

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable Daryl Reid
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Fortieth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	NDP
ALLUM, James, Hon.	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	NDP
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	NDP
BLADY, Sharon, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	NDP
BRAUN, Erna, Hon.	Rossmere	NDP
BRIESE, Stuart	Agassiz	PC
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	NDP
CHIEF, Kevin, Hon.	Point Douglas	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	NDP
CROTHERS, Deanne	St. James	NDP
CULLEN, Cliff	Spruce Woods	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FRIESEN, Cameron	Morden-Winkler	PC
GAUDREAU, Dave	St. Norbert	NDP
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Liberal
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.	Fort Rouge	NDP
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Richmond	NDP
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	NDP
KOSTYSHYN, Ron, Hon.	Swan River	NDP
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	Dawson Trail	NDP
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor, Hon.	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MELNICK, Christine	Riel	Ind.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	PC
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	NDP
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	NDP
PALLISTER, Brian	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PETTERSEN, Clarence	Flin Flon	NDP
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REID, Daryl, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Kewatinook	NDP
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	NDP
ROWAT, Leanne	Riding Mountain	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	St. Paul	PC
SELBY, Erin, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	PC
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin	NDP
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	NDP
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WIGHT, Melanie	Burrows	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	The Pas	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Good morning, everyone. Please be seated.

Speaker's Statement

Mr. Speaker: I have a statement for the House.

I must inform the House that Frank Whitehead, the honourable member for The Pas, has resigned his seat in the House effective May 16th, 2014. I am therefore tabling his resignation and my letter to the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council advising of the vacancy created in the House membership.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of the House to move directly to Bill 210, The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to proceed directly to Bill 210? *[Agreed]*

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 210—The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act

Mr. Speaker: We'll now proceed with debate on second readings of public bills, and we'll call Bill 210, The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act, standing in name of the honourable member for St. Vital, who has three minutes remaining.

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): It's a pleasure to stand here this morning and discuss this piece of legislation that has been brought forward by the MLA for Charleswood on a Tuesday morning after a

long weekend. I hope everyone had a good long weekend, and it's going to be a—definitely be an exciting week here in the Legislature as we await the royal visit.

I do want to continue off—in my remarks this morning in regards to some of the amazing work that was done here in the province of Manitoba, certainly around child care, and I was speaking at the time—the last time I spoke about the framework for a child-care system that was put in place, and I was recognizing the work that Myrna Phillips did when she was the legislative assistant to Len Evans. And she travelled all across the province and she met with daycare providers and she met with women's organizations throughout the province. And when we were in government, she was a responsible and an inspiring woman who, because of her work all across this province, we were able to lay the—a framework for an accessible child-care system for all, and everyone in this Legislature knows that we have continued on with that work.

Since we got elected in 1999, we have made significant investments in child care. As a provincial government, we have heard, you know, quite often from federal governments that they were going to, you know, bring in a national child-care strategy. And actually that never happened at the federal level. And we were the first jurisdiction in Canada, when the federal government opted out of their national child-care strategy, to pick up the costs of the commitments that they had made. And we will continue to be—we will continue to invest in our child-care system, because we know how important that is to working families. We know how important that is for young children, Mr. Speaker, because we have quality child care here in the province of Manitoba.

We have increased wages for child-care workers, we were the first—one of the first jurisdictions in Canada to have a pension plan for child-care workers, and that is how you build a sustainable child-care system.

And we have recently just made a commitment to put another 5,000 spaces in place. And we will continue to fund child-care spaces here in the province of Manitoba so that young families that

are—that have the—need the opportunity to go to work every day—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has elapsed.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, before I start the debate on Bill 210, I would like to express my gratitude to the member from The Pas for the service that he provided for those constituents, and we all know how important in the time that is set aside for all members of this House to serve. And, certainly, I know, on this side of the House, we all wish him well in whatever comes his way and wish him the best in whatever path he decides to go down.

The Bill 210 that was brought forward by the member from Charleswood is an important piece of legislation that we hope that all members of this House support—one that follows up on a bill that she brought forward almost 10 years ago, in regards to recognizing Nellie McClung for what she and others had done in respect to this province and what she and others have done in regards to bringing forward the opportunity for women not only to vote but also to serve in this great province, in this leadership role, not only as MLAs but we've seen a number of leaders of various provinces—mayors, of course, who are in that category as well. City councillors fit in there as well.

We know that whenever we look back in the history books of great Winnipeg or—and rural Manitoba and, in fact, for all provinces across this great province, women that have come forward to let their name stand. And Manitoba was the lead role in that, in regards to being this first province in order to bring forward legislation to allow women to vote. And I know that we would love to see more women in this Chamber, and we encourage all women to do so.

And, in fact, the member from Charleswood is the president of the Canadian parliamentary women's association that she has taken very seriously, and I know that she's passionate about awareness in order to bring more awareness to women in politics and other countries, as well. I know that she's been a strong voice.

I happened to have the opportunity to piggyback on a conference that she was at, speaking in Quebec City, along with other members of this Chamber and other provinces across Canada, and I can tell you that it was well received. And it seemed, in my view, as a male, being an observer in the process of which they

were debating a number of issues, that there's still not a hundred per cent buy-in, and even by some of the women that was there. And that struck me as odd, and I just think we still have a long way to go in this country and in this world about recognizing women and the role that they have to play, and can play a significant part of the decision-making process which we know is so important in order to make sure that we do have that debate and that opportunity.

* (10:10)

When we look at the number of women that have stepped up and ran for legislative MLA positions within the province of Manitoba, we've seen a significant number of women that have stepped forward and some of them coming from previous lives, whether that be with a school board—I remember Maureen Hemphill, for example, was the president of the Manitoba school trustees' association back in the '70s, then came and ran here in the Legislature. And I know there's others that have served as well, starting at different levels, whether it be school trustees or municipal work—all very important.

When we look at vote turnout as well—and I know that it's not where we like it to be, and it's incumbent—coming on all of us to see that whenever we're reaching out for people to not only serve, but to express their opinions—and I've noticed that in the past elections when I've been door knocking or the town hall meetings, the turnout has been actually more women at the—at least in my area, where the women are the ones that attend the public forums and want to get education and want to be up to date and, in fact, a number of the women have actually ran against me, which one day one maybe will take over the seat from Lakeside, and maybe the next election, we don't know; maybe in a future election, we don't know that either. But I can tell you this much, they're educated and they're up on the issues and it makes me very proud of the fact, being a male servicing the people in Lakeside, that there is that much interest, that there's a declared interest by the women in my riding. A number of men do too, but I'd have to say it is definitely more women at the public debate meetings that I've had in my area.

But having said that, there is a number of things that we can do, and one of those has again been brought forward by the member from Charleswood on recognizing January the 28th in 2016 the centennial rights of women to vote, that day to be set aside for this celebration. So I know how important it

is to all members of this House that we carry this message forward. It would be, to me, common sense that all members of this House would want to support this piece of legislation. Why anyone would not would lead me to believe that they truly don't believe the fact that this is something that we need to be doing in recognizing the service of women within the province of Manitoba, and hopefully other provinces will follow our suit once again of which we in Manitoba can be very, very proud, 100 years ago whereby this legislation was brought forward to allow women to vote.

And, of course, by having this day set aside in 2016 is the fact that whenever we are wanting to talk about this issue, we talk about it with knowledge; we talk about it not only because of the great statue and the monument that's been put outside for us to walk by and talk about, and brings friends and families and visitors alike across this great country and other parts of the world—and I know that it is noticed, and a lot of work went into that. I know the member from Charleswood had a role to play in that, I know Janice Filmon had a role to play in that and many other people had a significant role and—to play into that. And, of course, whenever we talk about those issues it's very important to us to be able to have the history to go with it.

So I know that, Mr. Speaker, all members in this Chamber and future members and past members can be able to talk about January the 28th, 2016, about a day that's being set aside to mark the 100 years of Nellie McClung and what her and others have been able to accomplish. But we don't want it to stop there, we want it to move forward, we want to play it forward, and with this legislation that'll be able to help us do exactly that.

So I know I have a number other of colleagues that want to speak on this piece of legislation, and I encourage all members, all members of this House, to support the legislation and do the right thing in making sure that those voices of those women that have sacrificed so much to make sure that women have a right to vote, run and hold office. This is a testimony to all women, and we certainly encourage all members of the House to support it.

Hon. James Allum (Minister of Education and Advanced Learning): Mr. Speaker, I'm honoured to get up and speak to this resolution today. Any time I can get up and speak to something that's historical in nature, it pleases me very much, and I'm certainly proud to be able to do that today.

I do want to follow in the previous member's notes just to say on behalf of our caucus, if I may be so bold to do that, that we'll greatly miss the member from The Pas. He is, in the first instance, an extraordinary individual, much accomplished in his life. He has been a chief, of course, of his home First Nation, and he remains an indispensable part of our caucus even as he, for reasons of his own health and well-being, needs to move on. He remains an indispensable part of our caucus in terms of his wisdom that he brings to subjects, to the guidance that he brings to political issues, to his local knowledge of his particular area of Manitoba, and I have to say, Mr. Speaker, I had the great honour of doing some public consultations with him and other members of our caucus. The member from Burrows was along with me at that point, and I have to say I got to know him very well. It pleased me greatly that he was a great hockey fan that helped me to keep tabs on what was going on that night in the regular season and in the playoffs, and so I just want to say that I, personally, and I know it's true for all members of our caucus, will miss him very much but we regard him nonetheless as an indispensable member of this Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to get up to talk about this motion. As a man, I have to acknowledge that I'm lucky enough in my household to have someone in my house, my wife, who helps to guide me and make sure that I do what I'm supposed to be doing. She's certainly much brighter than I am. She's much more knowledgeable on a range of topics. She provides me with support and help, and in her own right, I want to say she's also a professional, and we often lose sight of the fact that while she's a supermom, in most ways, she's a knowledgeable professional. She's a nurse and, of course, that makes her something extraordinary in many ways not only in helping people find their way through the health-care system but also for—as a member of this government and this party in our ongoing support for nurses, she knows who she can count on when it comes to making sure that there is proper support for health care in this province, and we have an appropriate number of nurses as well.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to say that while this motion has some interest to me—after all, we want to proclaim January 28th, 2016, as the centennial of Manitoba women's right to vote and that was a seminal day in our past—but it also needs to be acknowledged that women have played an incredibly appropriate and indispensable and important role in

the past before they had the vote, once they got the vote and then after the vote. It's a special day to acknowledge, I'll grant you that, but it doesn't acknowledge what Fernand Braudel once described as the *longue durée* that is women's contribution to the history of this country long before they had the right to vote.

Mr. Speaker, in 2016 as you'll—or in 1916, as you'll recall, Canada was in the midst of the Great War, and women were already playing an indispensable role in the conduct of that war, but prior to that, it'd been known as the progressive era in Canadian history, and Winnipeg was part of that progressive era on many, many fronts. And at the front of that progressive era in Canada, at the time, were women, and they were fundamentally concerned with what we describe now and—but was not appropriate at the time, is that domestic sphere which one might include all those things that mattered to a woman in the home, whether it's being the welfare of her children, having enough to eat, making sure that their children and family had access to appropriate health care, making sure that women—that families had enough to eat on the table, making sure there were enough clothing, making sure the children had the—and family had the opportunity to get appropriate education.

* (10:20)

And so, while it's important to recognize the political fact of the centennial of Manitoban women's right to vote, in fact, at that point in Canada's history, Mr. Speaker, women were already playing a large and incredible role in the well-being of our communities and our neighbourhoods and our society more generally. And, as we know, they have continued to play that role while also going out—as I said about my own wife becoming a professional in her own right—while still taking care of that domestic sphere.

Women were also, of course, indispensable in fighting the problems associated with too much drink and usually too much drink for men. The temperance movement was led, in many parts, by women who wanted to see males actually conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and take care of their families. And so not only in that domestic sphere that I just described that women were important, but they were also in terms of reforming society in general. And were I to be in a classroom right now, we would describe that as first-wave feminism, not really going so far as to demand a full and ultimate equality with

their inferior males, but really to ensuring that women's role in their society around 1916 was properly recognized and appreciated and the vote simply added on to that already critical role.

If I bring us to the present, however, Mr. Speaker, we know that women have continued to play a remarkable role in our society and our communities right through the 20th century and into the 21st century as well.

Mr. Speaker, my friend from St. Vital, who is an extraordinary woman in her own right and an extraordinary Education minister in her own right, and just goes to show you just what women have achieved just by her very example, pointed to a number of areas that we as a government have focused on, not only to improve the lives of women per se, but to improve the lives of families, of neighbourhoods and communities.

Chief among those, I suppose, is simply health care itself. It's absolutely important that we have a health-care system that serves all the people of Manitoba. And women have shown quite clearly that when it comes to what kind of health-care system do they want—do they want a single-payer, publicly funded health-care system or do they want a two-tier, credit-card kind of health-care system that's purported—proposed from the other side of the House—women have made it clear where they stand on that issue, and I'm proud to say, on this of the House, we're able to stand with women on that most important issue.

In relation to education, Mr. Speaker, we also know that—and it was asked of me at one time, this was in a campaign, and I was asked in an all-candidates debate, well, what would you—what have you—what will you do for women, was the question asked of me. And I, being a man, had only one answer and that was to simply say, what I want for my son I want for both of my daughters, and I see no difficulty in making that connection.

And so, Mr. Speaker, in the role of education, women, as we see, young women, girls, young women and women are succeeding in educational institutions across the province, whether we're—and in all professions, whether they're doctors or nurses or teachers or, as my friend from St. Vital will say, that her own daughter is an electrician and a professional in her own right. And I think each of us across the House could probably point to our own children, our daughters, having achieved great professional recognition.

So, Mr. Speaker, health care, education and then, of course, the member from St. Vital also referred to child care and our commitment to continue to build more affordable child care for women, but for children, for families, for the well-being of families as well.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it's important for us to always acknowledge the role and contribution of women in our communities. This resolution that's before us makes a start in that direction, but it strikes me that we would probably want to recognize the role and contribution of women across the *longue durée*, across the great length of history.

And so with that, Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to get up and speak to this particular resolution. I know that on this side of the House the liberation of women is a priority still.

Thank you.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to rise to put a few words on the record in support of Bill 210. But before I get into that, I would like to join many other members of the House in thanking the member for The Pas for his many years of service, and we wish him well in his future and certainly hope that his health and his family's health is well enough that he's able to enjoy his retirement.

But, I would like also to thank the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) for introducing this particular bill, The Centennial for Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act. I think it's important that we take advantage of this opportunity to recognize, in a non-partisan way, the contribution that was made back so many years ago in 1916 and the significance of it, the fact that, in particular, here in Manitoba, being the first in the country to do that, and something that spread across this country because of what happened here in Manitoba. And I would certainly encourage the members opposite to join us in support of this bill. I think it's significant, and when we have a centennial coming up on this, it is a great opportunity to give the recognition of how far we have come.

And I'd like to tie in some local examples. Over the years, we had—our family's been in the area many years, and we had the pleasure of keeping some of the minute books for some of the local churches back many years ago, in fact, right back before the turn of—not this century, but the last century, going back into the 1800s. And in the minute book for the local

church is some discussion of the Pink Teas that occurred and the—now, they talked about the fundraising; they never once mentioned, in that particular minute book, that they had Nellie McClung coming. They certainly mentioned that to the tea, but they didn't mention what the content—what was going on at the tea. I think there was a little bit of a—of less than open communication with the male members of the family as to what was going on there because, certainly, when you look back at other meetings, there was always a great deal about the content, usually related to church or school or other events in the community. But that particular issue was usually just mentioned very briefly, who the guest speaker was, and who was invited, but not a lot about what the content of the meeting was.

And so I can only suspect that they were taking advantage of the opportunity to do a female-only event, because that's certainly what those tended to be, and express their opinion on the importance of having a vote and guiding the future of the province and the community because once they got the vote provincially, of course, it wasn't very long until that was recognized at all levels of government. So, certainly, it was an important opening of an important landmark, and I think was something that we should all be proud of as Manitobans that this occurred.

And I took the time on the weekend to—we have a lady in the community who has kind of taken it upon herself, through the museum, to record and make sure all of these histories and minute books are looked after, and I checked with her to see how often this had come up in other small communities in rural Manitoba in the immediate vicinity of Portage la Prairie, and she said it was virtually in every community, almost every one of them participated in the so-called Pink Teas, and she did agree with me; it tended not to explain the content of what was going on at the tea, and what was going on there in terms of the impact on the vote was usually looked—overlooked in any records, but certainly the fact that they occurred—and I think that's something that actually has not really been mentioned, though Winnipeg was certainly a hotbed in regards to getting the vote for women. Many of the rural areas were extremely supportive of this as well, and certainly pushed very hard to get their inclusion in terms of the vote, and so that kind of broad-based support—and you must remember that at that time in history the proportion of people in the city of Winnipeg was much smaller, related to the whole

province, so it would have been absolutely essential for the rural areas to have been in strong support of this for it to have gotten the push that it did to actually become law.

* (10:30)

So, certainly, there's all kinds of signs, and many of these small, rural communities were based around the township concept, which is a six-mile square. And so in each one of these townships, there would be a church and a school. And so, of course, the whole community was focused around these church and school activities. And, certainly, it probably had many opportunities to record, to express their opinion, and good discussion, and at a very small scale. And Nellie McClung took the time to travel to many of these and, certainly, be in touch with those. So it was the kind of grassroots politics that, frankly, we should all admire. It certainly was a significant impact and actually led to a result that I think we as Manitobans should all be very proud of.

Now we have another small connection to this as well. In the—when we were doing some renovations in the farmyard, we ended up taking down a building just to clean it up. It had been used for general storage for as long as I can remember, and it had at one point in its history been a house a few miles down the road. And, of course, pioneers were very careful to husband their resources, so this got moved when it was no longer needed for a house and became just a general storage building in the farmyard and backed up against another building. So when we were taking it down, we get to the wall that's never been exposed that is pushed up against another building. And, lo and behold, there is a billboard on this and it says, Vote for Women. So, clearly, at one point in its history, it had faced the highway, and I had a chance to check with some older family members and, yes, that's what the case had been.

So we preserved this signage and, actually, it's on the wall of our rec room. And you would be amazed at how much discussion that has created mostly amongst—I have two teenage daughters, and when their friends come to visit, they want to know, what does this mean? And it gives them just a great opportunity to explain that at one point in history, women in Manitoba did not have the vote and that they fought for that, and that they were successful and that actually we were first in Canada. And you'd be surprised how much impact that has, and to show these teenage girls how far we have come here in

Manitoba in terms of recognizing women's rights and certainly making sure that they have what they need as part of society.

Now I know several of the members opposite come from mixed households, too, with daughters and sons. I only have daughters, so certainly the discussion of women's rights gets a little bit of attention in our household as compared to maybe some other households. And, certainly, they're at the stage now where the whole concept of elections, because of my job, is certainly something that they ask a lot of questions about. And it's a great opportunity to remind them that they have every bit as much right and opportunity as any man in the community, any boy in the community, and provides them with a little motivation that they can work hard to be recognized and get their goal in life.

Now I don't know, at this point in time, whether either of them—they're 14 and 16—have any interest in politics, and I certainly don't necessarily wish that on them, but I do wish a political awareness. And, clearly, we're able to take advantage of the opportunity here to foster some of that discussion. And I think that that's something that can be done for all Manitobans, to make everyone aware of this.

So I would certainly like to encourage the members opposite to do more than talk about this and talk about all the things that they have done, many things that benefited women, as has past governments of all stripes, both provincially and federally. And we work slowly towards getting full equality, and I know that it's not accomplished in every area. You hear a lot of talk about the glass ceiling in the corporate world that impacts women. And I know that there are disproportionate numbers of households with single parents, with women at the head, that struggle under some circumstances and certainly deserve our support so that they can move ahead. And certainly we'd like to see that all accomplished, but we do need to be—make sure that everyone's aware that this has a historical context.

So I would encourage the members opposite to put aside any politics on this and join us in support of this particular bill. I think it's an important recognition. It is grassroots at the very—grassroots politics at their very best. And I think that everyone in this House would want to be associated with that and recognize that and help support that as it moves into the future.

So I'd like to thank the Speaker for the opportunity to put a few words on the record in

regards to this, and I encourage the members opposite to join us in support of this bill. Thank you.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): It's my pleasure to speak to this motion, and I want to start with what I feel is a fundamental oversight and a flaw that is contained in here.

On the surface, of course, who on Earth could be opposed to the women's right to vote? This goes without saying. Indeed, in my community of Wolseley it's gone very much further: who in their right mind would feel that people of colour should not have the right to vote or the right to hold office; who in their right mind would think that Aboriginal people shouldn't have those rights; members from the disability community, who back in the era that we're talking about today were more often than not committed to horrible living conditions just because the understanding of what were considered illnesses just wasn't there like it is today; who in their right mind would exclude anyone from the LGBT community from voting or from holding public office? This all goes without saying.

This motion, however, Mr. Speaker, I think overlooks a good deal of that history. And to say that does not in any way detract from the remarkable contributions that Nellie McClung and all of the other activists who were immortalized on the lawn of the Manitoba Legislature—what they accomplished was absolutely necessary, it was just and it was a crucial point in Manitoba's history. I'm very proud of the fact that Manitoba was, in fact, the first province where some women got the right to vote, but women as a whole did not get the right to vote on the date that we are talking about. Indeed, Aboriginal women were the last demographic in our province to finally get the chance to go to the ballot box and exercise their franchise. Aboriginal men were excluded from voting at the same time that this motion was passed nearly 100 years ago.

And I recognize that members opposite do not have the enormous privileges and advantages that I have of being a member of the NDP caucus; we have Aboriginal MLAs in our caucus, we have members from the disabled, the LGBT community, the Metis community, visible minority communities represented in our caucus and, yes, we have a lot of fantastic, amazing women who are playing such enormous and crucial leadership roles in the implementation of a progressive agenda on our government's behalf. I'm enormously privileged to serve with all of these fine individuals. Members

opposite don't have very much of that diversity to draw on, and the blind spots that exist throughout our society still about the true nature of First Nations and Aboriginal people history, I think, has shown up in the resolution that is being considered here today.

So I would certainly encourage the House leaders to sit down and perhaps an amendment of some sort could be crafted to make this resolution much more reflective of what was accomplished, the importance of that almost 100 years ago, and to also recognize the very important historical truth that Aboriginal people were not considered people the same way that other folks with just a different colour of skin were considered 100 years ago. That does not detract from what was accomplished, but it is our responsibility as a more responsible, a more informed, a more just and a more progressive society to recognize where the historical gap has existed and to correct it so that we do not continue to perpetuate the myth that all women receive the vote because of the work of Nellie McClung and her colleagues. So I want to begin with that very important note.

Dipping very personally into a couple of local experiences in my own life which I think bring to the forefront the importance of this issue in my own constituency of Wolseley—Wolseley has very proudly been represented by amazing women who have held leadership positions right here in this very room: Myrna Phillips was Speaker during her time here, and she very kindly still meets with me on a regular basis to tell me all the things I need to do better, which is what I would expect, nothing less; and, of course, the remarkable Jean Friesen, who I was honoured to succeed. She came here as our Deputy Premier and, amongst many other things, of course, launched the Neighbourhoods Alive! program which has played such a fundamental role in improving the lives of inner city residents not just in Winnipeg, but in rural communities and in the North, around Manitoba.

* (10:40)

And, indeed, Mr. Speaker, I have a picture, a very iconic picture framed in my office of the Wolseley elm, and this was a famous tree right in the middle of Basswood and Wolseley Avenue many decades ago, and there was a roundabout that went around it, perhaps one of the first. People did not run into it at high speeds—unlike today, apparently. I understand it happens because they can't quite figure out how to deal with a roundabout. But there was a move in place to remove this historic icon from our

neighbourhood, and it was eventually vandalized and destroyed. But when city hall first tried to do it, a group of local residents surrounded it and prohibited the workers from continuing their work. And who was it that did that? It was all women. And that photograph is very proudly in my office and speaks to not just the leadership role that women play, but also so often the overlap between women's activism and protecting the planet that all of us come home, which, of course, today is very much alive in my constituency as well, as it is elsewhere, and needs to continue to spread.

And in my own experience with just about any social justice organization I've been involved in, whether it's around the environment or human rights or peace and disarmament or the pro-democracy movement, women are almost always outnumbering men in the meetings and in the on-the-ground commitment doing the heavy lifting. And that cannot be overlooked when we springboard to the contrast between ourselves, our government, our caucus—how we operate—and where members opposite have been and where they would take us—I see I only have a few minutes left, Mr. Speaker—but the contrast between our positive agenda for all Manitobans and particularly our sensitivity to traditionally disadvantaged groups like women, visible minorities, Aboriginal people, new Canadians, and where the members opposite have stood on various issues and where they have 'sted' they will—where they have said they will stand on various issues.

And we can start right at the top. Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition, as a federal Member of Parliament, very proudly shut down all of the Status of Women offices across the country, including the one right here in Manitoba. He also very proudly cancelled the national child-care program. Not that child care only benefits women, but I think we all know that women more often than not are the ones who will be at home with kids and who are not able to go to the workplace. They don't even have that choice. That's the key thing. They don't have the choice if there isn't the child care available for them. We were the first province to negotiate a national child-care program that would operate the same as medicare. Wouldn't matter where you live, how many kids you had, how much money you had in your pocket, you would be able to get child care that was free and affordable and based in your local community, based on your need not on what you had in your pocket. He proudly cancelled that agreement and left it for all the provinces to pick up the pieces.

And speaking of having the right to choose, I read from my notes here that the member opposite is, in fact, opposed to a woman's right to choose when it comes to when she chooses to have a child or if she chooses to seek a therapeutic abortion—again, a fundamental contrast between our party and theirs.

Never mind, let's look at the different professions where women are predominant. The nursing profession, what happened to nurses under the Conservatives? What would happen to them now? Our Health Minister, a fantastic woman, just announced that we have more nurses working here than ever before in Manitoba, that we have more doctors working here than ever before. We just graduated the largest class of doctors in the history of the province. Members opposite slashed the health-care budget, laid off 1,000 nurses and have promised to do the same thing again.

Mr. Speaker, I will conclude with this very simple observation that while this resolution is perhaps well-intentioned and certainly I think could be passed if it met the very important revisions that I have highlighted, I find it flawed, I find it selective and I find it suspect; I find it a lot like members opposite.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Clarence Pettersen (Flin Flon): Before I speak on this resolution, I'd like to talk about my friend and colleague, the member from Le Pas, who I'm going to miss dearly. We were both northerners, of course, and we'd sit in my office, have the odd orange juice and talk about growing up in the North, playing hockey, of course, count how many teeth are missing in each one of us. We had a lot in common, and I know—I bet anybody there's nobody here in the House that could eat ribs like my honourable member could, and we challenged some of our younger caucus members and they weren't up to the challenge.

So, yes, I'm going to miss him. He was a great representative for the North, for his community. Many times I would go to Le Pas and we would go out for lunch or just walk in the mall or I'd run into him at the gas station, and he was well thought of and I'm definitely going to miss him. So I'd just like to say and put on the record that it's a fine man that we're going to miss, and I miss—I know the constituents are going to miss him too.

Speaking about this resolution, Mr. Speaker, I guess I should start off, behind every man is a

woman, or behind every good woman is a man, depending which way you want to look at it. And I have a lot of good examples of great women, but, of course, we want to recognize Nellie McClung and her contribution with women votes right here in Manitoba.

It's important to note that not all women got the vote at that time. It was, you know, some Aboriginal women, some coloured women, didn't receive the vote 'til later on. So it's funny when we think about how we take things for granted and the importance of women—whether it's in the Leg. here, whether it's in other business—and how prominent women have become. And I like to think of—like I said, behind every man is a woman. We've got the Golden Boy looking north; we should have the golden girl looking south, Mr. Speaker. And in the southwest she would see the booming oil fields of the southwest and she would notice that women are pipefitters, women are truck drivers, women are, you know, equipment things. This didn't happen during Nellie's period of time. Then she would peer at Morden and she'd see farmers there, not just women but—or not just men, women driving the tractors and running the business, important part of the family in Morden. And, of course, she would look to the southeast in Emerson and Morris and she might see—I guess she could—she would see the men and women maybe driving down to the States to go shopping, and my question is how many pairs of shoes does a man need? But this is what—you have to realize that women and men are—were trying to get equal status, and we're still fighting for equality. The numbers, percentages even in this House are not 50-50, so we're looking at that.

Some of the great women I admire was my mom, Mr. Speaker. She wore the pants in the family, I have to say, and my dad worked hard in the mine for 33 years. She looked after the finances. I played a lot of hockey and sometimes I used somebody else's skates, and she would save money. She would not spend it on herself so I could get a new pair of Tacks—that was the skates back then—and she'd save money so I could get a better stick or, you know, one that I wanted. And I always admired my mom, the sacrifices she made for me. And women are as important then as they are now.

And now I look at the opportunities women have. I look at my own daughters. I have one daughter that is working in human resources in an oil company in Alberta for Nexen. I have another one that is a stay-at-home mom right now, and to me

that's the most important job in the world, and she's probably one of the best moms in the world, and I'm so proud of her. I got another daughter that is going to be coming down to live with me and she's going to go to the University of Winnipeg to look at opportunities there. So there's a lot of opportunities for women throughout, but, again, we still can't take our foot off the gas pedal because we still have to work for more inclusion for women.

* (10:50)

I know the opposition doesn't like us to speak about past history, whether it's the '90s, whatever, but history's important. History is important because we don't want to make the same mistakes that we made before. So when we talk about nurses being laid off, when we talk about opportunities that maybe women didn't have, we want to point out, you know, that the Leader of the Opposition was there when these opportunities were lost and that. So it's all important what we look at.

I think it's important, too, that we have to realize that women are not only fighting for equality, they're fighting to make sure that they have a place at the governing table. And we see many premiers that have been women now, which I think it great. We had a woman prime minister for, what, a few days or month or whatever. Hopefully, you know, that will change. These woman—or women in the past fought in the past, but the premier of the time—and I like this quote—to silence the women at the time he says, nice women don't want the vote. And it just kind of makes you laugh. Was there a person that actually thought that back then? Well, yes, he was the premier. Nice women don't want the vote. So, you know, just be quiet, you know, sit in the corner, let the men do the real job.

Well, boy, oh, boy, don't tell that to my wife; I think she wears the pants in the family. I was up half the night, she was worried with the Queen coming to visit. Is it all right? Do you wear fascinators? What kind of dress is she going to wear? I was, like say, almost kicked out because I couldn't answer those questions. So that will be interesting on Wednesday, Mr. Speaker, if women can wear fascinators in here or not. I don't know.

The other thing I'd like to say, women are on the fight lines of fighting for the rights to sit in this very Chamber. You know, at one time they didn't have the rights to come here. Women had to make noise and fight for child support, rights for fair treatment in divorce and protection from abusers. I mean, this is,

you know, this is—how can I say it? It's ironic that we're talking about the past but this is the way things were. Women had to be loud and fight for child care, quality education, accessible health care, including safe and 'therapeutic' abortions. They had to fight for all that, and the fight carries on because the debate carries on.

As a government MLA, the member of Fort Whyte supported drastic cuts to child care, cuts to EIA and firing nurses. That's not something to be proud of. As a government MP, he supported the closing of Status of Women office in Winnipeg and cancelling national child-care programs. And today as the opposition, he stands for an American-style, two-tier health-care system. And that's not we as the NDP fought for; we want to make sure that all Manitobans throughout Manitoba are treated equally and that is important.

Unlike the, Mr. Speaker, unlike the opposition leader, we take our responsibility to work towards gender equality seriously. Our team is full of strong, vocal woman fighting for women and their families every day. And I have to acknowledge the former Education Minister. If you want a definition of tenacity, it's my member, former member of Education who, in Bill 18, wouldn't take no for an answer and I—all teachers and former teachers stood here—and I noticed, yes I did notice looking around, there was an odd tear coming down because it's something that we all wanted for. And again I want to acknowledge my former Education Minister for getting Bill 18. That was very important.

I have to say, I guess, to sum up that, yes, maybe we should work for a golden girl to look south so there's an equality on the top of this beautiful building and so that all of Manitoba is looked upon by a golden boy and a golden girl.

And I have to say, on behalf of everybody here, it's great that I can put this message on, and if anybody wants a copy of it, of course, they can tape it—

Some Honourable Members: Read it in Hansard.

Mr. Pettersen: They can read in Hansard, yes, but, of course, they can tape it and take it to their constituency.

So thank you for giving me this opportunity, thank you for the members for listening and thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this great opportunity. Thank you. Thank you.

House Business

Hon. Andrew Swan (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on House business.

Mr. Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Swan: Pursuant to rule 38(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Crothers). The title of the resolution is 70th Anniversary of D-Day.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that, pursuant to rule 31(8), that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one brought forward by the honourable member for St. James, and the title of the resolution is the 70th Anniversary of D-Day.

* * *

Hon. Sharon Blady (Minister of Healthy Living and Seniors): It's a pleasure to rise today and join my colleagues on debating Bill 210, The Centennial of Manitoba Women's Right to Vote Act.

I'm not sure if everybody here is aware of it. We all come from different backgrounds. As many of you know, I'm an academic and predominantly a decolonization scholar, but my doctoral work is actually in women's studies and that's what I have been teaching, as well as native studies, and actually came to feminism by way of indigenous traditional knowledge.

I don't know how many folks are aware of the fact that in most indigenous cultures within North America that actually the gender balance and the division of power is actually one where women's representation is not what has been experienced by non-Aboriginal Canadians, especially those coming from Judeo-Christian European background.

So what is interesting for me was that with the introduction of women's rights to vote in 1916, what was interesting was that women of indigenous background were actually not allowed to vote, and the right to vote as expressed here, while it was an accomplishment, was an accomplishment predominantly for women of European ancestry and of particular socio-economic classes. So it was not an across-the-board advancement of the franchise to all women, to all members of that 51 per cent of the population.

And I think that's something that's very important to notice that when we take a look at democratic principles, oftentimes, again, those of us coming from a Euro-Canadian perspective look back on the democratic roots of our societies as being grounded in things like Greece, which, again, while it allowed—it was democratic, it was democratic to men who held particular socio-economic status, period, freeman landholders.

Mr. Speaker, what's interesting is when we get to other models like the United States. That was an interesting one because that's really a misinterpretation of the Haudenosaunee model and, interestingly enough, took women out of the equation. The Haudenosaunee model actually has women as clan mothers, as the leaders of each of their clans, and that when a man marries, he leaves his mother's longhouse, goes to his wife's longhouse, and, again, he could be appointed by his mother to be a representative of their particular clan but must also reside in his wife's longhouse of a different clan. And so the councils were formed and, again, the kind of system that we—that you see in the United States is actually a reflection of the layers of clan structures, but what was interesting is while men sat at the council tables, it was women that appointed them there and that women called the shots. And again, woe betide the man who, while representing his mother's clan and living in his wife's longhouse, ticked either of them off.

So talk about having to work on consensus building. And so I think while there is much to be celebrated in terms of women's right to vote, I think we have to look at the fact that there is still much more to do and both here in North America as well as across the world because, again, we see things happening, for example, with the so-called Fair Elections Act in Ottawa which will disenfranchise a number of people, and, ironically, the people that it's going to disenfranchise most are the people that require federal social services and federal supports and infrastructure the most. It will tend to disenfranchise Aboriginal women, probably disproportionately to any and all groups.

A lot of the—one of the factors that I find most interesting with that particular piece of legislation is its reliance on identification, and if you are the average, white, middle-class suburbanite, accessing identification is normal. You take it for granted that you will have your driver's licence, your health card. It doesn't take into—

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Healthy Living will have six minutes remaining.

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 18—Filipino Nursing

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., it's time for private members' resolutions, and the resolution under consideration this morning is entitled Filipino Nursing, sponsored by the honourable member for Tyndall Park.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): I move, seconded by the honourable member from Burrows,

WHEREAS more nurses are still needed across the province despite a net increase of over 3,560 nurses in Manitoba since 1999; and

WHEREAS along with adding more nurse training spaces, the provincial government also launched an overseas nurse recruitment mission to the Philippines with the goal of recruiting 100 nurses to rural Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Philippines trains more nurses than it is able to hire internally, offering a mutually beneficial opportunity to recruit nurses to rural Manitoba; and

WHEREAS these nurses, who have travelled to the other side of the world to work here in Manitoba, are making a real difference to patients and families across Manitoba; and

WHEREAS this recruitment mission would not have been a—such a success if it were not for a strong, supportive partnership between Manitoba Health, Manitoba Labour and Immigration, the regional health authorities, the College of Registered Nurses, the Manitoba Nurses' Union and the Philippine Nurses Association of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS a community settlement and integration plan was critical in supporting the nurses to settle in their new communities and has been key to longer term retention; and

WHEREAS these nurses have also helped to boost morale among existing staff by increasing staffing levels; and

WHEREAS these nurses have strengthened the health-care system and expanded the Manitoba multicultural mosaic.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba applaud these health-care professionals who have been wonderful additions to the nursing and Filipino-Manitoban communities and have paved the way for many more Filipino nurses to come to Manitoba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize that these well-educated and highly skilled nurses help to keep health-care services sustainable and have boosted morale among employees by increasing the staffing levels and strengthening support systems.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino), seconded by the honourable member for Burrows (Ms. Wight),

WHEREAS more nurses are—dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to consider the resolution as printed on today's Order Paper? [Agreed]

WHEREAS more nurses are still needed across the province despite a net increase of over 3,560 nurses in Manitoba since 1999; and

WHEREAS along with adding more nurse training spaces, the Provincial Government also launched an overseas nurse recruitment mission to the Philippines, with the goal of recruiting 100 nurses to rural Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Philippines trains more nurses than it is able to hire internally, offering mutually beneficial opportunity to recruit nurses to rural Manitoba; and

WHEREAS these nurses, who have travelled to the other side of the world to work here in Manitoba, are making a real difference to patients and families across Manitoba; and

WHEREAS this recruitment mission would not have been such a success if it were not for a strong, supportive partnership between Manitoba Health, Manitoba Labour and Immigration, the Regional Health Authorities, the College of Registered Nurses, the Manitoba Nurses Union and the Philippine Nurses' Association of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS a community settlement and integration plan was critical in supporting the nurses to settle in their new communities and has been key to longer term retention; and

WHEREAS these nurses have also helped to boost morale among existing staff by increasing staffing levels; and

WHEREAS these nurses have strengthened the health care system and expanded the Manitoba multicultural mosaic.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba applaud these health care professionals whom have been wonderful additions to the nursing and Filipino-Manitoban communities and have paved the way for many more Filipino nurses to come to Manitoba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize that these well educated and highly skilled nurses help to keep healthcare services sustainable and have boosted morale among employees by increasing the staffing levels and strengthening support systems.

Mr. Marcelino: Feeling ill and sickly brings out the grouchy, the mean and the obstinate in all patients, I think—I should maybe just speak about the member from Selkirk and me.

When I was a patient at the St. Boniface hospital, the first person who acknowledged my presence was a nurse, not a Filipina nurse, not any other nationality nurse, but a nurse. He was a male nurse, and he said, are you in a lot of pain? I said, yes. And he asked some more questions, too intrusive. He says, where? I said, chest. Then he says, don't move. I said, I'm not going anywhere. He says, just be still and we will take care of you. That's at the emergency room of St. Boniface hospital.

In less than two minutes, I was at the CRU. You know what that is? That's the cardiac resuscitation unit. They figured I must be having a heart attack. And I said, am I dying? And the male nurse said, no, you're not, not on my shift. And I said, I don't intend to. I'm the MLA for Tyndall Park. And he said, oh, shucks. That's not what he said. It's the other one. And I said, why, what's wrong? He says, now we have to take care of you real well. And I said, you don't have to. I don't have to jump the queue. And he said, no, you're not jumping the queue. Yours is an emergency. And I said, thank you very much.

But I digress. I'm talking about the Filipino nurses who have come here early on in the 20th century. And as nurses are—they are the backbone—when I say backbone, I emphasize that—of the health-care system, and they offer high-quality care, comfort and reassurance to patients and their families when they need it—when they need it most.

Our government's commitment to training and hiring more nurses resulted in over 17,795 nurses working in Manitoba, an all-time high, and that is 3,702 more than there were in 1999. Why do I even have to dwell on the numbers? Because the contrast is there. As a government, the New Democratic government of Manitoba chose to hire more nurses, and there's a very good reason for it. Nurses are the front lines, the front-line troops of our health-care system. They are the same people who would be there, whether it's an ER—or emergency room—or QuickCare or any other private—ACCESS—health-care ACCESS institutions.

And the nurses, when we needed them, are almost always there, especially during those times when you need, say, your medication, and they would go around the rooms with a medication tray and they'll make sure that you take it from that plastic cup, that they would usually say, this is your medication and I have verified it. Is your name Ted? And as soon as you say yes, the nurse gives it to you, one of the safeguards that most nurses follow. And it's one of those human contacts that are rare when we have been dealing with a government, whether federal or civic and sometimes provincial, that when you call you have to press 1 if you want service in English, or press 2 if it was in French, and I found that only the health-care system provides that person-to-person human approach to providing a service to all of us.

* (11:10)

I am a very proud member of a government that has resolved to put more training spaces for the nurses, and in our search for a more humane and compassionate system we have gone to the Philippines, which happens to be my birth country. When I came here 34 years ago, the first people who got in touch with me were the nurses who were here earlier, and some of them are still very good friends, and I appreciate more and more their friendship and, of course, their sense of humour. Some of them have retired and they were asking me, at your age, you should retire, too. And I said, I'm thinking really seriously about that, but then what would I do after

retirement? And my wife said, well, you could join me; you could actually join me and volunteer with the Health Sciences Centre. And that's where we went, my wife and I. She volunteers for the Health Sciences Centre at the Children's Hospital. And when I end my term here in 2020, I will volunteer at the Health Sciences Centre Children's Hospital. Not as a nurse but as a volunteer who could carry those little kids who might need the compassion and the human warmth and the comfort that most nurses—not only Filipino nurses but all nurses do provide.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, as a nurse myself over many years, I have worked with a number of Filipino nurses, and actually quite a number of them over the time I was a nurse. And I also worked with a number of Filipino health-care aides who were absolutely some of the best I have ever worked with. And I totally enjoyed the expertise that they brought to the workforce, and I can remember, you know, spending many nights and evenings working side by side along these nurses. And we were always a great team. It was always a pleasure because they had such a strong work ethic.

I got to know them as well, you know, through their—you know, through them talking to each other and then on getting to know them a little bit different just in terms of the culture and the closeness they have as families and the importance that community, their community, is to them and how committed they are to their religion and their families and to celebrating, too, you know, a number of events that happen within their families. And that certainly is the one thing that Filipino families do seem to do very well, is they're close as families, they're hard-working, but they also know how to party and celebrate, you know, family events or community events. And so I had a wonderful opportunity to get to know many of them and have great respect for the role that Filipino nurses have provided in Manitoba.

And I do know that, you know, we reached a point where there was a nursing shortage. And the government, in order to address that, had worked with other agencies here in Winnipeg to go down to the Philippines and to recruit nurses to bring them back. We do know that in the Philippines they do educate more nurses than they could use there. So it was, you know, sort of a win-win situation all around for the nurses to come here and work in Manitoba.

I can't imagine, though, Mr. Speaker, how difficult it must be for people that, you know, oftentimes leave their families behind in order to come to a country far away and to immerse themselves in another culture and work here. But they do it, too, in order to make the income and also be able to send some back home in order to provide for their families back home too. So they are making, you know, certainly, a number of sacrifices.

So I do really respect the nurses that came. I do know that we needed them very badly at the time because of the shortage in rural Manitoba and do want acknowledge the good work that they have done. And I hope they have felt very welcomed here in Manitoba.

I know that we have a very strong Filipino community—75,000, I believe, or in that range—of Filipinos that live here in Winnipeg. And I certainly hope that there is an opportunity for, you know, a lot of them to connect so that they don't feel so disconnected from their homes. I do know that in the Steinbach area and other parts of Manitoba, too, there are growing pockets of Filipino communities and Filipino families. So I certainly hope they feel welcome here and I hope they feel that they are an integral part of all of our communities.

I have to wonder, too, right now—with what is going on in Manitoba as to where the government does plan to look for further nurses to address the shortage that is going on right now—right now in Manitoba we've got the largest nursing shortage on record; we are short in Manitoba 1,800 nurses. It has never been that high—

An Honourable Member: It's not true.

Mrs. Driedger: Well, and the minister of—from Kildonan's saying it's not true. It's on his own government document. The—from the nursing supply—oh, I should get the proper name of the document, I guess, because he's yelling across, it's not true. I would indicate that in his own document—it's called the Manitoba Nursing Labour Market Supply 2013—it is absolutely true. The problem with this document is the government sat on it for three years and didn't want to put this out on their website, and interestingly enough, Mr. Speaker, what this document shows—and the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) doesn't know what he's talking about—is that the total nursing shortage in Manitoba is 1,777. It is right here in the government's own document. So for the minister—the member for Kildonan to be

chirping across the way, shows that he doesn't seem to want to recognize his own government's document.

Mr. Speaker, what the NDP has also done with their nursing release that came out was saying that there are more nurses at the bedside. In fact, that is not true. They're also taking credit for an all-time high of nurses in Manitoba of 18,000. But what the NDP did not put into their—what they did not put into their news release, that only 11,000 nurses are working in the public health-care system; that's all. They're taking credit for 18,000 nursing positions in Manitoba. Right now there are only 11,000 nurses in the public health-care system; there are 13,000 positions, but most of those now are vacant. So the NDP, what they have done is they've set up positions and they're bragging, they're taking credit for 6,000 nurses that we don't—they're not in the public system.

* (11:20)

So if we have 18,000 nurses, if we have 11,000 only working in the public health-care system, where are the rest, Mr. Speaker? A lot of them are actually in the private-duty agencies—*[interjection]* Yes, and doctors' offices, for the member for Kildonan—doctors' offices are private, and agency nurses are now the—government doesn't want to call them private-duty nurses anymore. Of the nursing vacancies that are showing here in Manitoba, the 17—almost 1,800 are missing from the public health-care system; there are only 11,000 working the public health-care system, the rest of them are agency nurses. And, in fact, this government, almost \$20 million has been spent in the last three years by RHAs hiring private-duty nurses—that is because we have the worst nursing shortage on record.

In 1999, the nursing shortage in Manitoba was 751, today it's almost 1,800; it's more than doubled under their watch. Mr. Speaker, there is a serious nursing shortage here and this government, in their news release where they're trying to take credit for all these private-duty nurses, weren't even honest enough to put that in their news release.

So, Mr. Speaker, while we recognize and value and support Filipino nurses that have come here, what we have got is a government that is not telling the truth in the documents that it sent out, they are not telling the truth to the public about the nursing situation in Manitoba right now; in fact, they have even took out of their document the shortages of

health-care aides in Manitoba—they've hidden that, they've covered that up, and they've also taken out of here the percentage of part-time nurses in Manitoba. We used to have the most number of part-time nurses in Canada, not full-time nurses; they took that out of this document too.

So there is a significant cover-up of a nursing shortage in Manitoba and this government does not want to be honest about it, and, Mr. Speaker, I think it's time that they started to work a little harder at fixing their own problems instead of living in the Dark Ages that they choose to do. They've got a big problem of their own under their own watch and they need to address it.

Ms. Melanie Wight (Burrows): It's an honour to get up and just—I wanted to put a few words in the record, first of all, to thank the many Filipino nurses who have come to our country to help out. I have a very close friend who's a nurse from the Philippines, and I know the tremendous amount of work that she's done, Kelly Legaspi, and she's amazing and she's just done a tremendous amount of work, working to also help the other nurses that are coming in from the Philippines and helping them sort of figure out the world that they're in here in Canada and how different it is, and they've just been truly a blessing to our province.

And we do, of course, I mean, in spite of having an all-time high—3,702 more nurses than we had in 1999—we do need more nurses and we're happily working to get more nurses, as opposed to the opposition, who, in fact, fired 1,000 nurses. So the member from Charleswood was mentioning the Dark Ages, and I assume she was referring to the 1990s, right, when, in fact, our hospitals were often without nurses and they had slashed so many of them. I don't know, she seemed to be suggesting that having nurses in doctors' offices was somehow a problem—kind of confused about that, I don't really understand who you would want in the doctor's office if not nurses—and that somehow that was very tricky of our government to count those nurses that are in doctors' offices. But, of course, we do count them because they're doing invaluable work in those areas, so I'm not sure what she was referring to. But I am really grateful to all the people in the nursing world.

I started my first contact with nurses when I was five, and I can remember back then when I went in for a heart operation and I had to eat candy—I mean pills—but they would wrap them in candy for me and put chocolate. That's what the nurses did for me

when I was five, and they would put little pieces of chocolate bar on each side of my pills that I had to chew up. So I was very grateful to them, and they were always the ones that came in to play with you. And I can remember little pull toys that I had that the nurses would actually try and spend some time doing that with me.

And I'm grateful to say that it was many, many years, probably 30 years, before I had to spend any more time at all in a hospital. I'm very grateful for the nurses that I met there when I was having my daughter. They were incredibly—they were like a cheerleader working with you, and I'm just so grateful for the fabulous level of care that we get from our nurses. And it wasn't another—it was another maybe 17 years, Mr. Speaker, before I ended up in—with some nurses helping me again and that was when I went in, in incredible pain, and it was a nurse who took about five minutes to say—and she diagnosed me—okay, you have a kidney stone, I'm absolutely sure.

It took a little longer in there to get that confirmed, but she immediately was able to give me to something right away to help with that pain. And so I really want to express my gratitude to all of the people that we have working in our nursing area.

And I did want to mention the Overseas Nurse Recruitment Mission to the Philippines in 2008 where we went to—with the goal of recruiting 100 nurses to Manitoba, and those nurses, who have come from the other side of the world to be here in Manitoba, are a people who make just a real difference in the lives of all of those of us who have to end up needing care. And, as the member from Tyndall Park mentioned, you're not usually in a great mood when you're feeling sick or when you're worried about whether or not you're going to survive, and so it's those kinds of caring individuals, many who are from the Philippines, that I would just like to express my gratitude to today.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure to stand up today and put a few words on the record in regards to this private member's resolution brought forward by the member from Tyndall Park. And, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to start off by saying welcome, and also congratulate the Filipino community and all of those nurses who have come to Manitoba, again from the Filipinos to—from the Philippines, sorry, to work in our great province.

Nursing is an integral part of the sustainability of our ailing health-care system here in Manitoba and, as such, all nurses deserve our praise for the important front-line service they provide.

Mr. Speaker, I have quite a few friends of mine that had gone on and became nurses and they put in countless hours and have many, many sacrifice within their lives and at the same time trying to raise families and that, so I commend all of those people who go into the nursing profession. And I have friends that are not only women but also men, as well, that have gone into the profession and have made their lifelong career, many of which, under this government, has gone ahead and taken administration positions as well. And I think that is part of the issue or things that are going on in this province..

And I know that the government right now is busy patting themselves on the back for hiring numbers and numbers of extra nurses. But, in fact, Mr. Speaker, we do seem to have a shortage of nurses because the more and more I find out that you go down to the ERs in—whether that's Beausejour or Pinawa or Powerview-Pine Falls and many others. I know in the Selkirk regional hospital, as well, we have quite a few temporary nurses, those of which who are unfamiliar to the community. And the fact is is because we do have a nurses shortage in the province, and so we're having to—the administration and the senior leaders in the regional health authorities are having to use temporary agencies.

* (11:30)

In regards to Filipino nurses in this great province of ours, I guess one of the questions I have is why has this government let the nursing shortage get so out of hand. As I mentioned, Mr. Speaker, and I know that our member from Charleswood, as well, has put quite a few words on the record—and I know that the member from Kildonan eagerly wants to get up and speak to a few things, I'm sure, and I'm sure he will. I'm sure he'll get his chance.

So let's not sidestep that larger issue and the crisis that we have at play here in Manitoba. We have a serious nursing shortage in this province, and while it's all fine and dandy, again, for the NDP to commend themselves for hiring more nurses, we should not forget that this work is far from complete. The NDP need to do more than congratulate themselves for their small victories. They need to have serious plan of how to address the nursing crisis in this province amongst others. Mr. Speaker, I know

that we've got doctor shortages, we've got ERs that are closed. We're now 19-plus, probably 20-plus ERs in this great province of ours that are either at reduced service or completely closed. And that's not helping those important Manitobans, those hard-working taxpayers, those people who depend on emergency services and also various clinics.

The ability to go and see a family doctor is far more difficult than it has been in the last 30 years, and why is that? I think it all comes down to leadership. I think the one-on-one, the personal connections with their patients, with the people that they're supposed to be serving, has gone array.

The NDP need to, basically, work on creating a better plan for the future and to actually have some benchmarks of where they need to get to. The problem is is they are hiring. They are training some fantastic nurses in this province, but a lot of those nurses—and as well as doctors—are leaving this great province and they're going to other places. We hear of countless stories of people who are picking up and moving to other provinces such as Saskatchewan and Alberta, and even to the east coast, Mr. Speaker, because they are—actually, those provinces are doing the work to basically headhunt those fantastic professionals, and what they're doing is they're enticing them to come to their provinces because of their need to, No. 1, increase their health-care system. But at the same time they're encouraging those people to come there, have their occupation and have a climate to—climate for them to raise a family as well.

Currently in our province we are having a nursing vacancy rate of 13 per cent. What is even more alarming is that the majority of these vacancies are in front-line positions. That is literally where Manitobans need the care most; gaps in the care of the bedside leave patients unsafe.

The NDP would like to have Manitobans believe that they have a handle on the nursing crisis. They have been touting how they have hired so many nurses and how the total nursing levels are at a record high. What they don't tell Manitobans is that—the fact they are facing the worst nursing shortage in the 15 years they have been in government. This has been a continuous trend and this number continues to climb. In fact, that number has rose from 1,494 in 2012 to 1,777 in 2013 alone. The NDP continues to boast and cherry-pick numbers to boast their partisan games, but neglects to even acknowledge the almost 2,000 key roles they have failed to fill.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the member from Charleswood had cited some of those quotes from the document that she proposed earlier to the member from Kildonan, and the fact is the numbers don't lie. Come out and visit the various ERs and hospitals within the communities and you'll—you're going to find that a lot of the people, a lot of the faces that are practising—again, it's great that they're stepping up and filling those—some of those gaps and, again, it's great that the member from Tyndall Park has brought forward this resolution, and congratulating those people coming from the Philippines to help us fill those gaps, but I encourage the member from Tyndall Park to stand up and to also encourage his government to be truthful with the people of Manitoba and to see exactly what our numbers are, where are we going, how are we going to get there, and for the betterment of our fellow Manitobans.

So, with that, I would like to say thank you for giving me the opportunity this morning to put a few words on the record. I know that we have a long way to go, and luckily for Manitobans we're about a year and a half away from the next election so hopefully we can move these guys out of the way and get moving forward in a proper direction.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Just prior to recognizing the next member, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us this morning from St. Laurent School 10 grade 9 students under the direction of Jeanette Edwards, and this group is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff).

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

* * *

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to put my comments regarding this resolution, and I thank the member from Tyndall Park to bring forward this resolution because this gives me an opportunity to appreciate how important the work Filipino nurses are doing in Manitoba.

Nurses are the backbone of health care, offering high-quality care, comfort and reassurance to patients and their families when they're needed. Because of our government's commitment to training

and hire more nurses—hiring more nurses, there are over 17,795 nurses working in Manitoba, an all-time high, and 3,702 more than there were in 1999.

Along with the—adding more nurse training spaces, the provincial government also launched an overseas nurse recruitment mission to the Philippines in 2008, with the goal of recruiting 100 nurses for—to rural Manitoba. These nurses, who have travelled to the other side of the world to work here in Manitoba, are continuing to make a real difference to patients and families across Manitoba.

This recruitment mission would not have been such a success if it were not for the strong support and partnership between Manitoba Health, Manitoba Labour and Immigration, the regional health authorities, the College of Registered Nurses and the Manitoba Nurses' Union and the Philippine Nurses Association of Manitoba. A community settlement and integration plan was critical in supporting the nurses to settle in their new communities and has been key to longer term retention.

The nurse recruits are helping to stabilize health in these regions. By adding to the existing nurse complement, they are helping reopen beds in some communities and prevent service disruptions in others. Today, 79 of the nurses recruited in 2008 are working in the Prairie Mountain Health region and 30 are working in the Southern Health region. These nurses have also helped to boost morale among existing staff by increasing staffing levels. These nurses have strengthened the health-care system and expanded the Manitoba multicultural mosaic.

Our government applauds these health-care professionals who have been wonderful additions to the nursing and Filipino-Manitoban communities and have paved the way for many more Filipino nurses to come to Manitoba. We recognize that these well-educated and high-skilled nurses help to keep health-care services sustainable and have boosted morale among employees by increasing the staffing levels and strengthening support systems.

We also know there is more to be done to support and encourage more nurses to come to live and work in Manitoba. The Minister of Health (Ms. Selby) recently met with the Philippine Nurses Association of Manitoba to learn more about their association and how to best support their membership. Our government will continue to work with the Philippine Nurses Association of Manitoba and all nursing associations in Manitoba to build the

better health-care system possible where that meets the needs of our families now and in the future.

* (11:40)

Mr. Speaker, in 2007, when I got elected and I looked at the Provincial Nominee Program, and I seen there are some problems, so I thought the system can be improved. What happened at that time—what was the situation—there were some conditions. Like, if you are a nurse, then you must have to have first offer from the Manitoba institution hospital so that with that job letter, then you could have applied for the Provincial Nominee Program.

And sitting somebody over here, how somebody, they can assess nurses back in the Philippines or in other countries, and that was a really hard job to do and also somebody to apply for provincial—under the Provincial Nominee Program for this nursing trade. So what happened, I looked at all these conditions. There were conditions of professional licence and there were some trade—have conditions for eligibility for certification—provisions certification, and there was also you have to have a job letter. So that was not an easy thing to do in that situation and we were not able to bring—maybe it was hard to bring all those professions, especially nurses.

So at that time, I sent an email to our then-premier. Like, I wanted to discuss with the premier, I think we can improve the system. I talked to the minister, then, at that time, and the premier sent me an email: no, not in September, but maybe in January. So I had a meeting with the—in January, with the premier, then Honourable Gary Doer. So I told—I asked him, okay, if we need nurses, why we don't let them come and why we put these conditions? He said that makes sense. If we need truck drivers, why we let them be exploited by the employer? Why we don't let them come over here, and so they will learn just like other trades? And if we were in need of teachers, why we ask them to first assess your credentials, then you can apply, then you can come?

And why we don't let them come if they want to become a teacher, at least they become—can become a health-care worker and not health-care worker, but I mean a charity-care worker. But later on, they can improve, and whatever they have to take, they will take their courses and they will fill that gap, and later on they will be teachers, they will be nurses. And so why we have the—all these conditions? And Mr. Gary Doer said, yes, that makes sense. Why not? So he

directed me to live—assistant minister and assistant minister and the deputy minister. So we had a meeting. In that meeting I put this forward. Like, one thing, we should reduce this exploitation. Sometime middlemen, middleperson, they exploit those scared workers, and they sometime under-the-table their jobs, money—we should remove these conditions.

So we had a meeting in—that's 2008, and after that meeting, the deputy minister and assistant deputy minister told me, well, we will have another meeting and perhaps then we will discuss about it. And—but after two months, I asked—they announced that all those conditions will be moved. Since then, so many nurses, so many teachers, so many security workers immigrated to Manitoba, and I feel in that some satisfaction because I was able to help those people come over here. And once—I think one reporter asked me—he was from the Philippines—why you are doing this, because nurses won't get a job over here and other nurses over here, they're not getting jobs? I said, well, the kind of country you come, I don't come from the same country. These people will come over here, they will improve, they will tough it out and pretty soon they will succeed, and you don't have to worry about that. He said, you know, no, I know, but being a reporter, I have to ask this question anyway, but I understand what you mean.

And since then many nurses have come from India as well, and most of the time if they talk to me I will point out, okay, maybe talk to Filipino nurses association. Maybe you should also have that kind of association, so you can be helped. But you can—we'll have some lobby group and they'll talk to the minister. So any—this way, I think, we'll—we [*inaudible*] but it's important. Being an immigrant you understand all those problems these immigrants have to go through. Therefore, you can all relate, I think, therefore you can correlate and help them out. And I think I'm—well, being through—going through all those hurdles and I understand the system, that that's why many people come to my office. Maybe every day 10 to 15 people drop in—all those immigrants—to get one kind of, or other kind of information, and we are always happy to provide that information. And I'm fortunate enough, I have my CA, who is from a Filipino background—and she also gone through Provincial Nominee Program. She understands very well, and we are able to help, and I'm glad I—we are in this position.

Thank you very much.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): It gives me pleasure to rise and put a few words on the record, just speaking about the private member's resolution that was brought forward by the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino) regarding Filipino nurses and the value they have in our Manitoba health-care system. And I do want to certainly echo his comments and many others that have been made today around the value of sustaining our health-care system, and I know that Filipino nurses do play an integral role in that happening here in our province.

And, Mr. Speaker, my former life, before I entered politics I worked as a registered nurse in several hospitals in the city of Winnipeg and had the distinct pleasure back in the '80s of working with Filipino nurses. Notably, the last place I worked at, Concordia Hospital where I worked in the intensive care unit, the very small intensive-care unit. It was only a two-bed intensive care unit, actually, and there were two nurses in—that staffed that unit, that two-bed unit on a 24-hour basis. And I had the good fortune of working with a Filipino nurse on many, many shifts and different occasions. Sometimes during the evening or the night when it might be a little bit quieter and we had the opportunity to get to know a little bit about each other and about our backgrounds, and certainly shared—and admired her. And in those days there weren't nearly as many Filipino nurses in Manitoba as there are today. But we had the opportunity to get to know her, and those of us, when we got together for our potluck dinners and—which is something that nurses do tend to do. Because of the intense profession and the intense work that is done, there's always time for that bit of get-together to try to lighten the mood a little bit and to share with each other some of the more pleasant things in life. And one of the things that I certainly did enjoy was our potluck dinners where she brought her Filipino cuisine to the table, and it was absolutely wonderful.

Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased that we were a government back in the '90s that negotiated and signed the Provincial Nominee Program to allow more immigrants to come to Manitoba to fill the job shortages that existed. And as a result of that we've seen many more Filipino nurses come to our province and they have been a welcome addition to help support our ailing health-care system where we see increasing numbers of shortages of nurses in our province. And it's important that we reach out to those that have the training and want to come to our wonderful country and to our province, that we reach

out to them and encourage them to come to Manitoba to fill those job shortages.

* (11:50)

We certainly welcome and want all nurses to know the value that we place on them, as legislators, and, you know, we get into back and forth here in this Legislature about which government has done things better and is a better friend of nurses. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that many, many nurses, most nurses, I would say, sort of don't enter the profession lightly. It is a profession that does require a lot of stamina. It requires people that can make the commitment to work on a 24-7 basis. Many have to work shift work, evenings and nights and weekends and long weekends and holidays, but they do make that commitment because they care very much about people and they care very much about wanting to ensure that they're providing the best possible support to those that are in need when their health is failing.

And many times they see very tragic situations where, despite all of their good efforts and all of the good work that is done, people do not survive. And that is the reality. That's the reality of the profession that nurses are engaged in, and in many instances it takes a special kind of person to look at the nursing profession as a profession of choice.

And so I have to say to all of those today—and it's much harder today, I think, Mr. Speaker, than it was in the days when I graduated from nursing. Yes, we had very difficult circumstances to deal with, but I would have to say that today things are more difficult in the health-care system. Nurses have greater challenges with all the new technology. They need to be continually bringing themselves up to speed on ever-changing medications and technology that, in many instances, makes their job easier, but it's also a little more difficult to try to keep up to speed on what is happening and all the changes that are occurring.

And when we see the kinds of shortages that we're seeing today in the health-care system, we have to congratulate all of those that have put their names forward, have chosen the profession of nursing and all of those that continue to make life a little bit easier for those that are experiencing the pain, the heartache and all of the things that go along with health issues that people and families deal with.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say our doors are open here in Manitoba to nurses not only from the

Philippines, but from anywhere where they are trained and they are accredited to come and work within our health-care system. There's a need for their expertise, for their education, and there's a need for us to be welcoming and to congratulate them for the good work that they do on a 24-7 basis for all of those who need the services of our health-care system here in Manitoba.

So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the member for Tyndall Park (Mr. Marcelino) for bringing this resolution forward.

Thank you.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I'm very pleased to follow the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) and others in the House today. I want to thank and congratulate the member for Tyndall Park for his excellent resolution here, congratulating Filipino nurses and recognizing their efforts in this country.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, there are some 65,000 people from the Philippines living in Manitoba right now, and that's a substantial increase over the last few years, and the member tells me that the nurses—Filipino nurses are approaching the thousand mark, not quite there yet, but, certainly, that will happen over time as the population continues to increase.

Now, you know, people—members have talked about the numbers here, and it's very instructive as to how well this government has done relative to the previous Conservative government. For example, today, Mr. Speaker, we have 17,795 nurses working in Manitoba. That's an all-time high. And when we look back to the 1990s when the Conservatives were last in government, we had—and we have reported in the Free Press; who can argue with the Free Press when the Free Press say in 1999 the Conservative government eliminated 1,100 nursing jobs over the past six years. That's a quote from the Free Press. In fact, in 1998 the Nurses' Union reported that 1,000 nurses had been laid off by the government and the source is Health Care in Manitoba report from April 1998. Who can argue with that? And in 1992, Manitoba's independent nurses colleges

reported that there were 15,665 nurses licensed and working in the province.

Now, by 1999, I ask the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) to listen to this because there were—in 1992—and I want to ask her which number is bigger—in 1992, there was 15,665 and by 1999—what, seven years later—there was only 14,992. So I ask the member for Charleswood to tell me now, which is bigger, which is bigger: 15,665 or 14,092? And if she can answer that question, it's pretty clear that the Conservatives slashed nurses while they were in power. That is a documented fact. That's a drop of 1,573 positions and we've indicated that we have 3,702 more now than there were in 1999, a grand total of 17,795. And even with her math skills even she will know that 17,792 is a lot bigger than 14,092, which were the figures in their figures.

So I want to thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, to—for giving me the opportunity to address this important resolution.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any further debate on the resolution?

The House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the resolution? *[Agreed]*

Mrs. Mitchelson: I wonder if there's a willingness to show that the resolution was passed unanimously.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to let the record show that the resolution was passed unanimously? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I believe if you were to canvass the House, you'd discover a willingness to call it 12 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Is there will of the House to consider it 12 noon? *[Agreed]*

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 20, 2014

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