

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

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Myrna Driedger
Speaker*

Vol. LXXVI No. 42A - 10 a.m., Tuesday, April 26, 2022

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AL TOMARE, 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 26, 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. Amen.

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

Good morning, everybody. Please be seated.

ORDERS OF THE DAY**Speaker's Statement**

Madam Speaker: I have a statement for the House.

I am advising the House that I have received a letter from the Government House Leader (Mr. Goertzen) and the member for Tyndall Park (Ms. Lamoureux) indicating that the member for Tyndall Park has identified Bill 208, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act, as their selected bill for this session.

As a reminder to the House, rule 24 permits each independent member to select one private member's bill per session to proceed to a second reading vote, and requires the Government House Leader and the member to provide written notice as to the date and time of the debate and the vote.

I have therefore been advised that Bill 208 will be debated at second reading on Tuesday, May 10th, 2022, starting at 10 a.m., with the question to be put at 10:55 a.m. Note that, in accordance with rule 23(7), any recorded vote requested would be deferred to Thursday, May 12th, 2022 at 11:55 a.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Acting Government House Leader): Good morning, Madam Speaker.

Could you call on Bill 233, the engineering and geoscientific professionals amendment act, for debate.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 233 this morning.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS**Bill 233—The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions Amendment Act**

Madam Speaker: I will therefore call second reading Bill 233, The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions Amendment Act.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I move, seconded by MLA Pedersen from Midland, that Bill 233—MLA for Midland, sorry—that Bill 233, the engineering and geoscience professions amendment act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Portage la Prairie, seconded by the honourable member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), that Bill 233, The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Mr. Wishart: It's my pleasure to bring forward this bill. The engineers and geoscience professions act provides regulation for those professions and disciplines here in Manitoba and it's my pleasure to bring forward this bill to update this legislation.

The changes to the legislation fall into three general categories: simplifying administrative practices in the language, removing barriers to practice and increasing transparency and enhancing the protection of the public.

In terms of simplifying the administration process, changes have been made to speed up the registration process while ensuring adequate oversight in the process. Also, there's a restructuring of

appeals to ensure faster resolution of issues and complaints while still maintaining an appeals process that is more consistent with some other professions. The process has been quite slow in the past, taking up to five years to deal with some appeals.

The registration process will also allow a new category of membership to allow more mobility from province to province in this country, something that we certainly support. Removing barriers to practice involves several pieces in its change: reducing barriers to out-of-jurisdiction applicants as was mentioned, the different provinces, as well as introducing a new category of membership.

The changes to registration process will allow a licensee to practise within the defined scope consistent with his training and experience. There are many training—suitable training facilities around the world for engineers and geoscientists, but they don't all have consistent training fields so that some—in some facilities you don't get the full scale, or you get more emphasis on one area than on another so that they're going to define within the licence what areas you can practise within. This allows the licensee to operate their own professional engineering and geoscience business within this limited scope of practice, but it will of course allow them to practise here in Manitoba.

Finally, in the area of increasing transparency in public protection, the act makes changes to increase public transparency when a professional member is formally charged as well as to speed up the process of hearings. As I mentioned before, they have been quite slow. While still maintaining the rights to appeal, names of those found not in compliance with the regulations will be made available to the public.

So I would certainly urge all members to support this bill. This is an industry where we are quite in—we have quite a lot of demand for people with this range of expertise across a broad range and we want to make sure that they're able to practise here in Manitoba.

The changes they have made are also very friendly to foreign trade engineers and geoscientists within their scope of practice. As I mentioned, they will define that and allow them to operate within that scope of practice in their own name and create their own businesses, which will get them in the marketplace and provide the services that we need.

This is an area of expertise that we need to continue growing Manitoba and as such, everyone here in the

House should be supportive of this bill and look forward to its passing.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

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.

* (10:10)

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I'd like to ask the member who he consulted with before introducing this bill.

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

Of course, we have consulted several times with the association over a number of years. This has been a work-in-progress for some time, and I also made a few calls with some of the private industry people to make sure that everyone was on board with this. There seems to be general support across the board for this.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): I would say the Manitoba government's doing a lot to build a stronger Manitoba. I want to thank the member for Portage La Prairie for bringing in this Bill 233, which is a very proactive amendment to this profession.

Can the member explain why this bill is important to our province's free trade?

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

Certainly, this is important in terms of free trade across Canada, as I mentioned, there. It will provide the ability for engineers—our engineers to go to other provinces and other engineers to come to these provinces—this province to provide the—their set of skills. The range of skills needed for some of these projects that we're seeing, moving into the future, is certainly very specific, and we need the expertise to be a little more mobile across the country so that we get the best advice on building these. And, of course, as we all know, there is often a shortage of engineers with the skill set needed to do certain projects.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, my question has to do with the fact that this is friendly to foreign-trained engineers, which I think is a good

thing, but I would ask: How will we be assured when their training is different and the standards are different in different countries—how will we assure that everything meets standards needed here in Manitoba?

Mr. Wishart: I thank the member for the question. It is a good question.

One of the reasons that it took so many different types of—so long in the consultation process to get this right—he's certainly right in that the scope of training in every facility is not exactly equal. So they do this by observing the scope of practice that the applicant is applying for and drawing—sort of defining the areas that they can operate within. There is oversight provided in this process, but they are still able to operate as their own business and in their own company in this process. It is a scope-of-practice approach which is quite unique and I think is very good—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I'm wondering if the member from Portage la Prairie can explain how this bill will remove barriers that have existed in the engineering and geoscience professions.

Mr. Wishart: As I mentioned, the interprovincial barriers will be removed, but also the scope-of-practice approach will certainly allow a lot more people to be able to practise their engineering skills, here in Manitoba. It was pointed out during the consultation process that about 40 per cent of the applicants are now foreign-trained, so that is a significant amount of expertise that we need to tap into, and this is one way to do it.

Mr. Moses: Can the member provide more detail as to the, quote, specific scope-of-practice licensees to—in terms of what that will hopefully look—type—look like in terms of the practice? That term is used in the bill: specific scope-of-practice licensees; tell us a little about that.

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

Defining the scope of practice is something that the trade and organization themselves are actually involved in. The range of skill sets that the individual is trained for will help define the scope of practice depending on the facility where the training has taken place, but also based on their ability—their demonstrated ability to do it. It's not a written-exam approach, it's a demonstrated-ability approach.

Mr. Michaleski: Again, I'd—I want to again thank the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) for bringing up this important bill today.

I reference the term scope of practice, and how, you know, the sector is changing. Communication is changing. So, can the member explain if this bill will make an impact to Manitoba's labour market needs?

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

We believe—and I know the engineers do as well—that this will move things significantly forward in dealing with these—the shortages in terms of trained people in the—in this field. So that should help deal with the labour market needs in a significant way as we move forward in building a better Manitoba.

Mr. Moses: What assurances are in this bill to ensure that we'll have a high standard of profession when it comes to the specific needs of Manitoba engineering? We have, you know, very moist soil here, different than other jurisdictions. We might have more rockier terrain, for geoscientists.

What ensure—'surances' will there be that those professionals will be skilled and able to train and work properly here in Manitoba?

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

We referred to the ongoing oversight, specially when a defined scope of practice will be in place, and that is one of the tools to make sure that we have the skill set for this particular situation.

That is a very insightful question, in that things are quite different in Manitoba, especially on the soil side of things as they are in other jurisdictions, so actual practical experience, scope-of-practice experience, is probably the best way to know it anyway.

Mr. Pedersen: The member for Portage la Prairie mentioned how the legislation—excuse me—will meet labour needs, but can the member also further explain how this will improve efficiency for the engineers and geoscientists in Manitoba?

Mr. Wishart: Well, certainly in terms of the registration process it'll now be much more open and handled much more easily.

The definition of the area that you're able to work in if you're not a Canadian- or Manitoba-trained engineer will be something that will be developed along with the association, but it will be very much based on scope of practice, demonstrated scope of practice, a different approach than has been done in the past when it was very much about where you were

trained and when you were trained. And this will be a more open process.

Mr. Moses: Engineers and geoscientists Manitoba all—currently have a mechanism, a system, for allowing internationally educated professionals into the province.

Can the member describe with 'specificity' how this bill will change that for internationally educated professionals in the field?

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

The biggest difference between what exists now and where we're going here in terms of scope-of-practice definition of the workplace is just that. As I mentioned before, the previous system depended very much on the training field, the university that you were trained at or the place you received your training.

This will be very much on your demonstrated ability to perform the tasks as described and defined by your area of expertise.

Mr. Michaleski: Again, I would thank the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) for bringing this bill.

It seems that this bill is really in line and supportive of an open—a more open economy that is, you know, going to foster growth and development. And again, this—amendments are sending the right signals by speeding up applications, removing barriers and providing transparency.

So can the member explain if this bill will attract more engineers and geoscientists in our province?

Mr. Wishart: I thank the member for the question. It is very insightful.

That is certainly the hope. As I had mentioned a few years ago, they commented on that about 40 per cent of their applications for membership were actually foreign-trained members. So we're already getting a significant number of people that have trained in other jurisdictions, here in Manitoba. We're hopeful that this will attract more and make it better to have—find the expertise that we needed.

* (10:20)

We need to rebuild Manitoba, moving into the future.

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

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): Well, I'm happy to be speaking on Bill 233. It's an interesting bill when it comes to the profession of engineering and geoscientist professionals.

Now, this bill proposes to make a few changes and to widen the scope of responsibility for the registrar of geoscientist professions in Manitoba. It would include the scope of registering engineers and geoscientists from out of their jurisdictions into their member association, here, and authorizing engineers and geoscientists to practise their professions through a partnership or corporation or other legal entity. And they use, now, this term: a specific scope of practice and the licensees through those.

So, as the individual who does not meet the requirement for membership in the association, but is qualified to practise within the limited scope of engineering or geoscience, may conduct their practice in a manner that is more similar to a member, including through a partnership.

Now, that is allowing people in other jurisdictions to come work in Manitoba with a limited scope to the amount of work that they're trying to do, and that brings us to some questions that we are currently looking at from professionals and safety in terms of public safety and public assurance and confidence and safety of the work of engineers and geoscientists in our province.

Now, we know that the profession in our province is well regarded and we wanted to keep it that way. And so we want to ensure that we have mechanisms to check and to ensure that if there is a limited scope of practice enabled to a certain licensee or a member, that there are safeguards to protect—to ensure that they are only able to work in that limited scope.

So we'd want to see that in this bill that—or there are other mechanisms ensured to make sure that there are a limited scope so that the people who are trained on specific areas of practice within engineering and geoscience are only working on those fields until they have had such time to complete competencies and actually work and practise in Manitoba conditions, in the conditions in this environment, in this soil, in this—weather conditions, to ensure that all the work that they're going to be doing moving forward in this province are up to a standard that we have become used to in this province.

And not only that, Madam Speaker, but we want to ensure that any other changes that we're making with regard to this field, in geoscience and in engineering, is going to be to raise the standard in Manitoba, to not just ensure that we maintain our standard, but make sure that it is as good a standard as there are in any other places in this country and around the world.

And so one of our concerns is that when we are making these changes to meet national labour mobility rules to match those rules, that we might be looking at ourselves while we're lowering the standards in Manitoba to meet other jurisdictional standards. And I think that's the route we should avoid taking, Madam Speaker.

In Manitoba, we shouldn't be taking a race-to-the-bottom approach. We should be taking an approach where we encourage other jurisdictions to meet our high standard, to ensure that we are leading the playing field and at the peak of the level of our professionals in the country. And so, as we—as I encourage the government to take aim at higher standards, I want to ensure that the changes we're making in Bill 233 are going to ensure those standards remain today and into the future.

This change also—this bill also proposes changes to the appeal act. So, where a person who is registered or a licence is suspended for nonpayment of dues, they can no longer appeal their suspension. The appeal committee is established to hear appeals of the decisions of the association related to registering persons to practise engineering or geoscience. Decisions of discipline committee of the association relating to skills and practice and profession conduct may now be appealed. And we see that there's a court of appeal by the engineer or geoscientist of the association as well.

Now, we know that engineers, as I've said, Madam Speaker, play an integral part of Manitoba, of our economy, of how we build so many infrastructure projects in this province, and we want to ensure that we have the right supports for engineering and for geoscientist professionals as they continue to tackle the big challenges that we all need.

And we know that engineers and geoscientists, their profession also hinges on the type of infrastructure investments that we make in this province. The further that we are growing and investing in our infrastructure, we're going to see a greater need for engineers to be working and active in this province.

As the member pointed out in his statement—I think, believe, during the question period—about 40 per cent of the engineers and geoscience professionals in the province are trained in other jurisdictions and come to Manitoba. So we want to have a fair mechanism, but also a mechanism for them to come and work in Manitoba that ensures that the standard of practice is and remains and will be high.

We see that as that practice as high and as those engineers and geoscientists from other professions, from other jurisdictions come to Canada, we not only want to ensure that they have that mechanism, but they also know that there's going to be investment into infrastructure here and there's going to be work ongoing here.

And I think that we've seen, you know, and underspent infrastructure budget in our Province by the provincial government for many years. And I think that in itself is a concern to the field of engineers in Manitoba when they're questioning and seeing various levels of infrastructure commitments made by the province, but on what—on the other side, they see that budget underspent year after year. And this is definitely a concern within that profession. What is the work going to look like? I hear one thing in the news, but yet I don't see those things actually come to fruition in terms of dollars spent on infrastructure by this Province.

When we go back to the changes within this bill specific to the registrar, and we see that the power of the registrar is expanded throughout their practice to not only register engineers and geoscientists who are in and from Manitoba and trained in Manitoba but in other jurisdictions, we also—are make—want to ensure that the registrar has the proper information to make those determinations.

And we know that this bill, as the member stated, makes changes around not looking so much at previous applicants' educational backgrounds from other jurisdictions, but more of a practice-based approach and skills-based approach here in Manitoba. And so we also look at this from the lens of how is this system that they're proposing in Bill 233 looked at in comparison to other professions that we see around the province and other professions that are seeking to come and work in Manitoba.

And we look at many times often in the news over the last few months has been nurses who have attempted and tried to come and work in Manitoba from other jurisdictions after being approved to work, for example, in Ontario or in Saskatchewan or Alberta

and having great difficulty coming to work here in Manitoba.

Are the changes that they're looking for in Bill 233 appropriate to be used in this field, and should they also be looked at to be used in other professions' fields to encourage those folks to work here in the province with a high standard, or is the mechanism that is used in other professions a model that should be looked at using—used in this bill for scientists—for geoscientists and engineers?

And when we compare those two, do we see an apples-for-apples approach with this government, or do we see one approach taken for one profession and another approach taken for another profession? And could those approaches or those mechanisms for allowing internationally educated professionals or for professionals from other jurisdictions and within Canada to come to Manitoba and work—is that—are those mechanisms able to overlap and be congruent, or are we seeing different paths taken by this government for different fields?

* (10:30)

And I know that we want to work closely and support engineers and geoscientists in Manitoba. They are a very important profession. And I think our main message with this bill is that any change we make to the way engineers and geoscientists are registered should be to respect their profession, to ensure that we have a high-quality standard for the work that they do in Manitoba so that the profession can be respected, so the public can be protected and to ensure that we have the right infrastructure investments to ensure that engineers and geoscientists can work today, work tomorrow into the future in Manitoba.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to Bill 233.

I think I just—go back to the question—line of questions. I do appreciate the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) bringing this bill. It's—again, it's a very appropriate bill, very proactive. And it's sending the right signal to Manitobans and the trade, whether it's the professional trade or those in the investment world, that Manitoba is open for business. And that's a great signal. So I—in that regard, you know, the member for Portage la Prairie's brought—brought in some very smart and appropriate legislation.

The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions Act provides for the regulation of those professions and related disciplines by the association of professional engineers and geoscientists of the province of Manitoba. I think we can all appreciate that this association is recognized. It is a respected association of professionals. And again, the—their authority in these jurisdictions—they do work and provide integrity for professionals, you know, within Manitoba and as part of a Manitoba way of doing business, and they do maintain, again, standards of quality, when it comes to public safety, and they do ensure science-based approaches and—when it come to growth and development and design.

Again, there's—when, especially, we get into the environmental field, when it comes to science, you know, there's a lot of professionals, so-called, out there, and professional accreditation is important, that it's backed by science and integrity. So it's important that, again, the engineering—the association of professional engineers and geoscientists is an important organization, and they do lend a lot of credibility.

This bill does—you know, it defines the goals and responsibilities. Bill 233 speeds up the application process and it also speeds up the appeal process, so that, again, is a—very much in the way the world is evolving. You know, these associations need to operate more efficiently and again, these steps in Bill 233 go towards making that efficient. Again, that's very attractive for investors or anybody that wants to do business here in Manitoba.

Again, removing barriers—this is something—there's a lot of people with, you know, education that are—have been difficult to find work in their profession. Again, with Manitoba taking this step and the association taking these steps and allowing them to work—again, very, very strong signal to the investment world. That—you know, and Manitoba's open for business, where there's a demand for these trades. There's a demand for this integrity of these association professionals. And again, it really does lend itself to being in line of a government that is looking to build a strong, positive investment environment here in Manitoba. Again, transparency nowadays is important, and this bill also goes towards addressing that as well.

The other note regarding the limited scope—again, this is also another, I think, a very important step where the authorities and the regulators can—you know, if we have the demand and people have, you know, may—different levels of accreditation from

within Manitoba or other jurisdictions, that they're allowed to practise within a limited scope, and that's important for an authority or an association to provide that oversight and regulation.

Not just only for the profession, but for, again, the investors, the—that are looking at the Manitoba economy, whether they're from in Manitoba or outside, that they are, again, what—they were making legislative change to allow these professionals to operate, and, again, if demand is increasing, we need to find ways to get these professionals into the work—Manitoba workforce, into the Manitoba economy so that they can help and grow, and taking down barriers is always a good idea.

Be—bill also establishes an appeal committee, and that, again, is a good move, and I think it—on appeal, they can further take measures if the bill allows engineers and geoscientists to appeal directly to the court of appeal against any decisions that are taken, of the disciplinary committee of the association, again.

So that's a good measure as well, backstopping, really, an effective bill that's making some positive changes for the sector and this profession.

I want to thank you again, Madam Speaker, for allowing me to speak on this, and I thank, again, the member from Portage la Prairie for bringing forward this really, very smart bill today.

MLA Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): There are parts of this particular piece of legislation that I have concerns with, and those concerns are very similar to other things that we've seen this government do any time they have said that they're making things easier for certain sectors: it generally means a lessening of the standards that we in Manitoba have come to expect. And, clearly, that is what this bill does.

Right now, in order to be licensed and have your stamp as a professional engineer in this province, we know that those folks are trained to the highest degree, have the best education possible and take that stamp as something very, very serious, because if they make mistakes in their engineering and lose that stamp, they can no longer practise in their profession.

Now, what we see with this particular piece of legislation is that engineers who don't meet the requirements to have an actual licence will be able to practise with some limited abilities, some limited—so they'll be able to engineer, I guess, something very specific, but the problem, of course, is similar to micro-credentials for the trades that this government is—introduced in the apprenticeship act, is people

won't get the full education to perform the full scope of the work required.

To my way of thinking, if there seems to be a shortage of skilled, properly educated, qualified engineers available in the province, then the government should do everything in their power to make sure that those skill upgrade opportunities and those education opportunities aren't just available for people who want to practise as engineers in the province, but are actually affordable, so that people can get the necessarily requirements to perform the full function, so that everybody knows when you hire that specific engineer, that they have the full scope of the necessary skills to do the job.

* (10:40)

Now, what we've seen the member from Portage la Prairie say, that there would be oversight provided for people that are using limited skills, limited scope. What he didn't mention is who's providing this oversight. Is it a general oversight where someone is working for an engineering firm but doesn't have the requisite skills—is that engineering firm, that private enterprise, now responsible for ensuring that that person only does certain things? Is there some government oversight involved in ensuring that people performing as engineers actually have the skills to engineer the things that they're being paid to engineer? The member left that kind of wide open.

The other thing that the member didn't really address was all the intricacies involved in what those limited-scope qualifications will be. And, certainly, I wouldn't want the member from Portage la Prairie to think that we on this side are opposed to foreign-trained individuals working in this province. Nothing could be further from the truth, as we've heard any number of times when we've asked questions about foreign-trained nurses and doctors and other professionals.

But what we want to make sure is that anybody that's performing those tasks in this province has the necessary skills and qualifications to do that, and if we're not sure that some other jurisdictions' training and education skills are at the same level as ours, then, like I said earlier, we should do everything in our power to make sure that those education opportunities are available and affordable so people can get the skills so that we can have continued faith in professional engineers actually being able to do that which they're employed to do.

Certainly, we've seen other jurisdictions where there's been some rather drastic engineering failures. Comes to mind, tailings dam failures in Brazil, for example, that were designed by engineers from those jurisdictions that failed. We've seen tailings dam failures in the province of British Columbia that were designed by engineers that failed.

So we really need to make sure that we're not setting our province up for the same sort of disasters, if you will, that we've seen elsewhere simply because, in our rush to lower our standards, which we've seen this government do in so many other instances, to accommodate business being able to do things cheaper, faster, but not necessarily better. So we need to make sure we safeguard those particular elements to make sure that a professional engineer meets the highest quality, meets the highest standard possible.

We don't want to see the whole problem with a lot of the free trade agreements—well, particularly free trade agreements that the member from Midlands was the minister responsible for negotiating that he failed to build any safeguards for the Province of Manitoba in. He left it wide open and hoped that everybody else would do the same. And other jurisdictions were perhaps a little better prepared and made sure that they did build safeguards in.

So, I want to make sure that, in the process of being—what did the member from Dauphin say—open for business, that we're not so, just, open for business that we're not ensuring that business is allowed and encouraged to operate safely, because that is always the concern when we see a lessening of the standards. The standards, in reality, should become higher as we learn more, as science progresses, as the engineering trade itself becomes more knowledgeable, then we should expect those standards of education before that engineer gets that stamp to also go up—not to go down—simply to make it cheaper for a business to hire an engineer.

So, those concerns that I have, whether it's engineers, nurses, teachers, welders, are basically the same, that we see the continual degradation of standards that keep us all safe, that we need to make sure that whatever is being done doesn't do that. So those are some of the concerns that we have here.

In the interest of just meeting the temporary labour market needs of today, we're not necessarily preparing Manitobans for the needs of tomorrow, if we ensure that engineers have a full scope of the needs and things that they need to do their jobs. They won't just be available to do that specific task today, but

they'll be available in Manitoba for future jobs, as long as the government actually spends some of that infrastructure money they keep talking about, and we move this province forward safely, because that's what it should be about and that's what the concern that I have specifically, with this bill, that I hope the member from Portage la Prairie is listening to and can somehow maybe withdraw this bill and relook at making sure that proper standards are met and maintained so that we know that engineers in this province meet the highest training standard possible.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I want to start by talking about the importance of engineering. This is really critical to building small and tall structures, retrofitting or repairing them when that's needed. It's important for not only buildings and structures but for roads which we travel on every day, and not only building them, but, of course, repairing them and making sure that they're fit and don't have the kind of potholes that we have that are causing a lot of damage to cars at the moment.

We have, in Manitoba, a lot of excellence in engineering. We have an incredible faculty of engineering. We have training grounds and a—research grounds in engineering, which is of a very high standard. But at the same time, we benefit from working with people who have trained elsewhere, and they bring knowledge and skills that—which benefit what we are doing here in Manitoba and can complement it.

We are at a time when we have some interesting and unique challenges with climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gases. We have the challenge of retrofitting a large number of structures in a relatively short period of time from a historic perspective. That retrofitting will involve greater insulation, building structures which are more energy efficient and yet, at the same time, well ventilated. We have learned during COVID how critical it is to have structures which are well ventilated.

We've learned from what's happening with, for example, radon in homes, that as you make them tighter, unless you make sure that the ventilation is also there, you have a situation where you're more likely to have troublesome and high radon levels.

I noticed that the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) talked about the need to rebuild Manitoba. I think the member for Portage la Prairie is talking about the problems that have arisen under

NDP and Conservative governments and that there is, as a result, a need for a Liberal government in this province to fix some of these problems, right?

* (10:50)

Maybe the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Wishart) was also looking at the potholes in the roads and saying, we're going to need to rebuild a lot of roads here because of what's happening. And, clearly, there is a need for expertise, for recognizing that Manitoba has a unique and very exacting environment, with a very high range of temperatures with—in some areas and at some times—very moist conditions, and that these are conditions which are, you know, problematic at times, for building not only roads but for other structures.

I have been in many northern communities, and one of the problems in many of the northern communities is moulds. A good example is the mould problems at Grand Rapids, which is right along the Saskatchewan River. And they have a high moisture level there naturally, but sometimes with homes with considerable numbers of people, that accentuates the problem. And so building structures which are suitable and which work in our cold climate and which don't get into problems with moulds, are well ventilated, again, is part of it, that this is important.

We have unique circumstances here in Manitoba, in a large flood plain with what we call the Winnipeg gumbo, the clay soils, and because we are in a very flat area, we have, as we experienced just in the last few days, a tremendous susceptibility to water runoff and to flooding of underpasses and to flooding of roads and damage to infrastructure.

And, certainly, this, again, is an aspect of our province which we need the special and unique engineering expertise to deal with, to overcome these obstacles which are clearly here in Manitoba and require expertise in the issues that we have here in Manitoba.

I am pleased to support this legislation. We in the Manitoba Liberal Party will support these changes. We see them, from what we can tell at the moment, as being largely beneficial in terms of making sure that things are flexible enough and yet accountable enough and with ability to appeal to the courts if necessary under some circumstances, and that this, we hope, will serve us well.

As a politician, I look forward to working with engineers. Engineers are making a tremendous contribution to our province. I think we need to be actually

doing a little more to support research in the area of engineering, to make sure that some of the particular requirements that we have in Manitoba—roads and houses and others—are really strongly addressed and improved so that we don't get into what we have at the moment, which is this incredible pothole country.

We need a better name for Manitoba and Winnipeg than the pothole capital of the world. We need to address that. We must address that. But this bill, I believe, is a substantial step, a positive one, and we will be supporting it. So I thank the member for Portage for bringing it forward.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further members—the honourable member for Transcona.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): It's a pleasure to put a few words on the record regarding Bill 233, The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions Amendment Act.

We do see a part of this bill that does have a bit of an emphasis on the continuing professional development. Certainly, that is something that—I come from an industry before that relied on continued professional development.

The one concern is the wording in here where we're, you know, pointing out a person's lack of professional development and being able to publish that. That is something that really, you know—at least in the industry that I come from, you don't name and shame, Madam Speaker. That is something that has me concerned about some of the wording that's in this bill, and I would hope there would be consideration where we would change some of that wording so that—you want to draw people in, is what I'm saying, as opposed to putting up barriers for people—oh, you know what, then I just won't say if I have qualifications regarding a particular area of either geoscience or engineering.

It's a disincentive, actually, to be honest about one's credentials, and that's something that would have me a little bit concerned about that. I hope that we would consider some type of wording change around that professional development piece. That part is something that does have me a little bit concerned.

Throughout debate, what I did notice as well is that we did touch upon, you know, some of the unique characteristics of Manitoba, some of the unique geological characteristics. We are, as the member from River Heights pointed out—we're at the bottom of Lake Agassiz in the southern part of Manitoba, and that requires very specific training and knowledge about the soils and the substructure beneath those soils

and what is needed to ensure that we have structures that can be weather-resistant and also flood-resistant, because we do know, with climate change, we're seeing more and more events like the past few days here in Manitoba.

We can go quickly from having a flood forecast that said there isn't going to be one—which is what we had in March of 2022—to now, three weeks later, being—say, we need to prepare now for a flood that was similar to 2011. So it could change that quickly.

So what does that require? It requires standards that are at the very highest because of the variability not only of our substrata, but also because of the challenges that climate change is putting in front of us right now, Madam Speaker.

And we have to be prepared to do that. And what do you do to do that? You ensure that you have regulations in place that are robust and that attract the very best engineers and geoscientists, not only in Canada, but from the world, the western hemisphere, because we want to ensure that any investments that are made in infrastructure in Manitoba, either government or private industry, is well supported by good engineering and good science.

You know, I find it interesting when I hear members opposite talk about, you know, this being an incentive to trade and everything, but at the same time, we're unwilling—we're unwilling—to go down to the border and remove that border blockade that cost \$70 million a day in this economy. And I know my members here on this side were really upset with that because it's incongruent, Madam Speaker.

So when we hear that kind of commentary, and then all of a sudden, now we want to open Manitoba to trade, but we'll let this little blockade happen, right—it kind of makes it incongruent. I want to point that out to the members opposite over there. And this is kind of—this is what we're seeing. All of the sudden, we're the people that are going to allow trade, when at the same time—oh, we'll—but we'll allow that blockade at the international border.

I just wanted to make that and put that on the record, Madam Speaker, because I found that to be an incongruence, the second incongruence.

We want to, of course, create the very safest places for our kids to be and to learn in. And what comes with that is very, very targeted, traceable investment in air circulation and in HRV pieces in schools. We have yet to see that.

We have some nebulous plan, but boy, you know what, we have engineers that are trained right now ready to go. As a matter of fact, many of the members—and I know members opposite have also received these emails—that have asked schools from engineers to be not just silver lead, go to the gold standard, because we know, Madam Speaker, we're going to be seeing more incidences perhaps of pandemics coming down the road. So we have to be prepared for that, making investments now so that we can create learning environments that are not—

* (11:00)

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

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 11—Strengthening, Rebuilding, Investing, and Recovering in 2022

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 Strengthening, Rebuilding, Investing, and Recovering in 2022 being brought forward by the honourable member for Borderland.

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen), that,

WHEREAS the Provincial Government's priorities in this recovery plan are to focus on strengthening healthcare, clearing the surgical and diagnostic backlog, fighting the growing inflation in order to make life more affordable, helping to build the Manitoba economy, investing in communities, advancing reconciliation, and protecting the shared environment; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is strengthening health care in the province by investing record setting amounts in order to clear the diagnostic and surgical backlog; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government has focused on the specific health care needs of seniors and created a department to focus on these needs; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is making life more affordable by helping Manitobans who rent through the creation of a Renters Tax Credit and increasing the money available for those utilizing rent assist; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is rebuilding the economy as part of this recovery plan through improvements to infrastructure projects and investing in attracting new immigration to the province; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government believes that affordable childcare is essential to rebuild the economy, that is why it is investing in childcare to bring down costs and increase available spaces; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is investing in rebuilding those communities that Manitobans have been disconnected from over the last two years by investing more money in the building sustainable communities grant program, almost doubling the funding available; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Government is working with First Nation and Indigenous communities by collaborating with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Leaders, and families to advance the shared goal of reconciliation; and

WHEREAS Manitobans have flocked to Manitoba's parks during the last two years, and the Provincial Government protecting the environment and take action on climate change by expanding the funds available to climate and conservation projects.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba agrees that this is an opportunity to rebuild and recover together by focusing on strengthening health care, making life affordable, building the economy, investing in communities, advancing reconciliation and protecting the environment.

Motion presented.

Mr. Guenter: It's a pleasure to rise in this House to speak to this important resolution that provides another opportunity for legislators in this place to demonstrate their commitment to the policies set out in the budget that we passed just last night—at least this side of the House—because these are uncertain times, and Manitobans are looking around them and they're seeing the war in Ukraine and the devastation there that that's causing and are concerned about the impacts that that conflict will have on our supply chains.

And Manitobans are concerned about inflation and rising interest rates and the rising cost of living. They're concerned about—frankly, Madam Speaker, I mean, we've come out of a pandemic and some of the impacts that have been left by the pandemic.

And then they're also concerned by what they see as an out-of-control, left-wing political class in this country which is, you know, at war with everything that, you know, the things you wear and the things you eat and the cars you drive, what kind it is, and how many you have and where you live, your house, and the things you say and post online and all manner of things, the way one wants to raise their children.

And so, even setting out and trying to make something of one's self and taking advantage of the economic opportunities available to us in this province and in this country, it seems that there are those forces at work to try to stymie that in our political class.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And so that's why this government, our Manitoba government, is, in a sense, a hedge of protection, providing an island of stability in this country and in this province, allowing people to work hard and make their own choices, take control of their lives and make their own decisions.

I think the resolution is important because it outlines that the budget is really a balanced approach, and it is. Manitobans are looking for balance. They're looking for stability and sanity, and, certainly, we provide that, that the budget provides that. It's a budget that cuts taxes and leaves more money on the kitchen table, and as I was thinking about it, with the notion of a spirit animal, I've never, you know, thought of having a spirit animal, but I think the kitchen table is perhaps the spirit animal of this government.

Of course, I'm taking some literary licence there, but I think this government certainly has cut taxes and provided much-needed tax relief in a period of rising inflation and the rising cost of living, where Manitoba families really are concerned about making ends meet and the education tax rebate will go a long way to helping them do that.

So, I do recall a conversation I had with a constituent who asked about the cheques that he was receiving, the education rebate cheques, and was very concerned and fearful, perhaps, even, of what happens should, God forbid, the opposition form government and they would—he understood that they would immediately rescind these rebate cheques. And I reminded him that yes, absolutely, that's—that is a concern, and that's why we need to make sure that every Manitoban knows of the real danger of the opposition not supporting this budget, is an illustration of—is a

demonstration, clear demonstration of the fact that they have no regard for the difficulty that Manitoba families are facing trying to make ends meet.

And so I think it's important that our government continues on this path. Certainly, Manitoba families are very, very fearful of the NDP and the opposition and what they'll do should they get back into power. We know that they have no plan, but we know that they are prone to their ideological instincts. And those instincts are to raise taxes. They did it in the 17 years that they were in power, raised the PST and all manner of taxes. There was never a tax that they didn't like.

And so, our government is moving forward with providing affordability for Manitoba families. But we are also focusing on health care and the need to deal with the surgical and diagnostic backlog. *[interjection]* We've put forward \$110 million to deal with the backlog, and this government is being—*[interjection]*

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Order. It's getting a little loud in here, please.

Mr. Guenter: And I think, as a rural member in this House, I very much appreciate the \$812-million capital commitment to rural health care. We've seen this government building hospitals in Neepawa and Portage la Prairie. There's been significant investments in facilities in Brandon and Selkirk, in Dauphin, and even in my constituency, in the RM of Stanley, Boundary Trails Health Centre, which is receiving a massive \$64-million upgrade and expansion and is expected to come online in the summer of 2024.

But we recognize that health care and addressing the concerns is more than just building buildings and creating that—creating the infrastructure and the health infrastructure that's needed. But it's also the personnel and the staff, and so that's why our government has done things like fund an increase of 50 per cent to the nursing seats in this—at post-secondary institutions in this province.

So, we're funding 400 additional nursing seats over several years. And we are also putting up \$23,000 for internationally accredited nurses to enable them to jump through the hoops and obtain licensure and placement in our health-care system. And so we know that there is lots of opportunities there as well. So there's a number of things that we're doing on the health-care front.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think one of the things that I really appreciated hearing in this budget was wage supports for—or increased wages for support

workers, for those who work in the Community Living disABILITY sector, those who work—support workers who work with adults with intellectual disabilities. There's \$18 million there to increase the wages there. We know the NDP left them low and stagnant for a period of time and it led to a labour crisis.

And so, in my constituency, Blue Sky Opportunities is one of the larger employers in Altona and they work in the CLDS sector and provide these important supports. And I want to thank them for all that they do.

And while I'm on the topic, I do want to thank the gentleman at the helm there for 20 years, for the better part of twenty years, Mr. Richard Neufeld, for his service. He's leaving at the end of this month, and I want to thank him and wish him a happy retirement, as he's worked in an incredibly difficult sector, but a very rewarding sector as well. So, Madam Speaker—or Mr. Speaker, I was heartened to see the funding there.

There's a number of other things—of course, \$500 million a year over three years in infrastructure spending. Right, so, four—\$500 million a year over the next three years, totalling \$1.5 billion to highways infrastructure. And so the MI budget can be a little confusing, and we've seen certain journalists in the media, perhaps, not quite understand how it works, but there is a strategic infrastructure component and there's the highways component, and focusing just on the highways, we're setting aside 1 and a half million dollars over three years, which is very well needed.

* (11:10)

If anyone's driven Highway 75 in recent days, the highway has taken quite a beating this winter, and so we'll need to invest in our infrastructure to ensure that our businesses, our farmers, our producers can get their goods to market quickly and efficiently. And we know that good infrastructure is a key part of a strong and healthy and growing economy.

Mr. Speaker, there is a number of other things we could talk about. There's the child-care deal with the federal government, for \$10-a-day child care, which will provide greater affordability for Manitoba families. I was very pleased the other day as well to have the Kiddie Sunshine Centre, which is the daycare in Altona, services Altona and the area, they're embarking on a—an ambitious project to double the number of child-care spaces available in that area.

And so I was very pleased to hear their plans and then to connect with the Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning (Mr. Ewasko) and have a discussion about the project and see the support that our government is providing in this area as well, and how it's playing out on the ground.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unfortunately, there's a lot of good news to talk about, but we're short on time, and so with that, I will allow other members to speak.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): 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.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I'd like to ask the member, this PMR suggests that this government is working to make life more affordable for Manitobans.

I'd like to ask the member if he can explain why his government locked in a \$175 tax increase on renters, which they imposed last year, and now this year is locking in, but calling it a credit.

Can you explain the difference there as to why you're making life more expensive, but suggesting that you're making life more affordable?

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do respect the member opposite, I think he is a reasonable fellow, but I do reject to the preamble to his question, the premise of the question.

We are not only—this \$525 renters' residential tax credit, we are expanding access to it to 45,000 additional households, so I think that's very significant, combined with the increase in education property tax rebates, combined with other measures, like we've taken in previous years: a two-year rent freeze, which is absolutely significant.

So, you know, there's a number of things we've done as a government to make life more affordable. I simply reject the premise of the question.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Can my good friend from Borderland explain how our government's budget is continuing to strengthen the health-care system here all across the province?

Mr. Guenter: Well, the member is absolutely—the member from Riding Mountain is absolutely correct,

our government is strengthening the health-care system. In fact, we are spending a record \$7.2 billion on health care this year, which is \$1 billion more than the NDP ever spent in health care.

And so we're spending \$110 million to address the pandemic diagnostic and surgical backlogs. We know there is the pandemic, which touched every aspect of our lives and had a devastating impact on our health-care system here in Canada, in our province, around the world. We're left with the impacts of it, and so we're putting up \$110 million among many other things we're doing to address the—

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): There are currently incredible numbers of unfilled positions, especially 'nurthing,' in health care, all over the province. It's unprecedented.

I'm asking the member how will he address this, because, in fact, the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) has been asked but she's not been able to tell us what she will do, so what would the member do?

Mr. Guenter: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we have a wonderful Health Minister who's absolutely dedicated and committed to her role and has done exemplary service to this province and to all Manitobans through incredibly challenging times, and I'm always happy to hear her provide detailed, factual and thoughtful information in question period and some of the good news that she's already provided.

But I would note that if the member references open positions, I mean, our government is putting up \$11 million to post-secondary institutions to increase nursing enrolment in Manitoba, and there's, again, a number of things we're doing. So I think onward, forward, let's keep making progress on this file.

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): I'm hoping that the member for Borderland, as a rural MLA, who hopefully would have the concerns of his constituents top of mind, could explain why the PC government has frozen funds for EMS and ambulances in both rural and northern Manitoba?

Mr. Guenter: I'm not sure, quite frankly, what the member is talking about.

I know, as a rural member, we've had great, great co-operation with Manitoba Health in terms of providing ambulance services and even a stretcher service, which is being piloted right now in Altona. There's a stretcher service being piloted right now in Altona in

my area, thanks to the work of Manitoba Health officials, the RHA, myself and other local elected officials to come together and make that happen.

So our government is very attuned, and, by the way, if the member wishes to reference ambulances, we cut the ambulance fees by 50 per cent, so I think that's—

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

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Good morning, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker. I just want to quickly ask a question about the strengthening that this budget brings forward.

We know we're going through a time right now which has—we're seeing a record level of rising inflation, and I'm wondering if the member from Borderland can talk about and explain how this budget makes life more affordable for Manitobans.

Mr. Guenter: It's wonderful to serve with great colleagues like the member for Brandon East in this Legislature, and, you know, I missed saying this in my remarks, but it really is a privilege to serve in this House and to keep the concerns of our constituents at the forefront, and that's what this budget does.

And the member referenced that in terms of affordability, and so I think a key part of this, along with the renters' residential tax credit and our \$10-a-day child care is the educational property tax rebate, which is absolutely significant for property owners and farmers, going to save them \$1,355 on average over two years.

And we're not stopping with where we're at right now. We've—

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

Ms. Naylor: Can the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter) explain why this government is not ending the practice of sending patients hundreds of kilometres away from home?

Mr. Guenter: I believe I did reference an \$812-million rural health-care plan, and so we're seeing significant upgrades and new hospitals, in fact, in this province, but that's not only exclusive to rural health care. We're seeing improvements here in the city as well: \$100 million for the St. Boniface ER. These are significant investments in our health-care system, and we certainly look forward to advancing these important projects.

Mr. Nesbitt: With the rising cost of living here due to inflation, can the member for Borderland explain to the House here what our government is doing to make life more affordable for Manitobans moving forward?

Mr. Guenter: There's a—the—a host of things that we have done in previous years: reducing the PST, indexing income tax brackets and beginning the phase-out of the education property tax. And so, as I said, that's very significant. We're seeing in that one measure alone a savings of \$1,355 over two years for the average Manitoban.

* (11:20)

So, I believe when one does the math and runs the numbers, Manitoba families are saving \$2,400, thanks to our government efforts at making life more affordable.

Mr. Isleifson: I know I was very fortunate last year to take on the role of the legislative assistant to the minister of Health—or last year or the year before that. And one of the things that I really enjoyed doing was reaching out and working in the seniors' health-care category.

And I know our government has moved forward in—instilled a new minister in that role, but I'm wondering if the member can explain other things that our government is doing that would help address the needs of seniors' health in our province?

Mr. Guenter: I thank the member for Brandon East for that great question, and I thank him for his contributions to Manitoba seniors in that file and in our caucus. And he provides some important perspective, thanks to his many years in the health-care system.

And so, our government is making some important, significant progress on the seniors' file. I think, notably, we have a Minister of Seniors, the wonderful member for Assiniboia (Mr. Johnston). And so, Manitoba seniors literally have a seat at the table at our government, at the—

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

The time for has questions has expired.

Debate

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

Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley): The priorities of Manitobans include health care, education, affordability, reconciliation and the environment, but none

of this was actually reflected in the province-provincial government's plan. The member for borderline who brought this forward this morning stood here in the House basically preaching some extreme right-wing ideology and fear-like, fear. He wants to just make Manitobans more afraid.

So I'm not exactly sure, you know, where his actual interest lies in terms of strengthening or recovering for Manitoba. I don't have any confidence in that from listening to the speech.

Manitoba is a growing province with growing needs, and we know that we need investments in health care that ensure every person can get quality care close to home. The PC government's rushed closures have resulted in a health-care system on the brink, and their cuts to our ICUs were a horrible mistake. We needed this care. We need it now, we needed it earlier in the pandemic.

They cut 18 ICU beds in consolidation before the pandemic. They cut 56 in-patient surgical beds right before COVID came to Manitoba. And they closed 124 hospital beds in Winnipeg in the last four years. This is damage that will take years to repair. Our hospitals are starved for capacity, with over 300 patients who've been transported many kilometres from home, and health-care funding remains below the rate of inflation.

This is not going to fix the damage—this PMR is fantasyland, because if it's not attached to actually meaningful numbers in the budget, none of this can actually happen.

We know that there are more than 2,300 hundred nurse positions vacant across the province. Critical areas of our hospitals have vacancy rates of 20 per cent or more. The use of agency care has surged by millions of dollars. Funding below inflation is not going to address the challenges faced in our hospitals, in our emergency rooms and in our clinics.

It's certainly not enough to deal with the challenges faced by our front-line health professionals. The budget includes no real financial commitment to resolving the outstanding contracts with health-care support staff, and they've frozen funding for physician recruitment.

Manitobans cannot trust this government to deal with the surgical backlog as we've seen time and time again. This budget leaves funding for emergency medical services flat, which isn't going to address the unacceptable growth in response times in Winnipeg

and across the province. And it doesn't address concerns in rural and northern Manitoba.

So if these things aren't addressed in the budget, I don't know what this PMR is even about. More often than not, there's not a doctor available at emergency rooms in Arborg or Eriksdale. And again, I would think, as a rural MLA, some of these issues would be top of mind for the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter).

High vacancies and low staff levels led to the closure of Roblin's emergency room and Grandview's hospital. And Roblin's ER is once again closed on weekdays. In the Thompson emergency room half-nearly half the positions are empty. In Gillam, Leaf Rapids, Lynn Lake and Snow Lake, the health region describes the situation as, quote, very fragile from a staffing perspective, and that gaps in services plague this site.

Northern Manitobans are getting very close to being unable to have their babies anywhere in the North. Obstetrics were cut in Flin Flon, services remaining in The Pas and Thompson are described by the region as in a very fragile state.

In addition, the PCs continue to refuse to release up-to-date data about the spread of COVID-19 and refuse to call an inquiry into the provincial government's pandemic response.

I realize I don't have the kind of time I hoped I did. I have lots to say about personal-care homes, but I'm going to leave that for one of my colleagues.

And I just want to reiterate something I said yesterday about affordability, how the current budget fails to keep life affordable for regular families, as hydro bills and the cost of everyday essentials increase, and how they've created a permanent tax hike for renters in the midst of the highest inflation in decades and the woefully inadequate minimum wage.

I'm going to jump ahead a little bit, hoping some of my colleagues will talk a little bit more about affordability. I'm sure that will happen.

But yesterday, I didn't have enough time in my speech to say everything I wanted to about this government's shameful record on relationships with Indigenous peoples. So, this PMR talks about reconciliation. But the term reconciliation cannot just be a catchphrase, a campaign slogan or a talking point. Reconciliation needs to start with truth, just as it did during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings. It needs to start with listening and actually

hearing the needs of First Nation, Métis and Inuit people.

Time and time again, this government forgets, ignores or even mocks a significant resource right here in this Chamber. There are five sitting MLAs on this side of the House who are Indigenous, MLAs who have direct ties to their community, whether urban, rural and northern. Our team includes MLAs with lived experience of intergenerational trauma as the children or grandchildren of residential school survivors. Many of us non-Indigenous folks have years of experience working with the TRC recommendations within education or health care or other settings. And at least two of our Indigenous members are recognized nationally and beyond for their work and leadership on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls.

Yet, this government continues to talk about reconciliation without ever having a meaningful conversation with Indigenous members of this House on what that might look like. When issues have been raised about racism that's been experienced by members of this House, either by other members of the House, security services or in other contexts, the responses range from complicit silence to outright denying these experiences. The entire Conservative caucus silently stood by while the then-premier made divisive decisions and destroyed relationships with Indigenous leaders across the province.

Budget 2022 includes no new funds for Manitoba's relationship with Métis people. The PC government ripped up agreements bargained with the MMF in good faith, and after delaying announcing funding for searching formal residential school sites, the PC government didn't deliver the money and blamed the federal government for delays, instead of just being a leader on this.

The Stefanson government even then spoke out Bill 200 to make Orange Shirt Day a statutory holiday.

We need a new approach to Manitoba's relationship with Indigenous people. Every time this government underfunds housing, minimum wage, health care, they make a statement about the lives of the most vulnerable people in our society and they make a statement about their lack of genuine commitment to Indigenous people, as well as Black and other racialized people in this province.

Advancing reconciliation in this budget would have looked like investments into the services that

people need the most. It would look like supporting Bill 200. It would look like cross-party engagement with Indigenous experience and knowledge. It would also look like significant environmental protections and working to stop climate change.

I'm going to repeat myself somewhat from yesterday's speech in order to talk about the climate and environment again. I'm pretty sure most folks weren't listening, anyway. But even so, they are words worth repeating. And they show how this PMR is just—there's nothing authentic in it when it talks about climate and parks.

* (11:30)

In six years in this office, this government has shown time and time again a profound lack of commitment to addressing climate change. It's really hard to believe that anything is different now.

Earlier this month, the IPCC released the third part of its Sixth Assessment Reports looking at ways to limit and prevent human-caused emissions that contribute to global warming, with a clear statement that action must be taken now. And this budget shows us that the Stefanson government is choosing to continue inaction in the face of a terrible climate crisis.

Budget 2022 reveals that millions were left unspent in Efficiency Manitoba this year. That is money that should have been spent to help Manitobans transition to cleaner choices.

As deputy premier, this Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) sat silent when environmental organizations had their funding cut and there were no new initiatives provided by the in government. Not only was funding cut for non-profits, but the Conservation and Climate department had 58 fewer full-time positions than they did six years ago. Parks and resource protection has at least 22 fewer full-time positions in that same time frame. There are many vacancies, and this budget just maintains the status quo.

Year after year, this government's cutting positions, leaving fewer and fewer people whose role it is to protect the environment. Budget 2022 revealed that the PCs left millions of dollars unspent to help Manitobans switch to clean energy and appliances.

When Efficiency Manitoba first came to be, the minister delayed this mission of Efficiency Manitoba's three-year strategic plan despite the law, and, by doing so, they undermined the oversight role of the PUB in the process and broke their own law.

Section 12 of The Efficiency Manitoba Act says that the minister can only approve Efficiency Manitoba's plan after the PUB has reviewed and made its own recommendations. But the minister had that plan on his desk before it went to the PUB. The minister undermined the independent role of the Public Utilities Board by passing a regulation that ended the furnace replacement program, a program ordered by the PUB. And this helped everyday Manitobans reduce their natural gas consumption and save on the energy bills.

Unfortunately, I'm out of time to talk again about the importance of investing in parks, but I'm just going to say we need to keep them public. We need to have more protected areas for Manitobans, and that will help us regrow our province.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): It's my pleasure today as the MLA for Riding Mountain to stand and talk about how Budget 2022 will strengthen, invest and build to 'enrich' the lives of my constituents and, indeed, all Manitobans.

Health care is a topic that our government takes seriously. This is the No. 1 issue on the minds of most Manitobans as we come out of a pandemic that most of us will hopefully only see once in a lifetime.

It's no secret that health care is suffering from a staffing shortage throughout Manitoba. Baby boomers retiring, others choosing a different career and recruiting by other provinces and states have played a role in the shortage of nurses and allied health professionals, not only here in Manitoba, but across Canada.

This issue is not new, and I believe it should have been addressed by former governments here in Manitoba, but we are the government now, and we are taking action.

Budget 2022 will invest over \$11 million to add 400 permanent seats for training nurses in Manitoba's post-secondary institutions.

I am pleased to add that the community of Virden will partner with Assiniboine Community College to train licensed practical nurses in the community in September 2022. The 25 LPNs who will graduate will then have the opportunity to fill vacancies in communities closer to where they live.

Paramedics are the first point of call for most Manitobans who need emergency care and are an important component of our rural clinical and preventative services plan. Budget 2022 will provide the funds to hire 35 more paramedics across Manitoba to

ensure that when Manitobans call 911 they get the first response they expect.

A couple of other budget items under Health that are significant to residents in my constituency are the 'investment' in a new hospital in Neepawa and the continued investment in the Brandon Regional Health Centre, which is a hub for western Manitoba.

These projects are part of \$812 million in—allocated for capital funding for health-care facilities across the province.

Budget 2022 will invest \$110 million to help address the surgical and diagnostic backlog that accumulated due to the pandemic. A new mobile CT scanner and two new mobile MRI units will be added to the diagnostic and imaging arsenal in Manitoba, which will allow for 12,000 more CT scans and over 7,000 more MRIs annually.

There's much more to talk about, such as Budget 2022's investment in health care in all areas of the province: \$100 million for the redevelopment of the St. Boniface general hospital emergency room, \$8 million for a new acute stroke unit at the Health Sciences Centre and \$4.9 million to expand Concordia Hospital's orthopedic surgery program that will allow to provide 1,000 more surgeries a year.

This is all possible due to a five per cent—5.8 per cent increase in health-care spending by our government. In fact, our government is now spending \$1 billion more in health care than the previous NDP government ever did.

Seniors are a focus of our government. This fact was made even clearer earlier this year when the Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) appointed my good friend, the MLA for Assiniboia, as Minister responsible for Seniors and Long-Term Care. Our seniors have worked hard their entire lives, sacrificed for their families and have given back to their communities. They now deserve to age with 'dignity' and independence.

Keeping seniors in their own homes longer is our goal, but to do that we need—we know we will need investments in home care. I am pleased to report that Budget 2022 will provide nearly \$20 million to implement a seniors' strategy along with \$32 million to help implement all 17 recommendations for changes to long-term care homes across Manitoba.

Highways are always a 'topic' of discussion by my constituents. I am pleased that significant upgrades have occurred over the past six years on

highways 1, 10, 16, 21 and 83 in my constituency. Work will continue this year on small sections of Highway 16 and begin on the busy Highway 10 corridor from Minnedosa to Riding Mountain National Park.

This work, year after year, is only possible through consistent budgeting by our government. I am excited to report this predictable annual spending will continue in Budget 2022 with \$500 million allocated for Manitoba's highway network this year, with a three-year plan to spend \$1.5 billion.

Funding for Manitoba's school system will increase by \$120 million for the '22-23 school year. This will mean a \$40-million increase in annual funding to public schools, \$2 million additional for independent schools and an additional \$77 million in one-time funding for public schools to assist with their ongoing financial pressures.

Our government will invest \$326 million over two years to make child care more affordable and accessible for Manitoba parents. Fees will be reduced by 50 per cent this year for low-'inkim' and middle-class parents across Manitoba. And we will create 716 spaces in new child-care centres and support 50 new home-based spaces this year.

The Building Sustainable Communities program has supported many, many projects in my constituency which enhanced the lives of residents through investment in projects important in their communities. I know municipalities and organizations are pleased that we have doubled our investment in the program to \$25 million this year. Besides supporting great projects in communities with matching funds, Building Sustainable Communities also creates jobs.

The cost of living is going up, and our government recognizes that. We are taking steps to make life more affordable for all Manitobans. The education property tax rebate will increase from 25 to 37.5 per cent in 2022 and then move to 50 per cent in 2023, saving the average homeowner \$1,355 over two years. A new tax credit will save residential renters up to \$525 per year.

Mr. James Teitsma, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

As I mentioned earlier, the child-care subsidy program will support an average of \$10 per day, per child, for regulated child-care spaces. This will allow families to keep more of their paycheques as well as allowing families to consider having both spouses join the workforce.

Vehicle registration fees will reduce by 10 per cent, saving Manitobans \$15 million this year, in keeping with our election promise of reducing fees by 30 per cent. This is on top of three rounds of rebates by Manitoba Public Insurance that will put \$500 million back in the hands of vehicle owners.

As a government MLA, I'm very proud that we kept our promise to balance the budget in 2019. Then the pandemic hit, creating a \$2.1-billion budget deficit. Budget 2022 projects a deficit of a \$548 million with a plan to return Manitoba's books to balance in the next seven years.

We know that we have a lot of work to do as we come out of the pandemic. Our government has never been afraid of hard work. As we recover together, Mr. Acting-Acting Deputy Speaker, it is important for Manitobans to know they have a government that will continue to invest in core services while also keeping an eye on fiscal responsibility.

* (11:40)

Budget 2022 moves Manitoba on a strong path to recovery, and I was certainly pleased to vote in favour of it yesterday.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Really grateful for an opportunity to speak to this PMR and I—you know, of course I recognize that the member opposite who's brought this forward, the member for Borderland (Mr. Guenter), has a job to do, bringing forward this PMR to support the work of his government, and I appreciate that, but I do feel for him, a little bit, having to make this case.

It's a tough case to make that this government is actually looking to strengthen, rebuild, invest in this province. I think most Manitobans would scoff at the idea that this government is focused on those goals. And, ultimately, that must be a huge concern for this government, which is, of course, why they're trying to continue to make this argument and repeat these types of lines.

We know what they want Manitobans to believe, but, unfortunately, they've got a long ways to go and they've got a lot of work to do. We had six long years under Brian Pallister: disastrous cuts to our health-care system, shutting down three emergency rooms in Winnipeg, leaving us vulnerable for the pandemic, misguided attempts at dismantling our public education system that would have led to possibly one of the biggest social experiments in Manitoban history,

privatization at Hydro—on and on and on. And they desperately needed to change the channel. They really desperately needed to change the channel after six years of Brian Pallister.

And I think there were high hopes for the new Premier (Mrs. Stefanson). I think there were genuinely Manitobans out there who thought, maybe this is time for a fresh start. We'll see this new Premier differentiate herself from her predecessor. But, of course, with the release of the recent budget, all those hopes were dashed, Mr. Acting-Acting Deputy Speaker.

The government is not doing as they're suggesting in this PMR, of course. It's quite the opposite. They're more focused on shrinking, cutting, chopping in 2022. And that is a huge concern given the state of things in this province. I think that one of the most important things that we need to talk about here—and I'm really just going to start plucking off some of the most whereases that stick out the most to me, here, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, and I think one of the biggest ones here is health care, of course.

It's hard to think of a bigger priority for Manitobans right now. We all hear about this all the time from constituents. Of course, this is a massive concern for so many in this province. We've got a surgical wait-list. Again, I don't even know what the number's at right now, but we know it's way past 150,000 people waiting for surgeries and tests.

We heard recently, as my colleague from Union Station revealed last week, that people are possibly facing an inability to access an ambulance at certain times when they need it in this province. Patient transfers continue to be an issue at 300 people being shipped around the province for care. We're seeing huge nursing vacancies around the province. Our health-care system is in a crisis state right now due to the cuts that have been made over the last many years by this government.

And then, most recently, of course, we saw—we're hearing more about waits in our ERs. We're seeing ER doctors write letters of concern to journalists. CEO of the WRHA wrote a letter to staff recently about the concerning wait times that are being faced by Manitobans, and, you know, when we look to the government to be accountable for this—we saw yesterday the Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), her response when asked what the government would do to fix these issues was, quote: One of the things I'm doing is insist they fix it. My expectation as a Health Minister is that they will address this.

That's the leadership we're getting from this government, which is deflecting, you know, suggesting the problem is over there, not taking accountability, and that's really the story that we've seen from this government and that's the story we seem to continue to see, not only during Brian Pallister's time, but now under the time—this new period under our new Premier.

It's the hallmark of this government. And the big underlying issue here is that this government is simply unwilling to invest what's needed in our health-care system. They're unwilling to make the investments needed. We saw a level of health-care investment that was far below the level of inflation, and we know what that means. That doesn't mean strengthening, rebuilding and investing, it means cutting, reductions and more challenges for people in Manitoba who need to access health care. They're just not willing to do what's needed, and Manitobans are going to pay for it with their health. That's scary news, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

Another key concern, of course, as many have spoken about, is the ongoing affordability challenges that Manitobans are facing right now. Costs are going up everywhere. I don't need to say that. We all know gasoline, groceries, inflation seems to go up, month after month, reaching record heights, heights not seen in 30 years. And this is going to be a huge challenge for us, for Manitobans, as we seek to rebuild this province, to develop a post-pandemic economy that will serve all of us.

But instead of working to make life more affordable, as this PMR suggests this government is doing, we're going in the wrong direction. We're going backwards. This government is actually working to make life more expensive.

Mr. Dennis Smook, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

And one of the whereases in this PMR, which suggests that government is making life more affordable through the creation of a renters' tax credit, is a perfect example of the type of dishonesty that we've seen from this government when it comes to their inaction in making life more affordable.

That supposed benefit, this renters' tax credit that's listed in this PMR, as everyone knows, is actually this government's work of locking in a tax increase that they imposed on renters last year, where they reduced a benefit of \$700 to \$525. They stole that away from renters. And then, of course, they heard

from Manitobans about that and they're quite worried about the impact of that tax increase on renters.

So this year they've tried to turn the page and they're calling that tax increase—now they've eliminated that old benefit and now they've created this new tax credit for renters—and they're calling it a benefit, when, in reality, they have locked in a tax increase. That is shameful. That's making life harder for the very people that this government should be most worried about. Who are those renters? People on fixed incomes, seniors, people who are struggling. That is not a segment of the Manitoban population that should be facing down bigger costs, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

Of course, I've spoken about this endlessly, and people are probably sick of hearing me talk about it, but hydro rates continue to go up under this government in ways that are very concerning. We've seen them for the very first time in this province's history legislate a hydro rate increase. Yes, I'm pointing at you, the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Khan). We've seen for the very first time this government legislate a hydro rate increase, which should be very concerning for the member for Fort Whyte and all members across the way, that they've legislated increases in cost on Manitobans at a time that they're really struggling.

And, of course, Bill 36, their new hydro bill, which is unbelievable in that it actually again seeks to further legislate bigger hydro rate increases on Manitobans, while kneecapping the role of the Public Utilities Board, is an incredible violation of Manitobans in that it seeks to take away the independence of the PUB. It seeks to take away from that advocate we all have to make sure we pay fair rates. It steals that away and it all but guarantees we're going to see much higher hydro rates and rates that are not fairly set here, in Manitoba.

Continue to raise tuition fees; they continue to let above-guideline rent increases spiral out of control—again, something I've spoken about frequently in this House. That, again, is contributing to a runaway housing affordability issue in this province. No action from this government. They're certainly, again, not contributing to increasing affordability of life here, and that's going to make life harder for everyone and again, a real concern.

And then one—the last thing I want to talk about which this PMR touches on, which I have very little time to discuss here, but that's the question of their child-care investments. We've seen a lot of back-

patting over the last couple of months from this government about what is about to happen in this province in terms of this huge flood of federal child-care dollars that are coming into Manitoba. We've seen them, you know, all of a sudden change course, talk about how they're supportive of affordable child care.

It's not lost on Manitobans where this government is really at when it comes to child care. We have not forgotten their bill last year, bill 47, that opened the door, wide open, to hugely increasing the role of private service providers in our child-care sector. We know that they wanted to massively increase the number of private child-care service providers. We know that they were going to open the door to the ability for child-care centres to buy and sell their child-care licences. That would be a first in Manitoba, and again, contributing to more privatization. So what we've seen with their new plan—again, we've got this huge truckload of money coming, but there are huge concerns with that as well.

* (11:50)

All other provinces are committing up to 60 per cent coverage for kids zero to six; Manitoba, in this agreement, 40 per cent. The target wages outlined in that agreement are for CCAs and ECE IIs are below the average wages that those workers are currently getting in this province. So even when the boatloads of money are coming in, we still have to watch them carefully and we still have huge concerns.

This PMR is—definitely cannot be supported, huge concerns. Grateful for an opportunity to speak to it.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): The honourable member who's introduced this motion talked about the real danger of having an NDP government. Well, I would like to comment here that there is also a real danger right now with a Conservative government, that we have a government which, essentially, believes that it can say one thing and that that gives it permission to do something completely opposite.

The government says that it is trying to strengthen health care, but the health-care system is now at its most problematic that it has ever been. I have talked with health professionals. They talk about the chaos, they talk about a government which has lost its way, it lost its compass. We have a major hospital in this province which has been without hot water for month—weeks. We've got large numbers of positions vacant.

Good management is about thinking ahead and building a team, but we have a Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon) who talks about, they—in her department—are going to fix it, because I can't. That's too bad for us and for the province.

The government talks about clearing the surgical and diagnostic backlog, but they give us a number in the budget which is picked out of a hat, has no plan on which it is based, no clear allocation of what those dollars are going to be used and how they will actually fix the health care and what, even, will be the target.

It's a government which should have, in May of 2020, two years ago, realized that there was going to be a backlog and developed a plan and presented it then. But two years later, we still don't have a plan, but we have a government which is talking but there's no basis underneath that talk for really doing very much.

The government—the member talks about concern with inflation, and yet the government goes around raising hydro rates and jacking up costs, triggering more inflation. The government talks about building the economy, and yet we have at the moment, one of the greatest net out-migrations of people from Manitoba to other provinces that we have ever seen.

Last year, it was more than 12,000 people net leaving Manitoba to go to other provinces because they see better opportunities, more positive things happening in other provinces. You don't build an economy by making things so problematic here that people are leaving in such large numbers.

The government has talked about investing in communities, but we have communities, in the North particularly, which are ravaged by diabetes, with up to 50 per cent or more people in the community with diabetes, and here the government has not even got a plan to help these communities.

We have an Afghan community in Winnipeg who are hurting because the—Afghanistan has been taken over by the Taliban, and they are doing dastardly things there in Afghanistan. And yet, the government has not reached out to the Afghan community in Winnipeg to say, how can we help?

This is a government which talks a talk but doesn't get things done. The government talks about reconciliation, but the Auditor General has provided the real answer that this government is not doing what it is supposed to be doing. The fact is that we need leadership in ending the discrimination against

Indigenous people that we've seen in the past, and which, sadly, too oftening is continuing.

And we see this problem of a government which is dividing people in the rise in anti-Semitism in Manitoba. Now this is not reconciliation itself, but it is a reflection of the divisions that are occurring under this government and the need to bring people together, to work together to bring about real reconciliation.

We have a resolution which talks about protecting the environment and yet we have a budget and a government which has done nothing about lead toxicity and lead pollution, which is a major issue in this province and has been known for years and has been not addressed adequately by any government.

We have a government which talks about climate change and yet the reality is stark that Manitoba's greenhouse gas emissions, in the most recent year, have gone up by 5.6 per cent in 2020 over 2005.

We are an outlier among provinces in not addressing climate change, in not reducing greenhouse gases. This is a government which has lost its way, which talks about addressing climate change, but lets the greenhouse gases increase and increase.

And it is notable that 2020 was the year of—the first year of the pandemic when there was a lot less—fewer people driving around and less consumption of fossil fuels, but even in that year in Manitoba, when you compare it with 2005, we were going up. The rest of Canada is going down almost 10 per cent from 2005 and Manitoba is going up.

It's a striking record in sharp contrast to this resolution. We need to confront the reality of what is happening. We need to talk about the real danger that this Conservative government is inflicting on Manitobans right now.

With that, I'm going to pass to others to speak a little bit because there's much more that needs to be said about this danger.

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): The honourable member for Keewatinook (Mr. Bushie)—or, sorry, the honourable member for Brandon East.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I know my time here is really limited, but I think it's important to put on the record the facts that are facing us with this great budget. I know through question periods over the last number of days the opposition has stood up and asked us when are we going to fire agency nurses. Look back, you can see that many times in there.

This budget, I'm very proud to say, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, that this budget pushes forward in nursing. We all know there's a shortage of nursing, not just in Manitoba, not just in Canada, but in all of North America.

And here we have an opportunity to invest money to new recruits, to 400 new possible nursing students that the opposition and the Liberal members voted against.

So to stand up in this House and say, we need this, we need this, we need this, we need a government that does this—then why are they not supporting a government who is doing exactly what needs to be done?

So we have an opportunity to push forward for all Manitobans, and that's exactly what we're doing on this side of the House. And the members on the opposite side—oh well.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): With my few short minutes here—

The Acting Speaker (Dennis Smook): Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Keewatinook will have 10 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 26, 2022

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Resolutions	
Speaker's Statement		Res. 11–Strengthening, Rebuilding, Investing, and Recovering in 2022	
Driedger	1577	Guenter	1586
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS			
Second Readings–Public Bills		Questions	
Bill 233–The Engineering and Geoscientific Professions Amendment Act		Sala	1589
Wishart	1577	Guenter	1589
Questions		Nesbitt	1589
Moses	1578	Gerrard	1589
Wishart	1578	Naylor	1589
Michaleski	1578	Isleifson	1590
Gerrard	1578	Debate	
Pedersen	1579	Naylor	1590
Debate		Nesbitt	1593
Moses	1580	Sala	1594
Michaleski	1582	Gerrard	1596
Lindsey	1583	Isleifson	1597
Gerrard	1584	Bushie	1598
Altomare	1585		

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

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