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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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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, Hon.	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, Hon.	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, Hon.	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, April 22, 2021

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Doyle Piwniuk): O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as they may attend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only in which is in accordance with Thy will, that we 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, everyone.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

House Business

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): On House business, pursuant to rule 33(8), I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine). The title of the resolution is Calling Upon the Provincial Government to Support Women's Economic Recovery.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been announced by the Opposition House Leader that, pursuant to rule 33-8, I am announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Thursday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. Johns. The title of the resolution is Calling Upon the Provincial Government to Support Women's Economic Recovery.

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Ms. Fontaine: Will you call Bill 223, The Spirit Bear Day Act, for second reading.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been announced by the Opposition House Leader that—to call Bill 223, The

Spirit Bear Day Act, for debate on second reading. *[interjection]* Pardon me—it needs to be moved. Okay.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 223—The Spirit Bear Day Act

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member from Keewatinook, that Bill 223, The Spirit Bear Day Act, now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Smith: Bill 223, the spirit day act will proclaim May 10th of each year as spirit bay beer—Spirit Bear day. This bill would proclaim this and help educate all Manitobans on Jordan's Principle.

May 10th is an especially important day in the history of Jordan's Principle, it was—as it was the day the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal issued its first non-compliance order against the government—the Canadian government. May 10th is also recognized as Spirit Bear's birthday, a bear that has become symbolic of Jordan's Principle.

Formally recognizing May 10th as Spirit Bear day will help create awareness of Jordan's Principle and the challenges faced by First Nation children when accessing government services.

Bill 223 is supported by the family whose story inspired Jordan's Principle, as well as by many First Nations communities, as well as Cindy Blackstock. Spirit Bear day is already celebrated on May 10th by schools across our province.

I hope Bill 223 will receive the unanimous support of this Assembly, in recognition of this important day.

May 10th, as I said, is Spirit Bear day's—birthday. This is a symbolic bear that was given to Jordan River Anderson in the hospital when his family had to put him in care in order for them to get proper medical care for their child.

Jordan was born with complex needs and there was—he had to leave his community and, like I said, his family had to put him in care so that he could get the proper medical care that he needed. So Jordan River Anderson, at age five, unfortunately succumbed

to all of his medical needs, and never spent a day in the home of his family, which is unfortunate.

We know that schools across the province on May 10th come and they walk around the Manitoba Legislature with their Spirit Bear day—with their Spirit Bears in recognition of Jordan River Anderson.

In speaking with Jordan River Anderson's family and them bringing this forward and asking for Manitobans to recognize this day formally in honour of this little boy, in honour of, you know, the sacrifices the family—in order for all Manitoba—well, kids right across the country, actually, in all of Canada that live in First Nations, to get the proper medical support that they need. It was a—you know, something that, you know—of course we would bring this forward in honour of this little boy.

And we know that thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of kids have been able to get access to medical care through Jordan's Principle, but there is still a struggle in this province, in this country of Canada, for First Nation children to get the care that they so deserve.

So this would ensure that First Nation children receive the services and support, and that they can receive them right in their communities if they—if available—and wouldn't have to leave their communities to come to Winnipeg, or families wouldn't have to put their children in care in order to get proper medical care, which happened with Jordan River Anderson's family. They didn't want this young boy to go into care, but unfortunately, that was the only way that they knew that he would get the care that he needed.

So, as I said, Jordan was born with complex medical needs and he spent more than two years unnecessarily in hospitals while different levels of government disagreed over who paid for home care so that Jordan could actually stay in his home community and stay in his home and get the proper care that he needed.

Jordan died in the hospital at the age of five years old, like I said, never having spent a day in his family home. He was under the care of the Province in the CFS system.

Jordan's Principle aims to make First Nation children—to make sure First Nations children can access all public services in a way that is reflective of their distinct cultural needs, takes full account of the historical disadvantages linked to colonization and without experiencing any severe service denials,

delays or disruptions because they are First Nations or live in a First Nation.

* (10:10)

Payment disputes within and between federal and provincial governments over services for First Nations children are not uncommon. Jordan's Principle is the care—is that the care of First Nation—or that children's care comes first.

First Nations children are frequently left waiting for services they desperately need or are even denied these services that are available to every other child. This includes services in education. We know that education is underfunded in First Nations.

Health: we know that, you know, many children and adults have to leave their communities to come and access health care in the city. We know that child care is an issue, as well, in First Nation communities; recreation and, of course, culture and language.

And Jordan's Principle calls on the government of first contact to pay for the services and seek reimbursement later, so that the child does not tragically get caught in the middle of government red tape.

In a landmark ruling on January 26, 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ordered the federal government to immediately stop applying a limited and discriminatory definition of Jordan's Principle and to immediately take actions and measures to implement the full meaning and scope of the principle.

In November 2006, the caring society, which is headed by Cindy Blackstock, the Assembly of First Nations and interested parties, like the chiefs of Ontario and Nishnawbe Aski Nation filed motions stating that Canada has failed to comply with the tribunal ruling and remedial orders.

Three days of hearings on the non-compliance motions were held in March 2017. On May 26, 2017, the tribunal found that the Government of Canada has continued its pattern of contact—conduct and narrow focus with respect to Jordan's Principle, resulting in unnecessarily and unlawful bureaucratic delays, gaps and denial of essential public services to First Nations children.

The tribunal issued further non-compliance orders. In 2006, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society under the leadership of Dr. Cindy Blackstock, brought the issue to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. They spent years arguing their case against the government, exposing a long history of the neglectful treatment of First Nation communities.

Stay was—or Spirit Bear was created in 2008 and acts as a symbol for the 165,000 First Nations children impacted by the child welfare case at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. Spirit Bear day was inspired by Jordan River Anderson's favourite toy, a teddy bear. Spirit day—Spirit Bear has—brought to every tribunal hearing since its creation to represent all of the children affected by this case.

The Spirit Bear plan was developed, composed of five main points to hold Canadian parliamentary accountable to help end inequalities in public services for First Nations children, youth and families.

And Deputy Speaker, this day would really, you know, help educate Manitobans on the significance of Jordan's Principle and the significance, really, of ensuring that all children in Manitoba, regardless of where they live get the proper health care that they need, that families don't have to put their children in care in order to get their health-care needs met.

This is already a recognized day by schools in our province. Thousands of kids visit this very building, the Manitoba Legislature and walk around parading with their bears. And, you know, this would be a way for our government to recognize that day and join with these children who are learning about this very significant day.

So, I urge all members of this House to, you know, unanimously vote in favour of this bill. This is a non-partisan bill. It's to honour Jordan River Anderson, honour the family's sacrifices and ensure that Manitobans know about the impacts of health care in First Nations.

Miigwech, Deputy Speaker.

Questions

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

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): Could the member tell this House who they have consulted with in—on this legislation?

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): Miigwech for that question.

So, the family approached us, asked us to bring this forward in recognition of Jordan River Anderson and really to help educate Manitobans on the need for health care.

We also consulted with Cindy Blackstock, who is, you know, the one that has been leading the tribunal court cases, and she is also in favour of this, and many First Nations as well, who have been doing work around Jordan's Principle and ensuring that all First Nations children have access to the health care that they need in their communities without have to leave and come to the city, and also, you know, many community members who live in this city that are also accessing medical care through—

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

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I just want to take a moment to say miigwech to my sister colleague, the member for Point Douglas, for bringing forward Bill 223.

I know that this is the second time that she's brought Bill 223. It's an important bill, and I would like her to share with the House what Bill 223 would mean to the family of Jordan.

Mrs. Smith: I want to thank my colleague for that question.

As my colleague knows, Jordan River Anderson's sister Jerleen has been doing lots of work around this bill and really trying to honour her brother, but also honour the family. Their father is ill right now. He is on dialysis. He has a lot of skin conditions and, you know, his feet aren't doing well. And we'd really like to get this bill passed before, you know, he passes, so that he can see this monumental bill pass in our Legislature and really uplift and honour their family, but Jordan—

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): First of all, I want to say thank you to the member for Point Douglas for bringing this resolution forward. It's important. It's important for Jordan's family, it is important for the process of reconciliation within Manitoba, is important to raise 'awarening' and understanding.

What I would ask the member would—is this: What—at the provincial level, specifically—more should be done right now in terms of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba?

Mrs. Smith: I thank the member for that question.

And, of course, you know, we need to be doing more on health care in terms of supporting kids in their communities. And, you know, we see a lot of kids having to leave their communities to come to the city to get access to health care. We know that there's a shortage of nurses in this province, and many nurses, you know, come in and out of communities. And many of these communities aren't, you know, having nurses come in and out because there's a shortage of nurses in this province right now, as well as doctors.

So, you know, this Province could stop fighting about who's going to pay for the health care and worry about that later and ensure that every single child in our province—

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

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): I thank the member for the bill before us this morning.

As a child, myself, I had a congenital heart defect which I had to see doctors for, and I can't imagine the awfulness of being put off and having the experience that we're talking about this morning. So I'm grateful for this.

I'm wondering if the member please could unpack more of the rationale behind the bill and expand more of the reasons why, in laymen's terms, so that common people, who may not know the background that many of us in this room know, can understand what it is that is behind her—

* (10:20)

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

Mrs. Smith: I thank the member for that question and sharing a bit of his—their history, as well.

And, as I said in my opening remarks, it's really about honouring the life of Jordan River Anderson and helping to educate Manitobans on what Jordan's Principle is in this province. And about, you know, the inadequacies, inequities that are happening in First Nations around health care and children and really having to, you know, leave their communities and be put into the child-welfare system to get the child care that they need. This is about, you know, making sure that members of Manitoba understand—

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

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): To honour spirit day, I asked my colleague from Point Douglas—and again, I thank her for raising this very important issue—but to honour spirit day, how could this government reduce the number of Indigenous children in care, thereby improving their health and well-being?

Mrs. Smith: I thank my colleague for that question.

As I know my colleague lives in a First Nation and, you know, has probably seen the impacts of children having to be put in care to access the proper health care that they need, and this shouldn't be happening.

This was the case of Jordan River Anderson. We can do better. We need to do better, and kids should not have to be put into care to get the proper access to health care that they need. We need to start supporting families in their homes and giving them the proper supports that they need so that children can be staying in their homes.

As I said, Jordan River Anderson didn't spend a day in his home. He spent two years in the hospital, in the care of the Province, and ended up dying in there. And we shouldn't have that happening here—

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

Mr. Lagimodiere: Can the member opposite tell us a little more detail as to why the bear is a symbol for Jordan's Principle?

Mrs. Smith: I thank the member for that question.

As I had said in my opening statement, that Spirit Bear has really been recognized as the symbolic material bear of Jordan's Principle in this province.

Jordan River Anderson was given a bear in the hospital and Cindy Blackstock took that bear and has since taken it to every single court case in—that's ever happened around Jordan's Principle. And Manitoban children have come to our Manitoba Legislature with these bears in recognition of Jordan River Anderson and Jordan's Principle—

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

Ms. Fontaine: I'd like to ask the member for Point Douglas—well, I think it's important to put on the record that when you look at movements, Indigenous movements across the country from coast to coast to coast, often those movements have been started and led by Indigenous women.

And so I'd like the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) to share a little bit in recognition of Bill 223 and the fundamental role that Cindy Blackstock has had on this movement.

Mrs. Smith: I thank my colleague for that question.

Cindy Blackstock has really been leading the charge in terms of ensuring that First Nations children get the proper health care that they need in their communities without having to leave their communities. There has been many court cases where it's been ruled in favour of First Nation children but this government continues to, you know, not adhere to those rulings, and Cindy Blackstock has continually had to take them back to court.

She understands the, you know, the significance of making sure that children get the care that they need in their communities. And she's continually—

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

Mr. Micklefield: Please, could the member opposite highlight for this Chamber any experiences that she might have had with Jordan's Principle or the issues that it raises.

Mrs. Smith: I thank my colleague for that question.

I have a nephew who was born with 'arthrogynosis,' which is a debilitating, I guess, disease, so he hasn't ever been able to walk. He was born with some vertebrae missing. He doesn't have movement of his arms. Cognitively, he's there. His family's had to fight to get a wheelchair—a proper wheelchair—several times, proper support in their home so that he's not having to leave his home to get supports, as well, respite for their family. So extensive experience with our family dealing with getting supports for—

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

And time for question period has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Debate's opened.

Any speakers?

The honourable Minister for Indigenous and Northern Relations. Just—we'll just have to pause a moment here 'til the podium's clean.

Hon. Eileen Clarke (Minister of Indigenous and Northern Relations): I'd like to acknowledge the

member opposite for bringing this private member's bill forward.

Jordan River Anderson was a child from Norway House Cree Nation, as we've heard, who was born with multiple disabilities which required a very high degree of medical care. It's very sad that the federal and provincial governments of the day couldn't agree on which one of them was responsible for paying this young child's medical bills. As a result, the medical care Jordan needed was delayed and, in 2005, a five-year-old Jordan River Anderson passed away.

Jordan was a boy who spent his entire life in the hospital, and he never got that chance to go home because of this intergovernmental dispute. After this tragedy, governments re-examined the way these cases were handled. Jordan's Principle was established as a policy that would put providing care to children first and leaving the settling of jurisdictional disputes until later.

Jordan's birthday was on May 10th. He would have been 21 years old in just a few days. And that would be—appropriate date to recognize Jordan's life, and to remind ourselves once again of Jordan's Principle.

As the member for Agassiz, I stand here today very proudly to follow the late Stu Briese, who was, as a Progressive Conservative, the MLA that sponsored a resolution on June 5th of 2015 regarding Jordan's Principle that was seconded by the Liberal member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), and which received the unanimous support of all parties in this House.

As Minister in Indigenous and North Relations, I've discussed Jordan's Principle with First Nations, and I visited Norway House, and visited the spot where Jordan was buried, to pay my respects. This was in 2016, when I was first appointed as the minister for this department. I spent four days in Norway House. And one of the prime reasons for going to that community was in regards to Jordan River Anderson.

Now, you may wonder why going to a cemetery is important. It's important to me because I've spent the last 49 years beside my husband, a funeral director. He has literally met with hundreds of First Nations families that are burying their babies, their children, their teenagers, and in some cases adults; but these adults are children of someone.

So it's very significant that I see where Jordan was buried and that I understand the circumstances surrounding his death and that I met the people that were friends, and the people that were friends of his family.

I understand that frustration felt by the people from that community. I was very appreciative for former Chief Evans for taking four days to take me around his community to meet many families, not just in Jordan's Principle but MMIWG as well. It was a specific time in my life where I felt very honoured to have that privilege to meet with these people.

* (10:30)

It was also the time of York-boat races at Norway House, and that's a big celebration and it's a time of great joy; they have a lot of fun. But during that time they also have a parade, annually, in respect of Jordan Anderson, and that was a good time. They—the children, from very, very young up, right up to the elders, participated in this parade. They decorated wagons, they decorated bikes, they paraded through the community and it was a huge celebration in memory of Jordan. It was a respectful time and it was a sad time, but it was a time that I was proud to be there to spend with their families.

I've also traveled to many other First Nations communities in this province and I have met with their Jordan's Principle—the people who run the facilities sometimes in—within their health-care system; their building.

The one that I first visited was Ebb and Flow First Nations, which is very close to my home community. It was a good day to be there. There was many therapists there working with their children, many children with many different kinds of disabilities and other issues that are difficult to deal with—sometimes just for the parents or for the community. But I learned and I understood how they come into the community, sometimes one time a week or more, as required, and they really were very engaged with the children. The children were happy and they were not thinking or worrying about their illness. They were having a good time but they were also being—receiving healing care, loving care, and it was really good to see. Another great experience.

Another community that I visited pre-COVID was Pine Creek First Nation in the northern part of our province, up near Swan River. And I know that—MLA for Swan River is there frequently, as well. They were in the process of building a new facility for Jordan's Principle. And I talked to the director last night and

that facility's complete but they're also expanding on it. And I was really pleased to hear that they're expanding beyond that for the children. They are actually getting into recreation and other facilities and other efforts to make sure that the children are receiving the full care and the full life that they so deserve.

I'm also really happy that governments of today are doing a better job than they were in 2005. Manitoba's ministry of Health and Seniors Care has millions of dollars in unpaid patient transportation costs from the federal government at this time. However, the Manitoba government continues to provide all services to these patients that need them.

The federal government, the Province and First Nations engaged in tri-party discussions about 'tardens' principle. In January 2019, Manitoba's minister of Health and minister of Families wrote letters requesting the resumption of tri-party discussions but no meetings have occurred since that time.

We urge the federal government to return to the table and resume discussions with both the Province and First Nations. We've also increased consultations with Manitoba's Indigenous communities regarding health care and other services. During the course of the pandemic, we've worked together with Indigenous communities across Manitoba to keep people safe. This includes becoming the first province in Canada to collect race- and ethnic-based information to better understand how communities are impacted by the pandemic, like, differently than others.

It also includes expanded access to vaccines for First Nations people. As of yesterday, First Nations people over the age of 30 could book an appointment to reserve the vaccine.

Our government is a firm supporter of Jordan's Principle and a firm supporter of ensuring quality care for all Manitobans. Whether they live in the city, on the reserve or in the far north, we're working with the federal government and with Indigenous communities to improve services.

In fiscal 2020, nearly \$200 million was invested in Jordan's Principle cases within Manitoba.

Of course, we still have a lot of work to do. We've also seen Indigenous persons who faced discrimination from hospital workers when seeking medical care. This is not appropriate. This is not an example of a jurisdictional dispute, like Jordan's case was, but it's sad and it's a serious problem that unfairly reduces access to health care. This is a problem our health

system is addressing, but it's also a reminder that there's still other barriers to delivering fair and equitable access to health-care services.

We've made many improvements to increase access to health care and social services for Indigenous Manitobans. Manitoba has come a very long way since 2005, however, we recognize that we still have a lot more to do and we do realize the promise of delivering fair and equal access to health care and to other social services that needs to be available to every Manitoban.

Thank you, Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Any further speakers?

Hon. Rochelle Squires (Minister of Families): I'm pleased to rise today—[interjection]—thank you—I'm pleased to rise today to put a few words on the record about this legislation.

To begin, I want to thank my colleague, the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith), for bringing this idea and this bill forward.

Similar to this act that helps provide education and awareness of—on issues deeply important to all Canadians, I remember a few years back supporting a similar act brought forward by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) regarding murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls that has taught me, and hopefully many other Manitobans, especially other settlers like myself, about systemic racism facing Indigenous people in our country and our province.

The Spirit Bear initiative and the Spirit Bear plan is an important undertaking which seeks to bring to light and create awareness of Jordan's Principle and the rulings of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in 2016, '17, '19 and '20, and in the case of the late Jordan River Anderson and the principle bearing his name.

We all know the circumstances that led to the tragic death of this young individual, and our government accepts the definition of Jordan's Principle set out by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which we understand includes the principle of substantive equality. Our government is committed to putting the needs of children first so that services are not delayed.

That is why we instituted the interdepartmental Jordan's Principle working group led by my department, and includes Health, Education, training, Indigenous and Northern Relations, and Finance. This group co-ordinates interdepartmental requests on service navigation, as needed, to ensure timely

service delivery between provincial departments and branches.

The working group is reviewing policies and regulations related to service delivery to ensure that these are consistent with the full scope of Jordan's Principle. Our working group's terms of reference state that the goal is to determine of—areas of common interest and share information, including legal advice, among departments related to the current implementation of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba; to scope out concerns and questions about the future implementation of Jordan's Principle; and to determine what a renewed provincial position might be; also to make a recommendation to senior management on a renewed provincial position on Jordan's Principle; and prepare provincial documents and common responses to external stakeholders, where appropriate.

For reflection, Mr. Speaker, in Jordan's Principle decision, Canada was ordered to apply Jordan's Principle to all First Nations children under the local age of majority living on and off reserve; to apply Jordan's Principle based on the needs of children, not what is just typically available to other children; and to ensure that administrative procedures do not delay service provisions.

We know that in the case of Jordan, and undoubtedly many others, government got in the way of the proper delivery of services to our youth. And while the tribunal has called on the federal government to meet their responsibilities to deliver high-quality services to Indigenous youth on and off reserve, we know that in many cases this is still not a reality.

That is why, as work progresses across many provincial departments and with our federal partners, any Jordan's Principle-related issue is resolved as it emerges at the first point of contact, usually by front-line delivery staff. Provincial staff are available to Jordan's Principle co-ordinators and case managers to provide consultation on all aspects of service delivery in the province of Manitoba.

Too many children have fallen through the cracks of jurisdictional disputes and miscommunications, and our government is committed to ensuring that this no longer happens, be it with Jordan's Principle issues or new issues arising as we move into the new world of further devolution with the implementation of C-92, the federal act respecting Indigenous children, youth and families.

Spirit Bear, the subject of this legislation, supports thousands of Indigenous children across our

country impacted by the provisions of services, as well as thousands of young and adult Canadians who have committed to learning about the case and working to ensure that reconciliation and equality of service are provided to all children in this country.

Our government agrees with the intent of the principle that Spirit Bear represents, that, despite federal responsibility for provision of services to Indigenous children, we believe that jurisdictional disputes between governments should not get in the way of the provision of services to children, and that is why we have stepped up, as earlier mentioned. We also believe in a different approach to the provision of services to children, and that is why we have stepped up, as earlier mentioned.

* (10:40)

We also believe in a different approach to the provision of services to Indigenous Manitobans. That is why, in the Department of Families, we are continuing to invest in preventative support for at-risk families and youth, be it through the expansion of youth hubs, investments in the Mothering Project, the Indigenous doula program or the Granny's House initiative.

Overall, these initiatives are taking a different approach to the provision of services: programs that are designed with Indigenous partners, programs and services that will get better results because it is long past the time that we, as government, do better for Indigenous citizens and that is what this government is committed to doing.

Increased advocacy for the issue and for Jordan's Principle is vital in our quest for reconciliation, and that is why I am pleased to speak in favour of this bill today.

The Spirit Bear is all about increasing advocacy and awareness about the challenges faced by Indigenous people, specifically Indigenous children, in trying to receive the services that they have a constitutional right to receive from the federal government.

Increased advocacy, such as the annual Spirit Bear day proposed in this legislation, can only help raise awareness, not just at the government level but to the service delivery agencies and indeed, all Manitobans, of the need for constant, diligent work to ensure that Indigenous children on and off reserve receive the same quality of care that all children receive. That is their right.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I was pleased to support this legislation. I want to thank my colleague for—from Point Douglas for bringing this forward.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, first off, I want to say that I support very strongly this bill, which would provide for Spirit Bear day in Manitoba to be celebrated annually.

I thank the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) for bringing this bill forward.

I remember vividly, in the fall of 2005, reading the tragic story of Jordan River Anderson in an article by Trudy Lavalée in a pediatric journal. It was a shocking and deeply disturbing story of how Jordan River Anderson had died before he was ever able to go home because his going home was delayed because of arguments between federal and provincial governments over who would pay for items as small as a shower head.

The—I asked these questions in the Legislature then, a few days later, December the 8th. Why did this government fail to put Jordan's interests first? Why did this government let intergovernmental bickering replace sensible policy? Why did Jordan have to die before he was ever able to go home?

In my supplementary question I asked: Will the premier today, shortly before we break for Christmas and Hanukkah, make a clear commitment to following Jordan's Principle, that the child must always come first? Sadly, no commitment was made then.

Later, with Trudy Lavalée's help—she later worked with me in my office in the Manitoba Legislature—I introduced on May 20th, 2008, with Kevin Lamoureux, a bill to implement Jordan's Principle. Sadly, it was not supported by the government when it was debated at second reading in June, 2008. Sadly, the government of the day settled later that year for a solution which would—turned out to be not very effective.

I was pleased in May 20th—sorry, I was pleased then, subsequent to this on June 5th, 2015, to work with Stu Briese on a motion which he introduced to—and we got passed—to support Jordan's Principle. This time the motion received unanimous support.

I would like to salute the efforts of Cindy Blackstock and the First Nations caring society over the years to support and promote Jordan's Principle and to get it fully implemented. When the Harper government took away funding from the First Nations

caring society, I joined many other Manitobans to attend multiple fundraisers to help her continue, which she was able to do.

On August 2016, I was fortunate to be able to go to Norway House on a plane together with Cindy Blackstock and Spirit Bear. It was an incredible experience to be able to talk and work with her in our joint efforts to help achieve a full Jordan's Principle. We walked together in the parade in Norway House and then, at a ceremony after the parade, we all saluted and honoured Cindy Blackstock for efforts—for her efforts on behalf of First Nations children.

There have been many occasions where there have been opportunities to move forward with Jordan's Principle. There is substantial progress today, but we are still not where we need to be, either at a federal or a provincial level. I'm a strong supporter of this bill. I hope all in the Chamber will support this bill to have Spirit Bear day recognized formally. It is important to the children of our province that all know this story. And it's important to reconciliation, to a healthier, happier province in the future.

Thank you. Merci. Miigwech.

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support Bill 223, The Spirit Bear Day Act.

I will start by acknowledging that we are gathering on ancestral land, Treaty 1 territory, the traditional territory of the Anishinabe, the Cree, the Oji-Cree, Dakota, the Dene people, and on the homeland of the Métis nation.

I want to say I'm extremely disappointed 'todee'—today to see no speakers from the members opposite standing today to support this very important bill, especially after the comments they make in the House and in our standing committees where they say that short speeches or no speeches indicate a complete lack of support for a bill.

If this is truly their position, I would suggest at least one member would rise today and support The Spirit Bear Day Act. The failure to do so will show those on this side of the House, and all Manitobans, just where they stand with their support for Jordan's Principle. And I look forward to hearing what the member from Keewatinook has to say to support Bill 223.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel I need to start by educating those in the House with a brief synopsis of who Jordan was and why this bill and Jordan's Principle should be important to all Manitobans. The

story of Jordan Anderson should tear at the heartstrings of all Manitobans, all Canadians. It is truly tragic.

Born in October of 1999, Jordan was born with a rare musculoskeletal disease. Initially, he needed to be on a respirator. His family had to sign a voluntary placement agreement in order for him to receive treatments. At the age of three, he still had not been able to go home from hospital, having many medical problems; he couldn't walk, he couldn't talk.

When the Children's Hospital decided Jordan was ready to go home in 2001, a medical support family home was found close to the Children's Hospital. However, Jordan was never discharged. He became the subject of jurisdictional football between the provincial government and the federal government, who squabbled over who would be financially responsible. The bickering was trivial and included such frivolous points as to just who would be responsible for paying for a shower head.

Jordan was never allowed to go home. He was never allowed to know life outside a hospital. He never knew the love and support within his family and within his local community. All of our children need to feel they are important, loved and cared for. Although I am sure the staff at the Children's Hospital was very loving and caring, this was institutional care; it can never replace nor compare to the love and care and the cuddles that can be found in a home environment.

Sadly, at the age of four, in February of 2005 Jordan passed, never having been able to leave the hospital, never knowing what it felt like to be in a home environment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Jordan's Principle is the principle that children have the right to timely access to the health care and the psychosocial services they need, regardless of the jurisdictional disputes, and governments can argue over who will cover the costs afterwards.

Jordan's Principle is a very simple principle. It was passed unanimously in the House of Commons in December of 2007.

* (10:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many children in Manitoba who require special care and services. It saddened me in 2005 to hear of the tragic events that surrounded Jordan's short life. I was embarrassed as a Canadian to see that in 2005, at that point in time, in a

day and age in a country that has universal health care, we still do not respect life for the gift it is. And I was extremely disappointed to see an act needed to be passed to ensure all Manitobans and Canadians would have the compassion needed to allow someone access to quality health care in a timely manner.

I thought about my own children and wondered how I would have responded. As a parent, I understand how important it is to have your child with you. As a community leader, I understand how important it is for a community to be able to come together to support one of their own.

How would I respond if I was told my child or a child from my community could not return home because the governments of Manitoba and Canada were tied up in a jurisdictional dispute over who would be responsible for providing the services needed? Having your family with you is important for both physical and spiritual healing.

Jordan's Principle is about equality. It's about equality of access to services. We understand the medical needs of individuals cannot be generalized and would vary with acuity needs and need to be addressed on an individual basis, but compassion should dictate that jurisdictional debates can be undertaken after the patient is cared for. The provision of services for sustaining life should be readily available. It should never be based on ethnicity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when it comes to the provision of health care, all lives matter; your origin or ethnicity does not.

It needs to be placed on the record that it took the previous government more than two-and-a-half years to pass the legislation needed to support and uphold the rights of First Nations children. And it needs to be placed on the record again that Brian Sinclair passed away in an emergency waiting room in 2008 from a urinary tract infection while waiting 38 hours to be seen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we on this side of the House know access to health-care needs to be available for all. The priority of this government is to ensure that all Manitobans receive the services that they require in a timely manner when and where they need them.

Our government is a firm supporter of Jordan's Principle, which is a child-first principle. It ensures quality of care for all Manitobans, whether they live in a city, on a reserve or in the far north. Our government is committed to continue to work with First Nations leadership and the federal government to

develop a co-ordinated approach to implementing the full scope of Jordan's Principle in the province.

In 2015, the late PC MLA, Stu Briese, introduced a resolution calling on the Province to ensure that no child falls through the cracks because of jurisdictional disputes between the federal and provincial governments. The resolution by Stu Briese called on the provincial government to formally support Jordan's Principle while reaffirming the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The resolution was unanimously passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a teddy bear called Spirit Bear has become the symbol of Jordan's Principle. In Indigenous culture the bear is one of the seven sacred animals. It represents courage. The bear provides many lessons in the way it lives, but courage is the most important teaching it offers. Though gentle and inquisitive by nature, bears are extremely ferocious when challenged or in danger. This is exemplified by the sow when one of her cubs is in danger. A sow would sacrifice her own life to save her cub.

The bear teaches us to have the mental and moral strength to overcome our greatest enemy, our self. The fears that prevent us from living our true spirit as human beings is a great challenge, a challenge that must be met with the same vigour and intensity as a sow protecting her cubs. Living of the heart and living of the spirit is difficult but the bear's example shows us how to face any danger to achieve these goals.

Mr. Deputy Spirit–Deputy Speaker, the Spirit Bear was a legend that told of a time when the world was white with snow. Raven later made everything green. He decided that one-in-ten black bears would have white fur. The white bears would remind people of the time of the glaciers. Raven said these bears would live in a special place; they would live in the Great Bear Rainforest. Spirit Bear and Jordan's Principle are aligned through the children's book which tells of Spirit Bear's mom telling him about the human rights case in Ottawa, the Jordan's Principle case, and he travels far to stand up for First Nations kids' rights.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Spirit Bear calls on our governments. It calls on Canada to immediately comply with all rulings by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, ordering it to immediately cease its discriminatory funding of First Nations Child and Family Services.

The order further requires Canada to fully and properly implement Jordan's Principle. It calls on

Parliament to ask the Parliamentary Budget Officer to publicly cost out the shortfalls in all federally funded public services provided to First Nations children, youth and families, education, health, water, child care, et cetera, and propose solutions to fix it.

It calls on government to consult with First Nations to co-create a holistic Spirit Bear plan to end all of the inequalities, with dates and confirmed investments, in a short period of time, sensitive to children's best interests, development and distinct community needs.

It calls on government departments providing services to First Nations children and families to undergo a thorough and independent 360-degree evaluation to identify any ongoing discriminatory ideologies, policies or practices and address them. These—

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

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Concordia, on a point of order.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): You know, I think that we've heard nothing but support for this bill here this morning, you know. And despite what the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) wanted to imply, obviously every member stands with our sister from Point Douglas on this side of the House.

I'd simply like to ask leave that we call for the question here this morning and get this bill passed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just wanted to let the member from Concordia that it's not a point of order. But we can have—ask for leave by the House to ask for a vote.

Is it leave for the House to ask for a vote—for the question?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No. I hear a no.

The honourable member for—there—again, there's no point of order here. The honourable member for—we have the—everybody has opportunity to speak during the debate.

* * *

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): The rules provide that when any party wishes to select a bill there are mechanisms to do that. When an opposition party chooses to highlight a bill as a priority, there are

mechanisms to do that and we will respect those mechanisms.

We do support this bill. We do support Jordan's Principle. We do stand—and I want to recognize the speeches that have been made this morning. They have been absolutely superb, and I thank my colleagues, both ministers and the member for Selkirk for informative, thoughtful and well-put-together speeches.

I think any teacher who wished to talk with their students about Jordan's Principle could easily look at this morning's debate and find lots of relevant material to share with students. Anyone wondering what this thing is about, I think just by reading Hansard from what has been shared in the last hour could put—could learn many things that would give them a good groundwork on this issue.

So, we're committed to putting this principle into practice. In fact, we're working right now with Indigenous leadership and the federal government to develop a co-ordinated approach so that this is not just something we pay lip service to, but real children in real situations get real help in real time.

We recognize this is something that is in process, but it's a process that needs to improve, even as it already has improved. We are a firm supporter of Jordan's Principle. And I, too, want to remember it was the former member for Agassiz, Stu Briese, who sponsored a resolution regarding Jordan's Principle, and that received unanimous support of all parties in the House.

In 2008, Manitoba was the first province to sign a bilateral agreement with Canada to implement Jordan's Principle. Manitoba and Canada established the joint committee on the implementation of Jordan's Principle to—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. When this member—matter is before the House, the honourable member for Rossmere will have seven minutes remaining.

I'm stopping the debate for private members' bills and moving on to private members' resolutions.

*(11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 19—Creation of a Paid Sick Leave Program

Mr. Deputy Speaker: So now we'll move on to private members' resolution, and the resolution for the day is resolution 19, the creation of paid sick leave program.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey),

WHEREAS the COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the importance of people staying home when they are sick to protect their community; and

WHEREAS the safety, health, and welfare of all Manitoba workers should remain paramount and workers should not feel pressured to come to work when they are sick to avoid losing pay; and

WHEREAS provincial data shows that racialized groups such as Indigenous, Black and Filipino Manitobans make up a disproportionate number of COVID-19 cases; and

WHEREAS a paid sick leave program will empower Manitobans to stay home when they are sick and keep coworkers, customers, and clients safe; and

WHEREAS the NDP has repeatedly called on the Provincial Government to implement a provincial paid sick leave program; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has attempted to take credit for the federal paid sick leave program, while not investing a single dollar into this program itself; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has a track record of imposing unconstitutional wage freezes on Manitobans and not creating new work contracts with various sectors across the province; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government continues to interfere in the collective bargaining process with nurses, universities, school bus drivers, and Manitoba Hydro workers; and

WHEREAS over 58% of Canadian workers do not have access to paid sick leave; and

WHEREAS over 70% of Canadian workers who make \$25,000 or less a year do not have access to paid sick leave, many of whom are essential workers; and

WHEREAS no one should be forced to lose wages when they are sick and make the responsible decision to stay home and protect others; and

WHEREAS cases of COVID-19 have been detected in numerous workplaces and Manitobans want a government that supports their health and well-being.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to create a paid sick leave program to support Manitobans to stay home when they feel unwell without fear of losing much-needed wages.

Motion presented.

Mr. Moses: I'm really pleased to be speaking and bringing forward this resolution today.

I think it is extremely needed in our climate and in our—in this atmosphere that we're in where we're all experiencing high cases of COVID, a rise in case count day after day, and where we are hopeful to see the light at the end of the tunnel at the end of this pandemic. But it's in—all of our responsibilities as members in the Legislative Assembly and all of our responsibilities as Manitobans to take every step we can to ensure that ourselves and our communities stay safe.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

This resolution, encouraging the government to ensure that leave is paid for—that there is paid sick leave for individuals, is a strong step, a strong positive step for all the workers in Manitoba that we should take not only because it's the right thing to do but because it's fiscally responsible, it's going to ensure that people have proper health-care coverage, that we keep our communities safe.

And let me say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, you know, recently I was in a conversation with a resident who is a single mom, and we talked about her experiences during the pandemic and how having reduced wages—reduced at-work hours at her employer—impacted her income for her and her daughter, and what it meant in their lives.

And we spoke about, you know, her daughter at school, who is in K-to-12 and we spoke about the challenges that she has to—for her rent and what the reduced wage—reduced work hours that she experienced during the pandemic, has—it affected on her health, her mental health and the lives of her daughter.

And after that conversation, I thought about how we, in our role, can help her. And, you know, paid sick leave is one of the first things that came to mind. In her job, when she is making that choice to go to work every day and as her daughter goes to school, it's obvious that she needs to work to help to support herself and her family financially.

But if she gets sick, if she is unwell, and as we know, we are asked by our health experts to stay home when we feel unwell, what choice does she really have? Does she choose to stay home and lose wages and struggle, really struggle with affording rent at month's end or affording food on her kitchen table?

Or maybe it means that she can't provide the right supplies for her daughter at school. Is that the choice that she has to make in Manitoba, in Winnipeg, just because she feels unwell and she's trying to do the right thing?

Or does she make the choice to continue to work so she has that—the finances and the income to support her family and continue to go to work, even though she shouldn't, because she feels unwell? Does she make that choice and put the health and safety of her co-workers at risk or other members of her community, or perhaps risking the health and safety of the people and the teachers in her daughter's classroom? That's how this virus spreads. That's how it transmits around our communities.

And having paid sick leave would be massively impactful on this woman's life, where she could make the right choice by staying home when she's feeling unwell so that she can actually do the right thing that our health experts are urging all Manitobans to stay home when they feel unwell.

Now, we know that Manitobans, like this woman, have helped to build our province, that they deserve to live in a province that values their work, that honours the time off when they're feeling unwell. Manitobans give so much to our society.

And when it comes to taking time off due to the illness, they should be paid and supported through that time. It's in all of our best interests. The self—the safety, the health and the welfare of all Manitobans are at stake here. We know that this pandemic relies on all of us doing our part.

But when workers feel the pressure to go to work to avoid losing pay, it's an unrealistic expectation on them. Unpaid protective leave that was created by this government is simply just the very, very, very bare minimum. When you don't get paid but you're allowed to leave work, you're incentivizing employees to stay at work because they're going to get paid. And that's why paid sick leave is so important.

You know, we've seen this in other jurisdictions where they're looking at and bringing in paid sick leave programs that is enhancing the quality of life and they're reducing the spread of this virus. We see that in other jurisdictions they're actually being advised by research, by scientists such as the Ontario COVID-19 Science Advisory Table that is calling to ensure that there are sick—paid sick days, that there's paid sick leave, including for—sick leave for quarantining, if you're feeling unwell, also if you're going

to get your vaccine. And that is critically important so that we can get through this pandemic with as many Manitobans as possible.

You know, with COVID-19, we're in a world where people should stay home even with mild symptoms. And that's not going to happen if we don't enact a paid sick leave program.

The government of Manitoba has only brought in the very bare minimum when it comes to allowing unpaid job-protected leave. It doesn't go far enough to address the issues when it comes to pay. And we know this supports workers as I've describe from my conversation with—as I described with the conversation with that woman earlier.

But we also know that this is something that employers want as well. Many businesses that I've spoken with are eagerly looking forward to the day when they can put the COVID-19 pandemic behind them. When restaurants can be full again, when concert venues can have their seats full, when we can resume the life that we've enjoyed. That doesn't happen unless we get through this pandemic. And one of the best ways to get through this pandemic is to reduce the community spread by ensuring that people stay home when they're feeling unwell. And paid sick leave does just that.

We know also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that workplaces—employees in workplaces will also benefit from that. Knowing that anyone in their workplace can stay home when they feel unwell makes you feel like when you're going to work, you're going to be surrounded by other people who are feeling healthy, and the risk of transmitting the virus will be lower in workplaces.

Again, this makes our workplaces safer, and this allows people to go to work and know that they're going to be safe because they have the protection and they have the ability to stay home when they're feeling unwell.

* (11:10)

And again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know this makes sense not only from a health perspective but from that financial perspective as well. When people have the income to stay home when they're feeling sick, unwell and needing to quarantine or needing to get a vaccine, they're protected financially and don't have to make it a difficult decision.

We also know that it's going to have long-term positive benefits on our provincial finances, as this

will lead to less cases of hospitalization due to COVID-19.

And this makes sense on so many levels: on a health perspective, on a financial perspective, both individually and from a provincial level financially it makes sense. And also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's simply just the right thing to do.

Paid sick leave was needed before the pandemic. It's been highlighted as a major issue during the pandemic and where we are today, there is no better way and nothing better that we should do—be doing than bringing in a paid sick leave program for all workers in Manitoba.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. And questions will be—may be answered addressed in the following sequence: the first question may be asked by a member from another party, and subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties, each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I'd like to ask the member opposite, Manitobans and all Canadians are covered through the federal sick leave program, so why would he propose that we double up on a support program that already exists?

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): We know that the provincial government here in Manitoba hasn't put any money into any sick leave programs here in our province and, you know, we know that Manitobans deserve better. They deserve a government that's working for them. This is something that Manitobans have asked for, that they know would be important to them and we know that it'll help our business communities and it'll help keep our communities safer. And that's why we should be doing it.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): I thank the member from St. Vital for bringing in this very important idea of paid sick leave and we heard the member from Borderland talk about the federal program.

Now is—my understanding is that federal program is really just a short-term solution that's never intended to be a fully paid sick leave program going forward. It's just in place during the pandemic.

So do you think it's important that we have something in place going forward for normal flus, for

future pandemics, so that workers can be safe in their workplaces?

Mr. Moses: I thank the member from Flin Flin for that, in question.

Yes, we should have a program that's long term that will allow workers to have paid sick leave in our province. This pandemic is highlighting an issue that existed before and by it being brought to the forefront, it should mean and should signal to all of us the serious around this issue. And we should be looking at a long-term paid sick leave program in Manitoba.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the member for St. Vital for bringing this resolution forward, and we will be supporting it, but I'm hoping the member could share with us why the NDP did not support us when we fought to push the government to create a provincial sick leave program for Manitobans back in the fall.

Mr. Moses: Well, I thank the member for the comments and the question. And I will say that, you know, what we're looking at doing today is to calling this government to act. We're calling this government to act on this very important issue.

It's been very obvious over the first, second and now third wave of this pandemic, that there's community transmission that's caused many times by workers who are going to work and—when they should be staying home. Paid sick leave goes to address that issue specifically.

I'm looking forward to many members signing onto this bill because it's something that Manitobans want, and it's something that's going to keep us all safe, and it's the right thing to do for Manitobans.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I thank the member for St. Vital for bringing this resolution forward. There's a lot of interest in this across the country, not only in BC but Ontario. And, of course, our own Premier (Mr. Pallister) has lobbied in regards to this with the federal government.

Being as the federal budget earlier this week mentioned it, there'll be significant rework of the EI and the benefits associated. I'm wondering if the member is on board to work with the federal government to make sure that all of Canada benefits from this?

Mr. Moses: You know, I thank the member for the question. It's very insightful to look up and, you know, be interested in what's happening around in other

jurisdictions because it's important to see those perspectives.

And I think that, you know, it's important that we look at ensuring that paid sick leave is available for as many people as possible. But it's also good to have a proactive approach and lead with our own provincial government. And so I urge the provincial government, through this resolution, to be a leader and put forward paid sick leave programs for workers in Manitoba.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): I thank the member for bringing forward this resolution. I'll be the first to admit I'm not intimately aware of all the details of the BC budget on Tuesday, but the member has said that this is the right thing to do, that it's the fiscally responsible thing to do, and something that any good government would do.

I'm wondering if the member can point out in the BC—the NDP BC government—where they have introduced a similar paid sick leave program that I could look to for a template.

Mr. Moses: Well, you know, I thank the member for the question very much. I'll allow the member to, you know, kind of do his own research when it comes to other jurisdictions. So I'll encourage him to do that on his own time instead of the brief few seconds I have to answer his response.

But I will say that it—the reasons it's happening in other jurisdictions is because it's such a popular program. It's something that is effective, in terms of financially, and it's something that keeps our communities healthier, right. And that is critically important right now during the third wave that we're experiencing of COVID-19.

Mr. Andrew Smith (Lagimodière): I, again, thank the member for introducing his resolution here. But just curious why members from the NDP caucus opposed our advocacy for a federal sick leave program when it was their own party's cousins in British Columbia that were one of the first governments to advocate alongside our government?

Mr. Moses: I thank the member for the question.

You know, it's—I'm very happy that it seems that the member is on board and supporting the paid sick leave. And his comments sound like he's in favour of it, so I hope that he does support this resolution.

In terms of the program, you know, it's disappointing to see that the—that what the provincial government brought in earlier was supported with no actual provincial dollars. And that's the disappointing

part about what this Pallister government has done. And so we're urging the Pallister government to put some money behind it so that it's sure that it's actually fully funded and it's supported to ensure that Manitobans have an actual paid sick leave in our province.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Are there any further questions?

Mr. Lindsey: You know, we've seen some of the PC caucus talk about the wonderful thing that their government did when they supported something that the federal government was fully funding. And that's the usual story we see with this bunch is support something as long as it doesn't cost them anything.

So I'll ask the member: Why do you think it's important that this Province, in particular, supports the working people in this province and shows, through introduction of a fully funded paid sick leave program going forward, recognizing that the federal program is just a temporary measure?

* (11:20)

Mr. Moses: Thank you so much for that question. It's critically important.

Like I said, the COVID-19 pandemic has only highlighted the issues around staying home when you feel unwell. But it goes so much further beyond that. We know that a growing income inequality around our country and around the globe is pervasive, and one of the ways to go about solving that is to ensure that people who work in 'precarious' work, but work in part-time work, have the ability to stay home and get paid so that they're not spreading a virus or anything throughout our communities to keep everyone safe.

That should happen now during the pandemic and into the future to ensure that we don't have these issues again. So we solve a problem not just temporarily; we can solve it—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Are there any further questions?

Mr. Lindsey: So you talked a little bit about what's happening here. So could you tell us really who's most likely to be impacted by needing a paid sick day? Is it the folks that work in an office somewhere that can work from home, or is it more likely to be people that are working—I don't know—in a meat-packing plant or some of the grocery stores, the lower wage type jobs that—where they can't work from home. Who's the

group most likely to be impacted by the shortage of wages?

Mr. Moses: Thank you so much for the question.

It's very clear that the people who will most likely be impacted are the ones who work in low-wage jobs in the grocery-store-type jobs, the factory-type jobs, because they are often feeling the most pressure and most pull to work when they might feel unwell. So this would not only go about helping their individual lives, but it would help to even out that balance between the financial strain and the health concerns that they might be having.

It's also many of the racialized communities and the marginalized people in our province who are the most at risk of these issues, and so this would go to solving some of their problems, both now in the short term when we really need it—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The member's time has expired.

Time for question period has expired.

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): We—the floor is now open for debate.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I thank you for the opportunity to put a few words on the record and reflect on this resolution and the work that our government has done. I think what's happening here is—this resolution really is an opportunity to, again, as I said, reflect on what we've done. I think, you know, mission accomplished, as far as protecting workers and providing paid sick leave during this historic and, I think, devastating and disruptive and chaotic time of COVID, so I'll just put that out there right away.

But there was mention of grocery workers and our truck drivers and folks that work in different sectors and different vocations, and so, to that end, Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to say that I think, really, we're talking about, in this resolution, about jobs and about health and income security and things like that. And so these are incredibly important topics and for our government have really been at the forefront, really, since we came into office, you know, beginning with better care closer to home and putting more money back on the kitchen table.

But I think these areas of focus—job security and job creation, economic growth, and protecting people's health—has really been drawn into focus in light of the times we live in now. And just the other

evening I was reading a—as I said, these are historic times—I was reading a copy of The Winnipeg Evening Tribune from the 1918 or 1919—the time of the Spanish flu, and struck me how many of the headlines then were similar in many respects to the ones we are reading today.

And so we can be encouraged that if we stay with it and continue to follow the fundamentals, that we'll get through this time and get through this period. And we know that Manitobans are stronger and more resilient than anything that this pandemic has thrown at us.

So to that end, I also just want to express my thanks for our nurses and doctors; our police; fire fighters and truckers; our grocery workers and many others working on the front lines right now who, again, for them, health and safety and their job security is important. There's a lot of insecurity out there and it's important that we be attuned to that, and so that's what we've been doing. So I just want to thank them for their work, for going above and beyond in serving their communities, and for being our everyday heroes. You know, they're always essential, but more so today, perhaps. And maybe we're a little more aware of them today, and the essential nature of the work they do. So my thanks to them.

And my encouragement, as well, to all Manitobans and constituents to continue to follow the fundamentals as we look at—there's talk about a third wave. And we're seeing some concerning increases in our numbers. And, of course, we're not out of this—out of the woods yet. So we've got to stay with it.

So, to that end, I want to encourage the constituents of Borderland to continue to heed the advice of Dr. Brent Roussin and public health officials and stay with it; follow the fundamentals, stay home as much as possible, and we'll get through this.

And I want to thank, as well, the efforts of Dr. Brent Roussin and the public health team that he leads, as well as Dr. Joss Reimer and the team she leads, the vaccination implementation task force. We're encouraged that, as the vaccines come at a slightly more more quick—in a more quick manner, perhaps, than in previous weeks, and as we continue to ramp up our vaccination effort, that we see the light at the end of the tunnel, and continue to protect the health and well-being of Manitobans.

So as far as jobs, you know, I think members will recall that, in March of last year, we introduced the

public health emergency leave, so—which provides unpaid job protection to workers who are required to take time off due to COVID. And I'd note that this leave aligns with the federal benefits available to Canadians who are sick or must self-isolate due to COVID-19. Even with the federal program, current public health emergency leave will still leave job protection to Manitobans—or, still provide job protection to Manitobans, and no legislative changes would be required.

And it's important to know that today, more broadly, Manitoba's current approach to sick days is consistent with most other jurisdictions. So, it doesn't require employers to provide any paid sick days but it requires employers to provide job protected unpaid leave for various reasons related to COVID-19. So, I think that's important as we're talking about job security and protecting the health, as well as the incomes of Manitobans, that this was an important step that our government took last year—last spring. And there's many, many, many other things we've done since, but I just wanted to put that out there as an important note.

I'd note, as well, that our Premier (Mr. Pallister) was a national—is a national leader on this front, in the sense that he called for—and our government called for—a paid sick leave program to help those affected by COVID. So if you need to get a COVID test, if you need to take time off work for that, if a member of your family tests positive for COVID, if you test positive for COVID and need to self-isolate—we know that in Manitoba we have pretty stringent rules around quarantine and isolation and travel requirements, as well, so these are all things that are in place to protect Manitobans and slow the spread.

So we need to make sure that, again, as far as protecting incomes when Manitobans are not able to work because a family member may have tested positive and is required to isolate, or they may be required to go for a test, that they can have the peace of knowing that their job is still there for them and that this—they will be paid for having to self-isolate.

* (11:30)

So I'm proud of the fact that our Premier was right out on—in front on this issue, on nationally urging the federal government to take action on this front and I'm pleased to welcome the federal government's support and also would note that the premiers of Yukon and BC were—joined forces with our Premier—with

the Premier in advocating for the type of national program that was passed by the federal government in September.

So this is the kind of cross-party collaboration that's needed to help move Manitoba forward in the right direction, in the fight against COVID-19. It's important that we all be focused on, again, protecting jobs and protecting the health of Manitobans and that's what we're doing as a government.

And, you know, I think we can be proud of the fact that our Premier, again, as I said, was out—in front on this issue and led the call, the national call for a paid sick leave program during COVID. And he was backed by the premiers of BC and Yukon. So it's important to reflect on that.

And there's many other things that we've done on—in terms of protecting jobs and incomes. I think of the Risk Recognition Program, a incredibly popular program, much-needed program, and again, goes back to recognizing the essential work that so many of our everyday heroes do: the grocery workers, personal-care-home workers, the—so many in public-facing front-line jobs.

And I would note that 80,000 Manitobans received around roughly \$1,500 in benefits through that program.

And so, again, you know, they're on the front lines in this time of risk, risk to their health and well-being, as well as—and that plays into the uncertainty in the economy more broadly and in some of the uncertainty in the job market.

So, I think the Risk Recognition Program was just one of the things we've done as a government, as well, to continue to backstop the incomes of Manitobans and protect their health and well-being.

So, there's more things that I could reflect on but, again, just wanted to note that our Premier was out on front, led the national call and was successful in advocating at the federal level for a COVID paid sick leave program.

With that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): You know, when I was a kid, there was a game that was called Balderdash, and I suspect the member from Borderland might be very good at that game.

We've heard a lot of things where he talks about his Premier leading, but his Premier didn't lead by doing anything. His Premier led by ensuring that

somebody else paid, somebody else did something. That's not leadership.

Workers in Manitoba deserve so much better. We know that they're guaranteed to have a job to come back to, but the member from Borderland clearly doesn't understand people that are working minimum wage jobs, not getting full 80 hours a week, that are struggling on a good day to make ends meet, that if they have to stay home when they're sick—while it's nice that they'll have a job to come back to—but in the meantime they'll lose their house, won't be able to feed their kids, because they can't afford to stay home when they're sick.

And that's the whole crux of this matter is being able to afford to stay home to protect not just yourself and your family, but to protect your co-workers and your community.

So, again the member from Borderland talks about the federal program, which is a temporary program at best. The Premier (Mr. Pallister) and his caucus shouldn't be actually afraid to lead. They shouldn't be afraid to show the rest of the provinces how to do the right thing, which would be to implement a paid sick leave program today. Don't wait for somebody else to do it. Don't always be the tail. Try and be the head of the dog.

An Honourable Member: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Point of Order

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): On a point of order.

The member for Rossmere, on a point of order.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): On Thursday, April 15th, the member from Point Douglas directly quoted from two pieces of correspondence in her motion for Bill 224. When I raised a point of order asking her to table the documents she quoted from, the Speaker agreed with my point of order and ruled that since the member did quote from the letters, she should table the letters she had quoted.

However, upon requesting the tabled documents from journals branch, I discovered the member did not table both letters, and that only one of the two letters was tabled, even though both letters were directly quoted before I raised the issue.

I quote the member from Hansard. Quote: Bryce Koch—I hope I say the last name right—who is a harm reduction nurse here in Manitoba, wrote me a letter in

support of this legislation. And the member goes on from there. End quote.

I note, for the House, the member did table that letter, and I'm grateful. However, later in her speech and before I raised the issue, the member stated—and here's my second quote: Another group that has written to me in support of this bill is the Westman Families of Addicts. And then the member went on. End quote.

It's regarding that second letter I raise this point of order today. And I ask the Speaker to request the member table the second letter from Westman Families of Addicts that she quoted from, and offer the House an explanation for not meeting the Speaker's initial request. I think members would be interested to see that letter, and I would be grateful if that could be tabled.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Deputy Speaker.

I believe that the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) has tabled the letter that was in question. And I would just mention that the member for—that just got up and spoke—[interjection]—Rossmere, thank you—I think is attempting to waste time in respect of our private member's resolution.

We, as the member knows, have very limited time to discuss resolutions that are important to Manitobans here, particularly in the midst of a global pandemic. And the member for Rossmere is attempting to waste time. The member for Point Douglas has already done so.

Miigwech.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Regarding the point of order raised, the member did raise the matter last week and the Speaker did rule on it at the time. Raising it again does not appear to be a—raising it again does appear to be a reflection on the Chair, which is not allowed. And I would caution the member on that.

Also, the member is referring—referencing an issue from last Thursday in this House. The Hansard for that has been available since last Monday, so the member could have done this—done his research and raised this earlier this week.

On pages 636 and 637 of the third edition of House of Commons Procedure and Practice, this is addressed, and I quote here: Members may raise—may rise on points of orders at virtually any time in the proceedings, providing that the point of order is raised

and concisely argued as soon as the irregularity occurs. Points of order respecting procedure must be raised promptly and before the question has passed to a stage at which the objection would be out of place. End quote.

For these reasons, the member for Rossmere (Mr. Micklefield) does not have a point of order. The member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) is welcome to table another document if she wishes to, but she is not obligated to do so.

* * *

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): We will now carry on with debate.

Mr. Lindsey: I suspect the member from St. Johns was onto something: that they didn't like the fact that I was calling out some of the comments that really were empty, at best, that—things that this government has talked about but failed to lead on, so I'll carry on.

And, you know, the member from Borderland quoted extensively from the speaking points that he's been given to quote from so that he doesn't have to worry about having independent thought on the matter. But, you know, he talked about leaving more money on the kitchen table. Clearly, he has no concept, again, of low-wage workers. They have no money on their kitchen table.

And by not having paid sick leave, it means that they have to decide whether to put food on the kitchen table or stay home when they're sick. And that's not a decision that any one of us should have to make for our children and our families.

* (11:40)

And, again, we talk a little bit about better care—closer to home is what he brought up—one of the strong selling points of his government. Clearly, he's never been to northern Manitoba because not only isn't there better care closer to home, in many cases now there's no care close to home, thanks to this government, thanks to this Premier (Mr. Pallister), thanks to his ideological drive to underspend and save money because he always wants to put money over people.

And particularly working people he has great disdain for; people in the North he has great disdain for. We know that he has great disdain for Indigenous people, the way he talks and treats those folks.

So he has the opportunity now to say, you know what, the NDP is right, I need to stand up in support of working people in this province, we need to have

paid sick leave. It's the right thing to do and it's the right thing for our communities.

You know, I worked for a living once upon a time before I had this job, and one of the glaring things that came up—and I think it was SARS maybe at the time—was my employer said, if you're sick stay home. My question to my employer was, if I'm sick and staying home are you paying me? And the answer was, well, no, you've got a sick leave program that will kick in after you're off work for five days and pay you for two of them. So my response was, well, then I'm coming to work because I can't afford to miss five days' pay and wait for a cheque to come in the mail somewhere down the road for two or three of those days.

Clearly, the members opposite don't understand working Manitobans. They clearly don't understand what it's like to have to worry about where your next meal is coming from. I guess some of them were born with a proverbial silver spoon, but maybe they need to take the spoon out and get out in the province and actually talk to low-wage workers. Talk to people that are working in a hog plant and find out why they go to work when they're not feeling well. Don't just take my word for it, don't take members on this side's word for it, go and do your own research to find out how abysmal your government's support has been for working people.

The best places that have some kind of paid sick leave are unionized workplaces, and yet since 2016 when this government first got elected, every year there's been another attack on working people. Every single year since they've been elected they've brought in legislation to attack the very groups that are best able to support working people in this province because they have such great disdain for working people.

The MFL is—has asked for 10 days paid sick leave. In my mind, I think it should be at least 14 because if you're supposed to stay home and self-isolate for 14 days, then you should get paid for that 14 days.

I know I've talked to health-care workers in the North that took time off from work to drive to another community—some cases it was more than one day because it's an eight-hour drive one—correction. They took that time off from their own sense of duty and sense of protecting the people they were caring for and their families, to go and get a vaccine because we couldn't get it in the North, again, because of the failures of this government. Their vaccine rollout plan in the North was such a disaster and continues to be.

But those working people, those heroes that we like to call them, have also gone for years without a wage increase because that's how this government and these PC caucus members thank front-line health-care workers and other workers in this province.

They make great speeches. The member from Borderland just made a great—oh, we want to thank all the front-line health-care workers. Well, you want to thank them? Pay them. Allow them to properly negotiate collective agreements. Get out of the way and quit interfering in constitutionally protected collective bargaining.

And that's exactly what every member of that PC caucus has done. They jumped right into the middle of collective bargaining and interfered every day since they introduced bill 28, which has proven to be unconstitutional.

So today we have the opportunity for them to do the right thing, but I'd be willing to take bets—and I'm not a betting man—but I'd be willing to take bets that they're not going to support this resolution. They're either going to talk it out or vote against it. They're certainly not going to implement it because that would show true leadership, and that's not what this bunch is about.

They're about just saving money, giving tax cuts. Meanwhile, health care's starving, workers are starving, and this government doesn't lead for those people, doesn't lead for working people in this province.

Every member that speaks about this resolution, that doesn't let it pass today, should be ashamed of themselves, should be ashamed to face their constituents and say, we stood in the way of paid sick leave for you—because some of them actually have working people in their constituencies. They should be ashamed to face them and say, we didn't support this.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I appreciate the chance to put a few words on the record in regards—excuse me—in regards to this resolution.

I'm disappointed, frankly, that the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Lindsey) took what was really a non-partisan issue, one that we're all working towards, I think, at various levels, and tried to make it into a partisan issue, tried to make it into an income-related issue.

When you're dealing with something like a pandemic—and really, that's what's driving this particular resolution—it crosses all areas because it's a community disease. Whether or not you're a low-income worker—and certainly they're at greater risk in some particular roles—or whether you're one that works in an office, whether it—if you're working remotely or whether you're working in person in that office, there is still an element of this disease that we need to try and manage and deal with. And so I think it's very important that we pay attention to this as a community disease, as any pandemic is.

Now, I mentioned in my question-period question that there's a lot going on across Canada related to this. In particular, we saw some leadership from our Premier (Mr. Pallister) in regards to this. And we saw his words joined by Premier Horgan of BC, who had a budget this week. And it wasn't included in their budget, but—so I reached out to a former colleague who is still involved with politics in BC to find out what was going on in BC, and her response was that they are still very interested in this and are pushing the federal government in regards to this and continue to want to follow up on that.

And, of course, as has been mentioned, there's been recommendations in Ontario, there's action and recommendations coming out of Quebec and, I believe, one of the Maritime provinces as well.

And with—as with many other things, when you want something done nationally, you need to build a consensus across all of the provinces. And this would seem like something that, given the timing and opportunity, something that can be moved that way with so much support, obviously, there across the province. We have temporary measures that are there now that would be a good indication of the level of interest.

* (11:50)

And I do know that the federal budget has a couple of significant moves in regards to the EI area, which would be the logical place to have this kind of a change incorporated, that is going to have a very significant impact not only on the program in the future but probably on the rates that the workers and the employers all share in that.

So there's going to be a very significant amount of interest in that moving forward. So I would think that this actually provides us with an excellent opportunity to continue to have a discussion at a national level and in the provinces, as well, and see if we can't do what it—what would amount to the right

thing, not only just for ourselves but all across this great country.

We've certainly seen Manitoba show leadership on this, and we have also seen the federal government in the past show leadership in a number of areas and in particular with their temporary programs. So I think that that is something that we should continue to work towards.

Now, as I said, all workers are impacted by this, so I think it is something that isn't just an income-related thing, though certainly I understand the issue of low-income workers being under more pressure. This—I think the Liberal members are probably going to mention the fact that 50 per cent of Manitobans are only \$200 away from being out of money and bankruptcy and starting to be impacted.

And that's also something that's very much in our mind when we talk about putting more dollars on the kitchen table. And, of course, there's different ways to do that. I mean, you can help people save their money by reducing their costs, which many of our tax cuts have certainly had an impact on. We've moved a number of people off the tax rolls by indexing and improving personal deductions, something that the previous government never moved on even though many, many people called for it over the years and our government has done.

And that does help in particular low-income folks to have more money left at the end of the month on their table, and what purpose they choose to do, whether it becomes food on the table or other things, that's their discretion on that, and we certainly trust Manitobans to make the right choices moving forward.

Now, we've introduced a number of programs—and the member from Borderland mentioned a significant number of them—and other provinces have a mix of programs as well. We've certainly seen, you know, a number of initiatives that have been very well received, including incentives to get people back in the workplace and incentives for the employers.

I think all of these have turned out to be very successful programs; some have had greater use than others. It's always difficult to predict when you design a program whether, you know, it'll have huge uptake or moderate uptake, but you try and deal with the problem as you see it.

There are—lots of diversity out there in the workplace, and also a lot of diversities amongst smaller

companies. And that's really what drives an awful lot of what goes on in Manitoba.

I've certainly heard from a number of small businesses that Bridge Grant 1 and 2, in particular, are—have been very valuable in—to them keeping their hopes alive and their doors open, where possible, depending on the nature of their business.

And we're beginning to move towards the end. I think we're all hoping that vaccines will continue to roll out, as they have been, and that the percentage of the population will rise to that level.

But we're no doubt going to have long-term impacts on the business, not only in terms of recovery for businesses but also the impact on the average Manitoban and what they can and can't do.

I think some of—we see some of that in terms of interest and people wanting to find—get outdoors as quickly as they can. We're hoping for good weather but we've also had huge interest in campsites, whether they be the provincial government campsites or private campsites.

I have a number of those in my constituency who have said they've never seen the numbers and the interest that is there this year and certainly are feeling like they would like to do more to help meet that need, but you can't change your plans in the middle of something like this; they have to work within the limitations that they're given.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to take on this. I know we could go on at considerable length on the different programs that we have put in place here in Manitoba, whether it's restart or the access to personal protection equipment, help making businesses—helping businesses have better access to that, but all of these programs were our government trying to help Manitobans bridge the stress that has put in place by natural phenomenon, a pandemic, that is really, and I'll repeat this, a community disease, one that spreads in the community that everyone is vulnerable to in some form.

Certainly, there are sectors that are more vulnerable; there's no question about that. In particular, the homeless community has a—clearly had some issues, and I know that there's a move to do something with the vaccination in that area to help reduce that pressure moving forward.

So thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity. I appreciate that. I don't view this as a partisan issue. I do view this as an issue that should

actually go—move beyond the province of Manitoba. I see this as an excellent opportunity to do that. I think that a quick reaction here in Manitoba might not necessarily help build the consensus that we need across this country, and I know that there is support in many other provinces; clearly you can see that. I think this is a chance to take advantage of this opportunity moving forward.

So thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to speak. Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): With only three minutes left here for debate, I'll keep my remarks very short because we want to see this resolution pass today.

It is without a doubt that every single one of us MLAs have heard from our constituents who have struggled with the question of should I go to work if I'm feeling sick. These common thoughts are often, I can't afford the pay deduction in my paycheque, or I won't be able to afford child care for my children next week if I don't go to work today, just as examples.

Mr. Speaker, the reasons are endless, and it is exactly why we need to create a paid sick leave program for Manitobans. This is also why it is so confusing that the NDP didn't support this initiative back in the fall. The NDP had a chance to support paid sick leave and chose not to. In fact, they worked against it, and the member said even in his introduction of this resolution that if we could have used—that we could have used this earlier.

So why didn't they support us urging the Province to create a sick leave program several months back when we fought for it?

So, Mr. Speaker, I strongly believe this is our duty, as elected officials, to do what is in our power to protect Manitobans, and we need to make it so people can afford to stay home when sick.

So, again, I'd like to thank the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) for bringing this forward and urge the government to support this important resolution.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): It's always a pleasure to participate in the democratic process. I do know that the member indicated—member for St. Vital indicated that it was important to look at other jurisdictions, so in the interim I did look at the British Columbia budget of his NDP brothers and sisters launched on Tuesday, and they do not, in fact, bring in paid sick leave that is being advocated for today.

So I find that of extreme interest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is the right thing, the fiscally responsible thing, the medically right thing to do, as the member has impassionately pleaded with us. We don't see their brothers and sisters in the British Columbia government following a similar path being put forward.

So I'm just curious, you know, if the member even reached out to his brothers and sisters on the west coast to find out perhaps their thinking as to why they didn't support a provincial paid sick leave program, and perhaps if he had, he would have found out that they're more interested in building that national consensus, Mr. Deputy Speaker, national consensus for a national program.

I think Manitobans and Canadians aren't looking for a hodgepodge, Whac-A-Mole-type approach when it comes to a sick leave program that will protect employees both today and tomorrow going forward.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): When this matter is again before the House, the member for McPhillips will have eight minutes remaining—nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 p.m., this House is recessed and stands recessed until 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, April 22, 2021

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Resolutions	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS		Res. 19—Creation of a Paid Sick Leave Program	
Second Readings—Public Bills		Moses	2636
Bill 223—The Spirit Bear Day Act		Questions	
B. Smith	2625	Guenter	2638
Questions		Moses	2638
Lagimodiere	2627	Lindsey	2638
B. Smith	2627	Lamoureux	2638
Fontaine	2627	Wishart	2638
Gerrard	2627	Martin	2639
Micklefield	2628	A. Smith	2639
Bushie	2628		
Debate		Debate	
Clarke	2629	Guenter	2640
Squires	2631	Lindsey	2641
Gerrard	2632	Wishart	2644
Lagimodiere	2633	Lamoureux	2646
Micklefield	2635	Martin	2646

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