say with deep appreciation that we are lucky here or, as Filipinos would say, blessed for being able to live, work and eventually gain citizenship here.

Manitoba has been a welcoming place where we could contribute to the economic, social, cultural and political fabric of this province and, in that way, Manitoba, too, is blessed to have us here.

I brought this resolution before the House today lifting up and examining the history of the Philippines and the contributions of Manitobans of Philippine descent because, at this juncture in Manitoba's history, we are very much part of the fabric of this province now. An interpretation of our struggles and resilience have led to recent migration to Manitoba since the 1950s in very large numbers and, as such, our Philippine history is even now being woven into the fabric of the story of this province.

In closing, I'd like to share some excerpts from quotes from several Filipino organizations in Manitoba regarding this resolution and the 500 years anniversary. From the Philippine Nurses Association of Manitoba: We appreciate this Legislature acknowledging the 500-year milestone in Philippine history and recognition given to Manitobans Philippine descent, especially those nurses and health-care workers who have migrated to Manitoba since the 1950s to serve the health needs of communities across the province.

From the Knights of Rizal: The Winnipeg chapter of the Knights of Rizal appreciate the opportunity that the 500 years commemoration displays in highlighting the history of the Philippines including the pivotal role that Dr. José P. Rizal, the national hero of the Philippines, played in inspiring the revolution against Spain. Through peaceful means and education, Dr. José P. Rizal taught us that knowledge brings freedom from exploitation, poverty and ignorance.

From the Philippine Heritage Council of Manitoba, they thank this Legislature's gesture of acceptance to Filipinos in Manitoba in recognizing 500 years commemoration of Philippine history.

From ANAK, a volunteer non-profit promoting Filipino culture to youth, they said: In acknowledging 500 years since Magellan landed among the islands that became collectively known as the Philippines, we, as ANAK Inc., are drawn to examine what it means to be part of the diaspora and settler-colonial spaces like Manitoba. Filipino-Canadian youth continue to actively seek an understanding of the parallels in the history of both our homeland and Canada. We look forward to a future with the solidarity we share with BIPOC communities is

inherent to our existence in Manitoba and all of our contributions to Canadian society are recognized.

From the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers: The quincentennial commemoration showcases the Philippines' rich history, with lessons that teach us about what is important in life today. We thank the Manitoba Legislature for providing the opportunity to share our living history which shapes our identity, gives us a chance to reshape social society, and reminds us that we are responsible for building a legacy for generations that follow us.

From Friends of Filipino Immigrants in Manitoba they said it's—in joining our beloved Philippines in celebrating 500 years of Christianity, may we live in unity with the rest of our brothers and sisters regardless of religion and belief, because in Christianity there is always humanity.

From the office of the Honourary Consul General, Ronaldo V. Opina: In Manitoba we have a Filipino community of almost 100,000, and Manitoba continues to be a destination that brings thousands of Filipinos every year. This milestone celebration highlights the magnanimity, compassion and humanity of Filipinos of the past whose legacy and virtues are carried on today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I still have more quotes coming in from BIBAK, a northern indigenous organization based in the Philippines here in Manitoba, and also from Pinays Manitoba, which is a Filipino women's group. But that's all I'll have to say for now.

Thank you very much for this time. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

An Honourable Member: On House business.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the member ran short on time, but I believe that she also wanted to move an amendment to her resolution this morning. I'm wondering if we could ask leave that she has the time to move that amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave by the House to allow the honourable member for Notre Dame (Ms. Marcelino) to put the amendment forward?
[Agreed]

Ms. Marcelino: I move, seconded by the member for Concordia,

THAT the resolution be amended

(a) *by deleting the title and replacing it with "Recognizing the year 2021 as the 500th Anniversary of the Philippines";*

(b) *by deleting "April 17, 2021" and the first whereas clause and replacing it with "January 1, 2021"; and*

(c) *by deleting the THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED clause and replacing it with the following:*

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the year 2021 as the 500th Anniversary of the Philippines to acknowledge the contributions of all Filipinos in Manitoba."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Notre Dame, seconded by the honourable member for Concordia—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Dispense.

I am satisfied that the amendment falls within the normal practices of the House representing—respecting the relevancy of the amendments in private members' business hour, and complies with the commonly referred to—the practices outlined in Bosch and Gagnon, House of Commons practice and procedures—procedures and practices protect—respecting amendments.

Is there any other speakers on this amendment?
No?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader—acting government House leader—oh, the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Resources.

Hon. Blaine Pedersen (Minister of Agriculture and Resource Development): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm just wondering, can we get a written copy of that amendment? I—not necessarily have a problem with it, but just so we actually know what it says?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay.

Mr. Pedersen: Thank you very much.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes. The Clerk was—I'll just give a few—about a minute and if anybody who has any other—wants to speak on this amendment?

* (11:40)

Are there any other speakers on the amendment?

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

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So now we'll—A question period up to 10 minutes will be held, and questions may be addressed with the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties; each independent member may ask one question; and no questions or answers shall exceed 45 seconds.

The first we're going to go to is the honourable member for Waverley.

Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley): Can the member opposite speak to her personal relationship to the Philippines?

Ms. Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Yes, sure.

I was born in the Philippines and I came to Canada when I was four years old. So it's definitely still a home country, but since I grew up here in Canada it's—you know, this is still also my home country here, too. So it's—that's the kind of identity that we grapple with as Filipino-Canadians.

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): Why is the member choosing to recognize the year 2021 as the 500th anniversary?

Ms. Marcelino: The year 2021 was a very, very significant watershed year for the history of the Philippines. It hearkened the arrival of Europeans to that region and it really changed the trajectory of the course of the lives of many people at that time.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): This is a wonderful resolution. We're looking forward to supporting it.

I'm just wondering if the member from Notre Dame has a specific celebration in mind come January 2021.

Ms. Marcelino: Right now, unfortunately, most of the celebrations have been cancelled. The only ones that I know of that still continue are art competitions

regarding this, so it's not like anything you have to do with other people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield)—oh, sorry.

The honourable member for The Maples.

Mr. Sandhu: Your resolution touches on some of the important—sorry, your resolution touches on the history of Filipino immigrants.

Can you please—could you please elaborate on this more?

Ms. Marcelino: I'm not really a historian, but from what I understand, Filipinos came to Manitoba starting in the 1950s. They first came as nurses and afterwards a lot of them came in the '60s and '70s through the garment industry. They were directly brought in for that type of work. After that, they were allowed to bring in their family members.

And then, in the '90s and until this date, the MPNP program—the Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program—really targeted a lot of skilled workers from the Philippines. And there's also the 'stregic' initiative—strategic initiative stream, and that—

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

Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière): I thank the member for bringing this forward.

I know the members in this Chamber are quite familiar—or to some degree, anyways—with Philippine Independence Day, when the country declared its independence from Spain in 1898. However, the country did continue to struggle with issues of sovereignty since then.

I'm wondering if the member—I know she did touch on a few things with regard to its historical background of the country of the Philippines.

Could the member maybe talk a little bit about the struggles and what, say, the Treaty of Manila meant for the Philippines when it was signed in 1946?

Ms. Marcelino: I'm sorry, I'm not familiar with that particular treaty.

Mr. Sandhu: Who did you consult with before bringing this forward?

Ms. Marcelino: Actually, it was the consul general of the Philippines in Canada. And his name is Consul General Orontes V. Castro.

He actually approached both me and the member for Waverley (Mr. Reyes) this past summer regarding our participation—or, celebrations for this in 2021. And then this past fall, he approached us to maybe do something different like this kind of recognition in—because there's not going to be any more celebrations in 2021.

In addition to that, I've reached out to the different community groups in—Filipino community groups in Manitoba, and I outlined the different groups in my speech.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Wondering if the member opposite can inform the House on the struggle for Filipino statehood.

And I just want to take this moment to acknowledge my appreciation for the Filipino members of our own family, who have brought a lot of fun to our family. And I could say so much more, but this is question time so I'll just leave it there.

If the member could inform the House on the struggle for Filipino statehood, I would be most grateful.

Thank you.

Ms. Marcelino: Again, I'm not a Philippine historian but, for sure, there were mga bayani [*heroes*], mga-national heroes—that we had, and they did contribute to the struggle and resistance in armed conflicts and—as well as in—through the writing, they raised the consciousness of many. And that's how they were able to eventually get independence from Spain.

There were a lot of wars that happened, and foreign occupation. And that really bogged, you know, the whole business of statehood, I think.

But, for now, this is a modern democracy—

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

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): Yes, I just want to commend my colleague, the member for Notre Dame, on bringing this resolution forward. It's an important acknowledgement. It's historic.

I'm grateful to be in a caucus alongside somebody who would take the time and effort to outline the reasons for bringing this forward today, and I would encourage all members to maybe do their own research instead of expecting, you know, Filipino members of our caucuses to be historians on all the information.

This resolution has certainly encouraged and inspired me to do some research of my own, so I just wanted to put words on the record commending our colleague and thanking her for this resolution.

Ms. Marcelino: You're very welcome, member for Union Station.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, next question.

Ms. Audrey Gordon (Southdale): Salamat po, thank you to the honourable member for Notre Dame for bringing forward this resolution.

Can you tell the House why this resolution is important for the community to recognize—just expound on that a little bit?

Thank you.

Ms. Marcelino: This commemoration is fraught with, you know, a lot of negativity with the legacy of colonialism. And it's important for community members—and especially, in my opinion, Filipino-Canadian youth—to be able to—with issues—history and understanding why your family had to leave. Those are really important parts of understanding that identity.

So, I think it's good when you raise sometimes uncomfortable topics in history, because you get to understand a little bit more about yourself and your family and your place in the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Question from the honourable member for The Maples.

* (11:50)

Mr. Sandhu: What are the—some of the contributions of Filipino-Manitobans to our province?

Ms. Marcelino: Well, I'd say basketball. That was one of the different groups that I forgot to mention was the Philippine Basketball Association. And then they also provided a quote in support of this resolution.

So there's everything from basketball to lots of singing that goes on, to all of our health-care workers—pretty much work in all the different hospitals and health centres and nursing stations across the province.

Filipinos are a part of manufacturing sectors here, and they also contribute to a lot of industry where there's skill shortages in different rural communities.

So we participate in the very fabric and—of Manitoba now in many aspects.

Mr. Micklefield: The member opposite speak to any other resolutions or initiatives taken by the Legislature to honour and recognize the Filipino community in our city, perhaps in our country or province? Wondering if the member had the opportunity to review some of those other initiatives celebrating the Filipino community and contribution.

Ms. Marcelino: For sure, for this particular 500 commemoration, there are some Toronto school boards that have passed similar resolutions, but I don't know of any other jurisdictions like at the level of the Legislature at this point, but I know that the consul general was working on it at that time.

In Manitoba, we are lucky because we do have Filipino representatives in the Legislature, and I know that my colleague across the way, the member for Waverley has, recently, I think in the last few years, passed the—passed a bill or a resolution highlighting Philippine independence. And that was a very, very welcome—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time and time for question period, has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Jon Reyes (Waverley): First of all, before I get into my words here is—I just want to let the member for Notre Dame (Ms. Marcelino) know that we do—we are in agreement, when we had spoken to the consul general of the Philippines in Toronto, that Toronto, Ontario, is not the centre of the universe; the mecca of Filipinos is here, right here in friendly Manitoba.

And I also have learned more about her, that she was born in the Philippines and that she actually spent some time in Toronto, I know, going to university, so I commend her for coming back here to Manitoba, her home province.

I would like to start off by first saying there is no place like home. Canada is my country, and Manitoba is my province. I've been to every province in this country, and I've met many people from coast to coast, and you can see the pride of each individual where they come from. I love to visit other places, and like many, I miss travelling when I could, when we all could.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our province is inhabited by many who came from different parts of the world, and many immigrants today still keep their ties to their motherlands. We know that this land is the original homeland of many First Nations. Eventually,

generation after generation, you would have European settlers of British, French, German, Dutch, Hungarian, Icelandic and Ukrainian descent, to name a few, come and make Manitoba their home.

Just over 60 years ago would mark the arrival of the first wave of Filipino immigrants to our province. Filipinos then and Filipinos now who have immigrated to Manitoba still have strong ties to their original homeland. Many still make their voyage to return back to the Philippines. Many still report—many still support their families back in the regions where they come from. We know the ties between our province and the Philippines has been strong throughout since the arrival of the first wave of immigrants. Many have contributed in the labour force, in business as well as in public service here in Manitoba.

And I am proud to have brought—I am proud that our government initiated the issuance of the proclamation by the Province of Manitoba on the quincennial jubilee—500th anniversary commemoration—of the Philippines in 2021, a wonderful piece of—document, which I've tabled and will send to the consul general of the Philippines in Toronto. I would personally like to thank the Minister for Sport, Culture and Heritage in doing so.

I also want to share to all members of the House that the consul general of the Republic of the Philippines, Consul General Orontes V. Castro, extended his sincere thanks to the government of Manitoba for initiating this proclamation and being the first province to do so.

As a Manitoban of Filipino heritage, I am very proud of our government in being proactive in recognizing that the year 2021 will mark a milestone in the collective history of the adherence to the Christian faith in the Republic of the Philippines and among Filipino 'disporia' who celebrate the 500th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in the Philippines.

So how did it all begin? Which of these Filipino immigrants first came to our province who as nurses, doctors, medical technologists and other professionals, which constituted the first wave of Filipino immigrants who arrived in Manitoba from 1959 to 1965? During those years, these were the occupations that our province needed to fill: services of professionals from these immigrants who had been living in the United States and those who came directly from the Philippines.

Fe Ryder was one of those first Filipino immigrant nurses who arrived in Manitoba in 1959 from St. Paul, Minnesota, and decided to stay in Winnipeg. Fast forward, over 60 years later, and we have had many Manitoba's Filipino community contribute to the nursing profession, including my mother-in-law, my aunts and through my wife's side of the family and my wife herself. Thank you for all you have done and what some of you continue to do to take care of the patients around our province, especially during this time.

Doctors were also recruited to come to Canada and, most notably, a fine distinguished gentleman, who I got to catch up at an Asian Heritage Month Community Leader Awards celebrations event, was Dr. Rolando Guzman and his lovely wife, Dr. Irene Guzman. They have been pillars of the Filipino community, having made Manitoba their home since 1961.

Dr. Rolando Guzman was a pathologist, and Dr. Irene Guzman a family doctor, my mother's former family doctor, like so many of—for those in the Filipino community during the early periods of Filipino settlers to Winnipeg. They organized many groups for teachers, nurses and garment workers, opening their homes to welcome the many Filipinos to our province. They were known as the father and mother of then the young immigrants. Many years later, Dr. Rolando Guzman would also be appointed as the Philippine Honourary Consul General.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke of garment workers, and I know that another wave of Filipino immigrants in the late '60s and in the '70s would go on to help Manitoba's economy through the garment industry. The path that many, including my father, Reynold Reyes, and my Uncle Henry took to better their lives in their newly adopted country of Canada, right here in Winnipeg. The TanJays, the Acme Beddings, the Nygards employed many of the first-generation Filipino-Canadians and our community; thanks to these companies for giving them the opportunity for employment and for coming to Canada.

Mr. Danny Sevilla, a family friend and my sister's godfather, still works to this day as a garment worker for Canada Goose, a very successful, globally recognized company and a Manitoba success story, gainfully employing many immigrants, including those from our Filipino community.

I mentioned a couple of professions that were—that where the Philippine community has contributed, who serve our province in different capacities. Our noticeable arrival during the '60s were teachers and under then, former Premier Duff Roblin. He made education a priority through the construction of new schools, libraries and other educational facilities to accommodate the needs of the increasing number of students.

Naturally, teachers from the Philippines immigrated to Manitoba to help fill the needs of teachers. Thank you to the former teachers, current teachers and educators at all levels involved for your contributions to the education system in our province.

We know family reunification is another key reason people immigrate and with respect to the Filipino community, many came in the '80s and '90s to join their families.

With the steady inflow of immigration from the Philippines, this community would start opening up small grocery stores so people can enjoy the taste of their former homeland and would also open up their own restaurants.

I remember the Fil-Craft grocery store on Notre Dame and Tawagin, which specialized in TV, video equipment sales. These were the small-business-owner pioneers of the Filipino community.

As the founder former president of the Manitoba Filipino Business Council and as a former small-business owner myself, I thank the Buenos, the Tawagins and all those who took a chance to go into private enterprise, create jobs back in the day be could—because it has inspired individuals in our community to go into business.

And when a community grows, like ours has, it contributes to the economy directly and indirectly. We see that Filipinos have—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. When this matter's before the House, the honourable member for Waverley (Mr. Reyes) will have two minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 26, 2020

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