

**Second Session - Fortieth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Fortieth Legislature**

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ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 16, 2013

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

**Mr. 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.

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

#### PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** Would you see if there's the will of the House to proceed to Bill 302, Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie.

**Mr. Speaker:** Under orders of the day in private members' business, is there leave to proceed directly to Bill 302? *[Agreed]*

#### SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

**Mr. Speaker:** All right, we'll call Bill 302, the—Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act.

#### Bill 302—Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act

**Mr. Dave Gaudreau (St. Norbert):** I move, seconded by the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that Bill 302, Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act, now be read for a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Gaudreau:** I'd actually like to recognize a few of the sisters who are here today up in the gallery; Sister Annette, Sister Showrillu and Sister Anne, who are joining us today to hear us debate on this bill.

Basically, this bill is amending things from back in 1901. When it was originally written, it discussed having \$20,000 worth of power to buy properties and stuff. And as you can imagine, Mr. Speaker, \$20,000 doesn't go a long way anymore to buying property; you can hardly buy a car for that anymore.

This group is a group that likes to live like the people and they're very much poverty advocates. Actually, the new Pope is—models himself after what their motto is, is to Live Like the People.

And, you know, they were first founded back in Québec in 1892, and then they moved into—they came to Manitoba in 1909, and came to Winnipeg. And what they started here was to help young women and girls, particularly, settle in Manitoba—new immigrants.

So they really have a—I feel that we have a very big tie with them just because of our policies. And the, you know, the former minister on the opposition side also had the immigration policies to help new—settle new people with the PNP program that they brought in.

And I think that it's really important that we recognize them and allow this act to be changed, so that way they can have the same powers as what normal people have to carry out their objections and—objects and purposes, which is to really help people, is their bottom line, is what they're looking at doing.

They moved into St. Boniface in the year that I was born, actually, in 1971. And they really work in solidarity to help marginalized voices and, you know, have people in the community that are underrepresented, usually, to help them into the community. And they build relationships with a variety of minority cultures in Canada and in Manitoba. So they do some fantastic work, and I think that it's really important that we recognize them here today as—for the work that they do and that we pass this bill and let them have the same—enjoy the same kind of purchasing power as what normal corporations would do.

You know, there—in Manitoba, 5 per cent of us are—what are—part of their mission is to have language—to having the dual language, with French and English in Manitoba, or in Canada, the official languages. And 5 per cent of us in Manitoba are

French-speaking background. I myself come from a French-speaking family, and, unfortunately, in the '70s, French was kind of on the way out, so I'm not quite fluent on it anymore.

But they, you know, they worked to educate students in Manitoba on basic French and French courses and immersion to educate people with *Division scolaire franco-manitobaine*. And many children throughout the province actually attended schools with them. And both of my parents were actually—attended Catholic schools and were educated by nuns in St. Boniface where they were raised, and their first language is actually French. So I've heard many stories from them about all of the years that they spent in Catholic school with the nuns, and, you know, some really great stories from them about how they're educated.

And, you know, I look at my mother and what she believed in before she passed on, and the community activism that she did, and, you know, I know that they did a great job educating her, because she was very involved in her community and had a compassion for people, and, you know, really had a love for life, and really wanted to better the lives of people in her area, in the community that she lived in.

And I take that passion from her. That's why I ended up running for politics and am where I am now, and unfortunately, she passed before I was able to—before she was able to see me get to this point. But she always knew that I would—I was going to move towards this direction, even though I wasn't quite sure where I was going at the time. But, you know, she was a—she definitely was educated by some fantastic people, just based on the way she led her life.

And, you know, I think that, regardless of who we are in Manitoba, we have to recognize that the nuns played a very important role in educating people from back, you know, from the time that Manitoba has been—inception of Manitoba actually. If you look back at the times—you know, you've looked back at the history of Manitoba—when I did my genealogy, it was actually the Catholic Church that kept the records for people and they—that was the first, if you want to call it, rudimentary system of records. And I went back and looked at those records, and it's pretty interesting that, you know, they talk about my ancestors, and they identify them by the plot of land that they have, and the fact that they had an axe or a canoe, and a chicken and a cow.

That was how that person was identified. And it was done in the Catholic books—the church books, that were the records for back then. And without those records, we—actually, I wouldn't know who some of my ancestors were, because that was the only record-keeping system back then.

I think it's really important to recognize that their work is to support the poor and underrepresented people in our community. And, you know, I think that's something that I take very seriously on—personally, you know, I look at some of the policies that we've done, and, you know, raising minimum wage every year, you know, as—developing more social housing units. This year we announced more social housing units to help those people who aren't necessarily able to get themselves out of the situation they're in.

\*(10:10)

I think it's really important that we all look at representing the vulnerable in our society. You know, we work with non-profit groups and community organizations. One of the groups that I have some ties to is Osborne House and also W.I.S.H., which is Women in Second Stage Housing, and, you know, these groups are able to help people and make communities and families thrive. Without them and without groups like the sisters here, we would not be able to function as a society. You know, these people need to have safe housing and education. I mean, that's the key. We've said that on our side many times that, you know, education is the way out of poverty and if you get yourself an education, you can surpass anything that's put in front of you, and it's really important. And the—you know, we view that—I mean, every year we put more money into education, and constant increasing to them, and, you know, funding to universities and colleges.

And, you know, we also have our Community Places programs which provides planning and assistance to non-profit community organizations and groups, which—you know, those grants are given towards facility constructions and upgrades to those groups. They need a little bit of help, because, you know, as a community organization, there's not a lot of money all the time for them and it's important that we support those groups to make people's lives better in Manitoba. You know, we—Community Places, for example, is more than a \$107 million in projects since its inception, and 7,000 community construction projects province-wide. And all of those

projects go into—right back into the community to help the people that we're talking about; people who are not able to buy all the services that they need. There's a—we need to have a—you know, community organizations that can help us get people into, you know, education and recreation and, you know, the—they deliver that.

They deliver newcomer education, and originally when—their inception, that's what they came here to do. And they helped newcomers settle, and I think that's really important. I mean, we look at Manitoba—125,000 more people in the last 12 years, and, you know, all—most of them are newcomers to this country, and it's really important that we support them when they come here. And this is the kind of organization that we need in our society to help newcomers come and settle and to—you know, we look at what happens when they come here. They—within a few months they have full-time employment, and within five years most of them—I think it's 80 per cent—end up owning houses in our society.

And, you know, I've said that before, that I can't imagine coming from somewhere—you know, having your life uprooted, to have to come here and start all over again. And it's important that we support these people, because it's—you know, I mean, they're going through the biggest upheaval in their life, and groups like this definitely help with getting these people settled in Manitoba and becoming good citizens. And, you know, they end up working and creating jobs and a lot of them become company owners that create even more jobs.

So I think it's really important that we recognize the work that they do. I'm hoping that all members of this House will support this bill unanimously and that we will pass it and allow them the privilege and the honour to keep serving our communities like they do so well, and to allow them to have a reasonable limit on spending, because, like I said, \$20,000 sure doesn't go the way it did in 1901.

So I'm hoping that today we see a unanimous consent of the House, and I'm pretty sure we're all going to agree on this bill, Mr. Speaker, and for that I thank you very much.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Lakeside, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from the Franciscan

Missionaries of Mary: Sister Annette John, Sister Showrillu Vatti and Sister Anne Adoukpe, who are the guests of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Gaudreau).

On behalf of all honourable members, we welcome you here this morning.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** I do want to put a few things on the record. And, of course, I'm pleased to second this resolution. Many times in the House—we don't see it that often, but many times in the House we do see all parties come together and debate legislation that we can agree with, and this is certainly one of those bills that we're more than happy to partner with the government to show our support.

And we know legislation, when we bring it in, sometimes gets dated. And this is one of those situations, as the member from St. Norbert pointed out, was going back to 1901. And the impact that \$20,000 had in—at that time, and now you can barely buy a new pickup or a new car for \$20,000.

So we certainly understand the need for the update and we appreciate what you do for all Manitobans, and we certainly cannot thank you enough for the contribution you make to society, to our communities and, of course, our province and our great country that we're all so proud to serve in.

Also, I want to thank Paul Hesse, who is the lawyer that's working pro bono that—my understanding—on the legislation in order to help the organization move forward. And I know that the sisters from the 'Franciscanary'—Franciscan Missionaries of Mary are quite proud of what they have accomplished, and, of course, whenever we look at changes to legislation we have to think about the future and the changes that come about as a result of those changes. So we are very pleased to be part of that.

I know the member from St. Norbert did talk briefly about the history going back to the record keeping—and I know, even though I'm not from a Catholic background as far as my religion goes—but I can tell you that I've also seen a number of records that are so important and vitally important to all Manitobans in order to go back and check history. So just that small part, that small part there, just one is so important to the history making and, of course, what we've seen from those impacted, a result of that

good record keeping, of course, you know the lives that they've impacted, the children.

In fact, back in 1901, we were the Chicago of the North and Winnipeg was anticipated to grow and prosper, and didn't quite turn out to be Chicago of the North, but we have turned out to be one of the most beautiful, well-kept cities in the country. And, of course, Manitoba, we're so proud of it. And the role that the sisters have done and that, as I said before, we just can't thank them enough.

So we're pleased to move this on to committee, and we are more than happy to debate that once again that it gets through committee. And I look for all members of the House to support this bill in its entirety.

So, with that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Innovation, Energy and Mines):** Monsieur le Président, je suis très heureux à parler aujourd'hui à cause cet Bill 302 pour Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act Manitoba, parce que c'est quelque chose très important pour tous les Manitobains et tous les gens qui parlent les deux langues au Canada.

#### **Translation**

*Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to speak about Bill 302, Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act, because it is something that is very important for all Manitobans and everyone who speaks the two languages of Canada.*

#### **English**

I know, Mr. Speaker, that we may not have translation services this morning, so I just reiterate that I'm very pleased to have the opportunity to speak about this bill. And I wanted to say a few words in French just to acknowledge the good efforts and the works of the sisters in ensuring that Canadians and others had the capacity and the ability to speak in dual languages, and, of course, in this province and in this country French is of paramount importance.

The—I am honoured to speak here today and not coincidentally, but because the order of which we're speaking which was based on Francis of Assisi is of significant—significant—impact on not just the local projects that we're talking about, but just briefly in terms of theological and world history. In fact, I've just concluded a book on medieval history that basically indicated that between Hildegard and

between Francis of Assisi it effectively changed the very approach to religion in Europe at that time. And since then the philosophy of St. Francis and the missions that have derived from St. Francis have been a significant and have had a significant impact on the world and on people in general.

\* (10:20)

The concept of giving up and sacrificing one's life to poverty and to helping those in need is extremely powerful and has had generational and century-making changes. It may not be the stuff of great history books in terms of conflict and royalty and nobility in power and politics, but it's had a transformation that not only changed the concept of theology in the 12th century and right through to the present day, but has seen its manifestation in the pronouncements of the most recent Pope of the Catholic Church.

So it's a powerful philosophy. It's not overly complex, but it's difficult to achieve. And the work, both in this community and around the world, has been nothing short of profound—and sole save our—shall I say, profound and has had a significant impact.

*Mr. Mohinder Saran, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

In Manitoba, it's been clear that so much of the work required, both in our health care and our social sector, the work has been borne by—on the backs and on the broad shoulders of the sisterhood, be it the education system, be it the health-care system, be it the personal care home system, be it the social system. I've learned, a long time ago, that the nuns in St. Boniface or the sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary in the North End of Winnipeg were far more powerful in achieving objectives of social justice and serving people than almost any of us as individuals have been able to achieve. They've done remarkable work.

They've done remarkable work in providing ministry and in setting examples. The issue and the concept of sacrifice and committing oneself to one's fellow human beings, totally is not something that's talked about a lot in our culture. I'm very—I'm much more hopeful of the next generation and the present generation in terms of their ability to enact and provide for a better world and provide for sharing and caring with their fellow citizens, because I've seen incredible work that goes on in our school system.

The—as someone who came from 'immigrant background'—as many in this community and in this Legislature, which I've always said is very reflective of the province of Manitoba—the nuns were the one that taught us our language, the Ukrainian language. We all went to Ukrainian school. We all were taught by nuns. We—when we went to nursing homes, the nuns were the volunteers there. When my grandmother entered a nursing home, she never spoke English her entire life, but the nuns provided for her. And at her funeral, when I looked out on—in the parish, there were the nuns attending to my grandmother from—so essentially they had been there from her birth to the grave, because she had been born in the old country, in Ukraine. And in the last—previous century, and from cradle to grave was tended to by the sisters. There weren't always priests around, and it made a significant factor in her and many lives.

So the bill we're enacting today—and I appreciate the fact that it's going to be unanimous—is significant because we're not—we're talking about entities that require a modern corporate structure in order to advance. And one of the ways that we function in today's society is through corporate structure, and allowing the flexibility and the expansion of corporate structure allows the sisters and others to carry on their tradition in a modern sense. The tradition and the concept that they're carrying on is a very—is as old as humankind, and that is to help one another, treat one another as you'd want to be treated yourself. But the structure is different, and that's we're effectively doing today.

And that's why this bill, I think, is so important. That's why, I think, that this bill will have unanimous passage in this House. And that's why I stand here to support and in a few words try to reflect, I think, the appreciation that the citizens of Manitoba have for the work of these women who day in and day out live amongst us and provide amongst us with little fanfare, with little recognition, but with significant impact.

And I only have to look at my own work when I, as Minister of Health, and the sisters of 'Marymount' whose motto is: you save one child, you save the world—when I look to the institutions run by the nuns across the province, when I look to the nuns who undertake their work in Winnipeg amongst the poor, providing social justice, it's—you can't quantify it in terms of dollars. But what you could say is that we are thankful that they are undertaking their mission and their philosophy because the impact that it has

on every single person in this province is significant. And the caring and the love that they pass on to many of those that we pass on the street that we don't have the time or energy, I suppose, sometimes to pay attention to, they need that support, care and loving just as much as any of us do. And where we can't, they can and where we can help them, I think, it's significant and it's important that we do.

So, with those few words, I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I, too, as all members of this House, am thankful that these women and these people are in our midst.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Monsieur le Président, je voudrais dire comme député libéral à cette assemblée que je donne mon appui à cette loi 302, la Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie.

**Translation**

*Mr. Speaker, I would like to say as a Liberal member of this Assembly that I support Bill 302, Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act.*

**English**

I think this is an endeavour which all of us support and, certainly, from the point of view of the Liberal Party, we are certainly supportive of this effort. And, as others have done, I want to say thank you to the sisters and all you have done, not just today, but over many, many, many years. Thank you.

Je voudrais dire merci aussi à Paul Hesse, qui est l'avocat qui a assisté dans cette loi.

**Translation**

*I would also like to thank Paul Hesse, who is the lawyer who assisted with this bill.*

**English**

I want to recognize that the Franciscan tradition, the teachings of St. Francis has already been discussed somewhat, have had a major influence and it's important for us to acknowledge this as well as acknowledging the good works that the Franciscan Missionaries of Marie are doing.

And as, indeed, has already been mentioned, the current Pope has renewed interest in the works of St. Francis and, I think, we are going to see globally some more attention than certainly has been paid in the last little while, and I think that's a good thing. So

I wish Franciscan Missionaries of Marie all the best and good works in the years ahead and say thank you.

Merci pour tout ce que vous faites.

**Translation**

*Thank you for all you do.*

**Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park):** I usually would not want to preface my speech with saying that I am a proud Catholic, born one, and I was baptized, grew up as a Catholic and still am a very proud Catholic.

\* (10:30)

The work that's done by most of the congregations, whether they are Franciscans or Dominican or Good Shepherd or some other congregations of sisters and nuns, have been part of most of my life. They have been running institutions like hospitals and orphanages.

The orphanages in the Philippines, where I grew up 33–or 66 years ago—shows you my age—were needed in order to supplement the function of government, because where there was failure on the part of government, the religious organizations were there to supplement and, in fact, sometimes take care of what government has failed to do.

The most telling of all the congregations that have been in service of humanity, was the one by Mother Teresa; she has been recognized as the one who was working with the poor in Calcutta.

But the Franciscan order of missionaries of Mary are working with immigrants, the young, new arrivals from someplace else who seek refuge in our cities, in our towns, in our most beautiful country. And it's been 123–or 121 years.

And for a non-profit organization, and with a vow of poverty that they have, to be sustained by this sheer willpower and commitment to service and to charity, is a most telling characteristic of what most of these congregations have personified.

So it is but good; I'll say it's even better that this a unanimous–unanimously approved bill to help out this congregation into its modern-day activities and help out and assist it in doing its work.

Most of the work that they do have been chronicled with the Archdiocese of St. Boniface. And the Archdiocese of St. Boniface is also very close to me because I attend two of theirs—two of

their parishes, where my wife reads during mass: the Holy Cross and, of course, the Holy Rosary.

I will close by saying that in the name of our Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we should support this.

Thank you.

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Minister of Family Services and Labour):** I also am pleased to stand today to put a few words on the record about this bill.

Je voudrais souhaiter les sœurs qui sont ici avec nous aujourd'hui bienvenue.

**Translation**

*I would like to welcome the sisters who are here with us today.*

**English**

We're very happy to have you with us. I want you to know that my first and second grade teachers were nuns; I don't think they belonged to your order, but I want you to know that your presence here has about the same effect that her presence had on our behaviour as six- and seven-year olds, and I want to thank you for that. If you could stay with us throughout the day, certainly during question period, I think that would have a salutary effect on the Chamber as a whole.

Much has been said about the history of this order, but I think it bears repeating that, really, the history of most of the services that governments now provide were initially provided in this country by nuns, by sisters and by priests, but mainly by the nuns who came here from other countries to provide those services.

The history of public health care in this country is based on hospitals and health care that nuns came as nurses to provide, often in very challenging circumstances. Any of us just have to go and look at some of the exhibits in the St. Boniface Museum to see—what stands in my mind—the picture of the Grey Nuns arriving by canoe to the red—the forks of the Red and the Assiniboine River to their new home where they were charged with putting in place health care, putting in place education for children and helping to make sure that those very needed services were available to many of the people who were here.

And if you think about it, these women and, of course, Marguerite D'Youville came—they often came from, maybe not privileged backgrounds, but



these were women who in Europe had backgrounds sometimes of wealth, perhaps had been married and widowed and had become a nun after that. And they came to a country where there was none of that infrastructure in place and they provided health care and education, sometimes outside in the elements and did the best they could with what they had.

Also, most of the history of having a public education system in this country is because of the Catholic Church and nuns who came and other churches who came and made education and made education for everyone a priority. And, I think, when we look at the history of social programs in Canada, the provision of health care to everyone no matter how much money you had and the provision of an education up to grade 12 no matter how much money you had, those are two of the great forces of social equality in our country. Knowing that you will be cared for when you're ill and knowing that everybody in this country gets an education, gets a good, primary public education, those are things that make—that advance equality for all of us, and that is much of the work of the Catholic Church.

In many parts of the country, the first children's aid societies, the first organizations who came together to protect children—and I know this is still a big part of the mission of the Franciscan order that's with us—those first organizations were also headed up by churches, including the Catholic Church. And so much of what we now think of and what we take for granted as our social system, our social-care system in Manitoba and in Canada, whether that be health care, education, children's aid societies—elder care also is a big feature—had its roots in the Catholic Church.

But, also, as we've talked a bit about St. Francis, and for me as a young child going through Catholic school, most children have a connection with St. Francis. That's one of the saints that you learn about and you feel an affinity for because St. Francis, of course, had a special connection to animals, and kids all have that connection to animals. And St. Francis was also a gentle person, a person who we've heard very much believed in walking the same path as the communities that he served, took vows of poverty and of service.

And I also can recall learning the hymn that is the prayer of St. Francis and the words of that prayer, and those were some of my grandmother's favourite words of prayer. And that St. Francis called upon us

all to be a channel of peace; make me a channel of your peace, was St. Francis's prayer. And that we're—if we were seeking to be forgiven, that first we had to forgive; if we were seeking to receive, that first we had to give. And those are words I remember very much growing up and remember singing with my grandmother in church, and they're words that I think should help to guide all of us who are also called to public service, that our role in public service is to be a channel for peace.

\* (10:40)

And whether that peace comes by delivering care to those who most need it—and also delivering care to those who are rejected by society, which, I think, is another feature of many religious orders that they take to heart, and they walk the path that Jesus called us to walk, which is to love one another and to love every person, to love every neighbour as you love yourself and not to judge but to love. And that is something that I think we find a constant in the way many religious orders conduct their faith. They live their faith by serving those who society has a history of rejecting, whether those are missions that are served in prisons, whether those are missions that are served to people who may be homeless, to people who are struggling with addictions and mental illness and other people that society has cast aside.

One of the privileges that I have as the MLA for Fort Rouge, is that I represent Villa Cabrini and I get to go every year to the celebration that they have for their namesake, Mother Cabrini, who was a nun. And Father Sam, who is the priest at the Holy Rosary Church, comes and says that mass and tells us the story of Mother Cabrini, who was a nun that came from Italy and came to the United States, came to Chicago, worked in some of the most challenging circumstances, by all accounts was a very strong woman and a tough lady and made sure that there were schools and hospitals. And still today, throughout the States, you'll find high schools bearing her name and hospitals bearing her name. And she believed that she had a vocation to come here and do that work. She—the way that Father Sam tells the story, it may not have been her first choice to get on the boat and go to do this work, but that's what she was called to do, and so she did that without question and threw her heart and soul into it. And, because of that, there are many, many institutions that bear her name, but also she was able to serve many, many people.

And most—it is true that most nuns work and they don't work for the glory of it. They don't work thinking that their name is going to be on a building someday. They do the work that they're called to do and they live their faith every day in the best way that they can.

And we also have tremendous examples in our community of that work, and I'm thinking particularly about Sister Lesley and the work that she has done with immigrant and refugee women. And we, of course, have been proud to be part of that work, along with the federal government, to support that. And have seen with her tenacity and perseverance, develop housing options and a real community for those women.

So I think today as we talk about modernizing this act, it's important to remember that religious orders, nuns and priests and brothers and sisters in our midst continue to serve a very important role. They have a proud history of making sure that we have the social programs in place in Canada that we now all treasure and take for granted, and they continue to serve that role. They continue to bring comfort to those who need comforting. They continue to be a voice of activism in many, many places. They remind us of our role as public policy makers to be a voice for the voiceless, to make sure that we are—as we are making decisions—that we're guided by our duty to serve and our duty to walk in whatever faith that we have, to make sure that we are loving each other and not judging each other and trying to help all of the people that we serve in making sure that we have a community and a society that we can also be proud of.

So I want to thank again, the sisters who have joined us today. I want to thank them for the work that they do in our communities, the work that I know that their order does around the country and around the world. And we're very honoured to have you here with us today and honoured to be able to all speak to this bill and support this bill unanimously.

Thank you very much.

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Local Government):** It's my pleasure today to rise and also to welcome our guests today. And I know that members opposite support this bill as we do, and it'll be pleased—I'll be certainly pleased to see this bill passed unanimously. We certainly—the amendments to this bill, it's important to note that this particular bill just enhances what already is being done.

And I know growing up in Dauphin, Manitoba, belonging to St. Viator's Church—and I know some of the members opposite some days wonder whether or not I'm a good Catholic boy because of the comments I pass and direct at them. But, indeed, growing up in Dauphin, Manitoba, and St. Viator's Church, and having my mother belong, and still belongs, to the Catholic Women's League, and all the good work that they do in the community, and with regard to working with people who are disadvantaged in the community of Dauphin and continue to do their work.

But what I want to do is reflect back to the days when I was much younger, going to work on my uncle's farm in Laurier, Manitoba, and my uncle's name was Wilfred Bouchard, who has since been passed away. But of his sisters, eight sisters, six of them became sisters, became nuns with the Grey Nuns. And there are still a few alive today. But those were the days, growing up, in a lot of Francophone communities, where many young men were called upon to become priests or the daughters became nuns. And in this particular family, my uncle's family, there was one priest and there were six nuns, and I believe they were all Grey Nuns. And they—and there's still, I believe, three alive today, and still continue to do good work and very similar to the sisters that are here today.

The kind of work they've done, dealing with people with mental illness, dealing with the challenges people have being homeless, and sometimes connected, of course, and dealing with the addictions that people have, all the good work that has taken place by the nuns, not only in Manitoba, but taking a look at the history with regard to the Franciscans and the good work that they've done, and it mentions here in my notes, certainly, that the institute moved to St. Boniface in 1971, but, certainly, the first congregation was founded in Québec in 1892.

Just to add a little more with regard to my background, my constituency was La Verendrye and now is Dawson Trail. Dawson Trail is composed of Ste. Anne, Lorette, Ile des Chênes, St. Adolphe. And each of one of those communities has a Catholic church, and the challenges that the Catholic Church is finding today is having priests, enough priests, to have their own churches. And I know, now, a lot of priests are moving around and having more than one church that they're responsible for. No—and it's very similar that it's taking place in the community of Lorette.

Just to note a personal item from my standpoint with regard to the Catholic Church, it's—I know my mother is coming in a couple of weeks to attend my daughter's wedding. First child that is going to be married in the Catholic church in Lorette, and that has made, of course, my mother very happy because a lot of weddings nowadays take place in more neutral ground, if I can use that term, in parks and other locations, which—they're beautiful, but the Catholic church, I don't know if many people here have been to the Catholic church in Lorette, but that particular church is really, really beautiful. And we certainly look forward to that day in a couple of weeks.

Just to talk a little bit more about the work that sisters do and the Franciscans have done for many, many years, we're talking about work that is—takes place working with multicultural communities. Yes, the French language has always been important and important in Manitoba and our history of Manitoba, but the support they provide for the poor and support they provide for the disadvantaged remains important today, as it was in the 1800s when they first congregated in Québec, and also when they moved to St. Boniface in 1971, I believe it was.

With 'ragald'—with regard to bilingualism in Manitoba, there has been a long-standing debate with regard to the French language and bilingualism in the province, a lot of angry debate, a lot of nastiness that has taken place over language in this province. But now, as we see Manitoba changing and evolving, there are many, many multicultural communities and many multicultural entities in this province now that we see has really made Manitoba a real strong force with regard to a lot of issues, whether it's economics or other issues across Canada. And we are very, very proud of our strong multicultural community we have. It has made Manitoba truly a better place.

\*(10:50)

But to go back to the debate with regard to language in the province of Manitoba, the linguistic duality is one of the main components of our Canadian identity. It's a language of two—or it's a country of two languages, and having both French and English as official languages in Canada is important to the citizens of Manitoba and our provincial government.

Our provincial government has steadfastly supported French language services. We've supported French language services being offered in many centres throughout the province. Indeed, we

have legislation that's put—been put in place that puts the bilingual services centre into law that these services will remain. There certainly can be others added, but certainly the ones that exist cannot be removed. We believe that—and, then, to be quite pointed about it, that it's not just francophones that attend these centres for services. There are many, many individuals that come to these service centres to access provincial programs. So—but the point I'm trying to make at this time is that this government made sure that French language services and the services can be accessed and programs can be accessed through those centres throughout Manitoba, and we believe it's truly important that they be there.

We know that when it comes to multicultural communities there are many people who come here from different countries, from all over the world looking for assistance, not a handout but a hand up, just to get a start. And we find that in Manitoba, as the Minister responsible for Family Services had pointed out, that the families—it doesn't take very long for the families to not only get good jobs, but also to access housing, to buy housing, buy their own homes and become very self-sufficient. But there still are those that need assistance, and that's where many nuns and this particular order has been very, very helpful throughout the years and continues to be helpful for those, not only as we mentioned that have mental illness concerns and problems, but also the fact that poverty still continues to be a problem for many and homelessness is also a challenge that we're trying to address.

And I know the members opposite, we may differ on a lot of things and we may differ on policy, we may differ on legislation we may want to pass and debate, but I believe this one members opposite feel as strongly as we do and we certainly look for their support in making these changes today.

I know that the items that we debate in here sometimes get contentious. It's an adversarial process a lot of the times. And I certainly had to chuckle when the Minister of Family Services mentioned that it's too bad that you couldn't be here more often because, quite frankly, there needs to be a little bit more civility in here. And I can certainly accept some blame as many others can in this Chamber, sometimes we get a little bit out of hand and make comments directed at each other that probably shouldn't be because everyone in this Chamber has been elected to do a job and has been elected by their citizens to represent their citizens in the best way they see. And we may differ on many things, but we

don't differ on wanting to make Manitoba a better place, and I think that's something that we all agree on. And we certainly agree with the fact that your order has really made a difference, made a difference to Manitoba, has made a difference to many citizens that have come here from other countries, many citizens that have their hand out looking for help, looking for support. And sometimes it may be one day, sometimes it may be a week, sometimes it may be a month and sometimes longer, but that assistance that you provide and have provided for so long will be needed not only tomorrow, but in many, many days into the future.

And so we want to ensure that your organization—and that you have support from the Province and you have support through legislation that gives you that, gives you what you need to be able to do the best work that you do and work that others can't do for various reasons. And so our government have—has always supported poverty reduction, has always supported community development.

Going back to when we were first elected—and when I was first elected in 1999, that's one of the first speeches Gary Doer gave—

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** Order. Order. Honourable Minister, the time has expired.

**Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows):** I don't have a strong connection to the Catholic world. I just wanted to say a few words to the women who came out today, because I do feel strongly about what they do and how they're reaching out to the—to those around us, that not everybody would be reaching out to and providing love where maybe those people never experienced love before and showing them what valuable people they are.

The member from Fort Rouge mentioned the prayer of St. Francis, and it's one of the prayers that sits on my wall. I wish I could I say that I live this prayer every day, as I certainly do not. I think these women here are probably much more likely to be living it every day. She read a piece of it, but I just think it's kind of a good ending.

And I just want to say this is the prayer: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace, / Where there is hatred, let me sow love; / Where there is injury, pardon; / Where there is doubt, faith; / Where there is despair, hope; / Where there is darkness, light; / Where there is sadness, joy. / O, Divine Master, / grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as

to console; / to be understood as to understand; / to be loved as to love. / For it is in giving that we receive. / It is in pardoning that we are pardoned, / and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

And I believe that that is the life that you are living and that in the next world you will hear: You have done well, good and faithful servant. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** Question. The question before the House is second reading of Bill 302, Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act.

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

I declare the motion carried.

**Ms. Howard:** Would you canvass the House to see if there's will that that vote be recorded as accepted unanimously?

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** Now the motion is being adopted unanimously.

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

So it's carried unanimously.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods):** I just wondered if you had canvassed the House to see if there's will to move to Bill 210, The Seniors' Rights Act.

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** Is there agreement to go to Bill 210? Agreed? [*Agreed*]

#### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** Resume the debate to Bill 210, second reading of the bill, The Seniors' Rights Act, standing in the name of member for Burrows. There are two minutes.

#### Bill 210—The Seniors' Rights Act

**Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows):** All right. I'm very pleased to be here to speak to the Home Care Program. [*interjection*] Oh, we're on The Seniors' Rights Act—so sorry. Okay, excellent, well, that fits right in, doesn't it? So, isn't that lucky?

Well, thank you so much, Mr. Eichler, but I would like to talk about that—a little bit about the home care in our province, because I think it is one of the key things that speaks to seniors' rights. Because in Manitoba we have home care—first of all, it has not been privatized. But what I was going to say is that it is—it allows—

\* (11:00)

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** Order, please. Order, please. Order, please.

The—this—our time is 11 o'clock. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Wight) will have one minute remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., it is time for private members' resolutions. The resolution we have before us this morning is the one sponsored by the honourable member for Rossmere, and the title of the resolution is the "Manitoba Home Care Program".

#### House Business

**Hon. Jennifer Howard (Government House Leader):** On House business.

Pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private members' resolution to be considered next Tuesday, will be one put forward by the honourable member for the Interlake. The title of the resolution is "Investment in Flood Protection Initiatives."

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** It has been announced—pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private members' resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for the Interlake. The title of the resolution is "Investment in Flood Protection Initiatives."

#### RESOLUTIONS

##### Res. 24—Manitoba Home Care Program

**Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere):** Manitoba Home Care Program—Mr. Speaker, moved by—I move, seconded by the member for Burrows,

WHEREAS Manitoba seniors helped build the province that Manitobans are proud to call home; and

WHEREAS the provincial government believes that all Manitobans deserve access to quality home care that will allow them to stay at home longer and age with dignity; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba Home Care Program established in 1974 is the oldest and most comprehensive universal home-care program in Canada; and

WHEREAS in the 1990s, the provincial government of the day and the current Leader of the Official Opposition attempted to privatize home-care services, introduced home-care user fees and tried to cut the home-care services seniors could access; and

WHEREAS the Leader of the Official Opposition recently renewed his support for a privatized, American-style, two-tier health-care system; and

WHEREAS since 1999, the provincial government has improved and expanded options for seniors' care, including expanded home care, more supportive housing and personal care home beds; and

WHEREAS the provincial government is committed to planning for the future in Manitoba and investing in services and programs such as the new Hospital Home Teams, more home-based rehabilitation services to ensure that Manitoba seniors can stay in their own homes longer with the care and support that makes that possible.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all members of the Legislative Assembly commend and recognize the many nurses, health-care aides and support workers who provide the high quality, compassionate care that has made our Home Care Program the best in the nation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the provincial government be urged to pledge its full support for keeping a publicly funded and publicly administered, universal home-care program, and also be urged to continue to expand the Manitoba Home Care Program to meet the needs of all Manitobans and their families and support their desire to live and age at home with dignity.

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** It has been moved by the honourable member for Rossmere, seconded by the honourable member for Burrows,

WHEREAS Manitoba—

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**The Acting Speaker (Mohinder Saran):** Dispense? Dispense.

**Ms. Braun:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think Mr. Speaker is coming in.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

I'm very pleased to be bringing this resolution forward this morning. As a representative of a corner of Winnipeg with a large number of seniors, I cannot say enough about the importance of our Home Care Program and the many people within that program that provide the wonderful care and attention to our most vulnerable citizens. I know the families of our citizens who require these services also acknowledge how valuable home care is for both their loved ones, but also for their families, because certainly knowing that their own loved ones are well looked after and cared for provides reassurance to them as their family.

For me to bring this resolution forward is a matter of commending not only the workers but also the program itself. And I have to say that I'm very, very honoured to be part of a government that believes our seniors, who have contributed so much to our communities, that they can rely on our health care as well as our home care; that this program is universal, publicly funded; and that we are continuing to build onto the Home Care Program to ensure that our seniors have a better quality of life. And I am very pleased that over the decade, well over a decade, that we have contributed to expanding the program, increasing the services that our seniors and other vulnerable members of our community can access.

And I guess one of the reasons that this is very close to my heart, and I hope I don't begin weeping as I did when I was writing up some of this, and I think the gentleman that I'm going to speak about is probably going to be quite tickled to know that I'm doing this because for the last number of years, I think it's over seven years, I had the privilege of keeping an eye on an elderly friend of the family.

There were several of us that kept an eye on Jake, and one of the folks always referred to the reason that we were all sort of in Jake's inner circle looking after him, was that we had inherited him. He was—he and his wife were good friends of my parents, as he and Gerda were with these other caregivers as well. And so with our inherited Jake, as parents—as his friends passed away and as his wife did, we kind of took over as people who checked in on him, made sure that he was okay and that he was getting to do the things that he wanted to do.

His nieces and nephews, his closest family, were nowhere near Manitoba. His niece and two nephews live in Ottawa and his other niece and her husband are in Kelowna, and even though they called regularly and checked on him via the phone, they didn't often come to visit although they always invited him and he often went. Especially at Christmastime he had the opportunity of going to Ontario. But, as it was, we were the ones that were there for Jake, to keep an eye on him.

He had chronic leukemia, which is quite a manageable disease, and he was well looked over by—well looked after by CancerCare for many years. But, as time progressed, we could see that he was in need of extra attention. Although he was fearlessly independent, but the three of us that looked on Jake regularly, we knew that we just could not provide the additional attention that he required, whether it was medical attention—and one of the things that we noticed over time was, although he attempted at the beginning to make sure that he tested out all of Gerda's recipes and cooked for himself and managed very well for a number of years, as time wore on and especially the chemo and all the other medical attention that he required for his leukemia took away his interest and his enjoyment of food. So we knew that he needed additional support.

And that's why I have to say the home-care program just absolutely blew me away. From the case manager from Access River East to the individual home-care providers, I was so impressed with the level of caring and attention that was provided, and I know that Jake really enjoyed and appreciated the workers as well. And I know that he had a very, very good relationship with all of them, from the gal that got him his breakfast in the morning—and she was an absolute delight—to the gentleman that came and bathed him every week. I know Jake was very appreciative and he expressed that to me often when I went to visit.

As his primary contact, I was always impressed with the professionalism of the workers, and that came about—as the primary contact, I was the one that if something should go awry they would be in touch with me and I would get the phone call.

And I was always very pleased at how professional they were and how they made a point of getting a hold of me as quickly as they could, and I know at one time it even required me leaving a meeting because he was not doing well.

And for me it was really important. I know for his family in Ottawa and Kelowna it was important as well because there was daily contact, and that daily contact reassured us that should something happen that someone would be dropping by and would be able to inform us. And I know that there were times that we would take shifts to go and visit him but a once-weekly visit, which was what most of us—the three of us could afford to do, wasn't enough to make sure that on a daily basis he was doing okay.

\*(11:10)

One of the things that I appreciated about it was it did give me kind of an ongoing record of how his health and what level of care he needed. And so the contacts with the home-care workers when something would happen gave me a chance to kind of assess, is it time to add additional services, and that was one of the things that I so appreciated about Access River East, as well, and the case manager that was situated there.

I think the thing that—one of the examples that I found particularly amazing was Jake required cataract surgery and, of course, with cataract surgery there's all kinds of medical attention that needs to happen on a daily basis several times during the day. And none of us had the ability to do that because we were all working at that time, and the third person that kept an eye on Jake was actually from the Selkirk area, so for him to drive in was a little more difficult. But through the case manager, we sat down, we looked at what his needs were and I was absolutely blown away by the level of attention that was given to his needs and that over the course the month that he needed eye drops and what have you, that someone would come by and that was all taken care of through our case manager.

I think above all, though, what Jake appreciated most was that he was able to stay in his home. Although after his wife's death Jake moved into an apartment. But one of the things that—he had a connection with the landlord—and one of the things that he was allowed to do was to bring all of his hunting and fishing trophies with him. I think I counted a set of 30 antlers. You had to be careful that if you tripped, you didn't impale yourself, but these were the source of his joy and he often referred to them as his children. For him to leave that—I mean, we talked hours on end about his adventures he had with—how he got this particular trophy or how he got that one and, of course, that always led to his

dreaming that one day he'd be able to go out fishing again.

I think that was probably one of the most blessed things about our Home Care Program, was the fact that he could stay. And I know we were at a point where we were looking at additional attention in terms of having someone come and help administer his medication. Unfortunately, that did not occur. I received the phone call at a meeting when we were out of town and had to drive back into Winnipeg, and he was in a hospital and unfortunately wasn't able to leave there and passed away in October.

But I know that he was able to—even though there were times that I with the other two people would talk about, is it time to move him to a personal care home. The thought of him leaving behind his treasured trophies was very difficult. And I think that when I think back on Jake and also other people in my life that have relied on home care, just the incredible value it was to these people to allow them to live with dignity in their homes for as long as they possibly could.

And not too long ago, I had the opportunity of chatting with a top-ranking official from Ontario, and that was one of the things that we got on the topic of, especially since I mentioned the relatives living in Ottawa. And he commented on how we have the finest home-care program in the country and that it was something that the rest of the provinces should look at and model after. And I guess, in terms of the history, we have to thank our NDP government back in the early '70s for bringing this forward.

And, again, it's—I cannot say enough about the quality of the program, the quality of the caregivers and the managers, and I do hope that we will have support for this because I think this is one of the programs that makes Manitoba a marvellous place to live.

Thank you.

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** It's a pleasure to rise and put a few words on the record regarding the private members' resolution on Manitoba home care. I'd like to thank the member for Rossmere for introducing it. I can't say as we agree with all of the 'whereases' that were included, but the point being that we need to recognize the rich heritage that our seniors and elders have provided us in a society.

We know that they have a very important place to many people in not only their family, but their friends and relatives and they're a big part of the community. I can't think of an organization, a volunteer organization in my community and probably true of many others, that is not anchored by a number of seniors that put all kinds of time and effort into it. And I suspect that Manitoba would not be the place it is today if it—if we did not have these people out there providing with volunteer efforts on—with their energy and dedication that changes the society that we live in. We have a record, actually, of being No. 1 in terms of volunteers and donations across Canada, and I think a great deal of this needs to be credited to that.

We also want to recognize, I think, the contribution of the home-care workers. I know I deal with them on a very frequent basis. We've certainly had a number of issues but we seem to be able to resolve them as to how home care is delivered in the community, and, like the member opposite, most of us on this side do get calls on a fairly regular basis from people that have issues with home care, and I must say we've had good co-operation with the—with our staff that actually provide the service and design the service and make it work.

We certainly went through some rough periods with lots of transition, particularly after—in the last year for the Portage la Prairie area, because pursuant to the last collective agreement there was a unionization process going through the home-care workers and there was a lot of staff change as a result of that. And that certainly led to issues with continuity.

And the member opposite certainly mentioned that it's very important to the people that receive the home care that they get, not only on a regular basis, but from people that they know because it becomes a social contact to them as much as anything.

And there was such a period of transition with different people coming different times at different days. The service was still getting to them, more or less on a continual basis, but we certainly found that they missed the continuity and that that was an important thing. And after a period of time you get to re-establish that, but, certainly, there was a challenge for a period of time to the point which we thought it was getting to be a crisis situation. But given a little time to work its way through the system and a little more flexibility that was shown in the process, we were able to resolve the level of care.

And I think we all agree that, as much as possible, we want seniors to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Their quality of life is probably the best that they can have in situations like that, but when time does come there needs to be facilities available to them, whether it's an assisted-living model, and we certainly need to do more in terms of expanding that, and I know my own community is working very hard in that direction now because we do not have a lot of capacity in that regard, or whether it's personal care homes. And the staff that are in personal care homes are so dedicated to the residents that are there. There's often staff shortages and staff change and situations there that do create a lot of conflict. And I know in our own case we are very dependent these days on outside agency staff that come in and provide the service in the personal care home. We can't seem to find enough people in our own community, which is sad, to provide that—the level of services. And with that you lose a certain element of the continuity.

And in personal care homes as well as in their own homes, it is very important to the residents there that not only do they have the same staff, the ones that they know and are comfortable with, but that their care and their daily routines and the medications that they take, that no errors are made in the process. And having people that are there on a regular basis, that's certainly a big part of it.

Both my parents went through this process, one more or less directly to a personal care home from our own home, or their own home, at the time, and the staff there were just wonderful. That was my mother and she spent four years in a personal care home, Lions Prairie Manor in Portage la Prairie. The staff were really good to her, and, certainly, in the latter years when she went through the process where Alzheimer's eventually took her and her memory was failing, they were a very important part of her life because seeing them on a daily basis, even though she did see the family very regularly, but seeing them on daily basis, that was her connection to reality. And it was certainly very important to maintain that as much as possible.

My father was a little more fortunate, though; when he did leave their home, he went to an assisted-living type facility in Portage, and home care there looked after him and provided services he needed and extended his ability to stay there by many years. He was there a total of about eight years and then spent a few months in a personal care home towards the end.



But we all came to appreciate the great dedication that the health-care workers provide in the community, whether they're the ones that provide home care or whether they're the doctors and nurses and aides and all of the other technologists that we see in the hospital situation, and, actually, in personal care homes we see them very much as well. And we think that that's very important that we recognize them here today.

\* (11:20)

We want to be sure that we have them into the future, and there is some concern about the level of care and the number of staff that are out there now. Certainly, there are issues with maintaining people enough and in certain positions, and the vacancy rate, on occasion, gets very high, and that provides—those that are left have to work extra hard and are stretched very thin in many cases. And I know I've certainly heard from a number of home-care workers that are really almost burnt out by the load that is put on them and the short notice that, in many cases, they get; we have to backfill because someone else is not available or that planning wasn't put far enough ahead.

And I know even in the cases of nurses in the personal care home, I have certainly heard on a fairly frequent basis from nurses that have to sign off at the end of the day on everything that was done, and, of course, that's to be transferred to the next staff person that comes on, and they don't know who that will be. That position might be open at the moment and it'll be a call to someone, and, hopefully, someone comes in to fill it. And they certainly don't feel very comfortable going away in that situation, and there have been occasions when they have been called back and asked for extra shifts. And certainly we want to keep that to a minimum, because everyone has to have a life of their own and, as I mentioned earlier, that the pressure of them can actually lead to burn-out situations, and we lose more staff members which makes the problem even worse. So we certainly need to pay attention to that and make sure that in the future that we have adequate staff at the front lines, in particular, because that is where the pressure really felt. And that is where the appreciation is really felt, because they're the ones that we deal with almost on a daily basis.

So we need to continue to improve and work at maintaining these services. They're less than perfect. We certainly see situations in the emergency rooms, for instance, and in rural Manitoba, there is a lengthy

list of 17 sites where emergency services are reduced. Even in fairly large hospitals, we actually find departments now that cannot maintain the level of services that they would like. In obstetrics in my own community of Portage la Prairie, you have to schedule which week you're going to have the baby, because we only have obstetric service every other week, which is certainly an unrealistic option. Fortunately, we're close enough that if—come—crisis situation comes along, they have to get on the—in the ambulance and off into Winnipeg for the services that are available there.

In fact, we—it was mentioned last week—actually, earlier this week in question period, that Winnipeg Regional Health Authority is actually the only authority where you—everyone can't walk in, that there's some restriction, you have to be from that regional health authority. I checked with my own regional health authority; nothing like that exists there. Doesn't matter where you come from in Southern Regional Health Authority; if you're from northern or you're from Winnipeg or you're from western, you get service. But here in Winnipeg, we still seem to have some restrictions on that and I do hope that that's resolved in the future, because we do not want a health care that is only for those in that particular region.

Now, I know that many others want to put comments on record in regard to this, so I will thank the—thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank the member for introduction of a resolution, and appreciate it.

**Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows):** Well, Mr. Speaker, it is good to be back up speaking about the Manitoba Home Care Program. It seems to be a day where we get to speak a little bit about love in the House, and that doesn't seem to happen very often, so it's a good morning, in my opinion, when we get to do that.

And the first thing I think I would like to just mention is I know that the member from Rossmere, where this came from in her heart, in bringing this thanks to these people, because she was so involved. And I think it really speaks to who she is, that she was doing this all these years with someone she inherited. And so I just would like to get that on the record. I know he must've appreciated her tremendously.

And I believe that when it comes to home care—I'll get to some of the facts and some of the things that we've done in government and that sort of thing a little later, but I do believe that the people who work in this field of home care are often the people

who are bringing to those people someone who loves them, in years when maybe that is no longer happening—not that their families don't love them, but many have moved away, many are taking care of their own little children now. It's not that easy in our busy world to, you know, be spending necessarily a lot of time, and I think we really need to be offering our thanks and our gratitude to the nurses and the health-care aides and those people that do this work.

And know, as the member was mentioning opposite, of course, it's not perfect. There is no system that's perfect because it's run by people and we're never perfect. So still we're the finest in the country, and that is something to be proud of, but we do always want to be working to make it better.

I know I'm grateful. My mother lives alone on her own on a farm, and I know that that's where she wants to remain. Right now she's in really good health and she still drives and, you know, takes care of everything herself. Sometimes I'm a little concerned about all the things that she is able to still do, but it's wonderful. But she speaks of wanting to be in that house, of little things, like, you know, being able to sit at the dining room table and see the light shining in through the stained glass, and how she doesn't want to give that up, and how she wants to be able to go and, you know, sit on the deck and, you know, watch the trees move in the wind and that sort of thing, grow her flowers, plant her little gardens. And, you know, she is 91 and so, you know, we don't know how long that that's going to be carrying on, but right now I know how important it is for people to be able to remain in their own homes. And we want to be—and we want to remain a government that understands how important that is to live in dignity and to know that the health care and home care that they're going to rely on is always going to be there for them, and that they can depend on that, that it's going to be universal care. And so I can't stress how important I think that is.

We were the first province in Manitoba to implement a province-wide home-care program, and it is the oldest, naturally, therefore, in the country. And many provinces, to their credit, picked it up and were able to follow that model and also institute some level, at least, of home care.

And so I'm proud to be part of a government where that was one of the priorities for us was that we were dedicated to working to make the quality of life for our seniors throughout the province better. We have approximately 40,000 Manitobans using

home-care services every year, I mean, that is a significant number. And I know that one of the things that people still hope to see, and I know reports have been done on it suggesting this, is that perhaps someday we will end up with a national home-care program across Canada. It strikes me as hard to understand why we would be, in 2013, this far along and not have that, but I'm not giving up. I'm hoping that, you know, someday we will be able to also do that federally. I know in Manitoba the report was, I believe, Roy Romanow, and I know we've already met and exceeded the recommendations that he made here in Manitoba, but I think it would be significant to see that go across our country because I think that is the kind of country we want Canada to be.

We have been recognized as a model for people to follow across the country. A recent report by the Coalition for Seniors and Nursing Home Residents' Rights say Manitoba's home care offers the highest end version of home care in the country—highest end version of home care in the country—and that report recommended a national home-care program be instituted using, in fact, Manitoba's provincial standards. So I think it's okay for us to be proud of that in Manitoba. I think it's okay for us to acknowledge something really good that we're doing and that others have said the rest of Canada should follow.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information recognized Manitoba as investing more in home care than nearly every other province. And, again, no, it's not perfect. Do things happen that shouldn't or mistakes made? Yes, of course, but we're always working to improve it. And those people are dedicated—hard-working people—and I was pleased to see both sides of the House acknowledging the hard work put in by the nurses and the home-care workers and the people that are going door to door—that was good to see.

\*(11:30)

Just a few years ago, the Free Press reported that Manitoba's program, again, is the best in Canada. And what is it that makes it so special? Well, I think it's the people, of course. The fabulous people that are working in that industry are certainly one of the key reasons that it is so special, is those people are prepared to be—not just somebody who comes in, and, I don't know, you know, makes a little meal or does or a little cleaning or in—ministers meds. They're prepared to be a companion and to bring

caring and concern and listen to the person and be somebody that they can—that can let them know that they're valuable still.

So I think that's certainly one of the key things. And I think another key thing is that in this province, we have no user fees or co-payments that need to be made for that program in Manitoba, and that is an excellent thing. It's publicly administered; it has a broad range of services that supports seniors. So it's many facets that are covered through this program: nursing; personal care such as help with bathing, getting dressed; household support such as laundry, preparing meals; specialized services—home oxygen, stroke rehabilitation therapy and just so many other areas that are covered by this.

So I think it really is special in that way, for sure. I know we had a member that we had spent a lot of time with and he was on oxygen and just needed a tremendous amount of care, and we'd go to visit him. He was still joking, still managing to make all the same jokes that he had made before—no, some of them were new—and he was able to do that right until the moment of his death. He was able to die in his own home; that was what he had wanted. And he was able to do that because of this program that we have in Manitoba.

So we really want to make sure that that stays like that, that we don't end up in situation like was being suggested by the previous government under Filmon, when they wanted to, you know, privatize and they wanted to introduce home-care user fees and all of those kinds of things.

So we're very proud that we have this system in Manitoba and we want to say thank you.

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Spruce Woods):** I do want to acknowledge the member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun) for bringing forward this resolution this morning—appreciate. And I think all members of the Chamber have had some experience with home care; some, obviously, probably more closely than others. And it is certainly a great service that we have in Manitoba, and I think it's an important service for the seniors of our province. And, you know, clearly, as members indicated this morning, there is more work to do, and we certainly will acknowledge that. And I think we'll acknowledge that on both sides of the House, Mr. Speaker.

But I think it is a key component when we look at the big picture of health care in Manitoba and how we deal with all facets of our population. And,

clearly, when you look at the demographics, the seniors are a ever-expanding part of Manitoba. And it's something that we have to acknowledge not only today, but in terms of the future, in terms of future planning and how we're going to deal with that changing in demographics, Mr. Speaker.

So I firmly believe that the Home Care Program can play a very important role in terms of the transitions, going forward. And clearly if we can keep Manitoba seniors and Manitobans in need in their own homes longer, I think it benefits all of society. It certainly has a tremendous benefit for the health-care services side of things, because, as we know, health care is under a tremendous amount of pressure now. And I talk about, you know, the acute-care side of health care and treatments around acute care and also, you know, all forms of health care, whether it be, you know, mental health or addictions or those types of things that quite often the aging population—gets encountered as they get older. So there's a lot of pressure on those services.

So I think it's clearly defined that Manitobans, for the most part, if they're in their own homes, their own familiar surroundings, have a tendency to live healthier lifestyles and, hopefully, you know, eventually will live longer as well. So if we can design a system that will accommodate people in their own homes, I think it's something that will certainly benefit all Manitobans, and it clearly is a benefit to those residents that want to stay in their homes for a longer period of time.

Mr. Speaker, in looking at the resolution, clearly there's some political statements in there, and that's pretty clear; the NDP would normally include political statements in most things. I know it's almost politics all the time over good, sound public policy, but, anyway, that's the nature of the game we're in here and these days.

But, anyway, to get back to the focus of the resolution, you know, as I said earlier, we all have examples of those who are involved in home care. And I reference my grandmother, actually, Mr. Speaker, who actually stayed in her own residence right up 'til the last few weeks. She was 101 when she passed away just not too long ago, but she was a very determined individual and she was determined that she was not going to find herself in a personal care home. So she stuck to her guns right to the end and she never did find herself in a personal care home.

But, going through that whole process, we did have some home care from time to time to help her for some services. She, as I said, though, she was a pretty strong-willed and determined individual and she was not one to ask for help or accept help very well. And it was sometimes a bit of a challenge to try to insist that a little bit of help from—every—couple days a week would be a benefit.

But, anyway, clearly those types of services that are supplied to Manitoba 'senions'—seniors are, I think, very important, and it's a key component of the whole health-care system.

I think, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about health-care programs or home-care programs, we have to be cognizant of transition programs, I like to call them. I think we as Manitobans have to step back and make sure that we have a clear picture and understanding of how we're going to deal with people as they transition through different stages of their life. And clearly, I think, it's important to keep people at home as long we can, as long as they have the ability to stay and live in their own residence, and the home-care program is really designed to assist those individuals in that regard.

But there comes a point, Mr. Speaker, when people need more services than what home care can deliver, and I think that's a bit of an area where we have to take a serious look as legislators in terms of how we're going to deal with that. A lot of people don't have the ability anymore to live on their own, even with health care—assisted home care, but they're certainly not ready for a personal care home situation. And we have to make sure that we have facilities that are available to provide those types of services, you know, whether they're—have a nurse on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that type of a situation within a facility.

And that's something I know a lot of—and travelling around the province over the last couple of years, we've recognized that in a lot of communities. Seniors recognize there's a need for that. There's a need for that transition, if you will, Mr. Speaker. And I think it's incumbent on—upon us to have a look in terms of how we can facilitate those types of seniors that need that type of assistance.

And we've seen it in different communities where they're having trouble with the current structure that we have in that regard. You know, we have facilities. We have homes from apartment-type-style structures, but we don't have the people there, the resources that should be there to

manage those people because they—a lot of the—some of those people do need access to 24-hour care, to a nurse or that type of a practitioner. And, Mr. Speaker, I think it's something that communities are finding a bit of a challenge with. There's not a real framework for that type of a transition area and, clearly, those types of things do cost money. But I think if the government was to look at a framework to help that, we could, you know, set up that type of framework and once it's in place then we can take it to different communities around the province and hopefully make it work. But there has to be a willingness to make that work.

\* (11:40)

Clearly, we're having a lot of pressure on our personal care home side of things, Mr. Speaker, clearly with the aging population, and there's a lot of challenges. I know in our region, certainly, we were finding seniors being transferred from facility to facility depending on when beds are available, and it's a sign of the stress and the fragile situation we have in health care as well. Because of nurse shortages and sometimes it's doctor shortages, acute-care beds get closed and sometimes the acute-care beds are—I hate to use the term—but they're almost like a storage on the way to a personal care home and that's the challenge. So, when the beds are closed, we have seniors waiting, either waiting for panelling or waiting for a personal care home bed to open up. They're quite often moved and the unfortunate part is they're moved away from their family members and in a lot of cases this move can be several, several, several hundred kilometres, and that certainly is a challenge to communities. It's a challenge to the patients and it's a challenge to the families of those patients as well. So I think that's something that we have to bear in mind, and that's why I think kind of the transition phase I think is pretty critical.

I know communities like MacGregor, for instance, are looking at a facility there to engage some of their seniors in recognizing that a lot of those seniors are to the point where they can't live with themselves even with home care, but they're not certainly ready for a personal care home bed. So they're looking for a facility that they can transition into which would also offer them kind of an extended care as well, Mr. Speaker, in case that requirement is there.

So, clearly, I know I had a letter from one of my constituents who sent the letter to the minister just in

the last week or so, Mr. Speaker, and certainly they are involved with home care and there's some issues that they're facing with home care and hoping for some improvements. We're certainly looking forward to the minister's response to their particular challenges.

We know the RHA is, of course, being realigned and, hopefully, working to—positively to make things happen better in home care.

So, with that, I thank the member for bringing forward this resolution.

**Ms. Deanne Crothers (St. James):** I was clapping for him—I'm very happy to be speaking to the Manitoba Home Care Program PMR brought forward by the member from Rossmere. And, as MLA for St. James, I represent probably one of the highest percentages of seniors in the constituency. So this is certainly something that I feel a strong connection to, and I'm fortunate that many of the St. James seniors don't want to leave St. James. They just don't want to get out of that constituency and I'm happy to have them.

So this is an issue that has come up fairly regularly for me on the doorstep as a result, and I'm very happy. But, when I do have these kinds of conversations with them because I can provide them with the information or connect them to some of the many programs that we have in place that will allow them to remain in their homes longer, such as the PRIME program which opened at Deer Lodge which helps seniors access routine regular care.

And I'm very proud that Manitoba's Home Care Program is one of the few in this country that has no user fees. And we've worked to find practical supports for seniors and their families to enable them to stay in their homes so that they can live and age at home with dignity. And I think that's one of the main pieces of this which I've certainly heard from any member that stood to speak to this PMR, and I really appreciate hearing the stories that people—the personal stories from members here who have talked about the benefits to their elderly relatives in the various forms of care that they've received.

And, you know, we've heard already how beneficial it is to be able to support seniors to age in their home, but I think it's worth saying again that with the right supports in place it means a better quality of life for our seniors. They can stay in the comfort of their own home, they can maintain their

schedules, making their own daily choices. We all have our habits.

Every morning, I'm sure, everybody here does a certain thing a certain way every day. I know in my family, my grandparents—and I'm not sure if I've relayed this story before; if I'm repeating myself, I'm sorry, but you're going to hear it again anyway. My grandparents were farmers, and I remember as a child sleeping over at their house and around 5 in the morning my grandmother would get out of bed, followed shortly by my grandfather. And I'd still be in bed, even though I was only 7 or 8; I wasn't getting up at 5 in the morning, but I'd smell the coffee coming from the kitchen and then I'd toddle downstairs and my grandmother would have the porridge cooking away, and this was the habit that they had when they were working in the fields and had to get up early to take care of the cattle, and here they were retired. They had no more cattle. I think they had one cow in the shed, as a pet, practically, and a horse. But they would still get up at 5 in the morning, make their coffee, have their porridge. I was slightly puzzled by this because, I think, by about 6 or so they'd lay down on the couch and have a nap. You know, didn't have the work to do that they used to do, but these were the habits that they developed and it was a habit that they needed and maintained.

And it's those kinds of things, I think, that when seniors are able to stay in their homes, they have the control over the choices about how they live their lives and how they're going to do those things every day. And we all have these experiences. These are all of the things that help us feel like we've started the day in the right way. So I think that you can't underestimate the importance of allowing someone to stay in their home, if it's safe, in terms of their quality of life.

And I have to also say that that helps maintain their independence and their sense of self-worth, because when you can make those kinds of decisions for yourself, no one else is dictating to you how you're going to start your day, when you're going to eat, how you're going to eat, what you're going to eat—I mean, maybe with married partners some of that still goes on, but I think that it ultimately allows the person to feel like they're still in control of their lives and they still have something to contribute.

And it also helps remain—help them to remain a regular part of family connectedness because they're still in their homes. They have family and friends

that visit them in their homes and they can have guests in their homes. It's one of those things, I think, even from a grandchild's perspective, going to see her grandparents in their own home is very important. I mean, that forms memories, and while—memories that are tied to place and people. And, while we have wonderful options here in the province for those that can no longer stay in their homes, it certainly changes the dynamic of how you maintain contact with your family members. So it helps maintain these personal ties individually.

And I think that the other thing that I want to really make sure I recognize here is that family members and the role that family members have in helping people stay in their homes longer is an immense responsibility. I had an experience when I was canvassing. I knocked on a door and an older woman came to the door and we were just chatting and I asked a question which—it was a fairly generic question, but it led her to tell me that she was taking care of her husband, who was suffering from dementia, at home. And as I started to talk with her a little bit more, she got quite emotional and it was very easy to see that she was trying to do too much on her own. And it was very rewarding for me to be able to share some information with her to make her understand that there were options available for her.

And I think that this is the other side of having home care. It doesn't just benefit the senior that's staying in their home longer, it benefits the family, because it takes that immense responsibility that they feel they have to do it all, all the time, under whatever circumstances, and it makes them realize that it's okay, they can share some of the burden and make it much easier for everyone. And it makes it easier for the senior too, because I'm sure there's a huge amount of guilt that they have to rely on someone else, another family member who they know is busy and—but these are the things that family members do for each other. But they don't have to do it all, and I think that it's very important for folks to understand that it's good to access these programs, it's good to be able to help support their senior stay in their home longer.

\* (11:50)

And, you know, again speaking of my grandparents, my grandmother did the very same thing that this woman did, and she hid it from the rest of my family for probably five or six years. We discovered that my grandfather had Alzheimer's and it was a long, slow, cruel disease that—I don't know

how she hid it as long as she did. But having supports in place earlier certainly would have made her quality of life quite a bit better as well.

But we are very fortunate in Manitoba to have as many good options as we do, and I think that taking advantage of being able to support someone in their home for as long as possible, as long as it's healthy and safe, is a wonderful way for us to continue having seniors stay involved in our community.

I think that it also, mentioning community, it does impact the community, because when seniors stay in their homes longer our communities are more age diverse, and I certainly have seen that in my community. As seniors might be selling their homes, they do want to stay in St. James; they're moving into apartments or condos. And that contact, I think, especially for the younger families that are moving into St. James, to have kids growing up with older people on the street or older people in the neighbourhood is a very important experience for them to have.

I mean, currently in my street, I have an 87-year-old neighbour on one side who is a fantastic, active fellow, and then on the other side I have a young family who moved in a couple of years ago with a 2-year-old, and, of course, I have a 4- and a 6-year-old, so between the three of us interacting just on the day-to-day stuff that you don't think anything of, these are very formative for kids. To have that exposure and to experience that other people in community who are older still contribute, still have something to say, still have something to offer, is very important.

And I think that, for folks that are staying in their homes longer, even if they do have health issues and they're supported, they're still able to contribute, and that's so important. It's important for them to understand. It's important for us to accept and be appreciative of, and that's a benefit to the community as a whole.

I've got a lot to say, but I'm running out of time here. So I'd just like to close by saying that, you know, I'm very, very proud that we've improved and expanded the options for seniors' care in this province. The fact that it's recognized outside of Canada but it's also one of the oldest comprehensive universal home-care programs—it is the oldest in Canada and it's a model that's been adopted by many other Canadian provinces speaks volumes.

And I'm glad that we are the ones that are leading the way, because this is very important. And

it's important not just because it's a good thing to do, it's important because everybody has something that they have to contribute. So thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet):** It gives me great pleasure to rise today to speak—to put a few words on the record in regards to this private member's resolution brought forward by the member from Rossmere.

When we're talking about seniors and home care, Mr. Speaker, it is very important to understand and to celebrate the various accomplishments and the rich heritage that our elders bring and contribute to our society. And we know that seniors and elders have an important place in the lives of their children, grandchildren and their communities, and today we just first want to recognize this and express our gratitude to all those people who have—who are either still with us or who have passed on.

This private member's resolution is an okay reminder that we need to continue working towards a Manitoba that recognizes the contributions and diversity that active seniors provide to our various communities.

In support of some of the various practitioners that aid our seniors on a day-to-day basis, Mr. Speaker, I would just like to thank them publicly and just put it on the record that they deserve the thanks and that we commend them for their work in providing life-saving and life-enhancing services to all of the Manitobans—all Manitobans, whether it's seniors or others. Day in and day out, we are very grateful for their dedication and commitment. Whether that is the dentists, nurses, midwives, doctors, physiotherapists, paramedics, technologists, mental-health workers, health-care aides and all of our other highly trained health-care professionals and paraprofessionals in hospitals, personal care homes and in the community work—and in the community, they work 'tiresly' so that all Manitobas including our seniors can have the healthiest lives possible. We commend the health-care providers who have ensured that Manitoba seniors receive the health-care services they need. Their kindness, compassion and care reminds us that a Manitoba society must be a society.

Some of our issues that I'm seeing since I've been elected MLA for the Lac du Bonnet constituency is the fact that we do rely on all of these health-care providers to work, again, 'tiresly' day in and day out. But the fact is, Mr. Speaker, is that a lot

of them are overworked and a lot of our facilities are understaffed. So it's with mixed emotions that I'm adding comments to today's resolution.

On the other hand, the issue as far as care for our seniors and home care is vital, and it's very important that we understand on both sides of the House how important the seniors and, again, our elders within our various communities what they have done and the legacy that they have provided for all of us here in Manitoba.

Now, speaking to the resolution, Mr. Speaker, the language that was used in the resolution is a little bit questionable at best. And I'm a little shocked that the member from Rossmere wrote this resolution up the way that she did because from—and I'd like to just put on the record, as well, that I thank the member from St. James and Burrows and Spruce Woods and also from Portage for sharing some of their personal stories as well. But, when we get right to the nuts and bolts of the resolution, all members in this House spoke about working together and moving things forward in regards to our seniors and their care, but the resolution doesn't speak that way. Even though it's a very important resolution, parts of it absolutely have to be amended. So, in principle, I support a few of the clauses, but overall I question again the member from Rossmere who put this together and the way that she did.

Just—in fact, as we all have, whether it's parents, grandparents or great-grandparents that have gone through the various home-care services through—whether it's actual home care or in personal care homes or in the hospitals in our province—and I know that I've had relatives and some of my wife's relatives as well that have been through the health care or had health-care services throughout the '70s and all the way now into the 2000s, and bottom line is we're all affected by this and we're going to be affected by this on a day-to-day basis and for many, many years to come.

In addition to—our kids are going to be impacted, our grandkids, our great-grandkids if we're so fortunate, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that seniors are facing a number of challenges in health care, especially when it comes to access. So while it is good to rise in the House and formally recognize the importance of our seniors and the value of their contributions to our community, it is meaningless unless better effort is made to ensure seniors can live in dignity with timely access to the health-care services they need.

Now, the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) publicly announces all Manitobans a health-care system they can rely on—*[interjection]*—and I know that the NDP member from Selkirk is asking me to just straightforward pass this resolution. But, in fact, that you would think that the member from Selkirk would have maybe sat down with the member from Rossmere and actually come up with a resolution that would work towards all of us working together and pushing this resolution forward. But I think that this resolution we need to maybe sit down and come

up with a few amendments to this resolution, and then, possibly, the member from Rossmere can bring this resolution back and we can chat about it again, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Order, please. When this matter's again before the House, the honourable member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) will have three minutes remaining.

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



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, July 16, 2013**

**CONTENTS**

<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>		<b>Debate on Second Readings—Public Bills</b>	
<b>PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS</b>		Bill 210—The Seniors' Rights Act	
<b>Second Readings—Private Bills</b>		Wight	3486
Bill 302—Les Franciscaines Missionnaires de Marie Incorporation Amendment Act		<b>Resolutions</b>	
Gaudreau	3477	Braun	3487
Eichler	3479	Wishart	3489
Chomiak	3480	Wight	3491
Gerrard	3481	Cullen	3493
T. Marcelino	3482	Crothers	3495
Howard	3482	Ewasko	3497
Lemieux	3484		
Wight	3486		

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