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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
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, 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
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Thompson	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

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

Good morning everybody. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Derek Johnson (Acting Government House Leader): I would like to call Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 223—The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye): I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk), that Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Smook: Being of Ukrainian descent, I am pleased to bring forward Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act, for debate in this Chamber

today. This bill proclaims the month of September as Ukrainian heritage month.

Some may ask, why the month of September? Well, the first official Ukrainian immigrants, Vasyl Eleniak and Ivan Pylypiw, arrived in Canada on September 7th, 1891, and soon afterwards, Ukrainian immigrants began arriving in Manitoba in larger numbers. I know that my grandfather arrived here in 1896. He settled in the Gardenton-Stuartburn-Vita area of southeastern Manitoba.

Over the years, many Ukrainians have fled their homeland to find freedom from oppression and a better life in Canada. When the first Ukrainian settlers arrived in Manitoba, times were not easy, but their determination, the work—and their work ethic allowed them to survive and become an important part of Manitoba history.

Manitoba's a province with rich culture from many countries, and the Manitobans of Ukrainian descent have left and continue to leave a historic mark on our province, and their contributions span communities across Manitoba and are reflected in our economic, political, social and cultural life.

Their food, song and dance are a great part of Manitoba. Ukrainian Canadians have played an important role in the development of Manitoba into one of the most desirable places in the world to live, work and call home.

It is important to recognize and celebrate these contributions. More than 180,000 Manitobans identify as being of Ukrainian descent.

Bill C-314, the Ukrainian Heritage Month Act, was introduced in the House of Commons of Canada on June 17th, 2021. Other provinces have looked at similar legislation.

It is time for Manitoba to recognize and celebrate the contributions that Ukrainians have made to Manitoba and support Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act.

Ukrainians have always been an important part of Manitoba and it's time for Manitobans to be an important part of Ukraine.

It has been more than a month since Vladimir Putin and his forces invaded Ukraine. Since the start

on February 24th, the invasion has only escalated. Targeting bombings of Ukrainians, of Ukraine's hospitals, residential areas and apartment blocks, orphanages, malls, schools and shops have increased.

Every day there are more reports of the damage to property and deaths of civilians that Putin is inflicting on Ukraine. Ukraine is no stranger to conflict, being the breadbasket of Europe. Throughout the years, there have been many attacks on Ukraine. In 1932 and '33 under the Soviet Communist regime of Joseph Stalin, around 7 million Ukrainians were starved to death during the Holodomor. This genocide is one atrocity that Ukrainians have endured.

Because of the current invasion of Ukraine, close to 4 million people have fled Ukraine seeking refuge in other countries. There is much that can be done to help Ukrainians fleeing a war they did not want nor start.

Our government is working with organizations such as the Ukrainian Canadian Congress of Manitoba, the Canada Ukrainian foundation, the Canadian Red Cross and other community organizations to address this humanitarian crisis.

To date, Manitoba has donated more than \$800,000 for humanitarian relief and will continue to support Ukraine in any way we can.

Our Manitoba government is working with the federal government to make sure that Ukrainians seeking immigration or come as refugees to Manitoba will seek a full—will receive a full range of supports. Our government has started a working group to evaluate the government services needed for Ukrainian citizens once they arrive in Manitoba.

Manitoba is preparing for the arrival of a large number of Ukrainian citizens seeking a safe haven in Manitoba. A special deputy minister steering committee has been established. A new Ukrainian refugee task force led by Emergency Measures Organization has begun to plan and co-ordinate efforts to help Ukrainian citizens.

Our government knows we will need a full range of provincial settlement support services to support thousands of Ukrainian families fleeing the war in Ukraine. Housing, health care, mental health services, K-to-12 education, child care, English language services, social assistance, employment assistance and more.

* (10:10)

Manitoba remains fully committed to welcome as many Ukrainians as possible fleeing this unprovoked and terrible war. We will continue to work with the federal government to prioritize applications and process documents of Ukrainians wishing to come to Manitoban. I am proud of the many Manitobans that have stood up in support of Ukraine and condemning Putin for his unprovoked war on Ukraine and—efforts.

Manitobans have always been known for their generosity when it comes to helping others. I would like to thank the many Manitobans that have contributed to humanitarian relief for Ukraine, no matter how small or large the contribution may be. It all helps.

I could speak longer on Bill 223, but I will give the many others that would like to speak in support of this bill the opportunity to do so.

Slava Ukraini. [*Glory to Ukraine.*] Thank you. Dyakuyu.

Questions

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

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): I want to say thank you to the member opposite for bringing out this—bringing forward this bill, which is very important. It's important to recognize contributions of our Ukrainian Manitobans to our economy.

The commemoration of Ukrainian heritage is important and it's also extremely important that real and tangible measures are put in place today to help Ukrainian people.

What new measures is the member prepared to support today?

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Vérendrye): I thank the member opposite for the question.

It's new measures. We are—have committees organized. We have already contributed over \$800,000, and I guess as we know how many new, like, Ukrainians will be coming to Manitoba, then we can look at what will be needed.

I mean, we are addressing the needs that are there right now or will be there—education, health care—but we don't know exactly what will be needed in the

future, as refugees and people wanting to emigrate here arrive.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): I'd like to thank the member for this bill.

And in light of the events in Ukraine over the past 36 hours, can the member please explain the increased importance of September as Ukrainian heritage month?

Mr. Smook: I thank the member very much for that question.

Well, September is an important month for Ukrainian heritage because it is the month that the first Ukrainian settlers did arrive in Canada. Ivan [*phonetic*] Eleniak and Ivan Pylypiw. I mean, it is important and there are other areas are looking at doing similar legislation. So it would—September is the month that I believe plays an important role for the Ukrainian population in Canada.

So if the federal government is going to have a Ukrainian heritage month, or other provinces have a Ukrainian heritage month, and September is the month, I believe that it is important that we follow that tradition.

Thank you.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the member for bringing forward this legislation.

I was wondering if the member had the opportunity to specifically work with the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, UCC, on the creation of this legislation, very specifically?

Mr. Smook: Yes, I did meet personally with Joan Lewandosky from the Ukrainian Canadian Congress. She took this—like, my idea to her committee and went it over.

Like, this is not the first time that this type of bill has been introduced. Back in 2016, I had a bill very similar to this that was on the Order Paper, but never made it to the floor of the House. The NDP brought a bill forward back in 2011, where they did introduce the last Saturday of July as Ukrainian heritage day in order to promote the Ukrainian festival in Dauphin. So it is something that has been talked about.

I listened to—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I think it's really important for us to support the people in Ukraine, the

Ukrainian people who are going through such a difficult time, suffering through the violence perpetrated by Putin's regime with this war.

We're offering a lot of supports in Canada and Manitoba specifically. And, you know, we have also brought forward a number of urgent matters that would increase the settlement for Ukrainian people, such as funding and staff support, increasing of those here in Manitoba, especially for the Provincial Nominee Program.

Will the member support our call for increased funding and increase supports to help settle—Ukrainians settle in Manitoba?

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

And, of course, like, our government has stated that we will welcome as many Ukrainians to Manitoba as possible, and with that, of course there will be more funding that will be necessary, but we can't—I don't think the member can tell me exactly how many refugees or people wanting to immigrate are going to come here.

If he could, you know, say a number of 2,000, 10,000, whatever; I don't think we know that. So, yes, as the number of refugees—and that enter Manitoba, there will be more money that will be needed, of course.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Thank you to the member from La Vérendrye for bringing this very important bill forward.

Can the member speak to the personal relationship with their Ukrainian heritage?

Mr. Smook: I thank the member for Swan River. This is probably one that might touch me a little bit, my personal relationship with my grandfather and his immigration to Canada.

Sorry—he immigrated here in 1896. He settled. He had 12—him and his wife had 12 children, of which all of them were very prosperous and did well and supported and did a lot for Manitoba in all the years that they were around. Unfortunately, they are all passed now.

Ms. Lamoureux: And I'd like to—

Madam Speaker: Oh, pardon me—the independent member only gets one question.

Mr. Brar: I thank the member for sharing his family story. Every immigrant has their own story and most of them have painful ones.

So, just wanted to know from the member, what is the Ukrainian Manitoban community calling for from this provincial government as the recent invasion of Ukraine unfolds?

Mr. Smook: I thank the member for that question. I didn't quite hear it all, but if I'm correct, the member was asking what the different organizations are calling from for the—from the Manitoba government.

Of course, in a situation like this with the war in Ukraine, the most important part, of course, is we need humanitarian relief for the Ukraine. There are a lot—I mean, our government has donated over \$800,000, but I was just reading an article—the Canadian Red Cross has raised over \$59 million for humanitarian aid. And I think it's important that we continue as what is necessary, what is needed or asked for by these organizations. We look at it and donate accordingly.

Mr. Schuler: Can the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Smook) share how this bill will affect his constituents and those of all members of this Legislature?

Mr. Smook: Well, I think this bill is very self-explanatory. It honours—and all of the Ukrainians that are in Manitoba by putting a month aside where we can honour all the contributions that have been made by Ukrainians of—Manitobans of Ukrainian descent.

I mean, it is important. I mean, we do have other months that we have set aside, whether—I know right now we're in the Sikh Heritage Month; there's the Filipino—there are a number of other, I guess, ethnic groups that have been recognized and I think it's very important. And Manitoba is one of those provinces that does look after everybody who's contributed to Manitoba.

* (10:20)

Thank you.

Mr. Moses: Madam Speaker, I think it's really important that we acknowledge and celebrate Ukrainian history here in Manitoba, especially at such a difficult time.

And so, given the challenges that Ukrainians face fleeing their war-torn country, will this government commit to resourcing the Provincial Nominee Program so that there are sufficient staff to process applications timely?

Mr. Smook: I thank the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses).

I believe, in my speech, I had talked about that several committees have been set up, the emergency measures has looked at and as it's needed—like right now. I—the federal government is basically in charge of immigration and that so, as we get people into Manitoba, of course we will have to staff up in order to handle that.

Mr. Wowchuk: Can the member provide a situation of how Ukrainians in Manitoba have contributed to their community and constituency?

Mr. Smook: Thank the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk).

Ukrainians, when they first immigrated to Canada here in the late 1800s, they were not given the best land that there is in Manitoba, because they wanted wood. They wanted to make sure that they had wood to build their homes and heat their homes. So, some of the areas that they were given in southeastern Manitoba, there was lots of wood, but there was also lots of stones.

There's some land that I was working last summer and I got to realize that this land has never been worked before. And the work that our forefathers did to make Manitoba a better province is extremely important.

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

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Wab Kinew (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want to acknowledge my colleague from La Vérendrye from bringing forward this bill here today. And I also want to acknowledge the memories that he shared about his family. Certainly, it's always a significant moment when we see a colleague moved in such a fashion.

I wanted to share briefly today the context for why I think this bill is important and should be passed. A few weeks ago we were at the Dauphin Kings Ukrainian Night at—as I've shared previously in a member's statement, and I had the honour of being asked to introduce one of the children's dance groups; this group in particular was called Zirka.

And what I shared there with the members is that, you know, Manitoba has long been a home base, if you will, for Ukrainian language and culture and identity. And right now, given what's happening overseas, to see children able to practise the culture

and speak the language of their ancestors is very significant. I would say that it's become even more clear how significant that is given the atrocities that are being disclosed in Bucha and other parts of Ukraine as we speak.

The war crimes are very troubling, are certainly crimes against humanity, and on a personal level are very sad to see the video and photographic evidence of. To hear the testimonials and to read the testimonials of women who are raped in the presence of their children is outrageous. It offends me as a human being. To see the image of a man lying dead in the street with an open bag of groceries is horrifying and ought to move all of us to take whatever action we can to bring about a just resolution to this situation. And to see the mass graves calls to mind some of the most dark periods in our history as human beings.

But beyond the emotional impacts of witnessing, reading and observing these crimes against humanity, what troubles me is the story that Vladimir Putin and others in the Russian elite, including the state media, are trying to use as so-called justifications for these aggressions and for these very damaging things. In particular, we know that Vladimir Putin, at the outset of this war, at the outset of this invasion, sought to deny the existence of Ukrainian language, culture and identity.

We read now, at the same time that evidence and data is being collected, which we believe should someday be used to prosecute these war crimes perpetrated under Vladimir Putin, that at the very same time that people like Human Rights Watch and international observers are collecting this evidence, that there are those in Russian state media who are calling for the complete destruction of Ukrainian identity.

When we are up against such a clear articulation of hatred and denial of not only language and culture but also of humanity, to me, it speaks to the importance of why, in a jurisdiction like Manitoba, there is a need to set aside a month to continue recognizing the day, to resource the festivals in schools and churches that will continue to allow Ukrainian identity to continue and to flourish into the future.

Certainly, we stand with Ukraine. We support the courage of the Ukrainian people, who are fighting with all their might against Russian forces, and I think we've all been moved by President Zelensky.

But I guess for me the bill takes on an added meaning. At any time, we would support the celebration of Ukrainian heritage, for sure. But given what is happening and the existential threat to an independent Ukraine and to the people who constitute that nation, again, we must remember that a nation is not simply a line on a map, a nation is a people, a nation is their lives collectively articulated in the practice of a culture or religion, and an identity that with those things under threat, it becomes so much more important for us to take these measures, to support them in this way.

Some people sometimes diminish the importance of symbolism, and they say, oh, symbolism, that's just a symbolic gesture, and try to write things off like that. But speaking as somebody who's had to claw his way up, speaking as somebody who comes from a community that has had to fight for every single right and that has never had anything granted to us easily in this country, I can tell you from the bottom of my heart that symbolism does matter.

Symbolism is important because it is the thing that keeps you going when you question yourself as to why you are undergoing these travails. Symbolism matters because it is the light at the end of the tunnel that drives you to take another step forward.

And so this bill is a recognition day act, yes. But in the act of that recognition there is meaning and there is hope and there is motivation that can be delivered to a community, but if we reflect on the fact of how we've all been moved by this, I think there is meaning to be derived for all of us.

What I mean by that is this: we've heard the words of President Zelensky articulating how his conflict—the conflict of his nation, I should say—is not just about Ukrainian independence, but he also wraps that up in the values of democracy and liberty and freedom.

And so for all of us, including those of us who may not have been able to vote in previous parts of this country or this province's history, I think we've all been very, very moved and called to action to stand up in the name of liberty, in the name of freedom, and in the name of democracy.

* (10:30)

And so with that in mind, yes, this bill should move forward. Yes, there should be humanitarian assistance. There should be more humanitarian assistance. There should be more resettlement programs.

But where crimes against humanity that call to mind some of the darkest parts of our collective history are taking place, there must also be further action. There must be action to ensuring that those who are attempting to flee the atrocities are kept safe.

Our team is very clear as well, that lethal aid must be provided to Ukraine. Ukrainian people are fighting. They are fighting for themselves but they are also fighting for the things that we believe in, like democracy and liberty, and democracy and liberty must prevail.

And as the evidence of these crimes against humanity are being collected, there also needs to be leadership to ensure the chain of custody of that evidence is intact so that a future prosecution of war crimes against Putin and others can be successful.

So as we sit here today, stand in our places to speak in support of this bill—and I'm sure that every colleague will speak in support of this bill—we should also recommit to action. We should recommit to action: (1) with the recognition that when it comes to the situation in Ukraine, that Canada must be a leader at the international level for those things that I just articulated. And given what my colleague from La Vérendrye has said, what my colleagues from the other 56 constituencies will say, if Canada is to be a leader at the international level on the topic of the war in Ukraine, then Manitoba should play a leadership role among the provinces.

And so I would hope that, in addition to the support for this bill today, that we as legislators in Manitoba marshal that support and put action behind the words that we've all said recently, of stand with Ukraine.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot): Madam Speaker, I'd first of all like to thank the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Smook) for putting forward this bill. It's an important bill in front of this Legislature and I know many wish to speak to it. I'd like to thank the member for La Vérendrye for his passion. These are very troubling times for us as a world, destabilizing for us as a world, and we know that there are a lot of things that are taking place that are troubling.

So, I would like to reference that in the last 36 hours, the town of Bucha, B-u-c-h-a, has been liberated and the Ukrainian military has found that the killing of civilians by the Russian military was taking place. They have found several mass graves, and as President Biden has now referred to it as a war crime,

the potential of mass killings of civilians in Ukraine seems now to be a policy of the Putin military and of the government.

Even more troubling, there is an article today out in RIA Novestia [*phonetic*], N-o-v-o-s-t-i. It's an editorial by Timofei Sergeitsev, and he terms it: What Russia should do with Ukraine. If you haven't seen a perfect example of Russian chauvinism, it would be in that title. And it goes on to suggest that what needs to be done is the de-Ukrainianization of that land, and I quote: The idea of Ukrainian culture and identity is fake.

That is a article that just came out in the last 12 hours and, Madam Speaker, this would have been approved by Putin and by the Kremlin. If you understand the way the system works there, these kinds of articles are not produced—are not published just randomly. They don't have the same kinds of freedoms we have here. This would have been approved.

So, we stand here today in the Manitoba Legislature, way out on the Canadian Prairies where cool winds still blow and we have a lot of snow, and you wonder, so why this, why today?

In fact, I had the opportunity to ask the member for La Vérendrye the question. I explained the importance of September as Ukrainian heritage month. Why now? Also, could the member explain how his constituents and all members' constituents would be affected by this?

I would suggest that we are now facing the kind of things that we saw, whether it was the Holodomor, Holocaust, Great Leap Forward, killing fields, and the list goes on and on and on. We are at the potential moment in history of humankind where again we could see the massacre of civilians by another nation. And from what we understand, that has taken place. The President of the United States, who would have far more insight and far more briefings than we would have here, today, has now referred to it as a war crime.

So, of what value is it of us to debate—to be debating something like this? And I would put forward that we, as the Western world, must stand up. And again, we all don't have the same kind of means that a President of the United States, or Prime Minister of Canada, for instance, has far more say, far more sway. But I would suggest in every region of this country, every village, every town, every city and every province, we get up and talk about what's going on.

And how timely—and I'd say, for the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Smook)—how timely it is to have brought forward this motion. And yes, I have been in this Legislature for a few years. Maybe not quite as many as the—as her speaker—as the Speaker, however, we have been through many of these, and there were times when there was a MLA, Len Derkach, on the Conservative side, and Dave Chomiak was the member on the NDP side, and we did many of these kinds of resolutions and we had many of these debates, and it was always harmonious. And I'd like to thank the members opposite for their support of this as well, because this now transcends politics.

This now even transcends our regional jurisdictions or provincial jurisdictions. This, now, has become a world issue. And what we've seen in the last 36 hours has shown us that we must stand, and we must stand—we can't stand on the international stage and we don't go to international world conferences. This is our domain here in this Chamber. And we are doing our part.

And I hope that when this bill is done that we do send it to the Prime Minister and we do send it to the leaders of the opposition in Ottawa, and that we do send it to the Foreign Affairs Minister and perhaps, even, to the minister of defence. Because it says to our national leadership that it doesn't matter where we are in this country, that we support the Western civilization, and I would suggest that it is the entire world that is now, with horror, recoiling at what is going on in Ukraine. And that we stand with our leadership, and we stand united because we cannot and must not just stand by and let this take place.

So, we're going to declare September as Ukraine heritage month, and for those of us who come from a Ukrainian background—I've already pointed out to this Legislature, my father was born there, of German heritage, but was born in Ukraine in that beautiful town called Swojczowka which, I would point out to this Chamber, as they were being kicked out of their town, as they left, they could see the flames burning their village. It was burned down and razed. It is now nothing more than a field.

In fact, I think I pointed out to this Legislature, I had the opportunity to see approximately where it would have been and there was a farmer out working the field and there is no town of Swojczowka. The Russians destroyed it. It is their policy that when they kick people out, they destroy all the dwellings and everything else that exists because then there is nothing to go home to. And you can see that policy.

Unfortunately, now, they're also starting to take on the civilians in what we are starting to see is perhaps, a mass murder on quite a scale.

So, again, the question is, what do we do going forward? And I was listening to members opposite and other debates. So, what do we do going forward? What do we do as a Province? What do we do as individuals? And I think we have seen, in Manitoba, what we always do: we open up our hearts; we open up our wallets. The government of Manitoba has put forward more than a \$650,000 and then some, and we see that Manitobans are prepared to open up their homes.

We would like to ask the federal government—we saw one of the members of Parliament who we know in this Chamber quite well. He used to serve here with distinction and asked about, you know, how Canada—how Manitoba could do its part for Canada's effort with Ukraine.

* (10:40)

And we would like to ask the government of Canada if they would then start identifying a certain number that Manitoba would take. I believe Manitobans are prepared to step into the crease and be able to help out.

I got an email the other day asking for individuals who had some Ukrainian language skills, if they would be prepared to be greeters in the event that larger groups of Ukrainians arrive, that they could greet them. We have that beautiful hug rug at the Manitoba airport and they could greet them there, and greet them with open arms. These individuals will be devastated for the fact that not just that they have to leave their homes, but chances are they will have no homes to go to.

So it's important that we do our part. We can't—we all can't be speaking for the country. That's the Prime Minister and the federal government, but we can do our part here.

And that's, I think, the lesson that we take out of his Chamber, is that we do have the opportunity to speak for Manitoba and for all Manitobans, and we say, first of all, that we condemn the kind of killings, the war crimes that are being perpetrated upon the civilians of Ukraine—No. 1; that we are prepared to stand with Ukraine, and I understand the federal government is increasing their military aid to Ukraine. That is very important, and we support that as well.

But also that we will embrace and we will love and cherish and support and take care of anybody who comes to Manitoba from that war-torn country, and we will give them a warm place and we would do so with love and affection, and I know that members of this Chamber will be with that as well.

And I'd like to thank the member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Smook) for having brought this forward. Absolutely, we should proclaim September as Ukrainian heritage month.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I just want to take a couple of minutes to put a couple of words on the record here this morning.

So, first and foremost, I'll say miigwech to our colleague in the Chamber here for bringing forward Bill 223. It's an important bill and certainly everyone on this side of the House supports this bill. And so miigwech for that.

In the last three weeks, there's been a trickling of information coming in of reports of rape of Ukrainian women and girls. And, certainly, in the last 32, 36 hours, we've seen the proof of that, as more and more stories have come forward of Ukrainian women and girls tortured, raped, massacred, and even in one case, as I'm sure most people have seen, the pictures of a woman tied up and branded with a swastika.

Girls as young as 10 years old, little babies, being raped; Ukrainian women as senior as 60 years old, being raped and gang-raped by Russian soldiers. It is a grotesque testament to how savage Putin is to—as has been done for generations and generations—use sexual violence and rape against innocent women and children as a tool of war.

It is—we should all be angered. We should all be enraged at the images that are coming out of Ukraine right now in respect to the sexual violence against Ukrainian women and girls trying to flee a war and occupation of—let's be honest—a madman, a psychopath. And I know that, you know, we're not supposed to be saying those type of things, but he is savage.

I want to—in the last little while, some women, some survivors have actually come forward and filed formal complaints of rape and sexual violence against Russian soldiers to the prosecutor general of Ukraine.

And I want to just take a moment to acknowledge the profound courage that it takes for women to go forward with formal complaints of something that is so brutal. And so I lift up those women and the

courage that they had in moving forward with a formal complaint. A lot of words have been spoken here this morning about acts of war here that we are seeing and that Putin is a war criminal and should be brought to international justice.

Finally, I just want to say this, Madam Speaker. You know, there's been a lot of talk lately directed to the Russian people. And we know that the Russian people live under an oppressive regime, but it is also their responsibility to stand up, and I know that that's easier said than done, but it is their responsibility to stand up and demand an end to what we're seeing in the Ukraine, and certainly demand an end to the rape and sexual violence against women and girls. I encourage the Russian people to stand up, to stand up and demand this stop, and stand up to Putin, as easy as that may be for us to be saying that here in this Chamber.

And then, finally, to the women and the girls of Ukraine, to all the people of Ukraine, we on this side of the House, and certainly everybody in this Chamber, stand in solidarity with them and we are with them every step of the way.

Miigwech.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the member once again for bringing forward this legislation today, and I'll just speak briefly here because we want to ensure the legislation does pass as everyone here in this House is in support of it.

Madam Speaker, here in Manitoba, we have over 180,000 Manitobans with Ukrainian heritage, and it's overwhelmingly evident the support that we are all wanting to send and contribute, and that we all need to send and contribute to Ukraine. And there are many ways that we can be showing our support, in more ways than we are currently.

We know that those with Ukrainian heritage have contributed so much to our economy, to our diversity and to so many of us on individual levels. And this is in part why we have a responsibility of doing everything in our power right now to give back and to help save lives of those living and fleeing Ukraine right now.

I appreciate what has been included in this legislation, talking about the first Ukrainian immigrants arriving in Canada on September 7th, and why does—the month of September would be designated as Ukrainian heritage month. Appreciate the population of Ukrainian descent in Canada and how all this information and the statistics were shared in the legislation.

I personally really appreciate the Ukrainian famine and genocide, that it was included in the legislation—the Holodomor, Madam Speaker, something that I don't think we necessarily talk about enough here in these Chambers, considering how many people's lives here in Manitoba were affected by it.

I personally find myself reflecting on a trip that my father and I took to Ukraine just a few years back, Madam Speaker, and I remember spending time in and around the national museum for the Holodomor. And it was by far one of the most heartbreaking things I have ever experienced and witnessed and learned about, and you sort of carry it with you. It's a sense of somberness that—you do, you carry it with you for the rest of your life.

I catch myself thinking about the deep metro stations. I remember being in Ukraine thinking about the cool infrastructure of—like, these are metro stations you stand at the top of the escalator, Madam Speaker, and you cannot see the bottom. They are very, very long and deep underground, but now all I think about when I think about the metro stations are people hiding out in them, seeking safety.

I want to thank the member for sharing a little bit about his own cultural heritage and his family of origin. And I know it's not easy to share personal stories like that in these Chambers, but I think that is a really, really important part of introducing legislation like this, and I think it's very appropriate, and I'm very happy that this member was the member to bring this legislation forward.

* (10:50)

Madam Speaker, I think it's important to honour, in this legislation, that we also recognize the honour and bravery of Ukrainian people. The legislation should recognize the labour movement and the Ukrainian Labour Temple that is a great source of pride and a gathering place here today in Manitoba.

It's a beautiful building with a vibrant history that was built in 1919, and it stands as a cultural meeting place, symbolizing social optimism and opportunity. I am proud that it's still used to this day very regularly in the North End of Winnipeg.

With all the ongoing war crimes and atrocities happening right now in Ukraine, we do need to do more, and I think we've heard this from all members of the House who have spoken this morning already. And we know there are—I want to say small things we can do, as far as increasing the staff with the Provincial Nominee Program—there are small things we

can do with helping with documentation and assisting and resettling when Ukrainians begin coming to Manitoba.

I also think that we could be making things a little bit clearer. I know this was about a week ago and I still haven't received an answer, but I had someone reach out to me and said like, Cindy, if I pay for my friend to come here—they're currently in Poland; they fled from Ukraine to Poland—if I pay for their flight to come here, will they be allowed to stay in Winnipeg? And we should have answers for this already, Madam Speaker.

And I do think that this is an issue at large, at both—on the three levels of government, the federal level, provincial level and city level. And I think we could be better working together to get some of these answers clarified, Madam Speaker.

I would think we all need to do more. We need to be hands-on, we need to do everything in our power, and I'm hopeful that with working all together and supporting legislation unanimously like this that it's a positive step in that direction.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): Yes, thank you Madam Speaker, for allowing me to put a few words on the records, and also I want to thank my fellow colleague from La Vérendrye for bringing this bill forth.

Madam Speaker, we're all ready in Manitoba and we're waiting here for the federal government to bring Ukrainian refugees to Canada. I had the opportunity this past weekend to attend a fundraiser in Roblin, and we all know that west-central Manitoba is a real hub, and there's a lot of Ukrainians and there's a number events. This weekend there's going to be one in Russell to see those little toddlers, those four- and five-year-olds up in the stage Ukrainian dancing and dressed in their attire, and they were proud and grandpa and grandma, gida and baba, were there and watching and clapping them and they kept looking at them and knowing that they're—were the attention of their parents.

And culture is really important. I kind of look back, you know, generations come and go and all denominations, we all tend to lose culture over time, and it's very important for us to be able to maintain that type of culture, and this bill just does that forth.

I remember back in Cowan, you know, on Christmas Eve we put hay on the floor, you know, and

it was—it kind of was representation of the manger and where baby Jesus was born and all those kind of things. We would go on *Ukrainian spoken*. *Translation unavailable*. You know, you go around to the houses and it would be to try to prosper the upcoming season that the—it would be a bountiful crop, and we'd go there, and—*Ukrainian spoken*. *Translation unavailable*.

So on, and you'd go there and they'd—I remember the elderly babas would come to the door and they did not want the wheat put on their floor.

They would go and have a basin and they'd put it on the steps and they'd make sure that you threw the wheat into the steps because they didn't want to have to sweep up the mess after, and this was all kind of neat stuff that happened, and they would give you a nickel. And if they gave you a dime, wow, you hit pay dirt.

You know, we'd all be smiling and we'd always miss the morning of school at the Cowan Ridge to be able to experience that, and that type of culture is important—*Ukrainian spoken*. *Translation unavailable*—when we'd go on Ukrainian New Year's Eve and go to the windows and the families would be having their Ukrainian New Year's supper, and we would go ahead and we'd sing outside the window. Of course, we'd wait for the—for all the senior people in our group, like the ones that were in grade 11 and 12 because they knew the words and we'd just kind of have to move our lips to, you know, make those things happen.

So that's why it's important and, you know, we looked at a lot of the things that are going on in the world and, you know, we—our government, of course, provided the \$800,000 for humanitarian aid in Ukraine, \$650,000 to the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, \$150,000 to the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation. Our government waived the \$500 nominee program fee.

So, you know, when we look at it—and this is so important today for us to move this bill forward because right now is where our Ukrainian families and friends are looking for support and knowing that this Legislature today passes this bill will really give a boost to morale.

So with that, since we do have 180,000 Ukrainian Manitobans, our doors are open. We're waiting anxiously for the federal government to do their part, Madam Speaker. We're ready to welcome our Ukrainian friends and families. Manitobas are anxious and many communities are ready and we're seeing

that. So let's make it happen and let's get this bill passed today, and I won't say anything further so that we can give that support to our Ukrainian friends.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 223, The Ukrainian Heritage Month Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

Mr. Smook: We'd like to ask for—if it's a unanimous vote. Call the—

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to recognize it as a unanimous vote? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Smook: On a point of order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for La Vérendrye (Mr. Smook), on a point of order.

Mr. Smook: I'd like to thank everybody in the House for letting this bill move on. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: We appreciate the member's comments, but it was not a point of order.

The honourable—[*interjection*]—and I had indicated that it was a good point but not a point of order. I had indicated that.

* * *

Hon. Derek Johnson (Acting Government House Leader): Yes, I'd like to ask that the House consider the resolution 9, recognizing—[*interjection*] Oh, sorry. Yes.

So we can do the motion, I'd like to see if the House can recognize that it's 11 o'clock.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to call it 11 o'clock? [*Agreed*]

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 9—Recognizing Climate Resiliency and Green Strategies in Manitoba Transportation

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and the time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on

Recognizing Climate Resiliency and Green Strategies in Manitoba Transportation, brought forward by the honourable member for McPhillips.

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): Madam Speaker, I move, second by the MLA for Brandon East,

WHEREAS it is essential for the province to move to a more sustainable transportation system; and

WHEREAS changes must be made to reduce the carbon footprint of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS shared streets are an integral part of the plan when exploring options that lessen dependence on fossil fuels, and

WHEREAS municipalities within the province had utilized these shared streets during the pandemic enabling many people to take advantage of these new options for active transportation which allowed them to feel safer using roads that were moved back to a shared space; and

WHEREAS any improvement to pedestrian, cyclist, or active transportation methods help provide more options for Manitobans to make a carbon reducing choice easier; and

WHEREAS the rising cost and impact of fossil fuels are causing many Manitobans to reconsider their personal transportation options to reduce their impact; and

WHEREAS improving access and expanding the options for reduced emission transportation is a concrete step to reducing the environmental impact of this province.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend that the provincial government for introduce legislation that will allow for the testing of reduced emission transportation and better shared paths for active transportation in order to improve the climate resiliency of Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for McPhillips, seconded by the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson),

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba commend the provincial government for introducing legislation that will allow for the testing of reduced emission transportation and better shared paths for active transportation in order to improve the climate resiliency of Manitoba.

Mr. Martin: It's always a please to rise in the House and be part of the democratic process, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Brad Michaleski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Especially in light—and I congratulate, the MLA for La Vérendrye, and all members of this House for passing the bill to move it on to the next stage for recognizing Ukrainian heritage month.

* (11:00)

Madam Speaker, we've seen and we heard from all members of this House and, in particular, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine) when she was talking about the horrific crimes against women in Ukraine. And we've heard from all members—images of individuals being shot in the back of the head, tied and mass graves; and clearly, the war crimes going on. And yet, we in this Chamber—and we in this Chamber across Manitoba are privileged, privileged that we get to stand here and be part of democracy, of how democracy should work.

And while there are times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it can, for lack of a better word, be partisan and go off the rails, I know Madam Speaker has actually sent up some correspondence recently urging us to improve our decorum. But when we see in Ukraine mayors being—and their families—being arrested and rounded up in that suppression of democracy, it just—it should make all of us value it that much more.

That being said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the outlets and one of the consequences of COVID—when we were all locked and restricted and limited, in terms of interaction and ability to be out and about—what we saw was an increasing number of Manitobans wanting to reconnect with nature; reconnect with being outside; reconnect with neighbours and friends but in a socially distant manner; in a healthy, responsible manner.

And so a lot of people began walking, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And with that came the municipal government, the City of Winnipeg, introducing and bringing forward an open streets plan, and they designated a number of sections of the city, a number of city streets. I mean, Wellington is obviously a terrific example, as it's often been designated as a primary pedestrian corridor on certain days, but the City of Winnipeg expanded this.

Now there were, of course, issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as there always is when governments attempt to do things—that something that hasn't been done

before and despite, you know, obviously the support of Winnipeggers and Manitobans for the idea of open streets, there was some legislative concern about liability and such.

And so I think it's important that we bring in legislation to make those kind of corrections so that everyone can have that opportunity in a safe manner to be outside and enjoy not only the physical benefits that comes with activity but also the mental health benefits that come with that kind of activity. Because we all know very much that Manitobans' and, indeed, Canadians' mental health has taken a bit of a hit during the last two years. A number of people have struggled.

So, again, fostering and allowing that opportunity for people to reconnect while reducing our greenhouse emissions, I think, is a win-win, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The other component that we need to look at—and the other component that this resolution speaks to—is the introduction of e-vehicles. And we've seen an explosion—I remember late last year going to Alter Ego Sports and Woodcock Cycle to find some parts for my bicycle. And it was incredible talking to them, that they couldn't keep the supply up—and obviously there was a component to that of supply chain issues but there was a larger component that citizens, in large, had just seized on bicycles as a viable means of transportation.

And we see that; we see that all around. We see the fat bikes that we've all seen in the winter along the Assiniboine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and also what's becoming increasingly popular in terms of e-transportation are these pedal-assist bikes, in which—you know, whether you buy it as is, as a pedal-assist with a battery component or whether or not you take a current bicycle you own and go—and online and buy yourself an upgrade kit to allow for that pedal assist.

But I know, in talking to a number of seniors who have pedal-assist bikes, they value that opportunity to not only—so that they can exercise but they can do that much more, but like so many people and so many cyclists, they want to ensure—and we want to ensure—that they are, indeed, safe and protected from vehicle traffic.

So it is important that we take a look and that we designate and we assist municipalities in designated open streets that allow for the safe transportation and the safe usage by pedestrians as well as alternative green means of transportation, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So as we move forward into this summer, I have no doubt that we're going to have any—an increasing

number of municipalities looking at open streets and looking at this idea. And so, when we look at the statistics, I mean, they're very clear in terms of what municipalities need to do. They need to look at probably a minimum of three kilometres in terms of a continuous path, would be in the best.

But more importantly, we need to ensure that when those streets are blocked off, that it's clearly marked and signed, so that, again, that we can 'product' those pedestrians and that e-transportation. Because this is where we need to go as a society, whether it is us, as individuals, 'bicelling' to work, whether it's us, as individuals, using mass transit, we all have a role in addressing the climate crisis that we have here on this planet.

And while in and of itself this action by our government will obviously only incrementally move us towards any kind of greenhouse goals, but like anything else, Mr. Deputy Speaker, good or bad, it all adds up. And so any opportunity that we can facilitate Manitobans utilizing or engaging in new technologies that move away from fossil fuel use, any time that we can engage and allow Manitobans that encouragement to ride bicycles or other means of active transportation, whether its to improve their physical or mental, or emotional health, I think it's incumbent upon all of us to do that.

And we saw first-hand last summer that this is what Manitobans want, and this is what they're looking for from their governments, whether it's municipal or provincial. And they're looking for it, just not on city streets in that designation, but all throughout the province of Manitoba.

So, as new developments come in, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see—and we all see that active transportation, that active component of those communities, whether it's in Bridgewater or a new development just out in southwest St. Paul, you constantly see that development as part—that active transportation as part of the larger development, so that we can meet those needs.

So again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we all need to do our part. We all need to take a look at our own fossil fuel consumption. We need to take a look at those alternatives, whether it is an e-bike or any others, but we also have to understand too, when we look at other alternative means, especially most of them today seem to be battery-related, there are environmental consequences with the use of batteries; in particular, the rare earth elements required in a lot of the production.

And we simply don't have a lot of this within Canada, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The majority of—actually, is in—South America has the largest deposits and as well as Africa, the continent of Africa, also has significant deposits; but again, difficult to get to, very environmentally damaging to get to. So again, there are consequences. But again, like any citizen, through proper research and involvement and knowledge, we can make those best choices.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I look forward to discussion and being involved in the democratic process this morning. And with those few words, I thank you for your time.

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 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.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): Thank you to the member for bringing forward this resolution.

I'm certain that members in my constituency would appreciate getting back to the shared street model, and having more opportunity for active transportation. But if we're going to be talking about climate resiliency and green strategies, we have to go further.

So I'd like to ask the member who brought this forward if he can tell me when his government will be implementing the recommendations from the Expert Advisory Council to the minister of sustainable development on their recommendations for Green Transportation Strategy for Manitoba.

* (11:10)

When will that be implemented, and will it be before the deadline before December 2022?

Mr. Shannon Martin (McPhillips): I thank my colleague for the question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can all play—the goal here is not to get involved in partisan debate. I mean, we could point out the Auditor General's previous comments about the NDP's climate plan. I think his quote was written on the back of a napkin.

I think the resolution's clear. This is about ensuring that miss—municipalities have the legislative

regulatory needs and requirements to ensure a safe open streets model for their citizens.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Good morning, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, and I'd like to thank my good friend and colleague from McPhillips for this resolution this morning. It's very important resolution, especially for the cities in our province here.

Can the member from McPhillips please tell me some of the benefits that open streets can have here in Manitoba?

Mr. Martin: I want to thank my colleague for that question.

The benefits are numerous and they're evident as we see in our own activity when we're out and about, whether it's walking our dogs, whether it's walking with a family, whether it's walking with our neighbours.

So not only do we have a reduction in terms of greenhouse gases—the vehicles that are left in their driveways as people use other means, but more importantly we allow individuals to re-engage with each other in a safe manner, that they are protected, and more importantly, that they can assist and rebuild their mental and physical health going forward.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): Just a question about—that relates to transit; I mean, which is connected to active transportation simply because people walk to transit.

Has there been any consideration as part of this to help the City of Winnipeg or other municipalities with the purchase of electric buses from New Flyer, which would be a natural fit for Manitoba?

Mr. Martin: I thank my colleague for that question.

And while electric buses do provide, obviously, benefits in terms of greenhouse reductions, it's important to remember that in the open streets in the summer last year and going forward, there will be no vehicle traffic allowed on that, whether it's a car, whether it's a bus or whether it's a semi-truck.

The idea is to designate safe corridors for pedestrians and for individuals that are using e-powered vehicles, whether it's like e-powered scooters and those kind of devices. So larger vehicles that would pose a threat to pedestrians will not be allowed and have not been allowed under the open streets concept.

Ms. Naylor: I just—I want to correct misinformation on the record. Buses still use the open streets concept, so that is a mistake that we just heard.

And so for—I'm going to also just repeat the title of this PMR: Recognizing Climate Resiliency and Green Strategies in Manitoba Transportation.

And I think it's a fair question to ask the member one more time if he has any idea when his government will be implementing the Green Transportation Strategy for Manitoba that was recommended to the minister of sustainable development from your own expert advisory council. It's directly related to this bill—

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Member's time is expired.

Mr. Martin: I thank my colleague for that question.

I think my colleague is attempting to use this as a question period to the minister responsible for the environment. This is clearly outside the bounds of the resolution.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm just urging all Manitobans to make use of open streets, to use them in a safe manner, and to ensure that we are all doing our part to ensure a sustainable environment not only for our children but for our grandchildren. I think we all have a role to play in this, and to take the quote, it all adds up.

So all our small steps, whether it's, you know, using LED light bulbs, whether it's getting more fuel-efficient vehicles or whether it's simply walking to work—

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Member's time has expired.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Again, I, too, want to thank the member from McPhillips for bringing this very important resolution forward.

We have a lot of history in rural Manitoba, especially in another small city, which is Brandon, on the open streets concept.

I'm just wondering if the member can explain if he has any concerns or heard of any concerns with the additional foot traffic and bus traffic and vehicle traffic. Are there any concerns with traffic congestion?

Mr. Martin: I'll also, just before I respond to the minister's or the member's question, I'd like to thank

him for his hospitality during the Royal Manitoba Winter Fair recently.

But that being said, obviously, safety of individuals, of pedestrians is paramount of any jurisdictions when they designate an open street, and so, ensuring the safe separation of vehicle traffic to pedestrians, to individuals on e-vehicles, e-scooters, is of paramount importance. And we've seen that the statistics, whether from MPI, have shown that there is decreased accidents, whether it's vehicle-vehicle accidents, whether vehicle-pedestrian, when these models are used, and used appropriately.

Ms. Naylor: The Progressive Conservative government cut 50-50 funding for transit.

Does the member support restoring 50-50 funding for transit as part of a green transportation strategy?

Mr. Martin: I appreciate my colleague's support for open streets.

This kind of concept is, as I said, is a proven concept. The legislation that this—that we're supporting in this resolution will build upon the success of open streets that we saw last year in the city of Winnipeg and expand it beyond but, more importantly, give municipalities the legislative wherewithal to ensure that they are legally protected, their liability's protected, but that we allow for the expansion of this opportunity for individuals to use every mode of energy-efficient, climate-resilient transportation that's suitable, that allows us to not only enjoy the fresh air and enjoy the outside, but more importantly take action—

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Nesbitt: Now, I know my colleague for McPhillips is a very active person. He's often out cycling. I know that.

I'm just wondering if he can tell the House about his experiences with open streets in Winnipeg, here, last year.

Mr. Martin: I thank my colleague for that question, and like many, many Manitobans, I made use of open streets riding around West St. Paul at times, and bicycling.

And it's a great opportunity to not only engage with constituents and neighbours, but, more importantly, it's an opportunity for you to re-engage as an individual into your own personal wellness, whether it's physical wellness or emotional or mental health.

But it also leaves you with that knowledge and that knowing that you have done something that makes a difference in the larger climate resiliency issue.

Again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all actions, no matter how small make a difference—

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The honourable member's time has expired.

Ms. Naylor: I note that the preamble to this PMR specifically talks about—and I'll just read it from the notes—improving access and expanding the options for reduced-emission transportation being a concrete step to reduce the environmental impact of this province.

So, in addition to open streets, can the member tell us what his government is doing to make zero-emission vehicles and public transportation more accessible to Manitobans?

Mr. Martin: I thank my colleague for that question because it is an important question when we deal with zero-emission vehicles. And the member would be fully aware that many individuals, whether here in Manitoba or North America, are, indeed, looking at zero-emission vehicles. But the challenge has become one of supply and demand.

Most individuals now, and I was actually out this weekend talking to some auto places, and they were noting it's about a two-year wait for a zero-emission vehicle like a Tesla. So, obviously, there are significant, significant issues. That's not to say that we shouldn't all be making an effort on an individual basis and as a community basis, to make a difference in a safe, sustainable manner.

* (11:20)

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): The time for questions has expired.

Debate

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

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I will comment that the open streets concept is definitely something that many folks in Winnipeg have been seeking. There was an enormous amount of disappointment in my community last year when it was discovered that, you know, something in the provincial highway act prevented the City from being able to allow the open streets concepts that they had allowed in 2020.

There are definitely some challenges, you know. I've certainly seen that on Wolseley Avenue. There's

challenges with managing how the streets are shared, and as I mentioned earlier, even with the open streets concept there is a bus that runs through Wolseley. There are delivery trucks that run through Wolseley. And some folks need to access that street, even if it's just for a block, because it's literally the only way to get out of their home to some other part of the city.

So, there's still challenges. There's issues for the City—to the municipality to work out, but I know that many, many folks of Wolseley will absolutely welcome this and the folks across the province, as well.

So, you know, I'm grateful that those changes are being made in the highway and transportation bill. I—on the other hand, I'm pretty confused by this resolution because a resolution that talks about green strategies and Manitoba transportation but the member can only speak to people walking or riding bikes is missing something.

Obviously, active transportation is a really important part of our fight about—against climate change, but if we can't have some movement; rapid, rapid movement in this province on electric vehicles, on electric transportation, on electric school buses, on all kinds of ways for reducing carbon emissions, then we're not going to get anywhere. We're just—continue to fall further and further behind the rest of the country.

So I reference earlier during the question period that Manitoba—this government—has an expert advisory committee and I've read all the reports that have come out of this committee, and particularly the last two. This one pertaining to active transportation I think is actually an incredible piece of work. I think that the folks who have been in this role have really put together a meaningful plan and recommendation.

But what I see—I just don't see any action on it. So the timeline from this plan, that I'm looking at it right now, is that Manitoba should develop a green transportation strategy that will be approved by the minister no later than December 31st, 2022. So we haven't hit that deadline yet, but when a member of the government can't even comment on whether the strategy is in play—like, even to say it's being worked on, even to call—you know, I've heard it tons of times in this room, you know, there's a committee working on that, stay tuned, you know, we'll have news coming soon. But the minister can't—the member couldn't even say that, which really concerns me that nothing's been happening.

So, further, the recommendations states that the strategy will be made available to the public. It will include a strategic direction that's consistent with but not limited to the recommended areas outlined below, and there's certainly pages of recommendations. I'm sure all of you would enjoy a read-through if you want to take a look at that report yourself.

But it also asks for a supplementary document containing an implementation plan that identifies immediate short terms of actions as well as long-term actions that reduce transportation emissions in sustainable and enduring ways. And there's recognition that activities consistent with the EAC recommendations should occur in advance of the completion and approval of the strategy.

So it's making it very clear and it says: Early success in reducing transportation-related GHG emissions means that you have to start now. The strategy itself might not be approved until December—that's the deadline. Or maybe it won't be approved at all within the term of this government, the way things are going, but that is the expectation; but the further expectation is that a number of things will already be taking place.

So that means funding, you know, perhaps that means rebates for people who want to buy electric vehicles. Perhaps that means investing in infrastructure throughout the province so that regardless of where people live, that they could take advantage of an electric vehicle option. Perhaps it means a comprehensive education strategy so that people understand the advantages and the importance of making a shift to electric vehicles. Perhaps it means going back to not only 50-50 funding for the City of Winnipeg's transportation system, but perhaps it means specifically, you know, working with the federal government to ensure the implementation of zero-emission buses, you know, well before, you know, it's too late. And this Province just hasn't done a lot around, you know, around this.

So it's clear that the member isn't at all familiar with this document or any of these plans, but I suggest that he takes a look at this on the website if he actually wants, you know, a resolution like this to have any meaning or have any teeth. It has to be about more than folks who have the ability and the means and the physical ability to walk or ride their bikes. There has to be a plan that works for everyone in this province.

We know that transportation accounts for a quarter of Canada's carbon emissions and that this

government needs to invest in the necessary infrastructure and enact green strategies in Manitoba transportation—public transit, as I've already mentioned, but we also know that so far this government hasn't really taken the climate crisis seriously. And I love open streets, don't get me wrong. But I'm going to say if this is the best the government can offer as a climate strategy in six years, we're in serious trouble.

When this government is not cutting highway spending, they're cutting public transit spending. They ended the 50-50 transit funding deal that municipalities came to rely on, and we know that many Manitoba workers, families and seniors rely on public transit. I've personally used public transit in two different cities for 37 years as my primary mode of transportation. It's really only recently, since the pandemic, that I've made some changes in that, but I'm pretty personally connected with that mode of transportation, what it means for people, who rides the bus, and, you know, who I talked to and saw on the bus every single day for years.

I know what an essential component it is to Manitoba hitting its carbon reduction goals, and it keeps commuters off the road. It reduces traffic; it reduces emissions; it reduces traffic accidents. It certainly reduces the—kind of the amount of congestion that we might find in the downtown. It makes it a more walkable, livable place for people to shop and work and live. Better transit simply improves the lives of people, of all Manitobans, whether they're students, workers or seniors. But this government has failed to improve transit and has made it less affordable for Manitobans to use.

Instead of investing in a modern transit system to meet the growing needs of our province, this PC government decided upon a regressive action that will make public transit less effective in a time when it's even more important. And ending the 50 per cent agreement has caused cuts to service. It's caused cancellation of projects and it has increased the fares.

And in addition to the lack of affordability of Winnipeg's transit, the—this government has failed to present a plan for Winnipeg Transit to go electric. We know that the government's had expert advice on this electrification of buses; they just are refusing to act. And they keep shifting Manitoba's—or, sorry, refusing to act to begin shifting Manitoba's fleet to electric power.

We also know Manitoba's electric buses are ready to be produced. There's lower operating costs, projected capital cost reductions. You know, I'm sure

many of you are aware of Winnipeg-based New Flyer. It's an organization I've been aware of for some time, and I think it was maybe just last year because the pandemic delayed things, but I got to finally have a tour of their facility. We asked a lot of important questions about the ability to scale up in order to meet Manitobans' needs, and it's very clear that this company could do that. And regardless of whether, you know, I would hope that Manitoba would invest in a Manitoba company, but regardless, there's multiple competitors on the market to allow this to happen.

* (11:30)

And Manitoba is so far behind cities like Vancouver, Victoria, Ottawa, Toronto, even the province of PEI and multiple other places across the country have managed to do this.

So thank you for bringing this resolution forward, but I suggest that you take it back to the drawing table and improve it.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): I'm proud to stand up here for a few minutes and put a few words on the record in support of this resolution put forward by my honourable friend from McPhillips.

Our government is working hard to ensure that green alternatives are supported to help support the climate resiliency of this province.

You know, more people in recent years have been taking advantage of active transportation, especially during the pandemic, and this piece of legislation to improve active transportation, especially in the cities, I think is very important.

More Manitobans are always seeking out green transportation options, and they need accessibility in order for those to happen. The price of fuel these days, I think will make people rethink their mode of transportation, especially when they're travelling short distances here in the city.

I know in the country it's a little bit different, and you know, myself, two years ago, I decided I was going to go on a walking plan every day and, you know, I enjoy my walks in my community of Shoal Lake. I guess I—you'd call that active transportation, taking yourself around.

In Shoal Lake, I think—and many small towns in rural Manitoba, we have a lot of open streets. You rarely see cars on some streets. I live on a street that, you know, fronts on a park, and you often see people on three-wheel trikes, bicycles, people walking,

walking their dogs, and certainly in a small town you can use active transportation a lot more because you're not hindered by all the traffic that you have here in the city of Winnipeg.

So, you know, being a rural MLA, I had to get a little background on this open streets concept here in Winnipeg, and I understand last year the City of Winnipeg conducted the pilot project that converted 14 streets into open streets.

So, the City of Winnipeg allowed people to walk on these streets and utilize active transportation to replace that automobile traffic for a few hours by temporarily limiting vehicle access. So that was a great thing, but without cars, you know, streets are a massive public space where you can walk and not worry about traffic coming behind you or in front of you. So it was a great thing.

However, municipalities discovered that The Highway Traffic Act didn't support open streets. So I want to thank my colleague, the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (Mr. Piwniuk) for introducing a bill in the Legislature earlier this session that will take care of some of the problems that municipalities had with open streets here, especially in Winnipeg and in Brandon, Selkirk; the bigger cities.

Last summer, I was out in Kelowna, BC, and I observed a project there with e-scooters—*[interjection]* E-scooters. My friend here is asking what was Kelowna, and I said e-scooters. You know, I didn't try out these e-scooters, they looked a little daunting, but many people were taking these e-scooters. They use credit cards, they get the e-scooter, they travel wherever they want, they drop it off, everything's GPS enabled there, and it was quite slick.

And each night these e-scooters are charged fully, I guess, by the companies. I think there's three or four companies in Kelowna that's doing that right now, and I couldn't believe how 'populay' they were in the downtown area of Kelowna. And I think any of you familiar with Kelowna will know, it's maybe not the open streets concept, because there's lots of pathways in downtown Kelowna that these were on, but they were also on sidewalks, on streets as well in the downtown area.

So, you know, this project is being then—the City of Kelowna is monitoring the results of this and from what I've heard it's been a great success. I think at the start, they were worried about vandalism to these scooters and things, but I never seen any of that

there and I kind of marveled at, you know, four or five scooters sitting in a drop-off location when I went out for a walk at seven in the morning, and I just marveled that there was no vandalism to these at all, but—so it was a great project, and I think that's the type of active transportation I think this bill is looking to accomplish here in Manitoba with electric bikes.

My friend from McPhillips has been investigating an electric bike, and I think the cost of electric bikes is still pretty high. I think that needs to come down. Something like Teslas, electric cars, I think they're all going to come down as we move forward here and more and more manufacturers are making them and cities embrace active transportation even more.

So, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, I think that that's all I really want to say today about active transportation. I think the more active all us—of us can be, I think the healthier we're going to be, and less stress on our health-care system, which we need, and longer lives for all of us here. So I fully support this resolution this morning and I hope my colleagues will, as well.

Thank you.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): It's good to have an opportunity to put a few words on the record in response to this resolution. It is indeed a positive thing to see this government exploring the, you know, expansion of open streets and to support the testing of lower emissions vehicles like e-scooters, et cetera. This is positive and it is a step in the right direction.

But respectfully, no commendments are in order here to this government. The actions that are proposed here barely even scrape the surface of the fundamental problem that we're facing in this province in terms of a runaway emissions issue. And we've seen little to no action of any kind from this government in taking real steps, real measures to actually work to reduce emissions in this province, especially as it relates to transportation emissions, which are our fastest growing area of emissions. And in fact, under this government, we've seen emissions grow year after year after year, and that's not spin, that's just fact.

And so, you know, that's the fundamental challenge that we face here in this province, but we've seen nothing at all. No action, no policy from this government that's actually responding to that core problem that we're facing, that fundamentally our planet is facing.

And, you know, while those emissions in Manitoba are skyrocketing, Manitobans are starting to

feel the impacts of climate change. We're seeing the climate crisis here at home. Last summer we saw wildfires knock out power to two communities, and they suffered for months on end without access to power. We're seeing droughts impact our farmers. And, you know, we've seen municipalities declare a threat of the Red River possibly running dry.

So these issues are starting to come home. We're feeling these things here, now, in Manitoba. And yet while Manitobans are experiencing that, while we're seeing this happen, this government continues to actively contribute to making that problem worse. And that's a real concern, I think, for everyday Manitobans that are right to be worried about what they're seeing happening in the world around them.

And so instead of action, what we've seen from this government is a lot of greenwashing; a lot of, you know, playing around, nibbling around the edges. We've set up a carbon savings account system here in this province that allows the government to continuously kick the bucket down the road, no real targets of any kind that commits the government to actually needing to genuinely make an effort to reduce emissions in this province.

And you know, in response to those critiques what we often hear from members of this government is that, well, you know, we've made our investments. We've invested in hydro historically, so we don't need to do that. It's a very bizarre argument because, of course, only a fraction of the energy we use is renewable. The vast majority of the energy we use in this province is carbon-based. And yet, again, no action and just continued refusal to do anything or to take any genuine actions from this government.

And in fact, their own Climate and Green Plan, which commits to making Manitoba supposedly the greenest place in Canada, doesn't even mention decarbonization. It doesn't even mention that as a key focus or one—as one of its pillars, completely ignores that.

So what does that say about their perspective on the future of this province or the future that they want to leave for our kids? It says that they're not paying attention to that. It says that they're ignoring that. And they're ignoring the realities that the, you know, the IPCC, the international panel on climate change, laid out for us, which is, you know, a disastrous future if we fail to take action.

* (11:40)

And Manitoba, while we are only part of the broader issue, we do need to step up and do our part. We've fallen so incredibly far behind the rest of this country in taking action, especially as it relates to greening transportation.

We can look at news—zero-emission vehicle registrations in other provinces in Canada: BC in Q3 of 2021, 13 per cent of all new vehicles were electric vehicles; Quebec, 10 per cent during the same quarter; Manitoba, 1.6 per cent. This is how we measure up or how we stack up to the other provinces in this country that are in a similar position to us, that have immense hydroelectric wealth. And we see those other provinces taking action to leverage that wealth to help their populations to do better, to live healthier lives, to save money, to help contribute to a cleaner energy future. But here, we've done nothing; we have the second lowest EV adoption rate in Canada.

We see other provinces committing to transitioning their fleet vehicles, to transitioning them entirely over to zero emissions by 2040. Manitoba has zero commitment—no action of any kind. Other provinces are offering thousands in incentives to help their citizens be able to take part in moving to a cleaner energy approach to transportation and moving towards the electrification of their vehicles. In Manitoba, zero; we don't—we haven't done anything at all to help ensure that Manitobans can be beneficiaries of the cost savings that can be generated by moving to an electric vehicle, if they're able to afford one.

We've also seen them make cuts to public transit instead of investing in public transit. You know, we're here again talking about—the resolution speaks to the value of looking at lowering emissions in this province, and yet, this same government that's put forward this resolution has actually cut funding to transit.

How can they stand behind that? That makes zero sense. We're moving backwards, and, as a result, transit fares in Winnipeg have been forced to go up. We've seen cuts to routes. Less and less people are able to be able to rely on transit because this government has decided to make cuts where we should have been making investments.

Other provinces have had mandates to require electric-vehicle-charging infrastructure be put in new buildings. Again, nothing in this province; a huge missed opportunity where we're committing more and more people to buying gas vehicles because they don't have a choice, because they have nowhere to charge

when they're living in their, maybe, condominium or their apartment building.

We've seen other provinces invest millions in active transportation—again, no meaningful action from this government to speak of. So we're just—we miss opportunity after opportunity and, you know, overall the biggest concern here that I think we can point to is that there's been zero investment from this province in expanding access to electric-vehicle-charging infrastructure.

If you own an electric vehicle in Manitoba or if you're thinking about owning one, you're probably thinking twice about that because you don't know if you can actually take a trip somewhere. You can't rely on getting access to that because the government hasn't made a single investment in that—nothing.

Think about how embarrassing that is in a province as wealthy as ours in terms of our access to hydroelectric energy. We have the opportunity here to create a huge explosion in the number of people who transition over to electric vehicles but we're not able to do that. We're not able to help people transition because this government has failed to make any investments.

We need to make investments in active transportation infrastructure. We need to restore funding to transit, 50-50 funding. We need to do that and we now—we need to ensure that we allow our municipalities to move towards functional transit so people can ensure that they can rely on buses being there when they need to be there. We need to help municipalities move towards electrifying their transit fleets.

We need to ensure people can have greater access to car share; things like Peg City co-op so that they can expand their fleet so more Manitobans can actually, instead of having to buy a vehicle, can rely on ride share. That's an excellent way to go but again, this government has done nothing to support that.

We need a plan to expand access to EV charging. That's a mandatory thing we need to see from this government—again, no action. That has to happen and we need to see some support for consumers who may want to buy an electric vehicle so that they can be part of that transition, so that they can afford to do that and they can be beneficiaries of the savings here.

The opportunity for this province is massive. It's a huge opportunity, not only to clean our air, to create healthier communities but to reduce transportation costs for Manitobans, to increase revenues for Hydro, to grow our economy, as my colleague spoke to. We

have a bus manufacturer right here in Winnipeg that could actually produce the electric buses that could help to serve Manitobans, and yet we've done nothing.

We need to make those investments, we need to do that, and most importantly—not only for economic reasons, not only for reasons that will help to increase revenues for Hydro, which these investments would do—but most importantly so that we can leave a future livable planet for our kids, that is really what's at stake here, and that's what this government has failed to consider.

It's clear that they haven't taken that to heart, and we need to make sure that we make these investments to make it so that Manitobans can actually have access to greener transportation, cleaner transportation. This resolution does not go far enough.

I thank you, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface): In principle, this is a fine resolution. I think it suffers from—it's kind of thing that's called the tyranny of low expectations, simply in that it's commending the provincial government for introducing legislation.

I sometimes joke when people thank me for any work that I do, is that the headline should be hero politician does job, but this is—again, this is an extremely low bar to set in terms of—and that is a—and given the fact that even in the last two weeks there have been rising clamour from the IPCC and others saying we're at a tipping point, that it's absolutely critical that we have bold action that's—this is not what we're seeing, just introducing legislation.

There are enormous things that could have been done, but we've sort of seen 30 years or so of greenwashing from governments of both stripes in Manitoba. It's often been mentioned that the Auditor General had had a report about—that under the NDP that there were inadequate measures as far as greenhouse—tackling climate change. And there's been a lot of putting it to the side since then.

And it's—even in the last few years it's become incredibly clear how important it is when we talk about supply chain issues. I was at a—the western lumber conference the other day, and when we talked about their supply chain shortages, a lot of it has to do with disasters related to climate change; that there was a massive storm off British Columbia that wiped out rail and roads, there have been huge storms in the Gulf of Mexico that have wiped out places that make resin.

All these—but and—what's happening is that these are the results, we're seeing inflation and supply chain crises being driven by climate change. And it is also true that Manitoba, of all the jurisdictions in Canada and many jurisdictions of the world, few jurisdictions have more to benefit and have more capacity to act on this issue than Manitoba does.

It doesn't have to focus entirely on electric vehicles. There are things we can actually achieve; enormous amounts of change by just having better transit, by letting people get out of their cars so that they don't all have to climb in—so you don't have traffic jams with traffic backed up for miles with one person in every car; that we actually have effective and functional transit in—both in Winnipeg and across Manitoba, both within municipalities and between municipalities, should be a goal, because we've seen that the collapse of inter-city buses. We were more than happy to pay for the—for—to help people get around within the city, which is important, but it's also something we should be considering, in order to make sure that people in remote rural areas also have access to transportation as well.

There are tremendous opportunities around electrification that we should be investing in, and this—these are very much baby steps. When we're talking about carbon footprints, these are baby steps, and when we need to be making great strides, and we need to be making them as quickly as possible.

So I do commend the member for McPhillips (Mr. Martin) for bringing this forward, modest though it be.

So I will—that being said, is that we need—we really need to be making much more significant investments, and there are lots—there are all sorts of ideas that are out there that have been extremely positive, great innovation in ways in which we can all harness and work together on this. It doesn't matter whether you live in the city or whether you are a farmer, that there are things that farmers can do as well to help sequester carbon, and it's something we should all be working towards.

So, with that, I'll thank you very much and I'll leave those comments on the record.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): It's—cognizant of the time, I just want to put a few words on the record in support of what this resolution does.

When we look at active transportation, whether it be the open streets, whether it be working with municipalities to create bicycle lanes, this resolution

is to recognize the initiatives that are put forth by the municipality. In this case, we are talking open streets with the City of Winnipeg.

* (11:50)

And I think it's important that we, as provincial legislators, stand behind the commitment that we make with our municipalities. Yes, this is a time to debate. This is a time to stand up in the House, put your views on record, to go back and forth and try to understand the other views.

But the resolution itself is to support an initiative that the City of Winnipeg has taken in trying to and in establishing a program that puts out active transportation.

I know, in Brandon, we have a bike path that goes around the entire city and you can certainly walk it, you can bike it. It takes a little while because it does go around the entire city, but it is there.

We also have Lorne Avenue, which is a bike-sharing idea where you—to share the road campaign. So they're out there. So it's initiatives like this that help us recognize green transportation and as the member from Wolseley talks about, the initiatives for green transportation—absolutely one hundred per cent, I totally agree.

I actually chaired in Brandon, for a number of years, their environment committee. And not on—in my duties in any way, shape or form when I was on city council. This was outside of city council, and I sat on the committee for, I believe, three years and then I chaired it for a number of years until 2016.

To this day, they still share their invites to their meetings and the minutes of their meetings with me because green initiatives, environmental issues need to be a concern for all of us.

So again, I totally support the resolution. Is there more that we need to do as a government? One hundred per cent there is more we need to do. But there is certainly no fault at taking the opportunity to congratulate the City of Winnipeg.

With that, I will sit down and hopefully ask for the question.

Thank you.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): I appreciate the opportunity to put some words on the record with regards to this particular resolution here this morning.

And I just wanted to start by sort of picking up where the member for St. James (Mr. Sala) left off, and that is on missed opportunities. You know, he was talking a lot about the missed opportunities when it comes to using Manitoba Hydro, leveraging Manitoba Hydro in order to electrify our transportation system.

But I think that there's a broader theme here with regards to missed opportunities that this government continues to drop the ball on. And in this case, the—specifically what I'm talking about is the element of the open-streets program, which, again, the—my colleague from Wolseley and St. James both talked about—how important that program has been for their constituents, but just for the broader, you know, mental health and wellness of people throughout this pandemic and even, you know, long before that, of course.

But we really did have an opportunity, a specific moment in time where we had broad consensus, broad support across all the—all political backgrounds and spectrum with regards to the importance of being outside, of using active transportation—as I said, as not only just to, you know, physical wellness, but mental wellness—we had an opportunity through the pandemic.

You know, of all the terrible things that have happened during the pandemic, this could have been one of the elements of positive that came out of the lessons learned of the pandemic was that we could have used that time, that leverage that time, in order to enhance and make better our active transportation networks and systems in this province.

And in fact, here in the City of Winnipeg, as was the case—I think it's been mentioned by members opposite—in other municipalities across the province used that opportunity, used that time to do things like the open-streets initiative where you had, you know, streets that we could say, no, for this period of time, or, you know, throughout the pandemic, these are streets that we are going to dedicate to active transportation. We are going to invite the public to use them, to get outside, enjoy our beautiful Manitoba scenery and weather.

And, we had that—as I said, that consensus, across political spectrum, from the municipalities on up through to the Province. And did the Province take advantage of that? No. They did not.

They had the opportunity to bring this kind of legislation forward. We called on them to bring this

legislation forward. The City of Winnipeg begged them to bring this legislation forward.

And here we are, you know, it's a—well, it was a beautiful day when I came into work. I know it's—I think maybe the rain has started, so we're going to see a little bit of weather. But I understand this weekend—this week and weekend—are going to be beautiful.

We're going to see more and more Winnipeggers coming out and trying to use their streets in a way that we have throughout the pandemic. And once again, they're going to be running up against the roadblock.

It's a simple bureaucratic change, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It didn't need, you know, study and, you know, complex legislation drafted. This is basic, straightforward stuff that this Province could have done, that this government could have taken initiative of—on, and did not.

So, you know, hey, we're in support of open streets. We're in support of more active transportation.

But when you have a government that the—one of their first acts of business when they came into power in 2016 was to cut the active transportation co-ordinator that was established under the NDP government, here in Manitoba, that did great work, including, you know, in my own constituency, the

Northeast Pioneers Greenway, worked with the community, worked with trails groups and active transportation, and Bike Winnipeg and so many other groups to come up with a comprehensive plan, not just for the city, but even when we did the interchange at Highway 101 and Highway 59—the first provincial project to incorporate active transportation at the very design level—that didn't just happen by accident.

It happened because it was pushed by the community, amplified by local politicians—myself included, I don't mind saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker—but then co-ordinated by an active transportation co-ordinator, cut by this government with no consideration of what that impact will have going forward.

So it's missed opportunity after missed opportunity.

I just want to just quickly touch on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the element of personal mobility devices and electric—

The Acting Speaker (Brad Michaleski): Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Concordia (Mr. Wiebe) will have five minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, April 5, 2022

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