

Fourth Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—
PUBLIC BILLS**

**Bill 200—The Manitoba Public Insurance
Corporation Amendment Act**

Mr. Speaker: Resume debate on second readings of public bills. Bill 200, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act, standing in the name of—

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, there has been a request for leave for Bill 201 to be called first and we are in agreement with that, if you can canvass the House.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to call Bill 201 first? [*Agreed*]

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 201—The Child and Family Services
Amendment Act (Grandparent Access)**

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 201, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Grandparent Access), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Speaker, I speak proudly of this bill and I encourage the government to listen carefully and to provide amendments, provide support, provide debate, provide some reasons why they will not support this bill, and we can move forward and enhance the rights of grandparents to have access to their grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, this bill provides the court with the opportunity and means to recognize the special relationship that exists between grandparents and grandchildren. It requires the court to consider the love, affection and similar ties that exist between the child and grandparent on an application by a grandparent for access to a child. This is the second

time that this piece of legislation has been introduced. As I had just indicated, I urge the provincial government to debate and to pass this legislation.

I have been in discussions with members opposite on this legislation and have asked them to provide clear indications of why, under first introduction, this bill was not supported. I feel that their reasons were weak, Mr. Speaker, and I really do encourage them to provide through debate the reasons why they would not support a piece of legislation such as this.

At the core of this legislation is a belief that grandparents share a special relationship with their grandchildren and it is in the best interests of a child to maintain a healthy existing relationship with their grandparents. There are many pros of a relationship with grandparents. In meeting with the Children's Advocate on this very issue, she had supported the idea and indicated how families of all cultural backgrounds rely on the heads of family and family members, including the Aboriginal community, the German community, Ukrainian community. We all respect and appreciate the history that we share from ancestors back, and I think that this piece of legislation supports that.

Really, Mr. Speaker, what harm is there in continuing a healthy existing relationship between grandparents and grandchildren? I say none. The harm comes when you sever that relationship. When communication between parents and grandparents degrades or is severed, it is often the grandchild that suffers the most. When the relationship is stopped for whatever reason, an important part of that child's support network is also cut off and taken away from them, a key coping mechanism when children are in situations where there is stress. They need the support mechanisms. They need to know that they are loved and supported, and grandparents show that unconditionally. The more support a child has, the less likely they are able to fall into bad circumstances or make poor choices.

Mr. Speaker, this bill also allows for an interim order concept which will allow the judges to grant interim orders regarding the access while applications are pending; again, an important piece

because it provides visitation for the short-term while the case is being tied up in court.

The vast majority of cases that have been shared with me are heartwrenching. So many of the grandparents I have spoken with are not necessarily seeking custody of their grandchildren or want the families to break up. But, rather, they are seeking reasonable access and visitation and wanting to provide the supports. They want contact with their grandchildren, and these grandparents want to share moments with their grandchildren. There are so many families that take this for granted, and this is lost on them. A phone call on their birthday; watching their grandchildren play hockey or figure skate; taking their grandchild to a concert, these are simple joys that are being denied both the grandparents and the grandchildren. These are situations that are disturbing to many members of the family.

Mr. Speaker, court is the last option, but the sad truth remains that many grandparents have explored every other choice available to them. The member from Minto has indicated that there are resources available for them. I know the Brandon group has asked the member from Minto to provide those supports available to them and have received no information on this. I encourage the government side to not play politics with this but to provide the supports that they believe are available to these grandparents so that they can move on and reconnect with their families.

As I indicated, visitation with grandparents provides needed stability when children may be facing constant changes in their lives, Mr. Speaker. So, when we provide the necessary supports for the grandparents, the parents and the grandchildren, we are ensuring that the network is strong and that kids can grow in a healthy environment within their communities. Focus needs to be on the children. Where is their voice?

Grandparents are not seeking access to their grandchildren to spite the children's parents, but rather they are doing it to maintain a relationship with the child. What they can do and what they want is simply to be given the opportunity to make the phone call, to attend a birthday party, to send a card or just to receive what we all value and love, a hug.

* (10:10)

Time and age, Mr. Speaker, a key point, that needs to be heard by this government. Grandparents

are saying that time is working against them. Children are growing up so fast, and with every day and week and month they do not see their grandchildren, they face the sad reality that they may not see them and they may not be here tomorrow. As adults, grandchildren may seek out their grandparents only to find that death has denied them that opportunity. That would be a heartbreaking situation, and if we as government, we as legislators can make a difference, I implore that this government look at that point if nothing else.

Bill 201 is continuing the work of the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) when she was Minister of Family Services. She introduced the changes to The Child and Family Services Act which allowed for the application for children, by extended family, defined as including grandparents, where it is in the best interest of the child. These amendments were proclaimed in 1997, Mr. Speaker, and continue to be law today, great work. But that is almost 10 years ago, 10 years, and the societal changes that have occurred over the last 10 years, need, require this government to look at this legislation and make it worthy of what today's challenges are in a family situation.

I encourage the government to have some foresight and an understanding and appreciation of the importance of reviewing this very important piece of legislation and providing some leadership and taking a stand and moving it forward. Manitoba needs to evolve with the changing definition of a family, and children deserve to know their grandparents, Mr. Speaker.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I have grandparents from the Brandon area. I have grandparents from the Interlake area. I have members of the GRAND Society here today, and they are really looking for some leadership from this government to provide a piece of legislation that will at least enhance the opportunities that they may have to see their grandchildren. When we introduced the legislation last spring, we had a family here who had not seen their grandchildren in several years. The only way that they could communicate with them was through the newspaper. Since that legislation was introduced, that family has now regained the ties with their grandchildren. So we see the progress being made just on making this government aware of the importance of this legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, on that note, I encourage the government to engage in the debate, provide the

reasons why they would not support this legislation, and let us move on and amend it and move it into committee. Thank you.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I move, seconded by the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff), that debate on Bill 201 be adjourned.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Minto, seconded by the honourable Member for Interlake, that debate be adjourned. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, what I am about to say might not correctly follow procedure, but let me appeal to you and to the government caucus that we on this side view this as an important topic, and we believe that there is reason to hear further comments from those who wish to speak on this bill. I am not accusing the member of trying to stifle debate, but that would be the effect of his suggestion.

I would ask the co-operation of the House, because we are all operating short because of the major committee that is going on at the end of the hall, that perhaps the member would consider withdrawing his position and allow some debate to proceed. We have people present who want to know what the thoughts of legislators are about grandparents' rights and I think it would only be reasonable and, in terms of co-operation, something that we probably could show that we are capable of doing in this House.

Mr. Speaker: The way we could proceed with debate if other members wish to speak to it is if the honourable Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) willingly withdraws his motion for adjourning debate.

Mr. Swan: No, certainly, if there are other members that wish to speak to it, I do not have any objection to that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, there is no objection, so we will continue the debate on Bill 201.

Mr. David Faurchou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I do believe we need clarity on this subject. Is the Member for Minto withdrawing his motion?

Mr. Speaker: To continue with the debate, my request was if the honourable member was willing to withdraw his motion to adjourn debate, which he has done, he has withdrawn that motion, so now we will hear from the members that wish to speak.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put a few words on record in regard to the bill that has been introduced by the member, Bill 201, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Grandparent Access).

It is ironic, Mr. Speaker, that we are covering this particular bill this morning, because this morning I was in a bit of a rush to get down here, but I had a letter that I had to mail. I went into the local post office, or the drugstore I should say, and naturally I was in a hurry and I ran into a constituent, an elderly fellow, and he had his granddaughter with him. It is someone that I have known for quite a few years and he was out with his granddaughter and he was taking her shopping. It just seemed that I had to stop and talk, he had to tell me about his granddaughter, and he had to tell me what he was doing, the fact that it was the season of running around and getting toys and things like that. I could tell that just the way he was telling me that he was just having a wonderful time with this granddaughter.

So I was a little late coming in this morning, but that was one of the reasons why, but it is just so ironic that I come in here this morning and this is the bill we are debating. It is about grandparents' access to their children. This time of year, I would think it must be tremendously burdensome on some grandparents that do not have access to their grandchildren through circumstances that, possibly, are even beyond their control and that they will not be able to see their grandchildren or have access to them.

The season of Christmas or the holiday season, it usually revolves around children. It revolves around children, the Christmas tree and the toys and all the merriment and the excitement that goes on downtown and throughout all the malls. It is all related to young people and children and the expression of giving and sharing during this season. Down in the United States within a day or so, I think it is on Thursday, they have their Thanksgiving and they celebrate another great event of giving thanks to the bountiful nature that they enjoy. Part of that is the family, the family unit, the people that are in your family whether it is your own direct children and then your grandchildren. It is a great feeling of getting together and to enjoy some of the wonderful times together and sharing.

The children look to the grandparents for guidance. They look to them for leadership and,

more than anything else, they look to them for the companionship and the love that, a lot of times, grandparents have got more time to give to their grandchildren than, possibly, they even had for their own children because their own children were raised during the time when they were either working or being involved heavily with their own commitments. So, once they retire, in a sense, they spend an awful lot more time with grandchildren. I have heard that expression a lot more in the last while.

* (10:20)

I had the opportunity, and I still have the opportunity, to be involved with a fair amount of seniors through my portfolio when I was in government as Seniors minister and now as a critic role for Seniors, and I still have an awful lot of contact with seniors, and some of the events and functions that I go to. The conversation, Mr. Speaker, ineffably revolves and goes back to their time with their grandchildren or what they have been doing with their grandchildren or who they are going to visit with grandchildren, and the fact that, because of circumstances, some of them are denied the ability to visit or to even interact or to even correspond with their grandchildren has to be very, very hard. It has to be very, very heartwrenching for them to not have this type of ability.

I think that when we look at this amendment to The Child and Family Services Act, it just corrects something that I think that a lot of people would agree with. Why would you want to restrict an access of the grandparents to their grandchildren and not have the ability for them to share and to grow up with them? We have all heard that expression, they grow up so fast.

I know I have two sons that have just grown up, and it seems just like a very short time ago that they were around, but they do grow up very fast, and for grandparents not to be a part of that growing up process or to share with it, to interact with it, I think it not only sets up a vacuum in the grandparents' role but also the children. The children suffer from that because there is a certain amount of love and involvement that the grandparents can give to a child that possibly even the parents cannot give. It is the warmth, the understanding, the time, the commitment, the involvement, the willingness to share, and those are a lot of the things that will help nurture a child into a better and healthy and more active environment, more loving, more caring, more involved. These are some of the things that children

would experience. Naturally, they rely on their parents, but grandparents can and do play a significant role in the upbringing of children.

So, Mr. Speaker, the amendment is a very minor amendment. When you look at the explanation on it, it is actually very, very simple. The bill requires that, on an application by grandparents for access to a child, the court must consider the love, the affection and similar ties that exist between the child and the grandparent. It sounds simple. I mean, those are things that I think that we all live by. It does not matter which political party or political stripe or which government, I think that the recognition that the ties that are between family are something that are very sacred and very present and prevalent in our society. So what this is doing is putting it in a legalistic term because of a situation where grandparents are denied the access to the children.

The member from Minnedosa outlined a few incidences of people who have talked to her about it in regard to not even being able to send cards or phone calling their grandchildren. I think we have had the opportunity to meet with some of the interest groups. I know that the member from Minto has met with them also, and these are actual stories. These are actual situations. These are people who are personally affected by the fact that they cannot get access to their grandchildren, and you can empathize with them and you can recognize the fact that they do have a real heartwrenching situation, and they come to the government and look for some sort of solution on it.

So it is something I think that we have to consider very, very carefully when we look at this bill and look at the common sense of it, if you want to call it, Mr. Speaker. It is the common-sense approach to making law and it is the common-sense approach to making an amendment. It is common sense to make things a little bit better, and what better time than to do it now in this season when we share so much with our family and with our children, with the season, the season of giving and the season of participating in the festivities, that we can make someone or some people very, very happy by having this amendment passed. Then it can even come into law before Christmas. What a wonderful gift, what a wonderful Christmas present, if you want to call it, to some very, very heartwrenched people who are looking for some sort of solution on this.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will pass on to other people who may be wanting to put some words on

the record. I thank you very, very much for the time to put these on the record. Thank you.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure again to rise and speak to Bill 201, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act for grandparent access to their grandchildren. I would certainly like to congratulate the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) who has persevered in this.

She brought it forward last year and the government refused to consider it, and she has brought it forward again this year. I think that shows how committed she is to this bill. I also want to congratulate the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), when she was the Minister of Child and Family Services, for the amendments that she brought forward into this bill. I also want to recognize and welcome the grandparents here today who have a significant stake in this.

This bill would provide the court the opportunity and means to recognize the special relationship that exists between grandchildren and their grandparents. It requires the court to consider the love, affection and similar ties that exist between the child and the grandparent on an application by a grandparent for access to the child.

I cannot understand the problem here, Mr. Speaker. Why would anybody want to restrict access for grandchildren and the grandparents? It just defies logic and I do not understand why this government refuses to look at this very good bill. They did not want to look at it last year, refusing to debate it and send it to committee. Again this year, we had an attempt by the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) to shut down the debate. It is very interesting that Dauphin has opened a chapter of the grandparents support group, and the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) does not stand to speak on this very important amendment to The Child and Family Services Act.

It is regrettable when we learn that grandparents and grandchildren are denied the access to each other. Grandparents need the love of their grandchildren, and grandchildren need the love of their grandparents. It is a very significant bond and relationship between a grandchild and a grandparent, a different kind of relationship than even between a child and parent. I remember studying social psychology in university and talking about the very special bond of recognition, the bond between the grandparent and the grandchild, because a grandchild was a significant knowledge to the grandparent, that their name, their genes would be passed on to future

generations. They recognized the continuance of their family, so to speak. It is a very, very strong bond that grandparents and grandchildren have, Mr. Speaker.

Just to speak a little bit about my own experiences, I was fortunate enough to have one grandparent and unfortunate in that three of my grandparents passed away before I was born. But that was a very, very special bond that I had with my grandmother who happened to live just four doors down the street from me in a very small town. It was a wonderful thing to just be able to run down the street to grandma's house whenever I wanted to.

We did some really great, wonderful things together. I think that I learned a lot of things from my grandmother because she had the time and she wanted to spend that time with her grandchild. It was a different situation with the mother and father who were working at the time, or at least my mother was part time, as she was a high school teacher part time. So there was always this special thing that I could go down to grandma's house and we could bake.

* (10:30)

You know, if I made a little bit of a mess in the kitchen that did not really matter because grandma did not really care. She just cared about being able to spend some time with her grandchildren. I used to be able to dress up in her clothes, and she did not mind that. She thought it was fun and she would encourage it. We would do silly and fun games and things together. So I would question why anybody would want to deny these kinds of relationships between a grandchild and a grandparent.

I also remember my grandmother as a very avid gardener. I think one of the things that we do recognize about the bond between grandparents and grandchildren is they can pass on a lot of knowledge, a lot of knowledge of family, a lot of knowledge of historical stories about maybe what brought their family to the area of the province that they live in, what their grandparents did and where they came from. So there is cultural and traditional history to be imparted down to grandchildren. There are all kinds of skills and arts that are passed down.

One of those things for me was my grandmother was a gardener. Having spent some time working with her in the garden, at the time I did not really like it that much, I considered it work, but I enjoyed spending the time with my grandmother.

An Honourable Member: You learned to use the hoe.

Mrs. Taillieu: Yes, I learned to use the hoe and the rake and the spade and to do the weeding and all of that. But it is not until in most recent years that I have been become very interested in gardening myself. It is very interesting that I can search back in the memory banks, if you will, and I can recall some of the things my grandmother taught me about what plants grow in shade, what grow in sun, what will grow next to each other, what will look nice next to each other. Those kinds of things I had forgotten. I had learned them a long time ago from my grandmother, I had just forgotten them. But then when I started to do this myself, they came back to me.

That is something that is part of the relationship between the grandparent and the grandchild that is invaluable. It is an invaluable learning experience. I am just using that as an example. But there are many, many things that can be imparted through these relationships.

I know that it is sad in this society that we have situations arise where parents become divorced and then the children, and often then a parent remarries, and maybe they move to another area, maybe there are blended families. Of course, these bring all kinds of challenges. I can talk about this because I have been married two times, have children from a previous marriage, and I recognize those kinds of issues that occur when you blend families, Mr. Speaker. So, I know of what I am speaking here. But I also know that those things can be overcome.

You know, I look at my children as having three sets of grandparents, not two. Well, actually, they probably have four sets of grandparents when I think about the extension of the family and the people that are now involved with my children. I think that is a good thing because all the more people love them and they love more people. There is nothing better than that.

It is very unfortunate, though, when we come to situations where that does not happen and where there needs to be a court intervention for grandparents to have access to their grandchildren. That is a very, very unfortunate thing that would have to occur. But we have to consider what is in the best interests of the child. I think, when we talk about children, we talk about love, we talk about affection, we talk about listening to them, helping

them through the crisis situations that all children have.

Whatever that may be, at any age, grandparents are great listeners, the unconditional love that they give, the hugs that they will give you when you need it, Mr. Speaker. So you know it just sort of defies logic and reason why we would want to not have that happen. It is in the best interest of children to have their grand—And however that may be. I mean, certainly, we recognize that maybe it is a simple thing like a telephone conversation or maybe it is a visit or maybe it is an outing to the park or maybe it is just a chance to sit and talk for a while. But all of these things become so valuable, especially when you are denied them. Then they become the most valuable, just a chance to speak on the phone. If you have been denied that opportunity, it will become a very, very significant thing, both for the grandchild and for the grandparent.

I think that it is very, very important that the grandchild know who their grandparents are, know where they came from and they, certainly, should be given the opportunity so that—[interjection] Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I too am pleased to put a few comments on record regarding Bill 201, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act. Simply, this act provides the court the opportunity and the means to recognize the special relationship that exists between grandchildren and grandparents. It requires the court to consider the love, affection and similar ties that exist between the child and the grandparent on an application by a grandparent to access to a child.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that this may be hard for people here to understand and to recognize, but actually, I am a grandparent and so I can speak from experience.

An Honourable Member: No, too young.

Mr. Dyck: Now, when you do the math, you know, it is interesting how young grandparents are nowadays. I used to think that grandparents were older. I would not say—

An Honourable Member: Those old people.

Mr. Dyck: Well, my Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) has other adjectives he wants to place here, but the point of it is that grandparents nowadays can be very, very young. I have three young grandsons. The Member for Minnedosa (Mrs.

Rowat) introduced this bill last year and it is interesting that members opposite, first of all, this morning, appeared to, although they did change it on the record, but did appear to want to stifle debate on a bill as important as this one where it would be denying grandparents the ability to be able to visit with their grandchildren.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to tell you that this morning, before my grandsons got on the bus, I got into my office and here is a message from them and guess what? They were just wishing me a happy day. Now is that not wonderful. I thought that was great. So here is a message from three young guys and they said, "Grandpa, we just wish that you would have a good day." So, my goodness, what does that do for me as a grandparent? It sort of just encourages you for the day. You know that there are people back home, an hour and a half away, who are actually thinking about you and just knowing that you are out working on their behalf and wishing you well.

So, Mr. Speaker, this bill is something that recognizes and that encourages, in fact, it mandates, the fact that I, as a grandparent, and I must say and I am delighted to be able to say that I do have access to my grandchildren, but we are not all that fortunate. So there is that opportunity to be able to, us, to encourage the government of the day, and believe me I do not know why they would not want to have this happen. I wish that they would get up and put some of their comments on record. I am sure that they must have, I would assume they have, thought this through, but that they must have some information out there that would say, "No, this is not a good thing," but we are not hearing from them today so, consequently, we on this side of the House need to carry this debate to try to encourage that this bill go through and go through as quickly as possible.

I was listening to the Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer) making comments. He was saying would it not be a wonderful Christmas present if this bill could be passed, in fact, before the House rises, and that would be a wonderful idea. However, I guess at this point in time, unless we can introduce it next week again and just keep talking about it and ultimately encourage them to look at this and, in fact move it forward, that this would take place. However, that does not seem to be the case.

* (10:40)

Mr. Speaker, I want to go back again to the realities of and the importance of grandparents. Now, I can remember back, and it is only a few short years

ago, but when I was a child and my grandparents came down, I remember sitting on the porch at the farmhouse, the farmstead, and my grandparents came down. Of course, in those days, people still had large gardens, so I sat beside my grandparents and we would be shelling peas. We would be preparing the peas, and in those days, of course, you did not freeze them because the accessibility to freezers was not there, so they would be canned. *[interjection]* Well, no, the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) says it is a long time ago. She has to recognize that we did not all have the technology within rural Manitoba that they had within the urban centre as quickly, so, consequently, the technology was out there, but our parents were not able at that point in time to afford it. We did not have that access to a deepfreeze. I also was very, very, very young at that time, just so the information is correct on the record.

Again, my grandparents taught me the work ethic, but this was not only that we sat there and shelled peas. We talked. We visited. They had the opportunity to share their cultural experiences of when they had come to Canada. In fact, my grandfather, I recall vividly how he told me stories of at the age of 19, he had left his family, and this was in England. They had gone from Russia and travelled down to England. In fact, his parents had said goodbye to him as a 19-year-old. Just put yourself into that situation. Our 19-year-olds today we think are pretty young, but he left his parents and his grandparents. They said goodbye. He got onto the boat and he crossed the ocean and came to Canada. But he knew full well that he would probably never, ever see his parents again.

So these were the stories that he shared with me. Then, of course, he went on to share of how he came, and I believe it was he stopped in Ireland and then they went down to Québec and then across to Minnesota, and then ultimately he came to Manitoba. He could not find a job in Manitoba so he moved to Saskatchewan and he got his first job as a wrangler. So he was a cowboy. Now, horses have always interested me, so ultimately he would tell me stories of how as a wrangler he would be riding and breaking horses, and this was in the wild, wild west.

So these are the kinds of stories that I have from my grandparents. Now, if I would not have been able to have a good relationship with them or have been able to see them, then, obviously, they would not have been able to tell me this stories and I would not have had those first-hand.

Now I want to take it the next step to our own children. With our own family, and, again, we lived on the farm for many years, and my father was also a farmer. When our children were born, we lived in the same yard as my parents, so, of course, this was daily contact with their grandchildren. Now, again, this was a special arrangement that we had and I realize not everyone can have that.

But what I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is the importance of grandchildren having access to their grandparents. I was busy as a parent. I was teaching at the time. I was getting involved in agriculture at the time. As my wife, Irene, would indicate, I was hardly ever home. However, our children had access to their grandparents, so their grandparents had the opportunity to shape, to mold, to encourage them in their walk in life, to tell them that there would be tough times coming on. I know that my son today, who is 33 years old, in fact, would indicate time and time again that when he talked to his grandfather as a farmer, and today farming is not all that easy, but he would say, you know, grandpa did say that farming would not always be easy, that that there would be tough times.

It is these kinds of experiences that we can share with our grandchildren and encourage them with, because they then know that there have been some tough times that they have had to go through. My goodness, they survived the tough times. They became stronger as a result of it.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would just encourage the members opposite to listen carefully to the information here to, in fact, allow us with the information that we are providing to encourage them to look at this bill again and subsequently to pass it, and that we can, in fact, give this information over to the grandparents.

I want to, again, thank the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat) for bringing the bill forward. Oh, here she is behind me, okay. Thank you so much for doing that and the grandparents for coming out. So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for this opportunity.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to Bill 201. In fact, I would compliment the member from Minnedosa with a wonderful idea. I wish I could have been the seconder for the bill. I just think it is something that is long overdue. It is a bill that I think recognizes the important role that our grandparents play in today's society.

You know, they are more than just grandparents. In many situations the grandparent is, in fact, the first parent, if you like. They are the ones who are providing the care in an everyday fashion. More and more today, society is relying on grandparents to fill the role of parents. They provide history and meaning to the family. They are one of the groupings of people in the lives of our children that provide stability.

I just am so much in favour of acknowledging the tremendous role that our grandparents play towards the children. It is a love that cannot be replaced. I find it absolutely disgusting how some grandchildren are denied the opportunity to be able to have that special relationship with their grandparents. I believe that courts need to take into consideration the importance of the grandparent. I see this as a bill that will at least say something to the courts, that we do need to recognize that special relationship between a grandparent and a grandchild.

Back on September 1, I had sent an e-mail to the Prime Minister and to our Premier (Mr. Doer), making the suggestion that Canada, at the very least Manitoba, recognize the first Sunday after Labour Day weekend as Grandparents' Day, in essence, giving the same sort of recognition to our grandparents once a year that we would give to a mother or to a father.

We would not be the first jurisdiction that would do that. They have been doing it in the United States for many years, Mr. Speaker. While I did get a response from the Prime Minister—*[interjection]* Well, it was like a Dear Kevin letter. But I am optimistic at some point in time that we will see it.

In fact, it did not take long. If I look at the response from the Prime Minister, I had sent the e-mail on September 1, and I had gotten a response by the Prime Minister on September 8. Well, the Premier took a little longer. I got a response in regard to our Grandparents' Day idea on October 7. I would like to read the response that I got.

Response from Premier Doer: "Thank you for your e-mail. I appreciate your time and effort in sending me an e-mail, and I can assure you that each e-mail is read and noted. As you may be aware, I receive many e-mails each day. Due to the large volume, you may not receive a response other than this automated reply. As the Internet is not a secure method of transmission, we respectfully request your full name and mailing address if you wish a

response. Thank you for sharing your concerns and comments with me."

So, Mr. Speaker, I would like to convey, through Hansard, my name. I cannot say my name because you would rule that it is against our rules, so you can title it to the MLA for Inkster. I advance this to the Premier. He has a choice. He can send it downstairs to my office, I am in Room 169, or he can mail me a response to my home at 2008 Burrows Avenue. Either way, I would welcome a response from the Premier in regard to what I believe is a wonderful—

An Honourable Member: I want a copy of that

Mr. Lamoureux: The member from Steinbach would like a copy, and so I would ask that the Premier send a copy to the member from Steinbach and the member from Minnedosa, who I know recognizes the value of our grandparents.

* (10:50)

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you, as I say, it does not have to be earth shattering. You know, it has been a long time since it has been happening in the United States, but I think it is a very strong statement. And shortly after sending that e-mail, I received a letter from the Minister responsible for Seniors, and it was not regarding grandparents, but it was acknowledging and giving a proclamation for seniors and elders of the month, and that was sent on September 12. So I thought it was somewhat ironic that here is an idea, an idea much like what the member from Minnedosa is trying to do, is to raise how important our grandparents are to us as a society and the government turns an absolute and total blind eye to it.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful. This is the second time the member from Minnedosa has brought in this legislation. I am hopeful that the government will see in its wisdom that there is merit for this legislation. There is merit for good ideas where they are for government to act on them, and I ask the government to recognize the value of this legislation and allow it to, at the very least, go to committee. Why would the government oppose—*[interjection]*

That is right, you know. We have members that are in the gallery, Mr. Speaker. I suspect a number of them are grandparents. Why not allow the opportunity for this bill to go into committee so that individuals, whether they are in the gallery or they are outside of the gallery, might have some input to

provide at the committee stage? We are not saying the government has to pass it, even though we would like to see it passed. At least allow it to go to committee and, through committee, people can then add comment. The average Manitoban would be able to come forward and provide their feedback on this critically important issue.

I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that there are thousands of Manitobans that would love to see this legislation pass, and you do not have to be a grandparent to see and value the important role that grandparents play in today's society. Unfortunately, at times, government is very narrow-minded, and if it is not their idea they are very reluctant, and I say that sadly, that they tend to drag their feet.

I am asking the government—this is the second time this bill has come forward—to do the right thing, to acknowledge the valuable contributions that seniors make and allow this bill, at the very least, to go to committee. Our grandparents deserve that sort of attention, and I ask for the government to give them a chance and allow this bill to go to committee, because sadly there are far too many. If one is out there, I would argue that is too many. But there are far too many grandparents that are being denied the opportunity to be able to see their grandchildren. And what is worse, there are children that are being denied the opportunity to have that special relationship with a grandparent, and that is a relationship that can only be one based on love and caring. We should be doing what we can to promote that union and that relationship, so I applaud the member from Minnedosa on bringing forward a wonderful bill. Thank you.

Mr. Faurschou: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to participate in the debate regarding Bill 201, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act, and I want to take this opportunity to applaud the efforts of the Member for Minnedosa (Ms. Rowat) bringing this forward.

I would like to just say that we all have our own memories of our relationship with our grandparents, and in doing that, think of the very special bond I had with my grandmother and to think that possibly not having had that opportunity or perhaps that relationship severed, I cannot imagine being denied that opportunity to learn from my grandmother as I did in my upbringing.

Mr. Speaker, we all recognize today that there are changes in the family make-up and also, too, at

no time in history have we seen the level of relationship break-up as we do in today's society. It is not to disregard the efforts of individuals within a relationship, but we all can recognize that the demands on family today under current economic situations are extraordinary, and it does lead to relationship break-up. Ultimately, within those relationship break-ups there are considerations, whether they be from spite or other rationale, there is access to children by grandparents being denied currently.

That is why I believe this legislation is so vitally important, and I know that persons have taken time out of their busy schedule to be here with us in the gallery and to observe the debate of this Assembly. I encourage the members opposite in government to give those individuals that want to participate in seeing this legislation be enacted have that opportunity. That is why I look to members opposite for their support to see that this legislation goes forward and allows the public to participate in the legislative process to which we here in Manitoba should be very proud of, that every piece of legislation that comes to this Assembly has that opportunity for public input and to allow a broader sector of our society to add to and contribute to the making of legislation that affects all Manitobans.

So with those brief words, I do want to encourage the members opposite to, essentially, give their blessing and to see this bill go forward to committee and to the public at this time. Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to once again, and may I conclude with an observation that I had when the former minister, the Member for River East, brought into context the definition of grandparent in the legislation pertaining to family services. I want to thank her for her vision and her recognition of the vital role that grandparents do play in the upbringing of children here in the province of Manitoba. Thank you very much.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): I move, seconded by the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff), to adjourn debate.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate again that we see—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is this on a point of order?

Point of Order

Mrs. Mitchelson: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. The honourable member, on a point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Unfortunate, again, to see members of the government attempting to shut down debate on this very important piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. I would ask that, in consideration of grandparents and children in this province, the member from Rossmere maybe reconsider his motion and ask, and maybe we could ask, whether he might withdraw it so we could continue debate on this legislation.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, not only is it not a point of order, that is completely out of order. If the member opposite would care to check the record of Hansard of last week or, certainly, we will see later on today, these motions are moved fairly routinely. I think opposition members have adjourned many bills in the early stage of this session. So it is not only not in order, I think it is simply a case of grandstanding in this particular case.

The members opposite had every opportunity to debate this bill. The session is young, this bill will be back, and the member opposite could make that point in debate. I will just say that adjournment motions are fairly standard. In fact, we do have other items of business which we should move onto and this so-called point of order is not a point of order but it is highly out of order for a member to get up and grandstand on a point of order in that way.

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for River East, she does not have a point of order. Members can adjourn debates and, in this case, we had agreed that members that wished to speak could speak and then the member would adjourn debate, but the hour being eleven o'clock, we have to move on.

Also, when motions are presented to the Speaker, I have to put them back to the House. That I have not done yet, because I was recognizing the honourable member for a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), seconded by the honourable member for the Interlake (Mr.

Nevakshonoff), that debate be adjourned. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Well, it is eleven o'clock, we have to move on to resolutions, as previously agreed.

An Honourable Member: Yeas and Nays.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of adjourning debate, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to adjourning debate, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): May I ask for a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Okay. The recorded vote will have to be deferred, as we had agreed that there would be no quorum call and no votes taken this morning, and also—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Also, on Tuesdays, the rule of the House is that any votes that are undertaken be deferred, so this vote will have to be deferred to the following Thursday because there is also an agreement in place that there would be no votes taken on Thursday. So this vote will be deferred until the following Thursday. Thursday, we know we do not have votes on Tuesday. That is part of our rules, so it will be deferred to the following Thursday.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I would like to take this opportunity before we move on to resolutions, which we had agreed to for eleven o'clock, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us Mr. and Mrs. Cullen, Donna Eckerholme [*phonetic*], Eileen Britain [*phonetic*] and B. Campbell and V. Campbell. On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

Also in the public gallery, we have Mr. and Mrs. Peter and Marie Sawatsky, who are accompanied by their daughter Yvonne, and also Mrs. Doris White and honorary Colonel Ben Van Ruiten and his wife Arlene. On behalf of all honourable members, I also welcome you here today.

The hour being past 11, we will now move on to resolutions and the resolution dealing with war brides.

RESOLUTIONS—COMMITTEE SELECTION

Res. 1—War Brides

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): It is my pleasure to introduce this resolution. [*interjection*] Sorry. I move, seconded by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that

WHEREAS during the entire six years of the Second World War tens of thousands of Canadian soldiers were posted overseas, mainly in Britain, but all over the world; and

WHEREAS during that time many servicemen and women married foreign nationals in those countries in which they were stationed; and

WHEREAS there were nearly 45 000 women who married Canadian servicemen stationed overseas during the Second World War, with 93 percent of these women coming from the United Kingdom; and

WHEREAS during and after the war these war brides, as they were known, left their friends, family and ultimately their home countries in great numbers to come and settle and build their lives in Canada; and

WHEREAS in the period from 1942 to 1948 over 64 000 war brides and dependents immigrated to Canada to start their new lives; and

WHEREAS the war brides along with their returning husbands became the new workers, entrepreneurs and leaders of the burgeoning Canadian economy as well as providing the solid foundation for the next generation of Canadians; and

WHEREAS the important sacrifices and work done by war brides took place far from the public eye has yet to receive the recognition it deserves.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to recognize the enormous

sacrifice made by war brides as well as their great contributions to Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Motion presented.

Ms. Korzeniowski: I am going to try to keep my message brief here because I know that we have people on both sides of the House who wish to speak to this, and I would like to acknowledge that we have two war brides sitting in our gallery, and I quite appreciate their efforts to come out.

The term "war bride" refers to foreign women who met and married Canadian servicemen who were serving overseas during the Second World War and who then immigrated to Canada during and following the war in order to meet up with their husbands and to start new lives. Over 250 000 Canadian servicemen served and were stationed overseas during the Second World War, the majority being in Britain. There were nearly 45 000 women who married Canadian servicemen stationed overseas with 93 percent of these women coming from the United Kingdom.

Mr. Speaker, when I began to think about the war brides and their experiences, I wanted to put a face to these women in order to better understand what they went through and who they really were as people. I began to try to find some women I might know as I have been involved in the military for the better part of my life, and it came to me that one of my parent's best friends of over 60 years was a war bride from Britain. Is it not always too close to your face?

Audrey met Reg Nichols in Sussex, England, in 1940-41, and she met Reg where she worked at the women's voluntary service on Friday nights serving coffee and tea to the servicemen. She was about 21 at the time. They married a year later in 1942. And I just want it to be said that marriage back then was not so simply done. Permission from the Canadian commanding officer was required as well as a demonstration on the part of the soldier that he could amass \$200, not an inconsiderable sum in those days, in order to provide for the family. Also, letters of reference were required from the woman in order to ascertain her good character. Finally, setting a date was also difficult for sudden postings and troop movements were a fact of life.

In total, over the period of 1939 to 1946, there were over 68 000 marriages and births between Canadian servicemen and foreign nationals from

nearly 20 countries ranging from England, where the majority of the brides and births were located, to such places as Russia, India and the Caribbean. There were nearly 22 000 births from war bride marriages in the same period. It is not surprising that by the time the brides were preparing to leave for Canada, many women already had at least one child and even more were pregnant.

The Canadian troops were stationed in England for three years before they saw active duty. One writer quipped, "This was the only army in history where the birth rate was higher than the death rate."

* (11:10)

Mr. Speaker, Audrey and Reg's first son was born in 1943 and was nearly two years old before his father saw him. Audrey and her new son lived with her family, including a younger brother and sister. They all lived through the hardships and fears in a country torn by the devastation of war, while her husband and the father of their child fought in another country.

Reg returned home to Canada to continue serving in the army. Audrey was given all of 24 hours to prepare to join him. The Canadian government provided war brides with free sea and rail passage to the destinations in Canada, as well as a daily food allowance and free access to medical care on boats and trains, but I digress.

Audrey's mother was heartbroken to have to say goodbye to not only her daughter but also to her grandson, not knowing when she would see them again. As it turns out, it would only be five years. I should not say "only" lightly but compared to many. They were reunited as Reg remained in the regular forces and returned to Germany on tour. They had two sons. Both had successful careers, David in public service, and the younger son, Ian, carrying on in the military tradition of his dad, is now retired as a colonel, but he continues to contribute to his country as a part of NATO.

Reg and Audrey met my parents shortly after the war. I am proud to say I knew this family, and, in fact, both our families were the first of Canadian families to be transferred to Germany when our fathers were sent under the UN action after the war.

Audrey lost Reg six years ago, two years after my mother lost my father. Audrey lives in Ontario and still keeps in contact with other war brides there, as well, of course, as my mother. They are more like sisters. I remember her as a positive and gracious

lady with a joie de vivre and tremendous energy. Her spirit is evident today.

Another war bride who lives in my constituency and is here today in the gallery is from Holland and her name is Marie Sawatsky. She spent her teen years in Holland working and living, hoping to stay safe from the bombings. Marie, her brother and two sisters were evacuated twice with their parents due to bombings. She says, "Every day counted. You really valued life and food and the pleasure of seeing the sun come up."

Holland was liberated in 1945 in April. In May she turned 21. She worked at the town hall. Peter Sawatsky, a Canadian soldier, was being quartered with the caretaker of the town hall, and that is how they met. They did not know each other very long, but she says, "It just felt right," and they married. When it was time to leave for Canada, the hardest thing was to say goodbye to her mom and brother and sisters, not knowing when they would see each other again. It would be 17 years before she returned to be with them.

Peter and Marie came to the Prairies in Canada and joined his family of eight siblings. Imagine coming to meet eight sisters-in-law. Fortunately, they not only welcomed her but argued over whose turn it was to have them over to visit. Marie impressed me with her positive attitude and most of all her sense of humour which, obviously, is part of her strength. They struggled and worked hard and raised five vivacious, I hear, lively and lovely daughters, one of whom is here in the gallery to support and pay tribute to her mother.

They have been back to Europe a few times, but Marie states her home is clearly and gratefully Canada. This family is clearly an asset to their community and to our country. Thank you.

Another woman from Holland, Doris White, met Bill after Holland was liberated. She was 21, he 23. There was one big party it seemed and everyone was inviting the soldiers for tea. Her 11-year-old sister invited some, including Bill. He left but came back for the cigarettes that he had forgotten and that was the beginning of a lifelong affair. They only knew each other for two or three weeks before he left but not before they became engaged. She left to join him in Nova Scotia where they married. They now have one son and one daughter. Leaving was difficult for Doris. Her mother begged her not to go. She had

such mixed emotions. She would be so homesick but so in love. It would be 14 years before she returned.

Her husband joined the regular forces and they spent two tours in Germany and travelled a lot, which only reinforced how glad she was to live in Canada. She said she would never live anywhere else. While in Germany she worked for the army, then back in Canada for the provincial government. Sadly Bill passed on just over two months ago. This incredibly strong and hearty lady is nonetheless carrying on and living and at 80-plus, as they all are, walks and buses to her Tai Chi lessons. Hats off to this feisty lady.

Lastly I would like to mention one more lady who was a war bride and who has brought to us, as stated in the resolution, the new workers, entrepreneurs and leaders of the burgeoning Canadian economy, a leader. Dorothy Keene is the mother of our own Minister of Advanced Education, Diane McGifford. I am going to leave her daughter to speak to her story. I just wanted to offer my appreciation for bringing us such a great colleague. Her two grandchildren, Dorothy's that is, are also accomplished and productive members of our society. Thank you, Dorothy.

In conclusion, I want to say that I noticed that all the stories I heard were bound by a common theme. These women lived their youth in fear of death and learned to truly appreciate life. They had few worldly possessions and little time for material things. Most brought little or no possessions with them on their voyage to Canada. It seems to me that they learned to value the important things in life, relationships and family and the value of work. They have brought these values with them and passed them on to their children. Their great inner strength gave them a greater appreciation for what is most important in life that many of us often take for granted. They are a feisty, stalwart and a flexible bunch.

Their determination to build a new life in Canada regardless of any adverse conditions encountered upon their arrival is one feature of the war brides that stands out above all others. We thank them for their sacrifices and their invaluable contributions to our country.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing any other members to speak, I want to remind all honourable members, when making references to other members

of the House to do it by constituencies or ministers by their portfolios.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak to the resolution put forward on war brides. I, too, have great respect and admiration for these women who gave up their lives, their families, to start a new life in Canada and to contribute to our society and to bring people into Canada who obviously have done great things for our country.

These war brides should be recognized for their bravery and loyalty coming to a new and unknown country and contributing to this country as their own. They left their home country knowing little or nothing about Canada, so these women had obviously taken huge risks in coming to Canada knowing only their spouse and maybe their children and a few others.

In speaking to the war brides in my constituency, I have learned of the hardships and the challenges they faced in moving to a new country and often into rural Manitoba where a lot of the amenities that they had enjoyed in cities prior to the war were definitely not available to them when they had moved to some of the rural communities.

The war brides also offer a very important part of our collective social and political history. At a recent function I attended in Winnipeg I sat with a war bride, and she shared the stories of how she had to change her name because somebody in the community already had the same name. Instead of causing friction she changed her name. So, obviously, people who were coming from other countries understood and respected the roots of some of the people in the communities and wanted to adjust and fit in as quickly and as effectively as possible.

* (11:20)

So what these women experienced in how they shaped post-war experiences in rural Manitoba as well as in Winnipeg and other places within Canada, each individual story has a special effect on the communities that they lived in. This past September, the Manitoba War Brides Association met at a reunion, and the reunion was held at the Royal Oak Inn in Brandon, and due to the declining numbers, it was decided at that time that this would be their final reunion, Mr. Speaker, as they felt that it was time to move on. Even though the numbers were smaller, their enthusiasm and gusto for sharing stories and

learning about each other's experiences from the past year were important. They also understood that the years were starting to challenge some of their abilities to get together.

In the constituency of Minnedosa and in the community of Minnedosa, there are three Manitoba war brides who are members of the association. They are Ruth Delmage, Irene Alex and Frances English. All three of these courageous women took it upon themselves to start a new life in the community of Minnedosa. Ruth Delmage met her husband Ernie Delmage quite literally by accident as a member of the Land Army. Ruth and another girl were going for a bike ride in September 1943. Ruth indicates that, "I was on a bike coming out of our drive into the main road and as I came around the corner, I ran right into two Canadian soldiers." She apologized for the mishap. Ruth was asked by one of the soldiers if they knew of any dances that night, and she and a friend knew of one and the four met up again at the dance. Knowing Ruth, the twinkle in her eye of sharing this story would be so clear and so crisp that I think that she still smiles over this chance meeting with Ernie. Over the next few days, Ruth and Ernie spent quite a lot of time together and about 10 days after first meeting, they decided to get married. The wedding took place on January 8, 1944.

Irene Alex met her husband Hilding back in a troop carrier truck. "I was in the British Military Police and he was in the Canadian Military Police," recalls Irene, "and we were going on a raid and he told one of the others that I was the girl he was going to marry and I said not if I can help it." But over time the two became close and made marriage plans for a later date. A rush was put on the marriage when Alex was involved in a near tragic accident with two broken legs and an injured back. It was uncertain that Alex would ever walk again. This is when Irene realized how much she loved her Canadian soldier and they decided to get married immediately. Alex, in a full-body cast, was carried into the church on a stretcher. That was on June 27, 1945.

My third war bride is Frances English. Her story is on V-E Day. She and her sister were on their way home when they met Canadian soldiers who asked for the way to the valley. "Jim and I planned to meet again at the next dance," is what Frances had indicated, "But I did not think much of that at the time. Oh, Canadian boys, they do not know how to dance. I was just going to have fun but it turned out that he was a very good dancer." A few months later

on September 22, 1945, Jim and Frances were married.

Mr. Speaker, I speak of three war brides and the stories that they shared. I think having them put on record is a testament to my generation of the importance of remembering and appreciating what they have contributed to our lives within our communities, within our constituencies and within our country. These were very strong women who made very, very difficult choices to leave family and friends behind and I applaud their efforts. I want to remember their stories and I am encouraged by the resolution that has come forward. I, too, encourage the government to recognize the enormous sacrifice made by war brides, as others, who have contributed to Canada.

Mr. Speaker, in the gallery today are Ben and Arlene Van Ruiten who I met at a function in Minnedosa and I had the honour of listening to the honorary colonel share his story of living in an occupied country and how he contributed to the freedom movement. I think that by listening to his story and listening to the stories of the war brides, all Canadians can be very proud of what has been contributed by people who were born and grew up in other countries but have come to enjoy the freedom and the lifestyle of Canada.

So I applaud my three war brides and I also applaud members of the gallery who are here today to recognize and support what we have to say in remembrance of their significant contributions. Thank you.

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to address this particular resolution and I thank my colleague for bringing the resolution to the Legislature.

As she has made apparent, the sacrifices that women make during war often do not receive the public attention which they merit. As well, and closer to home, her resolution gives me a chance to speak of the war bride I know best and love most, because my mother was one of those 45 000 women who married a Canadian serviceman, my father. Unfortunately, she passed away in 1987 without the recognition that my colleague's resolution endorses, so I make the point that unless we attend to this matter quickly there will be no war brides left to be celebrated.

Today, in remembering my special war bride, I recognize all those courageous women from all over Europe. I recognize, for instance, women like my mother-in-law, Ellie Wojczynski, who was Dutch and survived a dreadful war in Holland. She met her veteran shortly after the war's end when my father-in-law, a displaced and stateless Pole, was accepted by Holland. Later they came to Canada.

My mother, born Dorothy Keene, was a teacher by profession with, I am told, a daredevil's fondness for riding fast motorcycles, driving cars and dancing all night. This is hard for me to imagine but I am sure it is true. During the early part of the war, she was a teacher and along with her students was evacuated to the countryside, a safer place for the children away from the cities and the bombs. But shortly after meeting my father and a whirlwind courtship, she moved to London and to the thick of the Battle of Britain.

My family history is all about the second war. We grew up with tales of air raids, the blackouts, rationing, shortages, destruction, prisoners of war and, more positively, the music. My mother often told the story of returning home one evening after the all-clear had sounded and finding her apartment, her flat as she would have said of course, utterly destroyed along with the layette that she had prepared for my yet to be born brother. She was thankful that her baby was safe and with her and started knitting again. Fortunately, and if anyone knows an English war bride they can confirm this, these women were determined, valiant knitters, absolutely crazy about knitting, so she got on with the job. When my brother was born it was not in a real hospital but after another air-raid warning, in a London tube station temporarily converted to a hospital.

It was not all bad, Mr. Speaker. Men and women fell in love and started families, lived I think with an intensity born of the realization that tomorrow the Allied offensive in Europe might begin and lovers and families might be separated, perhaps forever. People lived close to death which I think gave life an added sweetness and intensity. Such are the advantages of living on the edge and in this way the fates are kind.

When my mother came to Canada following her husband, she came with her children to Halifax on a ship full of women with their children soon to be reunited with their husbands. At Halifax my mother took a train, again with her children, and came to

Winnipeg, such a long journey from Manchester, England to Winnipeg. When she arrived on February 14 it was minus 40 and she lost heart for a while until the spring when she planted the first of her many famous flower and vegetable gardens. Then in the fall my Canadian grandmother initiated my mother into the prairie mysteries of canning and pickling. At Christmas she and her war bride sisters sent the first parcels home, for Britain and most of Europe lived under rationing for many post-war years, and Canadian food was a luxury.

Tentatively, slowly, these women set up their lives in Canada, developed their yearly rituals and gradually became Canadians. Remarkable, courageous women, were they not? And my mother was remarkable. When her children were a little older, she began teaching and spent 25 years as an excellent inner-city schoolteacher and so made an important contribution to Canadian society.

* (11:30)

One day, when I was at the Winnipeg Education Centre, I was present when students were speaking about the best and most influential teachers they had ever had. You can guess my feelings when I realized that one student was talking about my mother and declared my mother to be her best teacher. Parents are usually proud of their children, but this reversal was a real moment of grace. And my mother knit through it all: the war; the voyage over; on the train; my childhood; her teaching career; and old age. Making clothes for your children and grandchildren is a noble thing to do, but knitting is as well a very nice metaphor to characterize our war brides. These women, who joined strands and created something new and useful, linked the old world with the new and created their very own versions of Canada.

In the Year of the Veteran I was delighted to receive a CD from the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson), a recording of Second World War music done very modernly. I am not sure my parents would have approved. I told the minister that this was the music my parents knew and loved, the music of their youth: "Sentimental Journey," "La Mere," "I'm Beginning to See the Light" and "The White Cliffs of Dover." My mother loved "The White Cliffs of Dover," could never hear it without weeping. Along with other war brides, my mother believed in the sentiments of the song made so famous by Vera Lynn: "There'll be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover / Tomorrow just you wait

and see / There'll be love and laughter and peace ever after / Tomorrow when the world is free."

These women lived to see their tomorrows, though in Canada not Dover. They lived to see blue skies free of threats, no bombs, no V-1s, no V-2s. Canada was good to most of them. They were admirable women who kept the home fires burning, often at great personal cost.

Mr. Speaker, surely, at the going down and the setting of the sun, we will remember them. By passing my colleague's resolution, we will remember them publicly. When we declare 2006 the year of the war bride, we will remember them. Thank you.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to put a few words on the record just in support of this resolution that has been brought forward by the Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski), and I think all of the speakers to this point have indicated that it is, especially in the Year of the Veteran, a very timely resolution. I believe we all should stand in our places and pay tribute to those women that were war brides and came over to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak specifically about one war bride in my community who married, became pregnant over in England and bore her first and only child, a daughter, and her husband was subsequently killed in action. She had made a commitment to him that, should anything happen to him, she would raise their child in Canada. And so, all alone, a single parent, she made the journey from England to Canada with no family, left her family behind and had no family over here to support her or to be with her. She had a daunting challenge ahead of her. She needed to work in order to support herself and her daughter, and she spent all of her pre-retirement years working and ensuring that her daughter had the kind of life that she wanted for her.

Mr. Speaker, she has never regretted coming to Canada. She holds Canada very dearly and believes that what her husband and many, many others had fought for is the kind of freedom she was able to enjoy in this country. She is now over 90 years old. Not only did she work hard, but she became very involved in the church, in the Catholic Church, and was very much a part of the Catholic Women's League who have, over the years, certainly, stood for many of the things which I believe as an individual.

I look to that, and I look to her as a woman who had conviction, made a commitment, followed through on that commitment, endured the challenges that would face any single, young woman with a young child venturing out on their own into uncharted waters, not knowing what to expect when she arrived here, but has made Canada her home, is proud to be a Canadian and is proud of what she has accomplished.

So I look to her and to the many, many others in the stories that we have heard about other war brides and say that we salute you as women and as members of our Canadian family who have, indeed, made a difference. I believe that many of the war brides that are alive today are grandparents and great-grandparents, and I believe that they place family values at the heart of their existence. I would believe that, if any of them had had the opportunity to hear the debate on the family unit and children and how important grandparents and great-grandparents are to the core of family and family values, they would be pleased to know that not only are we saluting them today as war brides, but we are also saluting family and family values with the private members' legislation that was introduced by the member from Minnedosa to try to strengthen family and family ties. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the private member's resolution brought forward by the Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski). In fact, I am proud to be able to second it. I think it is particularly relevant in the year 2005, which is known as the Year of the Veteran. One-quarter million Canadian soldiers served overseas during World War II and approximately 18 percent of them were married to foreign nationals, our servicemen. That was roughly 45 000 women they married overseas, or some of them were actually married here, but the 45 000 is the number. Ninety-three percent of the war brides came from the British Isles, but there were other countries as well. In fact, 20 other countries were involved, including, as was mentioned earlier, Russia, India and countries in the Caribbean. There were 1866 Dutch war brides, 649 Belgian war brides, and approximately 100 French war brides as well.

In the period 1939-1946, there were 68 000 marriages and births involving Canadian servicemen and foreign nationals, approximately 22 000-plus births and approximately 45 000-plus marriages. Some of the women were married overseas and came

to Canada with their children, one child, some of them of them were pregnant. There were special ships and special trains set aside for the war brides. It was quite an effort that the Canadian government was involved in at that time.

Mr. Speaker, there are so many war brides that I have met in my own life because I am also an immigrant. I came from Europe in '52, and I have had a chance to meet a number of Dutch war brides, but other war brides as well. I would like to list some of them. Unfortunately, I will not have time to speak about each one of them.

Mrs. Lisgus from Primate, Saskatchewan. I remember her very specifically because she was typically Dutch: tall, blond and blue-eyed. I am atypically Dutch. Mrs. Walker from Senlac. Mrs. Rundel from Denzil. Mrs. Eunice Partington from Evesham, Saskatchewan, a very wonderful lady, was a British war bride married to Reg Partington, a gentleman I got to know very well because my dad worked together with him farming. I got to know the family very well, particularly the son, Glen.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Later on, of course, I got to know another war bride very well, Ingrid Sonnen from Assiniboia, because she is the mother of my wife. So, my wife's mother is a German war bride who met her husband in Germany, a Canadian serviceman. Her family came out of East Prussia, was pushed out of East Prussia, ended up, I think it was, in Bremen or Bremerhaven and that is where Mrs. Ingrid Sonnen, at that time Miss Bankmann, would have met my wife's father, who was a Canadian soldier.

* (11:40)

I have also had the good fortune in Flin Flon to meet a number of other war brides, Mrs. Cory McKay, whose oldest daughter, Gertie, was actually born in Amsterdam; Mrs. Adriana, or Jean, Calder who was born in Tilberg, Brabant, the province of Brabant; Mrs. Ellie Trudeau, who is now deceased, unfortunately, who came to Flin Flon and later on brought her entire family, her mother and her father, her brother, Jan Akkerman and his wife, Eve, her brother René, and her sister Chris Heideveld; Mrs. Joyce Bongfeldt, a British war bride, who said she started the first war bride club in Flin Flon, I think it was '46 or '47, there were 66 ladies involved.

So I have known a lot of war brides and each of them has made an immense contribution to Canada. I would, I have often wondered, Mr. Speaker, how these things get started when people fall in love, but here is one typical example that comes from Joyce Hibbert's wonderful little book entitled *War Brides*: "My husband was one of the Canadian liberators of Schiedam. He served in the 1st Division, 3rd Brigade Service Corps, attached to the 9th Field Ambulance. It was love at first sight when I met my husband. I was on my bike, he was on his motorcycle. We said hello and he asked, 'Can you speak English?' I mumbled, 'A little bit.' Actually, I was one of the fortunate ones for I'd learned three foreign languages. The English and French came in handy when I landed in Montréal with my five-month-old son in September, 1946."

So, many of these ladies would ship on a boat, probably it could be in this case, probably Rotterdam or Hamburg or Bremerhaven or Liverpool. In this way they would arrive in Halifax or Montréal, probably the journey would take five, six, seven days. Then they may very well have to bounce all across Canada to get to Vancouver. So, it was not an easy journey in those days. I know it because I have made it myself. The trains were called diaper specials, there were so many war brides on there with babies that they were referred to as diaper specials. Mrs. Bongfeldt tells me it was not nearly as dreary as you might imagine it, bouncing across the Prairies because these were similarly minded young ladies. They were madly in love. They were going to a new country. They were very optimistic. And they had a heck of a good time. They said they knew how to party. So, that was heartening that we have Canadian immigrants that know how to party. Very, very important.

Mr. Speaker, once they got here, apparently they had to be claimed. The Red Cross was involved, the Canadian government was involved, but someone had to sort of stand up for them and they had to be claimed by their husband or their husband-to-be. So that was an interesting experience.

Mrs. Bongfeldt tells me when she created the first club in Flin Flon, I think it was '46 or '47, the 66 war brides got together but soon discovered that many of them did not necessarily share the same values or ideas. Some of them could not even speak English. So, they realized they had to do some training first, particularly the Dutch and the German war brides, difficulty with the language and difficulty with the culture. The others, the actual

English-speaking war brides from the British Isles, would help these other war brides out, which was very good to see. There was real camaraderie there.

The women integrated into Canada, not without, I imagine, some difficulty. There must have been great loneliness, a great regret at times, having to do without mother or dad or brothers and sisters and cousins. Many of them came from extended family in Europe. I know this myself, and it is like you are torn away from one fabric to adjust to another one. However, they were probably the most successful group that ever integrated into Canada. In fact, Pierre Berton refers to them as a seamless integration. These women integrated so well into Canada, they have become almost invisible. I think that is one of the problems, as the honourable minister mentioned a little while ago, I think maybe we should set a whole year aside to honour the war brides. Maybe 2006 should be the year of the war bride because they certainly contributed an awful lot to Canada.

I know in my own experience I have tried on several occasions to draw attention to, I would not say the plight of the Dutch war bride, but there are some concerns I have that some of the Dutch war brides would like to have some more recognition, would like to be able to go back to their home country. Many of them have not gone back. In fact, they have done a couple of attempts, I guess, is the word. One was a video and one was a, actually a film in Québec City which was supposed to be played in Holland and was supposed to awaken the interest of the Dutch public to the Dutch war brides now residing in Canada and aging and some of them wanting, not just recognition, but a chance to go back home again. Some of them never have gone back home.

So that was an interesting exercise because they told us on both occasions that because of technical reasons they could not use the video and they could not use the film. But we have not given up on the project, Mr. Speaker. We still think that not just the Dutch war brides but all war brides need more recognition.

I think all Canadians should pay tribute to them. It is only fitting and just that we do so. We should recognize their immense contributions. They are great Canadian citizens, and they have done so much for this country. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity

today to stand and speak in support of this resolution put forward by the member from St. James. As the years go by, the number of people who do remember the Second World War grows smaller and smaller, and today as Canada remembers its veterans, there is one special group that has a very special connection to the war and that is the war brides.

They are women who married Canadian servicemen in the Second World War, and after tearful goodbyes to their families, they embarked on a gruelling journey by ship and train to join their husbands and in-laws in a new country. Once they arrived, many war brides had to confront culture shock and desperate homesickness before embracing their new lives in Canada. Mr. Speaker, 2005 was rightfully dubbed the Year of the Veteran, but 1946 was the year when the greatest number of war brides sailed for Canada, and when we look at 2006, it will be the 60th anniversary of the arrival of war brides in Canada.

I do realize that there is a movement afoot to have 2006 declared the year of the war bride. More than one million Canadians are proud to say that they have a war bride in their family tree. Mr. Speaker, 2006 will be the 60th anniversary of the arrival of these incredible women to this country, and I think, in talking about them and hearing their stories today, it is certainly a testament to a group of strong, courageous and I would say very resilient women.

All of the speakers this morning in talking about individual stories have all brought pieces of that forward. I think, when we look at these women and look at what they must have faced in those days, it really is quite a story. It is a story that does need to be acknowledged, and a situation that we should not let go because when we see 45 000 war brides and their children landing in Canada at Halifax, Pier 21, that tells an incredible story of an incredible time in our history.

The contributions that women like this made and the resilience they have shown in coming to this country and the contributions that they have made here are really quite remarkable. The immigration to Canada of such a unique group of women and children is unprecedented in Canadian history and will likely never happen again. So we do not want to forget that very important part of our country's history.

The story of the Canadian war brides and their journey to Canada is one of the most fascinating of World War II. Why nearly 45 000 women would

leave behind everything that was familiar to start a new life in post-war Canada is definitely a story that is worth telling.

The war brides came from many countries in Europe, but the vast majority, as was indicated, about 93 percent, were British and the reasons they came here were fairly obvious. Canadians were among the first to come to the assistance of Britain after the war was declared in 1939, and they spent more time there than any other member of the Allied forces.

In fact, just 43 days after Canadian soldiers arrived in December of 1939, they celebrated the first marriage between a British woman and a Canadian serviceman. The marriage and the 48 000 which followed over the next six years formed part of the most unusual immigrant wave to hit Canada's shores. All women, all of the same generation and mostly British, these nearly 45 000 war brides are an important part of Canadian history that has gone relatively unnoticed by historians and others alike.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

As a group, the war brides shared many similarities, but far and above the image of a British war bride and her lovable accent and tea cosy, these women represented a diversity of experience that makes them as different from one another as they are to other immigrant groups in the post-war era.

* (11:50)

But whether they were English, Scottish, Irish, Welsh, Dutch, French, Belgian or Italian, the war brides have the shared experience of meeting and marrying a Canadian soldier during war time, leaving their home country for a new world by transatlantic ship across the ocean, crossing Canada by war bride train, settling into their new homes, raising families and adapting to a new culture, language and religion at a time in our history when the future held great promise for new Canadians. The Canadian war bride story is a compelling portrait of the human experience, love, passion, tragedy and adventure, and they are all part of that story.

When the war brides first arrived in Canada, organizations like the Red Cross, women's institutes and the Salvation Army took it upon themselves to organize war brides' clubs in their local districts. All across Canada from Vancouver Island to Cape Breton, war brides' clubs were a welcome relief for young women who were happy to get together with others like themselves. Having shared the experience of coming here to Canada on board the war bride

ships and across Canada by war bride trains, they had plenty to talk about. Sometimes the clubs gave lessons in French or English, cooking in Canadian culture, but they were mainly an opportunity for these new immigrants to gather with others who were quite literally in the same boat.

Many lasting friendships were born of the original war brides' clubs, but as the years wore on and children started to be born, there was less of a need for organized war brides' clubs in cities, villages and towns across Canada. Raising a family and becoming part of the great Canadian landscape overtook the need to be with your own kind, and the war brides' clubs faded into the past.

In the 1970s, however, there grew renewed interest in getting together again with other war brides. With the children grown up and moved away, husbands retired or deceased, there seemed to be more of a reason to re-establish those old links, and into the fold came Gloria Brock, a Saskatchewan war bride who single-handedly established the foundation for what we now know today as the war brides' clubs and provincial war brides' associations, and, as we have heard, Manitoba also has been a participant in that.

Mr. Speaker, it definitely is an amazing story, and last night when I started to look at preparing for some of this, I got on to the Web site, and I think I ended up being here for about three hours. I got caught up in reading a lot of the stories about Canadian war brides, and each one of them had something so unique to say. You got into the lives of each of these women as you read through them, and I think by the time I got into this story I just wanted to know more and more about these very, very special women, because it is quite amazing what they gave up. Their commitment and passion for what they wanted to do in coming to Canada is truly remarkable.

I think it is a very special opportunity for us here today to have an ability to stand here in a Legislature in this country and to say thank you to those Canadian war brides, to say that you have contributed immensely to this country, and you truly do deserve the recognition that is forthcoming now in this Legislature and in other Legislatures across the country as people are starting to talk about the war brides more and to acknowledge their contributions to Canada.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I, too, want to put a few words on the record in regard to this very worthy resolution. In fact, when I had made mention of it to my leader, he had indicated very clearly, right up front, this is a resolution that is welcome to see and we should do what we can to ensure that it gets passage today. So I suspect, as do all members of this Chamber, it is our intent to pass the resolution unanimously.

Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat taken by two particular points in terms of the Whereases. The sheer number of individuals whom we are talking about, some say 45 000 or it is estimated to be approximately 45 000 war brides over a set number of years, that was one, and the second one was the Whereas where it indicates the important sacrifices and work done by the war brides took place far from the public eye has yet to receive the recognition that it deserves.

Mr. Speaker, I really do believe that that is, indeed, the case. We are, in good part, where we are today as a society because of not only the war effort of so many young Canadians leaving our country and fighting so that we could, in fact, be here inside this Chamber. We will recall when we had the war vets this year sitting right behind us which was really a touching moment. These people who were overseas fighting for us to be able to speak today, just an arm's length from where I am speaking and I was truly touched by that. When we listen to the documentaries, we hear a lot about the boys who went to war and others. I want to be politically correct and say there were women and men, young women and young men that both went to war.

What we do not see in the documentaries, through all that destruction and all the things, the horror that took place was this unbelievable uniting of individuals who were able to, out of those pockets of destruction, we saw true love take place. Mr. Speaker, these people came back to Canada with their brides, or in many cases, the brides came prior to their arrival, and they were able to build our country to what it is today. Not only did they fight for our country, but with their significant other they built what we have today. As I was touched by the individuals who fought for us, I give special tribute to the war brides. All we need to do is look into our communities and we have war-time houses scattered, whether it is Weston, Brooklands, Shaughnessy, throughout our province, throughout the country, in recognition of the value of what the war brides and

those military young men did for us. I only wish I knew the words that would best give justice to that recognition.

What I do know, Mr. Speaker, is that we can do more. A year or so ago, I talked about putting murals on the wall in the Pool of the Black Star just outside this Chamber. How wonderful it would be to have in part of those murals, some mural depicting the war brides so that this way it lives forever. As you know, when you take a tour and they see the murals that stand about the Chamber, they often make reference, this is the World War, they will say this soldier did this and this soldier and this is what this mural is all about. I believe that, whether it is the Pool of the Black Star or other areas of this Legislature, because we have tourists, we have children that come every day virtually to this building, this is one of the ways that we can give valid recognition for the sacrifices because there were tremendous sacrifices that these war brides made. Individuals prior spoke of the individual war brides, well, there are many examples. These can be put in the form of the mural or made a part of the mural so that children that visit and others that visit this Legislature will see in perpetuity the positive impact that war brides have actually contributed toward who we are today.

I put the challenge to the member that introduced this resolution to raise the issue within

her caucus, that there is more that we can do. As her resolution states, Mr. Speaker, it has been kind of lost and we do need to ensure that there is recognition. I think that it behooves us, whether it is the year of 2006 for war brides, whatever it might be, that there is more that we can do. This is a wonderful resolution, we support the resolution, we want to see the resolution passed and that is why I will limit my remarks to that, but I do believe we can do more.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the resolution dealing with war brides.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Resolution agreed to.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Assembly that this motion be carried by unanimous consent of the House.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House for it to be unanimous? [*Agreed*]

The hour being 12 p.m., we will now recess and we will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 22, 2005

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