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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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(Hansard)

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTomARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	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, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	PC
KINew, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
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	Wolseley	NDP
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PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REDHEAD, Eric	Thompson	NDP
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
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SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
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TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
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WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Kirkfield Park	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Acting Government House Leader): I would like—on House business?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On House business.

Mrs. Guillemard: I would like to have consideration of Bill 213 for second reading, The Animal Care Amendment Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been announced by the honourable Minister for Mental Health and Community Wellness that this morning we will call Bill 213, for second reading, The Animal Care Amendment Act.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 213—The Animal Care Amendment Act

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): I move, seconded by the member from Brandon East, that Bill 213 be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Fort Whyte, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), that Bill 213, The Animal Care Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Khan: It is an honour to stand today and bring forward my first bill in this great Legislative Assembly.

This bill will take concrete steps to further the animal rights and protections throughout our province. I bring this bill forward as our temperatures fall and the cold makes its way into our province for the foreseeable next six months.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for most animals, specifically for dogs, this is a time of excitement, with fresh snow on the ground ready to jump and run around in and enjoy all around the neighbourhood and dog parks. However, this season can also be a time of distress.

Just like the middle of our hot Manitoba summers, our animals are vulnerable to extreme temperatures. If you are like me, then often a two-minute trip to the grocery store turns into an hour. This can create very dangerous situations if the animal is left in the car.

This bill works to protect against that increasing and—this bill works to protect against that and increases accountability, so pet owners will do the right thing and make sure their animals are not left without the protection they need to stay well in cold or in heat.

Some people think this bill is not an important bill, but I would beg to differ and I think most Manitobans, if not all Manitobans, would agree this bill is very important.

If you've ever had a pet, ever loved a pet with your whole heart, you know why this bill is important. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you can hear the dogs barking

outside now, they're excited about this bill. They want this bill passed.

If anyone needs convincing of this bill, just go outside and speak to one of the dogs, or one of the dog owners. My son is here today with his adorable dog—we have two dogs, Charlie and Bernie. Bernie is not allowed here, he is a giant, and so we just brought Charlie today, but just go ask him.

Or you can ask any of my colleagues, the member for Dawson Trail (Mr. Lagassé), and Bosco, Copper and Shady; the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) and his Chilly Dog; the member from Riel and her baby Zoe, or zo-zo; and the newly adorable father, the member from Radisson, and he just got a puppy and I don't even know what the puppy's name is.

I have seen many members opposite walking with their dogs, and the love in their eyes for their animal is paramount. My son was also very excited—this was my first bill—and we have candid conversations like I brought up numerous times in House. And he goes to me, Dad, this was great. Dad, now this means no one can be mean to their dog or cat. Now no one can leave their dog and cat in the car. That's just not right, Dad, people shouldn't do that.

If a nine-year-old gets it, I hope everyone in this House gets it and we will pass this bill today. A companion animal's not just a pet, it's a best friend; it's a family member; it's a companion for life.

Good day or bad day, your companion will love you. Rich or poor, they're always with you, and it doesn't care about your political leanings. Whether you're Liberal, NDP or PC, your companion animal will love you forever. They're affectionate, they're loving, their intelligent, they're energetic, but they don't have a voice of their own. We need to step up and protect them where we can.

Let's be honest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, pets are a lot easier to get along with humans, and I think that's why most of us love them more than other humans.

I love taking my dog for walks with my son in Fort Whyte. I love seeing other people walk their dogs in Linden Ridge and Whyte Ridge, and often we bump into them and I start up random conversations.

It builds community, it builds connections, it builds love for one another and respect for one another, and that's what we're working towards. I also really love when I see cats on leashes. For some reason that just brings an instant smile to my face.

The eyes of a loving animal, the cuddle of a newborn puppy or the meow of a kitten should be enough for us to want to protect them always. This bill further goes on protecting our animals and gives them rights and protections they deserve across the entire province.

This bill is about establishing limits—firm limits—and placing financial penalty for putting animals in harm's way. This bill is looking to amend the dated Animal Care Act, to prohibit leaving a companion animal, such as a dog or cat, in an unattended vehicle, if the temperature of the vehicle is dangerously hot or cold, above 22° or below negative 10°.

This bill would also look to build and expand the current RPO, Responsible Pet Ownership By-law, by the City of Winnipeg. We are not reinventing the wheel, we are simply adding to it. This bill accomplishes many more things, and I'll try to highlight four of them quickly.

This bill, provincially, fills gaps. The current temperature for companion animals left in unattended vehicles is only enforced within Winnipeg, not the rest of the province. This bill covers that.

Number two, it provides a province-wide, uniformed, informed approach. Just like temperature control stated above, this bill goes on further to clarify by which means an officer can enter a locked vehicle, what the steps are once they do. So, this removes all sorts of confusion that may arise from the situation.

* (10:10)

I've heard first hand from many people that they have seen many animals left in cars and it's very hot outside with no temperature control and they're not sure what to do. This bill further expands on that.

(3) This bill expands on the amount of people who can enforce the act. Currently, the RPO—Responsible Pet Ownership By-law—falls under the City of Winnipeg and animal control officers, ACOs, which is now—which can now attend these temperature calls through 311. They do not enforce The Animal Care Act, as previously, and were not able to answer these calls successfully as welfare fell under APOs, animal protection officers.

The Winnipeg Humane Society employs the APOs, could previously attend these calls under The Animal Care Act. However, they would have to wait until the animal is in distress before they can respond. Now, no one—everyone knows that if a car—animal is left in a car that's 25° or above, you don't want or have

to or should wait until that animal is distressed before you can act. This bill covers that. Now, both APOs and ACOs can make that call immediately without the animal being in distress.

To be clear, the RPO is enforced within Winnipeg, and outside of Winnipeg The Animal Care Act would have to take over and take care of these issues.

Currently, there are only a few APOs external in Winnipeg that are paid under contract work and under the CVO, the veterinary officer, leading to long response times and the animal—when the animal's already in distress, because there's only a few of them that work as contractors outside the city of Winnipeg.

This new legislation proposes to expand the definition of who or what an officer is so that they may intervene in the situation of extreme temperatures, as outlined by this bill. Officers will now include conservation officers, a person appointed or designated under The Municipal Act or the city of Winnipeg charter to enforce municipal offences, provincial park officers and any other person or class designated in the regulations.

This will allow for more officers, more APOs to respond and react quicker to help get these animals out of harm's way. On top of that, these officers will now be able to create a tickable—ticketable offence. People will now think twice before they leave their pet in a car.

Currently, there is not enough officers to simply enforce and respond to these situations. With only two or three vehicles to cover the entire city and only a handful of APOs outside the city, we need more. That's why this bill covers the expansion of what it means to be an officer.

Sadly, police and first responders are often the ones that are responding to these calls, taking them off of their duties to protect, police or respond to fires. Not only—along with that, the cost associated with bringing out a firetruck or police.

The simple logic of having more officers to enforce this legislation makes sense. Data supplied by Manitoba Agriculture states that leaving an animal in a vehicle is consistently in the top three most common reasons to call Animal Care from 2014 to 2020.

(4) Accountability for offenders. This bill, once passed, this will be a provincial offence. People who have committed provincial offences are often required to disclose this as part as a good character search.

People, again, will think twice now if they are held accountable for their actions. This bill takes one step further to protecting pets in—across all of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is not a partisan issue. I hope we can all agree that the health and welfare of animals is very important. It is very frustrating to see pets left—and animals—in extreme temperatures, and I hope that this bill will pass unanimously today. I know we don't always agree on things across the Chamber and there's constant heckling back and forth, but I'm truly hopeful that this will unanimously pass today.

I want to take this opportunity to thank a few people in the viewing gallery—oh, there they are back there: Jessica Miller, the CEO of Winnipeg Humane Society, for working with me on this; Brittany Semeniuk, from animal affairs and consultation at Winnipeg Humane Society; Leland Gordon, the general manager—there he is—for the City of Winnipeg animal services and community services; Corey Wilson, the executive director for the Manitoba Veterinary Association; and our local—I can't see him if he's here or not, he's here somewhere—our local, born-and-raised pet advocate, pet lover and animal champion which today is more important than being a two-time Grey Cup champion, pet lover Brady Oliveira is up here somewhere or is supposed to attend today, who also helped me with this. *[interjection]* He's with the dogs? He's with the dogs. Taking care of the dogs.

I want to thank everyone for attending today and I look forward to debating this and moving forward unanimously.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Well, I don't remember ever hearing dogs bark as we're in here, but it's a memorable moment. So, everyone watch yourselves as you enter the Chamber; we don't want one of those animals to bound in here.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay, a question period of under—of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the sponsoring member by any member in the following sequence: first question to be asked by a member from another party; this is to be followed by a rotation between the parties. Each independent member can ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is open for questions.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm going to put two questions in here: (1) Why are the dogs not in

here? We've heard them; I think we all want them in the gallery; (2) Deputy Speaker, could the member share with us if he has any information in respect of how many dogs or cats are left in Manitoba vehicles and have perished because of said?

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): I want to thank the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) for that question.

I agree, we should've had the dogs in here today. I asked for it; I pushed for it, but they didn't let them in the building. *[interjection]* Rightly, yes. Are we allowed to do that? I think we are. It would've been great to have them in here, and they're all very well behaved.

But there will be—there are dogs from the Winnipeg Humane Society, there is a dog I believe from the City of Winnipeg up for adoption today; and we will be taking pictures in the front. And my son is here, and he's really excited to meet everyone, so—his dog, Charlie.

So, also, to answer the second part of the question quickly, in 2015 there was 223 cases; '16, 247; 307; 368; and 386. So, every year it keeps going up and up, from failure to provide an animal with reasonable protection from heat and cold cases. So it's gone up every year—

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

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): Thank you very much to my colleague for—sorry, for introducing this legislation.

I know the colleague introduced some of his guests, but if the colleague can share whom he consulted with in terms of drafting this legislation so we can have it on the record and have an understanding of that background.

Mr. Khan: I want to thank the member for McPhillips for this great question.

As I mentioned in my preamble that there was a lot of consultation done on this. Again, with Winnipeg Humane Society, the City of Winnipeg, Chief Veterinary Officer and my son, and Brady Oliveira, who is a huge pet advocate.

And just a lot of other pet owners. I went around and talked to a lot of people about this, and was it important. And they said, oh, we already thought it was done, and I said, well, it's being done in the city; it's not being done throughout the province.

And I was amazed at how willing people were to work on this. They've—really shows you how much people love their animals. And I want to thank the work and the—even emails and phone calls last night at 11:30 at night, and email at 1:00 a.m. this morning from the people I consulted with.

So, thank you very much.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the member for Fort Whyte for bringing forward this legislation and those who have joined us here in the gallery. I think it brings so much joy here in the Legislature, at a time where we really need some good here in the Legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And a question for the member is: Has he had the opportunity to speak with or consult with community patrol groups to see if there's a role that they can play, whether it's in this legislation or protecting cats and dogs in extreme weather in vehicles?

Mr. Khan: I want to thank the member for Tyndall Park for that actually great question.

To be completely honest with you, no I have not; I hadn't thought of that yet. I think that's a great idea, and I think that's something that, for sure, I will look forward to doing, hopefully again, once this bill passes today.

I think that's something—a great idea, to reach out to community organizations throughout the province of Manitoba and let them know, now, this is the new law going forward, this is the new bill going forward, legislation—which is really all about education.

I don't think people know that, and people don't know who can enforce this. That was the big thing, and with this bill now being changed as the enforcement opportunity is so much larger. It doesn't just rely on a handful of APOs or, you know, the City of Winnipeg to handle this; it is much larger now.

So, I want to thank the member for Tyndall Park for that great question and suggestion.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I thank the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) for bringing this bill forward.

* (10:20)

I'm wondering if—two questions: Does this act cover service animals? And secondly, I just want to make sure I get this right: Who let the dogs out?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Wow.

Mr. Khan: I want to thank the member from Borderland for that—both of those really important, important questions.

For the first one, for service animals: yes, this does cover service animals—not only service animals, companion animals. And the definition of companion animal is quite large in that, so it does cover a wide range of animals but service animals for sure.

And as for who let the dogs out, I don't know. I was trying to google it quickly, but I don't know who actually let the dogs out. But if it's up to the—Mr. Deputy Speaker, maybe we can let the dogs in.

MLA Fontaine: So, in respect of my first question, I did just speak with our sergeant-in-arms. He has no issue with the dogs coming into the gallery. So, I just want to let folks know that. I don't know if people want to bring their dogs in the gallery, but our Sergeant-at-Arms is fine with it. *[interjection]* And also, the Deputy Speaker also has to approve it, as well.

An Honourable Member: No pressure.

MLA Fontaine: No pressure.

But—and then I will just ask my question, Deputy Speaker: What changes, if any, will be made to the government's instructions to members of the public on what to do if they find or witness a pet in a hot car?

Mr. Khan: I want to thank the member again for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) for that and thank you for asking if we can let the pets into the viewing gallery—animals—and I think my son would take that as a hard yes to bring all the pets in here.

To answer the question, if I understood it correctly, what government instructions will be laid forward on this.

So, there is a process currently for offenders of this legislation going forward. So, if there is an animal spotted in a car over 22° or below 10°C, it is written in the bill today on how they can respond, how they can enter and how they can deal with that situation, whether the APO would advise them to act on it immediately, given that we are increasing what an officer means in this bill now; would they stay with the animal, how would they respond. So, that—

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

Mr. Martin: To my colleague, often we look in the legislation for jurisdictions that may have similar

legislation that we can either emulate or improve upon.

I wonder if the member can speak to that?

Mr. Khan: I want to thank the member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin) for that question.

And in my research and consultation, I found that Manitoba would be the first province to have a set temperature limit—actual, concrete; if it's at 22° or below 10, this is when we can, you know, intervene on behalf of the safety of these animals in the car.

And we would be the pioneers of this, we would be the trendsetters. Everyone else is kind of vague in that and I think that ambiguity or that vagueness leads to unfortunate animals in distress in these vehicles, where the City of Winnipeg led the way by saying -10° to 22° we—you have the right to intervene, we should intervene and now we're expanding that throughout the province.

So, I'm excited to pass this and hopefully other provinces will follow suit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Turn my mic on—his time's expired but he sat down.

Any other questions? Okay. Sorry, was there a question coming? We have time. *[interjection]* No? Okay.

So, I just want to respond to what I think are repeated requests for dogs to be allowed in. There is actually a precedent for this. It did happen in the past that dogs, animal—service animals or dogs were permitted in the gallery.

So, the question's come forward. It actually is at my discretion. So, I'm going to say let's let the dogs in the gallery, how about it?

I will add this proviso: There's to be no participation from the gallery and if it gets out of hand, owners, please use discretion. We do have a serious job to do, but hey, it's Christmas and why not have a little fun. So, that's just for the next 35 minutes, until 11 o'clock.

And it's been quite a couple of weeks. We've had Bomber jerseys and now dogs. I—let's get on with the rest of the morning.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The debate is now—the floor is now open for debate, and I'm going to recognize the honourable member for St. Johns.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): So, what's the date today? Tuesday, November 29th, 2022.

The Conservatives have finally brought forward a bill that I think has a really good feeling, makes us feel good in the Chamber, that I would submit to the House that we can all agree on.

I actually would thank the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) for bringing forward this bill. Obviously, as an avid dog-lover and animal-rights activist, I think that this is a good bill.

Obviously, this bill brings in line, provincially, with what the City of Winnipeg has done just this past summer. Before I talk about what the City has done in respect to their new bylaws that went into effect July 1st, I want to just acknowledge some of the folks that the member for Fort Whyte has invited into the House today.

I do want to acknowledge Leland Gordon, who is the general manager for Winnipeg animal services. I've had the pleasure of working with him and knowing him since I got elected in 2016, and I am a regular at the Winnipeg animal services. I often will take their dogs out for doggy dates, and for several years I took their dog—a couple of their dogs home during the Christmas holidays.

That, of course, stopped during COVID, but I understand that they're going to start that again this season, and so I will be taking a dog home for the Christmas holidays. It's just an opportunity for—you know, over the holidays to get dogs out of the shelters so that they can have a little bit of time to kind of just relax, get out of those shelters and be with the other dogs, and just have a good time over the Christmas holidays.

Also, the doggy dates—I think it's a really good opportunity just to get dogs out of the shelter, even if it's for a couple of hours, to give them a good day, and also just for folks to know that there's these dogs that are available for adoption.

So, I want to acknowledge the good work that Leland does, and all of his staff there. They are all phenomenal, they do phenomenal work, they love the animals, they're good at their jobs. And so, I want to lift them up today.

I want to acknowledge Jessica Miller from the Humane Society. As I have said many, many times in this House, my own beloved Chilly Dog is from the Humane Society. We adopted him when he was, I think, eight weeks old, nine weeks old.

And as I've shared in this House, Chilly Dog is my first-ever dog, and we are absolutely obsessed with him. The Humane Society does phenomenal work. They have engaged in national and provincial campaigns in respect of ending the live horse transportation, slaughter, pigs; like all kinds of campaigns, the Humane Society is there.

Even in respect of some of the bills that have passed in this House, particularly I would suggest ag gag bills, I know that there was some movement on there, and from there as well. So, I want to acknowledge the work that they do.

I have a special acknowledgement for Brittany Semeniuk because I just absolutely love her. I think she is phenomenal; the work that she does is amazing. She is on the front lines of so many issues, but she is on the front lines right now of—again, once again—ending the live transportation of horses.

And I've had many opportunities to sit down with Brittany and to talk about ending this really inhumane practice of shipping off live horses to Japan. And I'm sure most folks in the Chamber will remember a couple of years ago, you know, about—I think it was like maybe 40 horses that sat in a February at like -40°.

They sat on the tarmac of the Winnipeg airport for hours waiting to be, you know, loaded up into these planes and then transported to Japan, standing up for like, God knows how many hours. And whether or not they get food or water—we don't know.

* (10:30)

So, I want to acknowledge Brittany. Brittany's partner and husband is Jonas, Dr. Jonas Watson, who is a vet here in Manitoba. Phenomenal work. They were just recently in Mexico. Jonas was recently up North, in the far North, doing work in respect of dog and—spay and neutering mobile clinics. *[interjection]* Aw, there we go.

And so, I want to acknowledge Brady Oliver *[phonetic]*—

Some Honourable Members: Oliveira.

MLA Fontaine: Oliveira, thank you, my colleagues are correcting me. I don't think we've had an opportunity to meet, but I do follow you on social media and I lift up all of the work that you all do as well. Very important work.

And I lift up all of the folks in this Chamber, but I think that it's a testament to the network of folks in

Manitoba who do animal welfare, who do animal rescue, who are on the front lines of animal rescue. Yesterday in the—in room 200, we had our diamond jubilee queen awards that were given out, and three of my recipients work on—in animal welfare.

And Katie Powell is one of them, with save the dog network; I think that Katie is just a phenomenal, like, determined, amazing Manitoban who goes into communities, will—sets up mobile spay and neuter clinics, rescues animals, has animals, you know, shipped in from different northern and rural communities; rehabs them, gets them ready, gets them adopted.

Russ and Maureen, who are St. Johns constituents, are with—do phenomenal work as well. In fact, they just had a mama who was from Red Sucker Lake who they just—she just gave birth, and I'm going to be seeing the pups hopefully this weekend.

So, Manitoba has—as I have said many, many times, it sits very uniquely across Canada. We do have an overpopulation of dogs, particularly in northern and rural communities. And there's a wide range of reasons that we do have those. The fundamental reason is that many northern and rural communities don't have access to vets; there's not veterinary care to get their pets spay and neutered.

And so, we do have a significant amount of dogs that are rescued and then shipped off to different provinces for adoption. And again, we have phenomenal Manitobans that put themselves on the line every single day, who have little to no support from any level of government to do that work. Often that work is done with—through donations, and through their own personal means.

I have spoken to so many animal rescuers who have mortgaged their house, re-mortgaged their house and then re-mortgaged their house again to pay for vet bills or whatever costs that they have. And yet, that is a commitment to animal welfare here in Manitoba.

My hope is that, one day, we're going to have an infrastructure in Manitoba that partners with the federal government, that does that work, that takes that load off of those that are on the front lines. That does those mobile spay and neuter clinics in communities that don't have access to veterinarian care. My hope is that, one day, we're going to have a provincial-wide public awareness campaign into responsible pet ownership.

And again, I think that it's important to—just quickly in my last minutes here—to note some of the

things that the City of Winnipeg has done. And I would argue that the City of Winnipeg bylaws are actually some of the most progressive across the country. And this bill falls in line with what the City is doing and so, again, I think that that's a good thing.

Dogs are now prohibited from being chained or housed outside for periods of time; their supervision is required. What else? You're not allow—pets are now prohibited from being left unattended in vehicles. Intact pet licences, breeding licences, doggy daycares; these are just some of the bylaws that the good folks at Winnipeg animal services were able to get approved, and came into force July 1st.

So, again, I think that this is one of those rare days that on—it doesn't matter what side of the House you sit on, we can all agree that this is a good bill in protecting those that don't have a voice for themselves.

And finally, once again, I just want to say a profound miigwech to all of the folks that do animal rescue, to all of the folks that are doing the lobbying, all of the folks that are looking at legislation to strengthen animal welfare, not only here in Winnipeg or Manitoba, but across Canada.

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

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): It's my pleasure to rise today and put a few brief comments on the record in relation to Bill 203, The Animal Care Amendment Act, brought forward by my colleague, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan).

I'm definitely a—this is definitely a feeling of—almost a pre-Christmas feeling, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It appears that we have support for this bill. I'm hoping that everyone in this House does support this bill to allow the MLA for Fort Whyte's concept to go forward and go to the public for that committee hearing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's incumbent upon all of us as legislators to take a look—and we often talk about those individuals that—you know, that can't care for themselves. Obviously, pets are individuals because they really are individuals and they can have their own personalities in our lives that require some level of care that's incumbent upon us for that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we saw an explosion of pet ownership during the pandemic as people found themselves at home and craving some sort of, you know, interaction. And many, many organizations

such as the Winnipeg Humane Society and rescue organizations across this province, and indeed across this country, found themselves overwhelmed by requests for animals. Now, unfortunately, now, a lot of those animals are finding themselves returned, which again is a sidebar issue.

But I'm one of those individuals that I have—and I'm very fortunate to have—I have two rescues, Sisko and Dax, and they have been definitely the light of my life, especially during the pandemic.

And as someone who has owned pets and dogs most of their lives and has transported them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mean, we've all seen and we've all been at malls or at events and we'll see a pet in a vehicle, and maybe the owner has—you know, they've left the window down a crack and they think that's enough because sometimes they just—you know, we don't know any better. And we don't understand that while the temperature, you know, quote unquote, you know, may be only, you know, 20°, in the 20s or whatever, in an enclosed vehicle that temperature can obviously be extraordinarily higher than that.

And you'll actually find usually once a year on news programs where they'll have a reporter will report from inside a enclosed vehicle with a thermometer just to show us, the audience, how quickly those temperatures can be intolerant for an individual. And you can only imagine what it would be like for a pet.

So, to have the parameters that are being suggested that emulate and copy that of the City of Winnipeg, I think, is a great concept by the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) because we have a working model. And that's always important that we have something that we can look at. And so here, in the case of the City of Winnipeg, we have a model, in terms of the temperature range, that appears to be working.

It's unfortunate that the member shared some increasing numbers in terms of the calls and I think they were over 300. Now, obviously we want those calls diminishing, but on the other hand, for every call that's—for all 300 of those calls, it's 300 animals who have been, you know, rescued, for lack of a better term, from the situation that they found themselves in.

So, I think we all need to take a look at, you know—not all legislation has to be profound and needs to change the world. Sometimes small ideas can make a big difference and in this case, obviously, this legislation will make a big difference not only in the lives

of the smallest and furriest members of our respective families, but I think it'll make an improvement in just the citizenry as well because they will have that guidance.

So, no longer will you see that vehicle and sort of be torn as to, you know, what should I do and what shouldn't I do and who should I call.

* (10:40)

And I remember once I was at the Polo Park, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I went in after seeing an animal—and the window had been left open a crack, but it was clearly warm—I went in, and I simply didn't know what to do, so I went in and talked to security and they came out with me.

And just coincidentally, at the same time, the owner went; and the owner just didn't have a really—a good concept that, you know, leaving the window open a crack really made no relevant difference to the temperature inside.

So again, so having these parameters being put forward through The Animal Care Amendment Act, having the support from the—both the—you know, the animal control, from the Winnipeg Humane Society and from the other organizations indeed shows the due diligence that my colleague, the member Fort Whyte, has put forward in this legislation.

I think this bill is something that, as we enter the Christmas holidays, that we can all agree on, and would be a gift that we could give, again, the smallest and furriest members of our families.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Thank you to my colleagues.

Well, I think I can pretty confidently say: this is the highlight of my day. Because we've got such a great morning where I think all of us as legislators are doing good work for the people of Manitoba. But we've also got some great guests—and also some people here, too; but the guests here are the dogs that were brought.

And I understand the—you know, the Speaker was very, very diligent in laying out exactly, you know, how we as legislators need to make sure we follow the rules of the House and the—you know, animals on the floor of the Legislature might be a bit of a stretch. I take that point.

But I'll just point out that right now, there's a real commotion going on, and while I'm speaking and

I have the floor and the mic's on, nobody's listening to me because they want to be up there meeting the dogs that have been brought to the Legislature. And that just shows the love that we have.

So, I did want to take the opportunity to recognize Brady Oliveira, who's come to the Chamber, brought his two awesome dogs—he's pretty awesome, too—but his dogs being here, I think, just shows that we as Manitobans care about this issue, that we care about animal welfare.

And it shows—and this legislation also shows in the work that's been done by my colleague from St. Johns, who is a tireless advocate for animals, who's taken the lead. And I appreciate that she's also in support of this bill and continues to advocate.

So, I hope that this sort of bipartisan, non-partisan attitude continues on as we talk more about animal welfare going into the future. And I know, I'm sure all members will be joining us in that.

I also just wanted to take the opportunity—as I said, Brady is here but, you know, he's here as I said, as an advocate for, you know, rescue operations that are happening in Manitoba.

And not least of which is K9 Advocates, who—you know, the founder of which lives in the constituency of my friend here from Transcona, or has connections to the community of Transcona—Jasmine. And in fact, some of the organizers in that organization are in my constituency as well. Folks who are just tireless and give their lives, give so much of their money, their time and their lives to rescue dogs around Manitoba.

And it's just—it's so heartening to see that the work that they do, you know, to—on the ground to make a difference, is championed by people like Brady, who's here, you know, pushing that message and making sure that folks know this is an important issue to people in Manitoba.

My own—so, I got two dogs. I've got to take a minute to talk about my dogs, right? I mean, again, the highlight of my day here; this is fantastic.

We've got two dogs: a golden retriever, very similar to the one that's here in the gallery—well, you know, the spitting image, I would say, actually; it was great to meet the one upstairs. But I've also got a little dog, I don't know—you know, what is she? I don't know. She's a rescue. And I'm happy to say she's a mutt, but she has got a lot of heart, and we got her through Spirit of Hope.

So, I did want to make sure that we gave them a shout-out as well, because our little dog Daisy is just the apple of my daughter's eye and well, you know, I guess maybe me too. I—you know, I, you know, sometimes play hard with her, but she's just an absolutely sweet dog. And she—we got her through a rescue, as well.

So, it just really shows again that I think there's a broad support for the work that these rescues do, but we need to take that a step further.

And again, that's the work that we're doing here in the Legislature. That is important because we know that during the pandemic, there were a lot of people who, you know, had a little bit of extra time on their hands, thought, you know, it'd be great to have a companion and—you know, and again, engaged with a lot of the great rescues in our province and wanted to, you know, be a part of that good-news story.

So, they went out and they got a dog, and now maybe, you know, it's a little more challenging than maybe they anticipated. And again, to hear the figures that were brought up here in the Chamber with regards to the number of times that this happens, I think it shows that, you know, maybe there needs to be more awareness, there needs to be more education of folks.

I don't think folks are doing this on purpose, for the most part. Most people love their animals and they wouldn't want to put them in harm's way. But by sending some specifics on the temperature ranges, I think it gives folks just maybe a bit better of a sense of what their responsibility is for their dogs.

And I think the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) mentioned as well, you know, you may be running into the grocery store, you think that's going to be a minute trip, and it gets to be a little bit longer. So, you know, we all have to be educated and understand our responsibilities as pet owners.

And if this gives law enforcement and animal rescue folks and our—the great work that the folks at the City of Winnipeg do—if this gives them another tool to do their job, keep animals safe, I think it's something that we, of course, will all support.

So, I don't want to take this too far and run out of time; we want to vote on this. You know, I'm just going to put it on the record that I was promised that we get a picture with those dogs on the front steps, so I hope that's going to happen because, you know, again, there's a lot of animal lovers here.

So, we all want to make sure that we're in that photo, and I want to get in and see those dogs one more time. I know the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) is up there petting the dogs, and—*[interjection]*

An Honourable Member: Union Station, too.

Mr. Wiebe: Union Station, maybe, the member would love to be there, I'm sure, as well. They're—you know, we're all dog lovers on a day like this.

So, it's just my absolute pleasure to just shout-out those people who are doing the great work in the community to support, you know, those dogs, or to get those dogs into loving homes.

I think there's a dog for—up for adoption here, so if anybody's, you know, looking for an opportunity to add another member to the family, I think the one that was barking and causing a bit of a ruckus obviously has some energy. So, I'm sure somebody would make—provide a great home for that dog.

But all of us can come together to say animal welfare is something we can all agree on; let's make sure that we're lock step.

Again, the good work that the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) is doing, if others join in on that, that is exactly what we're talking about here. Let's get together, let's make a difference, and let's—well, let's have some fun while we got the dogs in the Chamber, if—even if they're not on the floor. And I appreciate the ruling there with the Chair, but great to have them in the building.

Thanks for the opportunity to say some words.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm very happy to be able to rise this morning and speak a little bit about this legislation that has been brought forward. And I want to start off by thanking the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan) for bringing forward the legislation, and for all the consultation work that he has done.

And again, just to recognize who—everyone who has joined us up in the gallery today, for all the work that you do in protecting our animals here in Manitoba. I know Manitoba is actually one of the worst provinces in all of Canada, where we need dogs and cats to be protected, and so to see so many faces that are often behind the scenes come here to the people's building and teach us, and educate us about

these needs; it's very important work, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, I want to thank the member, again, for allowing us this opportunity and for the consultation he has done.

You know, having the animals here at the Legislature, it brings so much joy to the building and I think every MLA can attest to that—this. That we need this joy more than ever right now.

I know on the way up here to the Chambers I ran into Chanel, who is a one-year-old dog, who is actually up for adoption; and I believe Chanel has joined us here in the gallery as well. I can see some tails wagging up there. And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it just—it brings such joy to a person. Being able to run into a dog in the hallways of the Legislature and to enter the Chambers and hear the barking happening outside.

I'm very proud that our province could be the first province to introduce legislation that has the specific temperatures in place as well. I know the member mentioned that in his introductory remarks, and it's neat to be taking the lead on something of this nature, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think that there is merit in getting community patrol groups involved. I know that police services are already stretched very thin and that there are a lot of jobs and duties that fall under our police services.

* (10:50)

So, perhaps by getting these community patrol groups further involved, there is a way that more of these animals—and I believe the member shared that there was over 380 this past year who were in vehicles in extreme weather conditions—they could, in fact, be helped as well, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, all the other members have talked about their animals, so I have to mention: I have a cat. And my cat's name is Alfred. I think I'm a cat person, but I do really like dogs and I came very close to getting a dog back in 2015. It was actually during the 2016 election; I was door knocking—this is maybe six months in advance of the election—and so, I used to go into the people's homes and sit down and have coffees.

And I remember one home that I went into. There was a dog named Mindy *[phonetic]*—Mindy *[phonetic]* and Cindy. I think I'm allowed to say my own name in these Chambers, Mr. Deputy Speaker? How perfect would that be? And so, my heart just went out to this

dog, and this dog was actually being fostered by this family, in which the door I knocked on.

And so, I remember saying to the family, okay, after the election, if I win, I'm going to come back and adopt this dog, because I'll have a little more settledness in my life at that time, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

And sure enough, after the election—I won the election—and I went back to this person's house, and the dog had already been adopted. But I know Mindy [*phonetic*] is out there, and if I ever come across another dog where my heart sort of just goes out the way in which it did, I'm for sure going to be adopting it on the spot this time. I learned my lesson from that, because six years later, I still reflect on Mindy [*phonetic*] and I still think that would've been just perfect. Mindy [*phonetic*] and Cindy and of course, the cat Alfred, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So, with those few words and wanting to see this legislation pass this morning, I'm going to sit down and encourage all members to vote in favour.

Thank you.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I understand that there's some desire to get some photos, so I'll be very brief.

I just want to thank the member for Fort Whyte for bringing the bill forward, and say that I think this act includes some very important provisions. Of course, the setting of actual temperature targets, but also, as someone who has—a family member of mine is a bylaw officer and has shared stories about the exasperation with trying to get a animal protection officer on the scene when you're dealing with an animal situation.

And so, there's—that's a practical element of this bill that I think will also enable appropriate authorities to take care of situations involving dogs and animals and things like that.

So, with that, I look forward to passing this bill.

I just want to, since I have the opportunity, get my pet's names on the—on Hansard. We have a dog: his name's Tucker, he's six years old, he's a German shepherd and he really is the second-in-command on our country property; we've got goats and sheep and chickens and things like that, and he's just an amazing dog and does great work.

And we've got several cats as well, including our beloved retired alpha male Duke, who's just a

wonderful animal. So, a great environment for our children to grow up in.

And, again I want to thank the member for Fort Whyte and look forward to meeting all the dogs out there.

Before I sit down, I do want to thank the Pembina Valley Humane Society in our area for the work that they do as well.

So thank, you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any other speakers?

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 213, The Animal Care Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Obby Khan (Fort Whyte): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask that it be recorded as unanimous.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: It will be recorded—is there leave for it to be recorded as unanimous? [*Agreed*]

It will be recorded as unanimous.

Mr. Khan: Also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to ask that, with the passing of this today unanimously in the House, that we ask for a 10-minute recess to go outside, take a picture, see the supporters, see all the dogs—and ask for a 10-minute recess so that we can do that, if that's the will of the Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there agreement for a 10-minute recess? [*Agreed*]

Then we will recess for 10 minutes, and come back resuming the morning's proceedings at that time.

The House recessed at 10:54 a.m.

The House resumed at 11:05 a.m.

Mr. Brad Michaleski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Order. We're coming out after our 10-minute recess, so this House will reconvene after a very interesting request for a recess.

Introduction of Guests

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): And first of all, before we get started, I do want to recognize students that are in the gallery who we have with us today. St. John's-Ravenscourt, 27 students, grade 4, that are accompanied by Leanne Ryne [phonetic].

We welcome you to the House today. This is normally—session goes—that's going on here, but we had a brief recess to—because there's some dogs that are in the House, or in the Legislature.

So, the members will be coming back shortly, so hopefully you'll get to see things get going here.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 2—Calling on the Federal Government to Strengthen the Bail Provisions to Address Rising Violent Crime Rates

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): But the hour being after 11 o'clock, we will move to private members' resolutions. And the resolution before us this morning is brought to us by the MLA for Portage la Prairie, Calling on the Federal Government to Strengthen the Bail Provisions to Address Rising Violent Crime Rates.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I move, seconded by the member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin),

WHEREAS Canada is experiencing a rising rate of violent crimes and offences and Manitoba has not been immune to this national trend; and

WHEREAS British Columbia, Alberta, and Saskatchewan have also witnessed this trend and, as violent crime rises, innocent Canadians are being victimized by violent repeat offenders; and

WHEREAS many of those who are committing these violent crimes are known to police and the justice system and have been put out on bail despite having a history of, and being accused of, committing more violent acts; and

WHEREAS Winnipeg has unfortunately already seen the highest amount of homicides this year; and

WHEREAS this Provincial Government is united in standing up for the victims of violent crimes, domestic violence, and survivors of sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS this Provincial Government is committed to ensuring that preventative changes are made to improve the safety of all Manitobans; and

WHEREAS the Federal Government has the jurisdiction over the Criminal Code of Canada and has the authority to enact public safety measures to ensure that those who are at risk to reoffend are not granted bail; and

WHEREAS the federal Liberal-NDP coalition could join the Provincial Government on the right side standing up for Manitobans and working to ensure their safety; and

WHEREAS those who are being victimized by violent crime should have the assurance that regardless of the weapon that was used during the crime that they receive justice.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to unite in calling on the federal government to improve criminal legislation and make changes that would add knives to the provisions that invoke the reverse onus under section fifteen—515(6) of the Criminal Code to make it safer for Canadians by ensuring that violent offenders who apply for bail are properly considered.

Motion presented.

Mr. Wishart: I am pleased to bring forward this resolution. This is a follow-up on some of the discussion that has been occurring at the national level with the Justice ministers meeting and—of the federal Justice Minister also being involved in it.

What we're really looking for is to—that this change would update the Criminal Code to ensure that those who've—accused of crime with a knife are treated similar to a firearms offence, but not in a broad sense of the word because there are certainly exceptions to the rule. But an approach that is more targeted, that would give the criminal court who works with these offenders a wider set of tools and some discretion to help ensure public safety.

Now, we certainly realize that the issue of safety and security is front and center with many people. I think anyone who attended the AMM conference certainly heard it from a number of participants in that. Much of that, of course, is petty crime, but it does grow into larger cases, and in a number of cases knives have been involved. In fact—and in the assaults it's almost 40 per cent of the cases now have involved some edged weapon of some description.

So we're certainly looking for improvements to the determination on bail. It is a judgment call, very often, with the King prosecutor and the judge involved as to how they handle these things. But we certainly

want to give them a little more discretion in regards to this.

I recognize there's a big difference between somebody who has a pocket knife and somebody who's carrying a machete in their backpack for obvious purposes that are beyond, you know, self-preservation. They're using it as either a weapon or a threat of a weapon.

* (11:10)

So, certainly, we want to be able to do that, make better decisions. Our government has been trying to be proactive in this area and we have a couple of initiatives that we hope will help, including the \$3.6 million to improve downtown safety, and those initiatives include some cameras and dealing with some homelessness and addictions issues and also more people downtown.

Also a \$3.2 million for a multi-agency violent offenders apprehension unit, which includes 12 officers and will involve all different types of police forces in the province, including the First Nations police force, and I know I've spoken to them regarding this and they're looking forward to this coming into play.

This is a challenge for us. It's not just a Manitoba thing, of course; this has been a problem growing all the way across Canada, with BC and Ontario also having quite significant issues related to this.

We have done a lot already in terms of working with businesses, in particular, to try and show themselves how to protect themselves against issues like this, how to avoid confrontations, and certainly that has been helpful in the business community.

In the last year or so, there seems to have been a lot more occurring in rural areas, and so we're developing some initiatives to work with rural folks as well, to help them also deal with these types of situations.

In rural areas, there's a much greater tendency, unfortunately, to be confrontational, and of course, you're a lot further removed from police officers in many cases, so it can get to be an issue very quickly and we certainly want to avoid that if we can. And education is a big part of what we need to do on this.

I hope that this is actually a resolution that all members of the House can support as we move forward. It is proactive and positive. The way I view it, it's—when you look at the iconic situation when we see the scales of justice, and there's a balance in the

scales of justice between the victim and accused, and we have to make sure that we get that in balance. And so, this will help to make sure that in the long term that is in place.

So, I certainly would encourage everyone in the House here to actually support this resolution today.

Thank you.

Questions

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

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): Can the member explain why his government has cut funding to restorative justice programs—restorative justice programs that we know work in respect of recidivism and certainly keeping folks out of the justice system?

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Well, thank the member for the question.

And, certainly, we are interested in restorative justice. I know our government has put in a place for youth a facility in Thompson to help with the more traditional healing process and justice formation there.

It is a challenge moving forward and we are certainly interested in how we can work together in the future.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye): How would the change that the member is asking for in this resolution help provide justice for Manitobans?

Mr. Wishart: Well, thank you very much for the question.

I certainly think this would help for those that are involved in making sure that those violent offenders don't get back on the street as quickly. I think what we all have heard far too often is concern about people that have crossed the line with justice and end up back on the street much more quickly than people are comfortable with.

We want to work together to deal with issues like safety and security. And the use of knives and other edged weapons is certainly on the rise, and so we want to discourage that.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is two parts.

First, there was a report called Set Up to Fail: Bail and the Revolving Door of Pre-Trial Detention in 2014 when the NDP were in power, and it was absolutely shocking how awful the management of bail issues were under the NDP.

I wonder if the government has addressed the four major recommendations that were made in that report, specifically for Manitoba?

And, second: Can the member provide any specific evidence that this measure has actually worked in other jurisdictions?

Mr. Wishart: Those are good questions. We continue to work in justice on the recommendations; I had a chance to review some of them, and some progress has been made in a few areas, but much remains to be done.

There's certainly a move across the country to look at this, as I mentioned, the Justice ministers had an ongoing discussion with the federal Justice Minister to help deal with this. This is relatively new, and so I was not able to find any strong data. There are some limited information, I guess, in terms of what type of effect we would get.

But there is clearly a trend involving more instances of assault with a—

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The honourable member's time is up.

MLA Fontaine: Can the member explain to the House why his government cut the Gang Action Interagency Network in 2017?

Mr. Wishart: I realize the member has a good point, but we're looking at bringing back a co-ordinated approach to dealing with safety and, in particular, the multi-agency violent offenders, which would certainly deal with some of the same issues.

But it is an ongoing challenge. I'm also very pleased this time that they are including the First Nations police force, who feel at times that they could use a little more support in their efforts to deal with people that are out on bail.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): I want to thank my colleague and the member from Portage la Prairie for bringing this forward.

Could the member share with us how many serious offences were committed in Manitoba this

year so far, and draw that analogy the seriousness of knives and firearms both on the same level?

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

Certainly, in terms of number of murders, the number currently standing, I believe, at 42, which puts us in the range of potentially having a new record this year, which is not anything we want to achieve.

And certainly, we've seen across Canada the number of serious offences—assaults has been on the rise. So, we certainly want to put in place tools that provide the Crown with some opportunities to make judgements related to bail hearings, and try and deal with this issue in a more proactive—

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The honourable member's time is up.

The honourable member—is there any further questions?

MLA Fontaine: Can the member share with the House why his government cut the Spotlight anti-gang unit in 2017?

Mr. Wishart: Well, I thank the member for the question.

I know she was—she is looking to revisit some of the decisions that have been made in the past, here. We're certainly looking to move forward, and we're putting great faith in the multi-agency violent offenders apprehension unit.

* (11:20)

And I hope that, because it's working across a broader scale than anything that was in place before, it will be more successful in dealing with issues when it comes to bail in particular.

Mr. Smook: We all know that violent crime is on the rise coast-to-coast. BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan are all facing increased crime.

Why does the member think that federal change is needed?

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

And, certainly, as was indicated by the provincial Justice ministers to the federal Justice Minister, this is a cross-Canada issue and something that the federal government certainly has the leadership role in terms of guidelines as to what type of penalties or what type of conditions are put in place on the bail hearings.

And so, certainly, they are in the best position to help all provinces out in regards to this, not just a

province-to-province issue, but it's something that should be nationally led.

MLA Fontaine: Miigwech, Acting Deputy Premier–Speaker. Pardon me. Pardon me.

Can the member explain to the House why his government cut \$2.6 million for Community Safety in the 2021 budget?

Mr. Wishart: Well, my apologies for my voice. As many people in the House are doing, fighting a bit of a cold. Excuse me.

Three point six million dollars to improve downtown safety is a move in the right direction. We want to be–try and be proactive in regards to this and do what we can to deal with the issue up front.

I think that this initiative in the downtown safety area regarding cameras and also some–dealing with some addictions issues and some homelessness issues will take a step in the right direction to deal with some of the issues.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Is there no further questions?

If not, time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Debate is now open.

MLA Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm pleased to get up this morning and put on—a couple words on the record in respect of this morning's resolution.

You know, the member, in one of his answers, said that members on this side of the House want to look back, want to look back on some of the decisions that the PC government has made, but that they're about moving forward.

You know, Deputy Speaker, in my line of questioning—which, again, I'll remind the House what the questions were. My line of questioning was about the cuts that the PC government has instituted since taking—or since forming government in 2016. And actually I'm going to lay some of those out here.

In 2017, the PC government cut Justice programming for organizations like the Elizabeth Fry Society and the John Howard Society. Most folks would know that the Elizabeth Fry–Elizabeth Fry and John Howard work with citizens who are incarcerated and going to be released.

And those organizations have done phenomenal work for many, many years at helping citizens, helping Manitobans who are exiting or who are leaving incarceration to be able to, you know, be set up with social assistance if they need, housing, training, reconnecting with family and community supports, making those connections back to their communities. They do phenomenal work on that.

And the PC government cut Justice programming to those two organizations. They cut \$50,000 from Elizabeth Fry and then \$136,000 from John Howard.

The PC government cut dollars to restorative justice. Now, I have spoken in this House several times about restorative justice and I have said in this House that prior to being elected, I was the director of justice for the Southern Chiefs Organization for almost 10 years. And the huge—a huge component of the work that I did with Southern Chiefs Organization was setting up our restorative justice program in some of our southern First Nation communities.

Restorative justice works, and it is a meaningful process for both the individual in conflict with the law—for the individual who caused harm and for the individual who was harmed. It brings individuals together if they are willing to participate, and also if the Crown has diverted cases.

As I'm sure you're well aware, Assistant Deputy Speaker, not all cases are diverted from the Crown. In fact, the spectrum of cases that are diverted are actually quite small. But when those cases are diverted—and actually, I also put—want to put on the record, because a lot of folks don't realize this, that also police members also have the discretion to also refer cases to restorative justice.

And restorative justice works. It has been proven to reduce recidivism. It's been proven to help heal those harms, not only within the individuals, but within the families because often, you know, the harms that are, you know, against an individual affects the families, obviously, and not only families but communities.

So, restorative justice has this, like, three-way positive outcome of dealing with harms when folks are in conflict with the law.

But they—but the PCs cut those dollars to restorative justice. Instead of looking at restorative justice as a much-needed infrastructure in respect of tackling justice issues in the province, the PCs had no foresight and actually cut those programs.

As I said in some of my questions as well, Deputy Speaker, the PC government cut dollars to the Gang Action Interagency Network, cut dollars to the Spotlight anti-gang unit, cut \$2.6 million from Community Safety. I mean, I don't know who cuts dollars from community safety. It doesn't jive that apparently you have members opposite who are, like, so concerned about community safety, you know, out one side of their mouth, but then on the other side of their mouth they're actually cutting those dollars for those organizations to do that work. So that doesn't make sense.

And so, you know, when the member says to us that they're moving forward, in fact, Deputy Speaker, I would suggest to the House that, since 2016, all we've seen from the PC government is actually this regressive, archaic, dinosaur view in respect of what constitutes justice and how to tackle some of the issues that we see; and that we have actually gone back many, many steps in this province in respect of justice and dealing with some of the issues that we're dealing with.

I know that several members on this side of the House have brought it up since the Throne Speech, about the PC government connecting mental health issues and addictions and homelessness to a rise in—

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Sorry—order. I just have to ask the member the relevance and to try to bring—the subject matter that she's talking about hasn't really related to the wording or the intent of the resolution. So I would just ask the member to—because I'm failing to see the relevance in the comments as we're talking about federal government on knives and bail, and I haven't heard those words at all come from the member.

* (11:30)

So, I would ask for the member to focus on the resolution and try to retain relevance.

Thank you.

MLA Fontaine: I am concerned that the remarks that I'm putting on the official record, it's gone—it's not understood—the connection to the resolution today, and let me just lay out the connection to the resolution today.

And that is to say that, if I had been allowed to continue, what I was saying was that the member who brought forward this resolution, in his response to me not more than 11 minutes ago, noted that they were—the PC government was trying to move forward to

look at some addictions and some homelessness issues.

There are consequences, Acting Deputy Speaker, when you make cut after cut after cut after cut, over the last six and a half years; there are consequences to those cuts. There are consequences to cuts in the midst of a pandemic, when our society—when the globe has been completely upended in respect of dealing with this pandemic.

And you have a government that, on top of the cuts that continued, the barrage of cuts that continue to social safety nets, there are consequences to that. And the consequences are that you force your citizens to participate or to get in conflict with the law when they're not able to get their basic needs met. Those are the consequences.

There are also consequences when you have a government that attributes or connects mental health issues, addictions and homelessness to criminality. There are consequences to that.

And some of the consequences to that is the resolution that we see this morning that has no thought about how we make justice more equitable. As you know, Acting Deputy Speaker, a report just came out just a couple of months ago that spoke about the fact that Indigenous women across Canada, not only in Manitoba, make up more than 50 per cent of incarcerated individuals across Canada, as you know.

And instead of dealing with some of the issues, some of the core, root causes of why individuals become in conflict with the law, what we've seen from this PC government is choices that actually only exacerbate and compound those issues.

And so, I would submit to the House that where the member says that the PC government is moving forward in respect of addressing some of the issues, this PC government continues to take us down a very dark road, a very inequitable road and a very consequential road, for not only everybody here, but for all Manitobans.

And that is a tragedy.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye): I would like to start by thanking my colleague from Portage la Prairie for bringing this important resolution forward, calling on the federal government to improve criminal legislation and make changes that would add knives to the provisions that invoke the reverse onus, under sections 515(6) of the Criminal Code, to make it safer

for Canadians by ensuring that violent offenders who apply for bail are properly considered.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, I think that all of us in this Chamber can agree that, in the last few years, crime and violent crime is on the rise here in Manitoba, in other parts of Canada. And in talking with colleagues in the US, it is on the rise there, as well. Canadians and Manitobans are getting tired of being victimized by repeat offenders. They want change.

Many of those who are committing these violent crimes are well-known to police and the justice system. They have been put out on bail despite having a history of crime. We know that crime and violent crime are on the rise; I have pages and pages of statistics that show that. The homicide rate in Winnipeg is at its highest.

I was involved with our local crime watch, know a number of police officers and have talked to many more. It is frustrating for them to work hard at building a case against a criminal, just to find them back on the street committing more crimes a few days later.

It seems the criminals of today are getting braver and braver, starting with small thefts, then moving on to larger ones, then on to robberies, where weapons are used and people may get injured. Having owned a business—a few businesses, I have seen this first-hand. The last time my business was broken into, the robbers parked right in front of the door, where there was a lot of light, in full view of the security camera, smashed the glass door and were in and out of the building with what they wanted in less than four minutes. They wore hoodies and never looked at the cameras.

This resolution is about asking the federal government to make changes to the Criminal Code of Canada. As a provincial government, we are unable to make these changes, yet we are forced to work with federal legislation to ensure law and order and administer justice within the province. The federal government can change the Criminal Code and public safety measures to ensure that those who are at risk to reoffend are not granted bail.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, stabbings account for 32 per cent of the homicides in Canada in 2021, with shootings at 40 per cent. Of this 40 per cent, handguns were the primary type of gun at 57 per cent, shotguns at 26 per cent; and 46 per cent of the firearm-related homicides were gang related.

It seems that our federal government is more interested in taking guns away from law-abiding citizens and hunters than cracking down on the use of knives in violent crime.

Our PC government is taking proactive steps to tackle rising crime and working to keep Manitobans safe. Our PC government spent five days making back-to-back announcements which outline crime prevention programs. Our PC government is putting up \$3.6 million to improve safety in downtown Winnipeg and addressing homelessness and addiction, and taking concrete action to keep Manitobans safe.

Our PC government has created a dedicated police force that will focus on violent offenders. We are spending \$3.2 million on this new multi-agency integrated violent offender apprehension unit. These are just some of the measures our PC government is taking to improve the safety of all Manitobans.

I would ask members opposite to support this important resolution, to treat those guilty of violent crime the same no matter if they use a gun or a knife, when it comes to bail. Unless the members opposite are standing with the federal government and feel that taking guns away from, you know, innocent civilians is more important than, you know, putting people away that have committed crimes with knives.

Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

MLA Uzoma Asagwara (Union Station): I'm always grateful for the opportunity to put some words on the record in regards to really anything that comes up in this House, but certainly when we're talking about justice and decisions that affect all Manitobans. I welcome the opportunity to do so.

* (11:40)

So, in regards to this resolution, I think that my colleague, the MLA for St. Johns, the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) did a really great job of outlining what some of the concerns are in terms of some of—the member who brought this resolution forward—his responses to her questions specifically surrounding the cuts that this government has made to services and resources, organizations and efforts which we know actually support communities being safer, support those who are in conflict with the justice system in having good outcomes, healthy outcomes, in reducing recidivism in our communities.

And I do think that it's really, really important for that to be highlighted, because really and truly, the connection to—from addressing root issues and a government that chooses to attack people's basic needs and underfund and cut the very resources that address people's basic needs, the connection from that directly to crime, violence, recidivism, et cetera, it's a direct line. It's directly related. And that data is not only evident here in Manitoba or accessible here in Manitoba, but we see many other jurisdictions over many, many decades, quite frankly, that reflect that direct line.

And so I do think it's incredibly important for us to put this resolution within context. And the context that this resolution is being brought forward in, here in Manitoba, is that this Conservative government, since 2016, has time and time and time again contributed to the conditions in which we will see people struggle and we will see issues in our communities around safety start to really rear their head.

And so, I've said this before in this House, but I'll say it again: when the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) stands up and faces Manitobans—when she finds the opportunity, the time in her schedule, to do so, because she tends to hide more recently—but when she does face Manitobans and say, enough is enough, one has to wonder, what is the Premier had enough about?

And, quite frankly, it sounds like—and it's obvious based on what we're seeing in the data—that the Premier is actually fed up and tired of her own decision making. The Premier is sick and tired of the consequences of her government's cuts from day one to the very aspects of our communities that would see people be safer.

And so that really does beg the question, this resolution—you know, albeit a very specific narrative from this member who brought it forward and from the PCs who are all, you know, I would say, reiterating the narratives around this resolution—quite frankly, is quite disingenuous.

And I think what this government needs to understand is that, for the last several years, Manitobans have been paying attention. I think that they believe that Manitobans will be so distracted by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic they'll fail to recognize that before the pandemic ever reached Manitoba's borders, this government was already decimating the services that Manitobans rely on in order to thrive.

And I think, quite frankly, it's insulting to Manitobans that the Premier, the Minister for Justice, members of the PC caucus would think so little of Manitobans that they actually believe residents of this province, citizens of our great province, would buy into the narrative that the PCs are trying to sell them, that this government is not responsible for the issues that we're seeing right now.

And the fact of the matter is this government is responsible for the issues that we're seeing right now. And to be an effective change-maker in areas around justice, community safety, wellness, well-being, one must be able to honestly reflect on the decisions that have been made that have landed us where we are.

This government has missed that crucial first step. They have not been honest and reflected transparently on the decisions that they've made that have gotten us to the point where they would bring a resolution like this forward.

There is something that I've raised previously, and my colleague, the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine), already raised this, but I do think it's important to state again, that, in the Throne Speech, which came, obviously, before we got to this point, this resolution being brought forward, but we've seen the same themes, right?

In the Throne Speech, the Premier, this government talked a lot about crime in our communities and rising violent crime. And the Premier has been consistent in attributing or correlating crime and violence with homelessness, with poverty, with addictions and mental health.

Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, that is wrong. That is a harmful and stigmatizing approach that, again, when we talk about root issues, creates a culture around these areas where people, many people from every corner of our province, every community, deal with.

It creates a level of stigma and shame which makes it very difficult for even those people who are struggling with these challenges to access the help and service they deserve, in order to see themselves overcome those very challenges.

It is actually dangerous. It is dangerous that a government, and a premier, would intentionally advance a narrative, a false and discriminatory narrative, that if you are struggling with poverty, mental illness, addictions, homelessness, that you are somehow deserving of being criminalized. Or that you are somehow the person or beings contributing to our communities being unsafe.

I say this as somebody who has been a part of the downtown community that comes up so often in conversations around safety, been a part of this community since I was very small, but certainly since I was 17 years old and I started going to university at the University of Winnipeg.

Some of the most compassionate, loving, generous, community focused members of our communities are those who are unsheltered, who are struggling with mental illnesses, addictions, who are living in poverty. Some of those folks who bring forward the most innovative, people-centred solutions to the challenges we're facing, are those folks.

It serves no one for a government, or a resolution, to further harm and stigmatize the very people we need to be part of the solutions in addressing community wellness and safety.

The last thing that I want to talk about here is the importance, again, of addressing root issues, addressing something that a lot of folks will know is identified as social determinants of health: housing, education, gender, equity, you know, needs for the aging, et cetera. All of these important areas, these are all areas that have been systemically underfunded and attacked by this government since 2016.

I want to take this opportunity to encourage the government, to ask this government, the Minister of Justice (Mr. Goertzen) including, and also the member who brought this resolution forward, to sincerely look at the social determinants of health.

If they don't know what I'm talking about, or what that means, they can look it up, learn up on that term and understand the importance of investing meaningfully in these areas, instead of doing the exact opposite they've been doing since 2016.

And I would like to make a call to the Minister of Mental Health—this has been raised several times—a good example of how you shame and stigmatize people who are in most need, sometimes, of the supports and resources that would help them thrive and help our communities overall, help everybody quite frankly, have good outcomes.

The Minister of Mental Health took a trip recently to BC, and during her time out there took some photos of some folks struggling on the east side of Vancouver, I believe, and posted those pictures to social media. I would ask that the minister take those off her social media. Delete those photos. Be a minister, be a government, that leads by offering people compassion and dignity and respect.

Role model that. That kind of role modelling sets a tone in our province and encourages people to reach out to their government and services, to get the help that they need.

So, that would be my final ask, and plea, of the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), and quite frankly, of the entire PC caucus.

Thank you for the time today.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill is, from what we can tell, primarily a diversionary tactic by the PCs to divert people away from the shocking reality that the Manitoba government has done such a horrible job that violent crime in Manitoba has risen dramatically under the PCs.

* (11:50)

Let's look at it. Violent Crime Severity Index has gone up in Manitoba from 139 to 182; that's from 2015 to 2021, a whopping 32 per cent increase. Put this in context: that is 2,266 violent crimes per 100,000 residents, which for our population of about 1.4 million would mean almost 32,000 violent crimes in 2021 in Manitoba.

Put this in the context of the Canadian rate for the violent Crime Severity Index, which is 92.5. The Manitoba rate is essentially double that of the rate for all of Canada. We are way too high. Essentially we have twice as much violent crime as the rest of Canada.

And what have the Tories done? Virtually nothing; but in fact, what they have done is to cut all sorts of programs which were designed to help people and designed to reduce crime. And in cutting those programs, they have been part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

Let's look at the homicide rate. It has risen from 3.71 in 2015 for Manitoba, up to 4.41 per 100,000 population, a 19 per cent increase in homicides under the PCs for the province. When you look at Winnipeg, it's up in 2021 to 5.3 per 100,000 population, a 93 per cent increase over 2015. A huge increase. And for Canada, the rate is 2.06. Manitoba's rate is 2.14 times Canada's rate, and Winnipeg's rate is 2.6 times the rate for Canada.

We're on the wrong side of this, and this government has been doing atrociously.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to speak momentarily, or briefly, about why. And, in fact, this why has

been addressed significantly by the member for St. Johns (MLA Fontaine) and the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara).

The severity and disastrousness of the cuts in so many areas of crime prevention have been a significant factor in this increase.

But this government has also done poorly in addressing many other areas, from homelessness to poverty to mental health to substance use and addictions to helping children who are neurodivergent, children with learning disabilities, with ADHD and autism, who are put out on the street at age 18 without any supports.

Children in Child and Family Services, they have done poorly in helping children to transition at age 18. This should've been done much better and with a much higher priority.

They have failed to address things like lead exposure, which may be related to the increase in crime. PCs are contributing to making life difficult for people who are marginalized. Surely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we should have some level of judicial discretion in this area of setting bail.

The MLA for Portage la Prairie says there's no strong evidence that his approach actually works better than using judges to assess the situation individually and make decisions. We're replacing judicial wisdom with a resolution which is calling for changes for which there is not the adequate evidence that they are actually going to make a difference.

Did this MLA actually consult judges, former judges, individuals who have knowledge of the bail system in Manitoba? Or did he just talk with his friends on the street who are concerned about violent crime and came up with this idea?

I think it's important to note, when we're talking about bail, that there was a report in 2014 called Set Up to Fail: Bail and the Revolving Door of Pre-trial Detention.

Now, it was done across Canada, but what was shocking was how bad Manitoba is compared with other provinces. We don't use, or did not then use bail very well. We end up with too many people in remand and too many people being incarcerated.

And the fact is that under the NDP, the—as the report shows—the situation was terrible and it needed to be changed, and there were major recommendations made; and it is very disappointing that we

have the member for Portage standing up and saying well, a little bit have been done, but not nearly enough.

And that's exactly what I hear from people who are lawyers dealing with these sorts of problems. That, although there was a little bit of effort to address this, the recommendations still have not been fully implemented. This is now eight years after 2014 report; those recommendations should've been fully implemented without the hesitancy and the equivocation of the current PC government.

I want to talk about how—one of the issues which came out in that report, and it was the discrimination, the racial discrimination. And this report talks specifically about that.

But it gives an instance from Manitoba, and this is from a Manitoba defence counsel, and he says as follows: I walked into bail court wanting to do a bail, and there was this poor Aboriginal woman on the screen.

She had a terrible record for shoplifting stuff and breaches, and she was on another shoplifting charge and a breach. You know, she had a bit of an explanation and a lot of Gladue factors, but the judge denied her bail.

The next guy is this white guy in custody on a conditional sentence order for drug offences, now charged with a home invasion with a group of others, where they go into a house.

One of them had some kind of a weapon, either a tire iron or a firearm or something. Mom is there to sign a \$1,000 surety, and the judge lets him out.

This poor Aboriginal woman, who couldn't find a surety to save her life, but really, what's she going to do, shoplift? She gets detained, and this other guy gets out.

So, there are issues and we have to face up to the fact that there is too often a differential treatment, and I can provide a lot more stories if the minister actually wants that, or if there was actually time to do that, but this needs to be addressed.

There is far too many people who are Indigenous, who are incarcerated and are not denied bail, and that needs to be reconsidered and relooked at.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, just to sum up. While, you know, this idea might have merit, the problem is that there's no evidence at this juncture that's strong enough to actually support implementing it.

And we know that judges have a lot of experience in this area. They have a lot of wisdom and sometimes it is better, for individual cases, for judges to know all the facts and then make the decision.

There is, clearly, in Manitoba, as I have and others have talked about, a problem with a high crime rate. This problem has existed under both NDP and PC governments, but it is clearly much worse in the last few years under the PC government.

There needs to be a much more effective approach to decreasing crime in this province. This is not a sufficient answer for what we need to do.

We need to do much more addressing the root causes of crime. We need to have a holistic approach.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will sit down but there is much more that could be said on this.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the resolution?
[Agreed]

I declare the resolution carried.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 29, 2022

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