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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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(Hansard)

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-First Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLUM, James	Fort Garry-Riverview	NDP
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	NDP
BINDLE, Kelly	Thompson	PC
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy, Hon.	River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
CURRY, Nic	Kildonan	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EICHLER, Ralph, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FLETCHER, Steven, Hon.	Assiniboia	Ind.
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GRAYDON, Clifford	Emerson	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott	St. James	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
KLASSEN, Judy	Kewatinook	Lib.
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan	Selkirk	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Burrows	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Flor	Logan	NDP
MARCELINO, Ted	Tyndall Park	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	Morris	PC
MAYER, Colleen	St. Vital	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Fort Whyte	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine, Hon.	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle	Arthur-Virden	PC
REYES, Jon	St. Norbert	PC
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	Ind.
SCHULER, Ron, Hon.	St. Paul	PC
SMITH, Andrew	Southdale	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Verendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	NDP
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Gimli	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 12, 2018

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): Good morning, Madam Speaker.

Please, could you canvass the House to see if there's leave to debate Bill 201, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act, for second reading.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave this morning to debate Bill 201? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 201—The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): I move, seconded by the member from Thompson, that Bill 201, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lagimodiere: The bill before us will designate October 1st as The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act, which is the same day The Conservation Officers Act came into force in 2015.

Madam Speaker, this is a reintroduction of a bill that—discussed last session where the duties and training of our conservation officers were detailed.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the conservation officers who have joined us here today. We are working on getting this bill passed, and, with the support of members opposite today, we will see it

pass second reading. I understand more officers wanted to join us here today in the gallery, but priorities at work intervened and apparently they are being certified in firearm usage, and apparently that's more important than hearing me speak in the House today. So, thank you for those who did come out.

Madam Speaker, conservation officers have a dangerous and difficult job that often involves strenuous circumstances that many people do not realize. This is why they deserve a day of recognition.

Their job involves ensuring that hunting, trapping and fishing is carried out safely and legally, which may be extremely dangerous. They are stewards of Manitoba's natural resources and have the duties of peace officers. This is a job to be proud of. Conservation officers serve some of the most remote corners of Manitoba. They are tasked with responsibilities that require resolution under extreme conditions. The Manitoba Conservation Officers Service has earned an official day of recognition.

Our government shares the concerns of Manitobans regarding the dangers of law enforcement with respect to unsafe and unsustainable harvesting practices. That is why we want a day to recognize the hard and dangerous work that conservation officers do for us. Once passed, this bill will establish October 1st as a day of commemoration, a day of respect, a day of appreciation for the diversity of responsibilities that conservation officers perform on behalf of all Manitobans.

Madam Speaker, in terms of historical significance to Manitoba, it is worth noting that the regulatory inspection capacity of fish and wildlife has existed in Manitoba for approximately 139 years. The protection of game act received royal assent in 1879, empowering the Lieutenant Governor to appoint guardians to protect Manitoba's natural resources and enforce our laws. The game guardians were the first agents in Manitoba dedicated specifically to enforcing wildlife laws and were the initial predecessors to today's conservation officers.

Madam Speaker, formally established in 1902, the game protection branch was responsible for protecting Manitoba's big game, game birds and

waterfowl from overhunting. The game protection branch operated under the Department of Agriculture and Immigration. To enact their mandate, the branch issued hunting licences, investigated complaints and initiated prosecutions. Under the terms of the act, game guardians confiscated weapons used illegally, licensed the exportation of trophy animal heads and issued permits for the shipment of live animals and birds to natural parks in Ontario, United States and Great Britain. While the provincial game guardian was the first sole staff for the branch, by 1915, he was termed the chief game guardian and was assisted by a staff of permanent and seasonal game guardians based in locations throughout the province.

Over time, legislation and enforcement powers changed. When jurisdiction flowed from the federal government to the provinces, game guardians became natural resource officers. In the early 1960s, Manitoba consolidated game guardians, forest guardians, fish inspectors and natural resource officers into one entity, called conservation officers. On October 1st, 2015, the Manitoba government proclaimed The Conservation Officers Act, conferring powers of peace officers for enforcement purposes upon conservation officers.

Our conservation officers are—have not been immune to personal tragedy. The following six Manitoba conservation officers lost their lives while carrying out their duties. They have been recognized by the Canadian peace officers memorial association and the North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association. May we never forget their supreme sacrifice and the loss their families have to cope with.

Kenneth Skwark. While conducting forest fire operations in northern forests in Manitoba, Kenneth died in a helicopter accident June 28th, 1995. He left behind his wife and young family. On his last day of fire duty at Leaf Rapids, Ken started early so he could leave early and get back to his family. The helicopter he was in crashed into the Churchill River. Officer Skwark drowned after being knocked unconscious during the crash impact.

Keith Bartley. While conducting a night hunting patrol, Keith died in a head-on accident on November 19th, 1989. His wife and young children were left behind to mourn his death. Keith and his partner had left home to respond to a call of night lighting near Fisher Branch. They were each driving their respective patrol vehicles. As was customary at the time for covert and tactical approach of

night-lighting suspects, officers blacked out their patrol vehicles. Keith collided head-on with Colin's vehicle. Keith died at the scene.

Robert Logan lost his life on November 3rd, 1983. While travelling to a provincial park, Robert's vehicle rolled over after encountering black ice. Robert was thrown from his patrol vehicle. This incident occurred prior to the mandatory seatbelt use in Manitoba. It was the opinion of officials that investigated that Robert Logan would have easily survived the rollover had he been wearing a seatbelt. The only damage to his vehicle were a broken windshield and a small dent in the roof. He left behind his wife and young family to mourn the death of a husband and loving father. On September 27th, 2013, the Province of Manitoba named a lake in his honour. Robert Logan Lake is located near Childs Lake in Duck Mountain Provincial Park.

*(10:10)

Allan Assiniboine. Allan drowned after his patrol boat exploded on Lake Winnipegosis on July 27th, 1976. There were three people on board. Two survived by hanging on to floating materials. The crew of a commercial fishing vessel saw the explosion and immediately attended the area and rescued two.

William McLeod: William was shot in the leg with a shotgun by an impaired trapper. He suffered from his injury for several months. He passed on May 12th, 1967 from complications resulting from the wound. An island on Cormorant Lake was renamed William James McLeod Island on December 27th, 2013.

Charles Morrish: While conducting a trapline patrol, Charles drowned when his muskeg tractor broke through the ice on April 3rd, 1966. An island on Clearwater Lake near The Pas was renamed Morrish Island on—September 27th, 2013.

Madam Speaker, I personally knew three of these officers and am proud to be a personal friend of one of the survivors of the boat explosion.

Madam Speaker, the value of conservation officers to all Manitobans should be clear. Our keystone province represents over 647,000 square miles. It represents more than 100,000 lakes, 90 provincial parks, and numerous and dangerous species and ecosystems which require active management and enforcement.

I wish to remind all Manitobans when they encounter a conservation officer in the field that they are just performing their duties and enforcing the laws of Manitoba. These men and women represent a special type of law enforcement officer. From inner cities to the deep woods, wetlands to our lakes on watercraft, off-road vehicles and on foot, conservation officers serve with courage and professionalism.

Conservation Officers Service is an elite, versatile team that uses technology to solve crimes and safeguard Manitobans. It maintains standards for its officers. They are professionally trained and equipped law enforcement officers. They are our provincial government's largest armed and most visible representation in Manitoba communities.

The Conservation Officers Service has obviously paid a hefty price with the loss of six members while on duty. They are integral to the overall team of professional law enforcement officers that protects Manitobans and ensures the high quality of life that makes our province an attractive destination for our visitors.

Progressive Conservatives take seriously the need to protect our natural resources, fisheries and wildlife so they can be enjoyed in a responsible way by future generations.

Thank you to the current and retired members for your service, for your dedication, for dedicating your lives to enforcement of our natural resource laws aimed at protecting our natural resources.

The Manitoba Conservation office service has earned an official day of recognition. I hope this non-partisan bill will be supported by all parties, Madam Speaker, and it will lead to a national acknowledgement of the important work conservation officers perform.

Thank you.

Questions

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

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Thank the honourable member for bringing this motion forward

again, and also want to start by acknowledging the COs in the gallery with us here today. Thank you for being here.

I don't know if any of you are—*[interjection]* I don't know if any of these particular members of our hard-working CO squad were here when this bill was previously debated, so my question for the member will be: Why did his government not proceed with this legislation when we passed it to second reading previously?

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): Well, I thank the member opposite for that question, and just want to put forward that, you know, some of these members were here the last time that we did discuss this bill. They were very excited about the bill that we brought forward last time, and they're here again to support us in making sure we get the bill passed this time.

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): I want to ask the member: Who did the member for Selkirk consult in the preparation of this private member's bill, and what was the response?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Well, thank you for that question.

Of course, I did consult with conservation officers, both active and retired conservation officers. I also discussed this with the president of the MGEU who did join us here last time. In fact, the MGEU, the last time in October, thought it was passed and unfortunately put it out there that it was conservation officer recognition day in October 1st.

I also spoke to many Manitobans. I spoke to wildlife groups, lodge owners and their representatives, representatives from Ducks Unlimited, Manitoba Wildlife Federation, I spoke to the MMF, Minister of Natural Resources, I spoke to many indigenous leaders and their groups. And everybody that I talked to was in support of this bill.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, a two-part question. The first part is last time I had asked whether the government would restore the cuts that had been made to the number of conservation officers and the member had answered that he was going to work toward restoring the cuts.

So the question is: Have any of those cuts been restored? And the second part is whether—on the recognition day itself, what are the plans to honour conservation officers if we pass this bill?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Yes. I do know that the minister is currently working with the resource officers association in addressing the current shortfall that we have in the province in resource officers. We do know that previously, the entire department was seriously gutted by cuts over the years.

My understanding that at one time we had approximately 130 officers in the province and that went down to 90 officers, a significant decrease in the number of officers that are out there to enforce our laws and make sure that hunting is carried out safely within the province of Manitoba.

Mrs. Colleen Mayer (St. Vital): I was growing up in Fisher Branch and knowing many of the crew that was stationed in Hodgson. I'm very familiar with the answer to this upcoming question. But can the member please tell me about the duties—elaborate on some of the duties that conservation officers deal with every day?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Well, I thank the member for the question. And, yes, being from Fisher Branch, you're probably well aware that the duties vary significantly from job to job, but there is a list that I do have here of typical jobs that one might encounter as a conservation officer, including: park patrol of natural areas to ensure their conservation and protection; enforcing all environmental legislation, including issuing tickets and subpoenas; checking hunting and fishing parties for licences, bag limits and compliance with safety regulations, for example, boating safety, firearm safety and snowmobile and ATV safety.

And actually, some of the offers—officers in the gallery have actually pulled me over and checked me. Thank you for that. And they also invest—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Altemeyer: I want to pick up on the good point raised by my colleague from River Heights. This government has indeed brought forward a very reasonable proposal to recognize the wonderful work that conservation officers do, but as has so often been the case, this government will say one thing and do quite another, and cuts to the department are chief among them.

Can the member tell us what is the current vacancy rate—what is the vacancy rate amongst conservation officers right now?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Well, thank you for the question, and I just want to remind the member opposite that it

was his government that made all the cuts to the resource officers association and to its members. They're the ones that got rid of members, that got rid of patrols, that cut back on their budget seriously. So thank you for the question, but you need to really take ownership of the fact that you're the ones that cut conservation officers.

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder to members, when making, you know, asking questions or having responses, that the member ask it in the third party or answer in the third party as it helps to better manage the debate.

Mr. Bindle: Can the member please provide a brief description of the legislation and what it will accomplish?

* (10:20)

Mr. Lagimodiere: The bill before us will designate October 1st, as I said, in each year as Conservation Officer Recognition Day. This is the same day The Conservation Officers Act came in to—enforce in 2015. This day will be a day to recognize the history of the conservation officers within Manitoba, a day to recognize the training and responsibilities performed by conservation officers on a daily basis and a day to recognize those in the profession that paid the ultimate sacrifice in performing these duties, and in the training and responsibilities I did say that a lot of other officers wanted to be here today, but were sidelined with extra training that they do on an annual basis to keep up their certification in firearms.

Thank you.

Mr. Altemeyer: Yes, and speaking of that training which the member referenced earlier, it was our previous government which did change the law to properly recognize conservation officers as law enforcement officers with power of peace officers in the province.

Clearly, the government says one thing and then does another when it comes to this perfectly reasonable piece of legislation we approved before. It was put on the Notice Paper November 22nd of last year. Why was it only introduced yesterday in the Chamber?

Mr. Lagimodiere: I'm very thankful that this was introduced in the Chamber yesterday. It was—like, as I said previously, it was introduced in the previous session. Unfortunately, we weren't able to bring it to committee and get it past committee and third reading and get it to law. But, hopefully, with the

help and support of members on this side today, we will see this pass second reading and make it to committee.

Thank you.

Mrs. Mayer: There are many officers that we should recognize. For me, it is retired CO, Jack Kowalchuk, and, of course, the late Keith Bartley. Many of them have told stories over the years about the risks of their job. Can the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) please tell me—or tell the House, rather, some of the risks that come with being in—a conservation officer?

Mr. Lagimodiere: I thank the member for that question, and as I have said in some of my speaking, that conservations are asked to form—to perform duties under some extremely strenuous circumstances and that most in—Manitobans do not understand. Their job is both physically and mentally demanding, whether it involves capturing and handling a wild animal, to enforcing regulations, risks are always a serious concern for our officers. And you—if you think about this, how would you feel if you were out on a night patrol and it was your job to approach a vehicle that was suspected of having high-powered rifles, and your job is to pull them over and say, what's going on?

Thank you.

Mr. Gerrard: Just a follow-up into what I had mentioned earlier, and that is that, oh, it's important to have a conservation officer recognition day, but it's also important to have a plan for what would happen on that day should we pass this legislation. Can you give us your vision for a plan of how we would recognize conservation officers on the special day should we pass this bill?

Mr. Lagimodiere: I thank the member for the question, and, actually, I have spoken to some school teachers around about the importance of conservation officers in the province of Manitoba. A lot of them are on board, if we do have an act in place, where they say that they are more than happy to let the children in their classroom know about the conservation officers and the duties they perform and the importance of them in the province of Manitoba.

So there are a lot of groups that would be on board with helping support and get the word out about the importance of conservation officers in Manitoba.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): As I indicated in my first question or the preamble to it, our caucus remains committed to seeing this proposal brought through, same as we did before. We very much support the work that conservation officers do in every corner of our province, covering a wide range of responsibilities, many of them exceedingly dangerous or potentially exceedingly dangerous. They are just as much first responders as are ones that those of us who live in the city might be more familiar with—paramedics, police, fire. But conservation officers are just as much an integral part of ensuring safety for Manitobans throughout our province as each of those fine professions are as well. The historical contribution, under different names and different departments dating back over 100 years, is well documented and has emerged right through to the modern-day role and the abilities and skills and training that conservation officers receive and then employ in the field.

And we remain confused and slightly concerned, Madam Speaker, that we did support this bill when it came through—and the public probably doesn't get to see this as often as would be nice, but there are times in this Chamber, believe it or not, when the government will bring forward a private member's bill and the opposition will see the merits of it and proceed with allowing it to pass. We would certainly appreciate it if more of the ideas that we brought forward, which we feel have merit, made it through government. That would perhaps make this extended summer sitting a little bit more productive. But, you know, we'll see what everyone's behaviour is in the future.

We are not the only ones who are confused, though, as to why this bill didn't pass. The honourable member's answers to that pretty straightforward question—I don't even know what to make of it. It's almost as if he doesn't understand that when we allow a private member's bill to go to second reading, that's the green light to the government for them to then call it to the committee stage, get it through committee, make any amendments that might be based on good input that members of the public or conservation officers may choose to contribute at that time and bring it back to

the House for third and final reading. That's the process.

So he brought the bill in previously, and we said yes, let's send this to committee. And then it didn't go anywhere, which does call into question just how serious this government is about passing this legislation and what are their real intentions beyond that. The MLA for River Heights asked a simple question about what would the plans be for this coming October if this bill passed in time to recognize the first Manitoba conservation officers recognition day, and the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) didn't have an answer to that either.

It's also true that, when a government is fully behind a proclamation, a resolution, a private—or an idea—legislated proposal, they can bring it in as a government-sponsored bill which will certainly guarantee passage. They have to introduce it within a certain time frame in order for that guarantee to be in place by the end of the normal spring setting, but even then the bill will eventually pass. And, for the second time in a row, the government has chosen not to give this particular idea that level of priority and that level of support, which again puts some questions into our mind about what is the true thinking over there, particularly since—as I've mentioned—they brought this bill forward last time and we green-lighted it, and they could have brought it back in as a government bill in this session. But that didn't happen.

We're also very concerned that conservation officers are facing a dramatically increasing workload, particularly given this government's political decisions around the threat of more foreign invasive species coming into Manitoba. And we have raised this issue on countless occasions, but water diversion projects from North Dakota could bring many, many more foreign invasive species to our province through the waterways—through the Souris River, through the Red River. And just this week, it—or, just late last week, rather, it was revealed that the government's been secretly negotiating with North Dakota on getting one of those projects to happen, a project that we have stood up and defended Manitoba's water for 16 years straight to block that project from happening. And now the government is undermining the future health of Manitoba's ecosystems. There could be enormous damage to commercial and recreational fishing. There could be damages to water infrastructure and just to our waterways as a whole.

* (10:30)

All of that additional pressure is going to land on many people's desks, and our conservation officers, unfortunately, are going to be on the front lines of dealing with those types of impacts.

So we remain very concerned that the government is doing the exact opposite of what has been the political position, the policy position, not just of Manitoba governments, but of the federal government in Ottawa for over 40 years, and that is to oppose these projects and to try and stop them any way that we can while also helping North Dakota with additional ideas on how they can meet their water needs in different parts of the state.

So conservation officers are facing an increased workload if this government proceeds down that path.

We also remain very concerned about the fishery in general here in Manitoba. We can see, I think, Madam Speaker, what happens when you take the trained expertise of conservation officers off of a file and off of an issue, because the previous minister for Sustainable Development wrote a letter to all commercial fishers and put right in black-and-white writing that she was ordering conservation officers to stop monitoring the export of freshwater fish from Manitoba.

And, on the second day of the open market, we had a fish dealer not only start to receive fish from Manitoba fishers that they would never get paid for, but that fish dealer also arranged for that fish to be exported out of our country in contaminated fertilizer bins that contained a, quote, brown, sloppy goo in the bottom of them.

That type of thing is simply not acceptable. Never mind the fact that the government never notified anyone that this had happened; they tried to cover it up, and never mind the fact that there's a huge threat to the food safety on both sides of the Canada-US border—

An Honourable Member: Madam Speaker, a point of order.

Mr. Altemeyer: —but the conservation officers were not there—

Madam Speaker: The honourable—order.

Point of Order

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Rossmere, on point of order?

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Madam Speaker, on relevance, the member seems to be talking about a different bill than the one we are discussing this morning.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, I was listening carefully to what my colleague from Wolseley had to say, and he is clearly talking about an issue that our conservation officers have to deal with, and, unfortunately, they have to deal with more and more with the challenges that are being posed by the fisheries.

So I know that the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) put on the record both in his comments and his questions a description of various jobs that our conservation officers have to undertake in the course of their duties, and I know the member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer) was just attempting to do the same thing, to talk about the challenges for these brave women and men who serve our environment.

Madam Speaker: I would indicate to the member for Rossmere that I do not believe he has a point of order. The member was making reference to the role of conservation officers and their job, and I would urge caution to members to keep bringing that—the comments back to the specific topic of recognizing conservation officers. But I do not believe the member had a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Altemeyer: It obviously wasn't a point of order. It was a member trying to hush up, once again, the sharing of information that relates to bad decisions made by this government which are actually making the jobs of conservation officers more difficult, because the issues are still out there. They still work with all the people affected, but they're no longer allowed to do the job that they used to do before and, of course, because they were not there to try and catch this type of unscrupulous behaviour from happening, that, of course, throws into sharp contrast the reputation of our entire multi-million-dollar freshwater fishery industry here in Manitoba and the thousands of jobs that depend on it.

This is reflective—like, the member trying to interrupt me is reflective of a government that fundamentally seems to want to undermine its own public officers and its own public service and stop them from doing the jobs that they want to do on multiple occasions.

These conservation officers here in the gallery with us today along with all of their colleagues across the province are suffering from the same wage freeze that has been imposed on all public servants by this government, and yet this member's colleagues, every single Cabinet minister and the Premier (Mr. Pallister) gave themselves a 20 per cent salary increase. On top of that, they have now brought forward no less than three different legislative proposals to enshrine that 20 per cent salary increase in law—*[interjection]* And they're chattering again because they don't want to be hearing about this.

But when you decide that lining the pockets of Cabinet—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order. Order.

I would indicate that the member is now straying off the topic of the legislation at hand, and I would ask the member to bring his topic of conversation back to the legislation that is before us and not stray in the manner he is currently doing.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, allow me to bring this over to the runway real simple: it would be way better recognition for conservation officers to, as well as having a recognition day, to properly support them financially, to support them in the field, to enable them to do the job that they are trained to do, and while we absolutely support recognizing them, we will not in any way step down or back off from calling this government out on the bad decisions that they are making which are making Manitoba worse and not better in so many situations.

Thank you.

Madam Speaker: For clarity of the record during the question period, each independent member may only ask one question, and I did allow the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) to ask two questions and I should point out that I should not have allowed him that second question.

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): It's my pleasure to say I fully support Bill 201, the conservation officers service recognition day bill, and I want to thank my colleague, my friend, and the esteemed honourable member for Selkirk, for bringing it forward, and I look forward to seeing it pass this morning.

I want to recognize and thank the Manitoba conservation officers who have taken the time to come to the Legislature to witness today's debate on this important bill recognizing their profession. They

represent the third largest armed law enforcement agency in Manitoba, and we welcome them and thank them for their dedication and commitment.

We are debating this bill this morning within a time limit, hoping all discussion can be concluded before the allotted one hour time limit expires, after which I hope we can get a chance to vote on, pass, and advance the bill to the next stage.

I'm optimistic this bill, recognizing Manitoba conservation officers for their selfless work, will get passed this morning because they deserve support and recognition for carrying out their important enforcement duties, because recognizing October 1st each year throughout the province as Manitoba officers—conservation officers services day will help Manitobans show their appreciation to these officers and because this is a completely non-partisan issue, as I believe every member in this House is thankful to the men and women who work in this field protecting our province's resources, wildlife, ecosystems and the public.

Why October 1st, Madam Speaker? Because it was on October 1st, 2015, The Conservation Officers Act was originally passed, which expanded the legal enforcement duties of natural resource officers and gave natural resource officers peace officer powers and renamed them as conservation officers, and that bill was passed with all parties' support.

Law enforcement, resource management, and disaster management has evolved considerably since the early days in Manitoba. In response to these changes, Manitoba, in 1998, consolidated game guardians, forest guardians, fish inspectors and natural resource officers into one entity called natural resource officers, and it was around this time in the late 1990s, natural resource officers first started carrying side arms for protection. It made perfect sense because they were dealing with armed hunters in remote back-country and there was a high degree of risk, a risk the officers had undertaken many times prior to without having side arms simply because it was their duty.

And, Madam Speaker, today's conservation officers have many duties. They are involved in and responsible for (1) parks and security—they oversee seasonal park patrol officers and campgrounds and cottage subdivisions within our provincial parks, and that includes taking care of bear problems and problem animals; they are involved in firefighting and supervising fire management teams; they are involved in forestry; they work with forestry staff,

timber companies, First Nations and other user groups to manage forest harvesting.

They work with fisheries enforcement, including sport, commercial and subsistence fisheries and they liaison with rights-based harvesters.

They lead the provincial agency for fishery and wildlife enforcement, including licence enforcement and assisting inspectors at checkpoints and aquatic invasive species checkpoints.

* (10:40)

They assist RCMP in search and rescue operations on land and water. Many people don't know this, but they also have a K-9 unit. They perform public outreach and other education programs that educate young people on conservation.

They do trapline enforcement, and they maintain harvesting statistics. In this particular case, that duty of theirs hits close to home because annually we have a fur table in Thompson that's held by the Trappers Association, and the furs are managed, counted and handled by natural resource officers. And this is one of the few remaining fur tables in North America, and it's very successful, and it's one chance where trappers can work directly with first—with conservation officers and the Trappers Association when they come in to town from remote parts of the province and other provinces and get help and advice and work together.

Conservation officers, they also maintain their firearm certification, as the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) mentioned today, and they provide recommendations for regulation and management of the province's natural resources to the authorities to make policy and pass bills.

In many instances, conservation officers are the first on the scene of incidents such as highway traffic accidents, drownings and wildlife collisions. They assist the police and protect the public whenever called upon to do so.

There is also the added risk of coming into contact with hazardous substances these days such as fentanyl and carfentanil when responding to emergencies.

Among other numerous duties as assigned, they are on call day and night, and they risk their lives whenever they respond.

Like all enforcement agents, they are easily identifiable as enforcement officers by bad guys and

risk resentment, retaliation and revenge from criminals. They are also potential—there is also potential for members to experience PTSD from some of the incidents that they witness, and on top of that, they have families that worry about them.

Today, I want to honour the conservation officers' colleagues from the past that have been—that have fallen. As mentioned by the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere), there were six members: Kenneth Skwark, Keith Bartley, Robert Logan, Allan Assiniboine, William McLeod and Charles Morrish.

I encourage all members to support this bill, and I sincerely hope it passes today because we need to recognize and honour the sacrifice of conservation officers, their fallen comrades and their families, and what better way to do that than to pass Bill 201 today, recognizing October 1st every year as their day so it may serve as a timeless tribute to what all Manitobans feel, what we believe and what we know: that whenever called upon, our conservation officers will do what they have always done: their full duty.

In honour of the sacrifice, dedication and commitment of all Manitoba conservation officers in performing their duties and protecting our people, our wildlife and our province, I want to welcome the following officers to the Chamber: retired officer, Andre Desrosiers; Chad Moir with the K-9 unit; Dave Cove from Selkirk; Joe Johannesson from Winnipeg; and my brother Allen Bindle from the Lundar office. Please join me in welcoming them to the gallery today.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Well, Madam Speaker, welcome to day four of the emergency session that the Premier (Mr. Pallister) has called back. And I don't know if the Premier had come out and said that passing the member for Selkirk's bill was something they'd overlooked and this was the emergency. We might have a very different situation today, this afternoon and over the next couple of weeks.

This bill would proclaim October 1st in each year as Manitoba conservation officers recognition day. I can say, quite clearly, that our NDP team supports the great work of our conservation officers, and we will continue to do so. And many colleagues after myself do wish to stand up and put some words on the record about how important conservation officers are to the province of Manitoba and how

this government needs to respect the work of conservation officers and other public employees.

And I was—I have to admit, I was quite concerned by something that the member for Thompson (Mr. Bindle) stood up and said in his comments because it's not the first time I've heard it. The member for Thompson has put on the record that there is some sort of time limit on this bill passing. And I don't fully—I don't believe that the member for Thompson understands how private members work in this Legislature. Every member of this Legislature, elected to this place, is entitled to speak to bills. I planned to speak to this bill and put on the record how important conservation officers are. I have other colleagues who wish to speak to this as well.

I know it's not the first time that government backbenchers have tried to say there is some magical time limit that must be followed. I don't know if, through their backbenchers, this government is now trying to invoke closure and trying to prevent members from having their opportunity to speak, but I can put on the record that the member for Thompson is absolutely wrong. The member should know that there are some other very important private members' bills that will yet be debated, whether it's Thursday, whether it's next Tuesday, whether it's in July, whether it's in October and that does not allow him to prevent others from speaking.

And, of course, I know the member for Radisson (Mr. Teitsma) did the same thing a couple of weeks ago by standing up and saying that somehow there was a magical—I don't know what happens, the chamber of doom—if something doesn't pass when there's still members who want to speak. I would like to put on the record that that is absolutely wrong and also undemocratic.

So I'm going to use my time to speak, as will my colleagues—*[interjection]*

Well, and I know I hear some chattering, and even the member for Selkirk was unable to explain why, when this bill passed through the Legislature last time, when every member who wanted to have the chance to speak, to recognize conservation officers, why it passed second reading and then nothing happened. And the member himself even said, well, goodness, MGEU thought it passed. How could that happen? Well, the simple answer is that nobody in this government ever talks to MGEU, so how would they know what had happened to the bill?

And here's a bill that was actually put on the Notice Paper on the second day of the legislative session. That was November 22nd, 2017, and then absolutely nothing was done by this member or any member of the government until yesterday, day 61 of the session, when the member introduced and now we are debating it today. And, again, he was asked for some explanation as to why the bill sat on the Order Paper for some 60 sitting days, and the member doesn't have a reason.

The real reason is that even though this government likes to talk a good game, when it actually comes to supporting our public employees, when it comes to supporting the work of conservation officers and others who keep us and our environment safe, they do not make it a priority.

Manitoba, we all know—*[interjection]*

Well, and I hear members complaining again, and maybe if one of them wants to stand up on a point of order and explain how it was that this bill sat on the Order Paper for 60 sitting days without the member even being able to stand up and introduce it for second reading, I would be interested and I think it'd be enlightening for this Chamber. But unless they're going to do that, I would like to use the rest of my time to speak about this bill.

Manitoba is home to beautiful natural spaces and we want to protect these treasured spaces and ensure they're there not just for our current generation but for future generations to enjoy, and we recognize the work that conservation officers do to enforce the laws that protect our natural resources, educate the public and also assist police where need be and, if necessary, attend at court, give evidence, assist Crown attorneys in securing convictions of people who do things that are against the law, that endanger our environment, that endanger animals or even endanger people.

And we know that conservation officers are crucial to Manitoba's conservation strategy, and that's why their role was better described and expanded in 2015, which I know members opposite have talked about. That's when The Conservation Officers Act was passed, and what that law did is it recognized conservation officers as law enforcement officers with the powers of peace officers, and that was intended to reflect the many difficult jobs they do, and sometimes—I think we can agree across this House—sometimes they face dangers out in the field and we wanted to make sure that that was recognized, and members of the then-opposition had

every chance to speak on that bill. They did, and I do believe that that bill passed with the agreement of all parties of the House because I think there was an understanding of just how important these individuals are.

* (10:50)

And our point is that the government should be supporting, attracting and retaining quality conservation officers to protect and preserve Manitoba's natural wonders. Instead, the government moves in the other direction. And we know that they have now said—without consultation, without negotiation—that they are going to freeze public service sector salaries. And that includes every conservation officer in Manitoba. And we know that there are some public servants, including conservation officers, that have a wealth of experience, that have a wealth of knowledge, that have the ability to pass on their knowledge to newer officers. Well, I've heard the number of them are actually choosing to retire because now they're saying, if the government's going to impose a wage freeze, then maybe I'm going to retire, and I will just start collecting my pension and maybe I'll move on and do something else. And that's a shame. And that's not necessary. *[interjection]*

Well, I know the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) was going to stand up and give some kind of explanation as to why the bill—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: —sat there for 60 days, but I don't think he has one either. And—*[interjection]* Well, I'll let the member for Steinbach speak after I'm finished. And I'm sure he'll put some good thoughts on the record. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan: We also are concerned that there are individuals within Conservation—conservation officers who may choose to do other things. I've met—in the course of my time as the Attorney General of Manitoba, I met police officers, whether with the City of Winnipeg police or with the RCMP who said, you know, I've already been out there in dangerous situations. I've actually had to deal with some very difficult things. If this government's not going to respect my work, then maybe I'm going to consider becoming a police officer, and that many of the skills that these women and men have are very portable to working in another form of law enforcement.

The concern, as well, is that highly trained conservation officers may depart Manitoba and go elsewhere for better-paying jobs in other jurisdictions which, again, is a shame. And not only is it detrimental to preserving Manitoba's animals and plants, but it's a strain on recruitment and training resources for the province when highly trained individuals leave the workforce.

Now we know that the last Sunday in September is a very important day in the Legislature. It's peace officers' memorial day. And I don't know—I expect a number of members of this House haven't yet had the opportunity to attend the peace officers' memorial which, in good weather, happens on the south side of the Legislature; in inclement weather, it happens inside our building, Madam Speaker. And I would encourage every single member of the Legislature to attend that memorial because it is a chance for all of us—the public, but also as legislators—to acknowledge and to thank those servants of safety who've given their lives to their work.

And the peace officers' memorial day includes not just police—whether it's the Winnipeg city police, other municipal police forces, the RCMP—but also conservation officers. And as we know, there are six individuals who have lost their lives. I do thank the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) for putting the names on the record, and I did not know that he actually knew three of the conservation officers who've lost their lives, and that is something new that we all have the chance to learn in this House every day.

Correctional officers, sheriff's officers all have the opportunity to be recognized, and I think it is important that we give recognition. But along with giving recognition, we need to give respect. And that is what I think this government needs to focus on.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I rise in support of conservation officers in our province.

I welcome those who are here, and your role is tremendously important. The background that you need to have to do the work that you do with the detailed knowledge of, you know, the biology and management of fisheries and wildlife and endangered species of biodiversity, managing forest fires, working with people and communications, courage, persistence—these are all attributes and

important characteristics of people like yourselves who are conservation officers.

We respect you for the tremendous work that you do over a very large area in all parts of our province and thank you for your commitment to working with others, to being a part of what we are now involved with in terms of the reconciliation efforts and so on, but working together with others all over this province is tremendously important.

In contrast to the member for Minto (Mr. Swan), I'm actually appreciative of the fact that this was brought forward during our emergency session. Conservation officers often deal with emergencies, and so it is quite appropriate and I think that it is fitting that we have this dealt with at an emergency session.

I think that the importance of the work that you do is major, that we need to be planning ahead of time for when we have this conservation day so that it can be—a knowledge of the conservation officers and recognition of conservation officers can be not just in schools but in the Legislative Chamber and in activities throughout the province, and I think it would be important to do that. It is important for young people to see the potential and the importance of working in the field of conservation. I think we have many, many young people who are very interested and concerned about the environment, and with more understanding of the role that conservation officers play, I think we could attract people to this field.

I think, in order to do this, we need to provide a vision for the future and improved funding to replace some of the cutbacks. I notice that even in this year's budget, sadly, that the regional support services had two FTEs cut at headquarters and six FTEs cut in the regions around the province. Not all of those will be conservation officers, but many will be people who support conservation officers, and we need to be thinking about how we build, not how we reduce. And so that would be my commitment to hoping that we can use this conservation officers recognition day as a springboard to building a success in the future.

With those few words, I want to thank the conservation officers who are here for coming and recognize the important work that they do.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci. Miigwech.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm pleased to put some words on the record, Madam Speaker, this morning, on Bill 201. First and foremost, I do

certainly want to recognize all of the COs that we have in the gallery today and just say how much I appreciate their work and their sacrifice, and understanding that often the paths that we choose come from a deep sense of conviction and passion and compassion for our environment or whatever you choose. So I do want to just acknowledge each and every one of you today.

I do actually want to acknowledge Mr. Chad Moir. I did—I don't know if he remembers, we had the opportunity to meet a couple of years ago when he came with his canine partner Hunter. And that was—somebody had told me that there was a canine unit in the building, and every time there's a canine unit member in the building, I run around the building trying to find him or her. And so, if you recall, you allowed me to take a picture with Hunter, and I do really appreciate that.

And perhaps Mr. Moir would be interested that last week we were here debating a private member's bill on an appreciation day recognizing animal rescue and those on the front line. And, unfortunately, that bill was talked out by members opposite. *[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: And so I think that Mr. Moir would be interested in that.

I do want to just put on the record, Madam Speaker, that we were—

* (11:00)

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

* * *

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Acting Government House Leader): I'm wondering if you could canvass the House, please, to see if there's leave to discuss the resolution put forward by the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) on the topic of Lyme disease.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave to resume debate on the private member's resolution on Lyme disease? *[Agreed]*

DEBATE ON RESOLUTIONS

Res. 18—Recognizing Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention

Madam Speaker: We will then move to resolution, Recognizing Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention, standing in the name of the honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview, who has nine minutes remaining.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): I'm pleased to get up to speak to this resolution brought forward by the member from Emerson. I think all of us would agree that this is a critically important issue, a very serious matter and one that we need, as elected representatives, need to take seriously. And so I compliment the member for Emerson for bringing it forward and offering us the chance to have a good debate here in the House, both last week and again this week about this matter of—very important to the health and well-being of Manitobans and frankly, Canadians, as the nature of Lyme disease spreads its way through our environment finding new places to grow and develop and evolve. And these are things that, quite rightly, require a higher sense of awareness, and a higher sense of action, and to be proactive on an issue of—that has quite significant consequences for public health and for individual health.

Mr. Doyle Pivniuk, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

And so we were glad to be able to spend some time debating it last week and happy to do so, again, this week. The difference, of course, being that last week was the regular session, I think, and if I'm not mistaken, and this week, we're in an emergency circumstance—an emergency session. And as serious—and I want to say, as serious as this issue is, I'm not sure that this particular resolution itself meets the test of requiring an emergency session.

An Honourable Member: Or even urgency.

Mr. Allum: Well, my friend from Tyndall Park says, maybe it doesn't even meet the test of urgency, but you know, we have an obligation here to be on the front edge of these issues and to make sure that we're speaking about them. Raising awareness. And most importantly, doing the kind of work that's necessary first of all to treat Lyme disease in the event that someone suffers from it. And always more important, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to prevent it, if at all possible. We on this side of the House believe wholly and completely in prevention on a wide range of issues, including this one.

And so, you know, I think that there's ample reason for us to get up and debate it and discuss it, but I have to say, I don't know that this meets the actual test of an emergency session. Calling the House back, into session—I don't know that this really meets that test. But I'll leave it for others to decide in the absence of the government having other issues to discuss, who instead need to recycle issues from week to week. We, as the loyal opposition, will, of course, do our best to put some words on the record and to—and take these issues seriously, but I again fall back to the point that I'm not sure that this is really something that requires an emergency session, although I want to make it absolutely clear that this is a serious matter for all Manitobans.

I do want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the debate, frankly, got off to a bad start last week. The member—member from Emerson put this forward, I assumed, in good faith, because he wanted his colleagues, all 57 of us, to debate it and to talk about it. And yet he spent most of his speech last week trashing the NDP, trashing the opposition and actually undermining the very seriousness of the question that he—and resolution that he was putting before the House. And I found that to be quite disappointing, and I have to say, and it seems to be endemic on the government side, that members ought not—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. There's a lot of conversation happening in the Chamber right now, so if we can just quiet down a bit and listen to the speaker.

The honourable member for Fort Garry-Riverview.

Mr. Allum: —that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I was saying that members ought not—government members feel that we ought not to engage in debate in the House, that we should merely roll over and pass the things that they put forward, not do our job on this side of the House, on behalf of Manitobans but instead, should simply roll over and, as a result, undermine my responsibility as the elected member for Fort Garry-Riverview to get up in this House and put words on the record that I hope convey where my constituents are at on issues of public importance.

And so I find it always disappointing that whenever members on our side get up to speak, we're accused of some kind of unrighteous behaviour when we're, fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all we're

doing is for—fulfilling our democratic obligations, our democratic responsibility, our democratic duty. And so I kind of take exception when my time to speak is undermined by the government's—government members' desire just to bulldoze their way through a legislative agenda.

And then I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, after last week, there I found myself down in the cafeteria with other members of the public, and who comes in but the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), who proceeded to—

An Honourable Member: Point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Rossmere—member for—MLA for 'osmer' on a point of order.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield (Rossmere): Resolution before the House this morning is on the topic of Lyme disease. It's quite literally a life-and-death issue for some people, and member opposite seems to be waxing eloquent about all manner of grievances between the parties and, you know, they may be legitimate or not, I'm not sure but, certainly, that's not the topic before the House this morning, and I would like to ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you wouldn't encourage the member to come back to the topic at hand, which is of interest to people, I believe, some of them even in the gallery this morning.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable opposition House leader—

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Miigwech, Deputy—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On a point of—same point of order.

Ms. Fontaine: On the—yes, miigwech.

Well, I appreciate my colleague's, you know, brief remarks in respect of the member for—

An Honourable Member: Fort Garry-Riverview.

Ms. Fontaine: Fort Garry-Riverview, thank you.

I would advise the House, and I would have to disabuse that in the sense that the member is simply making the connection between a lot of the actions or lack of—lack thereof, on the part of members opposite and certainly of government, in respect of how we

actually do support Manitobans, the myriad of needs that Manitobans have, including, Deputy Speaker, those Manitobans with Lyme disease. You can't just silo the discussion solely to just this piece and divorced from what the actions of the government is doing, that actually is having a fundamental impact on Manitobans with Lyme disease and, again, Manitobans with a myriad of different health issues that are facing.

So you can't really see one without the other, and so I would suggest to the House and to you, my Deputy Speaker, that he is talking to the resolution on hand and that his—actually, his comments are quite pertinent and it would do well for members opposite to actually listen to what the member's talking about because the member doesn't just talk from, you know, no sense of knowledge on what's going on. In fact, he's talking from, and every member on this side of the House, every time we get up and speak, we are talking about—

* (11:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Yes.

Ms. Fontaine: Okay, I see that I'm being told to wrap it up, and I will wrap it up.

So I would just say, Deputy Speaker, that I would like to disabuse my colleague across the way. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the point of order, I would—I just want to make—warn everybody there's no point of order, but be relevant to what they were talking on the resolution. And I just encourage everyone to stay with the topic.

* * *

Mr. Allum: I thank my friend from Rossmere for that interjection and for the wise words put on the record by—from my friend from St. Johns.

I mean, the point that I was simply trying to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that if the member from Emerson wants us to support a bill or a resolution that he puts forward on what I think we've said is a very, very serious matter, then he needs to go back and reread his copy of Dale Carnegie's book, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Because getting up and trashing the opposition prior to making a speech about—or, in the course of making a speech about a resolution and then, as I was saying, going down into the cafeteria where there's a bunch of people from the public there, as well as myself, and again trashing the NDP for utilizing their right to

speak on a matter of public importance and on a resolution put forward in this House and not simply rolling over for the bulldozing-type aspects of the government's agenda—well, I don't think that that's appropriate. And that's all I was trying to say in that because I think it is important, if we really do genuinely want to work together in this House—both to pass resolutions of this kind or to find our way through this emergency session—that we put aside some of the rhetoric and actually engage in genuine and meaningful debate.

Now I can say just on Lyme disease itself that I think that there is a critical amount of information already available. Annual reports were put out in two-fifteen and 2016 on the disease and its evolution here in Manitoba—first discovered in 1989 and then—and growing, and in growing in probably in relationship quite definitely to climate change, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So these are critical issues and something that we take very, very seriously. I think the government—our government and then it seems to me that the—a successor government has done some good work in that regard. If you go to the website, you can learn about symptoms and causes and treatment and prevention. You can learn about a BLT, which—not a bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwich but, in fact, the black-legged tick that is responsible for Lyme disease.

So we take these issues very seriously, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we're glad we're—we had the opportunity—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Dennis Smook (La Verendrye): I would like to start by welcoming the guests that are in the gallery today to listen to this debate.

It is an honour to be in this Chamber this morning and have the opportunity to speak to this important resolution brought forward by my colleague, the member for Emerson. This resolution recognizing Lyme disease awareness and prevention—it is one that is extremely important for Manitobans, and I would urge members opposite to support this resolution.

I would like to thank the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) for bringing this resolution forward. This is actually the third time the member has raised this issue in this Chamber. The first time was when we were in opposition. The NDP spoke it out; I don't know why. Now, just in this last session,

the member brought it forward again and, once again, the NDP spoke it out. Maybe the third time will be the lucky charm.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the members opposite would just read the text of the resolution, they will see how important it is to inform Manitobans on the effects of Lyme disease. When Lyme disease is left untreated, it can have severe consequences for the patient, causing arthritis, heart 'palpitations', brain inflammation, nerve pain, dizziness, blurred vision and a compromised immune system. Every year, we are seeing more and more cases of Lyme disease. In 2009, there was one confirmed case of Lyme disease and in 2016, there were 52 confirmed and probable Lyme disease cases.

Lyme disease is difficult to diagnose, currently has no cure, and successful treatment of symptoms can take a long time. The highest incident rate based on region of residence for confirmed and probable cases has been in southern Manitoba, in the Southern Health RHA.

Lyme disease has become a public health concern for many Manitobans. People who have not known anyone with Lyme disease probably are not concerned. They have not seen first-hand how severe the disease can be.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are a number of guests in the gallery that have first-hand experience with this disease. A young girl contacted Lyme disease in 2014 when she was 12 years old. She used to be a competitive swimmer, competing across western Canada, but once she contacted the disease, within months she could no longer swim nor attend school. She has missed grade 7 and grade 8 because she was too sick to attend school. She is currently in her second semester of grade 10. At the beginning of this semester, she relapsed and has missed considerable amount of school once again.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I've seen other Manitobans with Lyme disease, severe cases of it. When you see someone in a wheelchair that is barely a shadow what they once were, their legs are thinner than most people's arms, makes you think what can we do to help. There are many cases of Lyme disease out there that affect the health of Manitobans. This resolution is a start to making more Manitobans are aware of what a tick bite can possibly bring with it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how many of us even know the proper way to remove a tick that has attached itself to us? Most just grab it and squeeze it so they

get a good hold on it and pull. Wrong. When you squeeze the tick, you push what is in the tick back into you.

This resolution is all about raising awareness of the effects Lyme disease and how important it is to recognize it sooner than later. Lyme disease is best treated in early stages of infection with a two- to three-week course of antibiotics, but the longer left untreated, the more severe it can become.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the number of cases of Lyme disease increasing every year. Not only do we have more cases of Lyme disease, we are also seeing other tick-borne diseases on the increase in Manitoba, along with new species of ticks that are making their way to Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would encourage members opposite to support this resolution. Is it a—it is a non-partisan resolution putting the health of Manitobans first. Should the NDP once again choose to speak it out, we can let Manitobans be the judges of who is concerned about them.

Thank you, Madam—Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): What a pleasure it is to rise this morning, and a very important topic, indeed, for us to be considering here before the Legislature, certainly something that is very much a concern for myself as both an outdoorsman and as a father, somebody who takes a lot of pride in spending as much time out in the bush with my kids and with my family as possible. And, in fact, I appreciated that the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) spoke just before me, because, as members of the Chamber will know, we have a family cottage down in the Sandilands, and absolutely phenomenal, gorgeous country out there.

We were just out there this spring and spent a lot of time cutting wood and spending time in the bush, and, of course, the kids just get out there and they get out into the bush and that's one of their favourite things to do. And now my daughter's climbing trees, much too high she's climbing for my comfort level, but she seems confident and I like to encourage that.

But, as she's doing that, of course—and this, as I said, was early spring, so this was prime time for ticks here in Manitoba and for the kind of ticks that carry Lyme disease. So this was a major concern for us. So besides the climbing too high in the tree, the ticks were the No. 1 concern for us, and so right away our first task after getting the kids out of the bush and cleaned up a little bit was to not only check

for ticks ourselves, because that is important, but also to teach them how to properly check and be aware of how serious it is to have a tick, and especially for a tick to bite and become embedded.

* (11:20)

I appreciated, as well, the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Smook) talking about the proper way to remove a tick and, again, how to be very cautious and careful about when doing that.

So we certainly understand, as I said, I understand as a father how important that is for my children. But for myself, you know, maybe I'm not as cautious as I should be, and this is part of the process, I think, we're undertaking here in the Legislature and throughout society, about educating and teaching people.

Now, I don't get grossed out by ticks. In fact, I remember a camping trip, a canoe trip—this was a number of years ago in the Whiteshell—and I counted 36 ticks that I pulled off myself, which—I can hear the murmur in the Legislature as some people squirming in their seats. To be honest with you, it did not bother me one bit, but, again, I knew that it was important to deal with it, and as the member for La Verendrye says, I should be concerned about that because that is a big concern.

But, as I said, I think there is a higher awareness now, not only in Manitoba but throughout North America. And it wasn't too long ago that—when I was sort of going down the rabbit hole of research into Lyme disease and some of the effects, and this was when I was the critic for Health at the time, that I read some studies and some reports that were out of the United States, and I wish I had that specific information for the House. Maybe one of the members that's speaking after me will be able to expand on this, but it's in the Midwest and I believe it's in—I want to say in Illinois, but I think that's wrong, and maybe members in the gallery will be able to share this information with us, but they consider that the epicentre for the Lyme disease epidemic, and it's absolutely unbelievable the number of cases that they've had there.

But again, the education that's come out of that and the awareness that's come out of that has been spectacular. It's really moved, I think, the needle in terms of where—not only people understand for themselves and can hopefully protect themselves better, can have a better awareness and then be more proactive about their own health, you know, again,

making sure that they don't get exposed to ticks, then making sure if they are exposed, that they don't get bitten or that they're checked and dealt with, but if they do get bitten, understanding the telltale signs of the, you know, the bullseye or other factors which, again, I understand are not always present, so that's what makes Lyme disease that much more difficult to diagnose and treat.

But I think there is a larger awareness about it and I think people are becoming more and more aware of it and understanding that, you know, when you think that there might be an issue when you've had that exposure, you know, and again, there's, you know, a hundred different symptoms of Lyme disease, so it's incredibly hard to diagnose and treat, but I think there's a more of an understanding from the individual's side and from the medical community of how important it is to understand these symptoms, to be able to treat them and treat them early because that is the key to treating Lyme disease.

So I mention all of this, Mr. Speaker, primarily because this speaks very much to this idea of a recognition day. Are we talking about a day? This is a day?—[interjection]—a month—a recognition month, and I'm glad that the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) has brought it forward in that way because I think having an entire month where the government could be proactive, go out, spread the word, spread information. I guess it would also be helpful for the medical community to join in with that process in educating people. But just more awareness is, you know, exactly where we need to go with regards to this issue because there is certainly more that needs to be done. This is a process that needs to be expanded, and not just on the, you know, awareness in terms of the disease and understanding the treatments, but improving those treatments through research, you know, working towards a true vaccine for Lyme disease.

You know, another factor—well, in fact, just yesterday—literally yesterday, Mr. Speaker, we pulled a nice big juicy tick right off of the dog in my living room, and we thought maybe the tick season had been over because we were spending some time in the bush and, like, it could—we were at—we were in Birds Hill park, and you couldn't have asked for a better tick environment. It was, like, knee-high grass, big thick grass, a little bit of bush around it, and my kids are going back and forth and back and forth through it—right—which, again, I encourage and I

appreciate. I love that they're outdoors and they're doing that. But, you know, the dogs were out there. I guess one got on them.

We thought that we didn't see any on the dogs or on the kids before this, but again, we got one just yesterday, pulled off the big tick. But the dog had the—has the treatment for it, has the, I guess, some kind of vaccine or repellent that we get every year and—but that's for animals, right? So that does not apply to people.

And that's why it's so important that the research continues, because I think there's a lot of work that can be done. And I know that there have been major strides, but again, this is the kind of bill—or the—sorry—the kind of resolution that could help move the needle on that as well and allow for, you know, more recognition and more effort and potentially more money that goes towards research, that people either are willing to donate, that government is willing to support, that strides can be made.

So I'm very happy to speak to this in terms of support for this initiative. This is something that is near and dear to my heart as a—like I said, as an outdoorsman and somebody who has children. And it is just one of many, you know, diseases and issues that we can see for spending time outside, but it is such an important one. With cases on the rise, with suspected cases on the rise, this couldn't be more important. So I think it's an important resolution to continue to move forward through the process.

Now, I see I only have a very short period of time left, Mr. Deputy Speaker, so I did want to address the idea that this is now coming forward in an emergency session of the Legislature. And, you know, this just goes to show where the priorities are of this government. You know, we asked what was the reason for this emergency session. They said, well, it's an important—you know, financial matters.

We have yet to get to those in terms of business of the House, but when we have time in this Legislature, when we come together as legislators for private members' business, there are often good ideas, and those ideas come from both sides of the House, I would contend, Mr. Speaker.

And yet, time and time again, the government refuses to support good work that's being done on the opposition bench, as they talked out a number of resolutions and bills last week. I find that unfortunate and I think it's unfortunate moving forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time is up.

Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River): You know, just in reference, this is a true emergency session and this topic of Lyme disease is an emergency for many people, including our guests, who I'd like to welcome here today: Heather Allan, who is a caregiver; Ryus St. Pierre, a geologist who has Lyme disease; Marnie Le Page, a caregiver and mother of Brooke Le Page, who is with us today, the daughter who missed two and a half years of school without Lyme disease—now, if that's not an emergency, I do not know what is—and Wendy Falkner, who has Lyme disease; and Marnie Omnichinski [*phonetic*], who also has. And I welcome you today for this very, very important debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm pleased to put a few words on record today. Early detection and treatment, as in many diseases, applies to Lyme disease. Lyme disease became provincially reportable in 1999 and nationally reportable in 2009. The public health impact posed by tick-borne diseases continues to increase in our province.

These increases can largely be attributed to continued expansion of the blacklegged tick throughout southern Manitoba. The number and distribution of risk areas for blacklegged ticks has steadily increased with risk areas from Ontario border to Brandon area, north from the US to Riding Mountain National Park.

* (11:30)

Infection rates have increased tenfold from five cases in 2009 to 52 in 2016. The highest risk is in the spring and early summertime from May to June. Lyme disease has no cure, and successful treatment of symptoms can take a long time. When left untreated, the bacterial infection can spread into the joints, heart, nervous system, causing more severe and dangerous symptoms like arthritis, heart palpitations, brain inflammation, nerve pain, dizziness, blurred vision and a compromised immune system.

Being informed of the disease and knowledge of ways to take preventative measures is crucial to avoiding infection. In today's world of outdoor enthusiasts, tick checks, bathing soon after coming indoors, is a great way to find ticks and prevent infection.

Groups like the Manitoba Lyme Disease Group is a provincial non-profit run by volunteers and provides support to Manitobans and focuses on education and awareness. Another organization, the Canadian Lyme Disease Foundation, is a registered non-profit organization run by volunteers from across the country. The organization wears four hats: advocacy, giving a voice to Lyme disease victims, research, literature review and awareness.

With changing climates, it's almost certainty we will see the movement of certain species of insects move northward and with it carry the risk of increased Lyme disease frequency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this resolution brings light to the issue of those suffering with Lyme disease and their families that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognizes the importance and severity of this disease. Raising awareness of the effects of this disease, encouraging better treatment and diagnosis of infection, and promoting prevention strategies are the objectives of this resolution. Knowing the diversity of ticks out there that have bitten, a simple procedure of saving the specimen can be a first important step in quick treatment of a tick-borne disease.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this morning I spoke to Amanda Stevenson [*phonetic*]. Amanda Stevenson [*phonetic*] wanted me to share her story today to the legislators to see what an emergency this is in her life. Amanda [*phonetic*], on May 12th, had a tick in her scalp. She said it was there a maximum of 12 hours, and now she cannot work. She lays down frequently, cannot think; she's forgetting. She's got neurological symptoms that are worsening. She researched and she tried to find specialists. Two to three—she indicated that she was given medication to two to three weeks, doxycycline for the—in the care, the acute treatment, and then she contacted ILADS. It's a society of doctors who will recommend close proximity, and she has gotten some direction from them. I asked Amanda [*phonetic*], I said, Amanda [*phonetic*], what do we need in this province? And she said doctors must be trained by physicians that have experience, see the variability in ways to help them. Short-course action is not sufficient. You got to treat the person and not the idea. It's not the same for everybody. Please share my story, she said, so we move fast on this terrible disease. And if that's not an emergency for this young lady, I do not know what is. The resolution is important to the health of all Canadians. It's important all Manitobans are aware

that the devastating consequences of this disease, the long-term implications of Lyme disease to an individual can be severe. I ask all members to support this resolution. Let's sow the seed for public awareness, early diagnosis and immediate treatment and move on to the next stage of this very important resolution. Thank you.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): So I'm, again, once again this morning pleased to put some official words on the record for the member for Emerson's (Mr. Graydon) private member's resolution, Recognizing Lyme Disease Awareness and Prevention. I do just want to take a moment to recognize all of our guests in the gallery and just say on a personal note, I noted—or I think we all saw in the House the emotions that this issue brings to Manitobans, not only in the House—but I certainly do want to just recognize those moments of vulnerability and acknowledgement of what this does in people's individual lives, particularly when it involves our children.

I actually do remember, several years back, I used to host a lot of indigenous folks from across the country at my house because there were a lot of folks that would want to travel to different—you know, either ceremonies of powwows or activities that were going on across the country. And I always opened up my house for individuals that were struggling financially because I happened to have an extra bedroom and a big basement.

And one summer I opened up my house to a single father and his daughter. He had a beautiful daughter; she was about nine years old. And they came from BC. They were indigenous from out in BC. And so they spent about a week with me and—or, actually, maybe it was about two weeks that they spent with me. And, you know, we became pretty close and became extended relatives. And went back to BC, and only months later—and at the time, my son—my oldest son was about four or five. And so, this gentleman's daughter—who, again, was about eight or nine—and my son developed a very good, close friendship. And only a couple of months later, this little girl, I was made aware, had bitten—had been bitten by a tick and actually died. She actually passed away from that bite.

And so I know—and I know how devastating that is. Obviously, that—the most extreme on the spectrum of the results of what can happen in respect of ticks. And certainly we know that Lyme disease can have a devastating impact on individuals' lives.

But, again, as I said in respect of when it involves our children—so I actually just do want to take a moment to put that story on the official record because I have never—we've lost contact, me and that father, but I've actually never forgotten him, and I often think about him during tick season because I always am very cognizant of when my boys were younger and going out into the bush. We hike quite a bit. We go back to my First Nation community of Sagkeeng First Nation and participate in Treaty Days and, as well, going out with women to go pick traditional medicines. And, when you go pick traditional medicines like sweetgrass—and sweetgrass grows quite long, and you're very crouched low so that you can pick the sweetgrass from the root—once you're finished, you're actually covered in ticks.

So I—as I said, I—during tick season, I often think about this dad, and I just want to acknowledge him here today and acknowledge his little girl who was just a sweet, beautiful little girl.

So, I do also want to say, and I think that it's important to put on the record, deputy House Speaker, that, you know, we are here during an emergency session, and we've just heard from the member from—we've just heard that this is the emergency for why we are here on this extended—so that's good to know because we were curious on this side of the House why—what the emergency was, other than the budget bill which we're still waiting for.

But I do just want to put on the record here that it's important for people to recognize and for Manitobans to recognize that members opposite are in government. They are a part of the Pallister government. And, as we've heard quite often, they do have a substantial majority. We recognize that on this side of the House, that they do have a substantial majority, and you are in government.

And so alongside that, with great responsibility also comes certain privileges. And one of the privileges of being in government is that you have the ability to create bills, not private members' resolutions, which is basically just an agreement in the House here, but you actually have the privilege of creating bills. And so it is curious to me, respectfully, deputy House Speaker, why the member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) didn't put a private member's bill or why the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), as the Health Minister, didn't think that if this is an emergency, as is—was

noted just a couple of minutes ago, why hasn't the Health Minister put a private member's bill?

* (11:40)

And, actually, I like that there was note just a couple of minutes ago about Amanda [*phonetic*] asking Amanda [*phonetic*] what she thinks—and I would absolutely agree—Amanda [*phonetic*] says that doctors need more training in respect of Lyme disease and to get that training so that, when people present themselves, that doctors actually have that knowledge to say, you know what, we need to look immediately to see if this is Lyme disease. Absolutely, hands-down, every single member on this side of the House agrees with Amanda. [*phonetic*] Absolutely.

With that being said, training for—training doctors to have that training in respect of Lyme disease and how it presents comes resources. And so I would encourage members opposite, particularly my esteemed colleague from Steinbach, the Minister for Health—

An Honourable Member: Esteemed.

Ms. Fontaine: Esteemed—to put a government bill and introduce when we come back in the fall to ensure, first off, (a)—and I'll give some suggestions—(a) that we have recognizing Lyme disease awareness and prevention month. Great. I think that that's beautiful. But, alongside that, that the Minister of Health puts those resources for training for doctors to—[*interjection*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —get the training for Lyme disease.

As well, Deputy House Speaker, what I would also encourage the Minister for Health to do is, as was recently discussed, that they would have a Lyme disease clinic, and to get that in the bill as well. Like, I think that if the government and the member for Emerson—and the member for Emerson has direct—he can just walk over and talk to the Minister for Health. They can talk; they can go for lunch; they can talk after caucus. [*interjection*] And—well, yes, maybe in the minister's office. But they can talk and they can hash out what this extraordinary government bill can be on Lyme disease.

And I can put it on the record here that it is certainly something that I'm sure that our members would support if the Minister of Health comes next

fall with a government bill, which is guaranteed passage—that's, again, the privilege of being in government is that it is guaranteed passage. And so I think that it's important to put those records—
[interjection]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine:—those words on the record in respect of what the government can do in respect of Lyme awareness month and prevention. And then, again, ensuring that the Manitobans that, unfortunately, will present at doctor's offices or at hospitals with these symptoms, because we know—and I think that everybody can agree—we know that Lyme disease is on the rise in Manitoba and across Canada. In fact, it's on the rise most places.

And so, you know, for the Minister of Health to take this issue seriously, to put a government bill, introduce it in the next sitting, ensuring that it's one—their specified bills, that it's a designated bill, whatever they need to—their selected bills. There's a whole myriad of different tools that are at the government's disposal to make sure that this bill comes before and that we support Manitobans that are dealing with Lyme disease.

So, in a very real way, so that we're not here in extended session talking about something that they could've done, actually, in May of 2016 when they started to introduce their bills, and some of their—I would suggest—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm pleased to speak to this resolution this morning. [interjection] Well, and I hear, once again, members of the government caucus trying to silence opposition members. And I find that to be a very disappointing and a very dangerous trend, actually. If the members opposite, who apparently are not trained on how this House works, believe that they should just be able to shout out and prevent members from speaking, that's a pretty dark day for democracy in Manitoba.

So I'm pleased to be able to stand up and talk about this resolution and talk about Lyme disease awareness and prevention. And I have listened to the debates, both the other day and today, and what I think is missing from the resolution that the member from Emerson put forward is any kind of explanation as to why Lyme disease is actually increasing, not just in Manitoba, but in other Canadian provinces as well as American states. And I think that that's a very

important part of this discussion. So I'm going to use the short amount of time I have this morning to talk a little bit about that because that adds to steps that can be taken by people and steps that could be taken by governments to try to prevent the spread of Lyme disease so that we don't have more Manitobans contracting a very dangerous and difficult disease. We know that Lyme disease can manifest itself in almost an infinite number of ways, which the people who've shared their stories, people who've shared their stories with me, with others, have said it is difficult to diagnose because it can manifest itself in so many different ways.

And, when I talk about why it is increasing, I do believe that the member's numbers that he puts in the resolution are correct; it's gone from one confirmed case in 2009 to 29 confirmed cases in 2017. I will also agree many other cases are unreported or unconfirmed. That actually matches the experience of our southern neighbour, Minnesota, which despite being another cold-weather jurisdiction, as Minnesotans would be quite prepared to say, they have seen Lyme disease on the increase. And why is that? Because conditions are actually getting better for ticks, which carry the disease, to thrive. There's two factors in particular, and here I'm actually quoting out of an online article posted in Sports Magazine, talking about Lyme disease. And they say there's two factors in particular that seem to be making it easier for the tick that carries Lyme disease in North America—that's the American blacklegged tick; some of us know it as the deer tick, and also in Europe, a similar cousin, the castor bean tick—the tick to spread the disease.

And one of those things is the explosion of populations of creatures on whose blood it likes to feed, and why that has happened, and I'll speak a little bit about that in the time that I have, but the other is climate change. And there is nothing in the member for Emerson's (Mr. Graydon) resolution that acknowledges that climate change has actually played a part, a major part, perhaps the most important part, in Lyme disease spreading not just in Manitoba, but to Minnesota, to Wisconsin, to other Canadian provinces. But that would be in keeping with this government's approach of ignoring the perils of climate change. Sometimes we think about the more, perhaps the more visible manifestations of polar bears that don't have enough to eat or greater examples of extreme weather. But, indeed, the fact that more Manitobans are now at risk of getting Lyme disease is every bit as much a part of climate

change as those other things. And that is because of the life cycle of the tick. And, of course, in doing the research and in looking, the tick's life cycle is actually far more complex than one might expect. We all have a natural aversion to ticks. I know, in our household, that's the case when somebody comes home and finds a tick on them, and I'm sure it's exactly the same in everybody else's household.

Ticks feed on the blood of mammals, any kind of 'manimals' pretty much. And they actually need to feed on blood to graduate from larva, the initial stage, to nymph, then from nymph to adult, the three stages of the life cycle. And females need a third blood meal to lay eggs. And all this usually happens in the space of about two years. In a colder climate, it is more difficult for all of those stages to happen within that two years. But as we see with warmer springs, where the larva can actually start to emerge sooner, and warmer falls, warmer autumns, when, indeed there is more time for mature ticks to have the chance to drink the blood of a mammal and continue on, you see how and why places like Minnesota and Manitoba are now experiencing such an increase in a difficult disease.

* (11:50)

And, when the ticks first hatch, usually in late spring, they're tiny. They're actually no bigger than the period at the end of the sentence in Hansard. And these newborn ticks are programmed to climb up on a blade of grass, as my colleague from Concordia talked about, and they simply wait there. And they wait there for an unsuspecting mammal to come by. And at that point—usually it's a small rodent or bird, but it can be a human. When somebody comes by, that tiny larva grabs hold and then after burrowing through some fur or hair, the tick finds a patch of skin and actually saws through the mammal's flesh, inserts its straw-like mouth tube and starts sucking away on the mammal's blood, and once it's gulped down its first blood meal, which takes a few days, the tick drops to the ground and it's ready to moult into the next stage of its life cycle, when it becomes a nymph.

And for Lyme transmission, it's that first contact that's critical, because a larval tick isn't born carrying the—carrying what causes Lyme disease. It needs to pick up that bacteria from a host that it's able to feed on, and only then, after reawakening as a hungry new nymph, can the tick pass Lyme on to the next host, whether it's an animal or person that it feeds on.

And then that gets to the second part of something not mentioned in the member's resolution. Who are the typical hosts? And, without knowledge, one might think that it must be deer. We know there's lots of deer around. In fact, for those of us—whether you live in an urban community or a rural community, it sure seems like there's a lot more deer than there were even a number of years ago, but deer actually are not the major mammal that results in the spreading of Lyme disease. It's actually mice. And just as there's an explosion of deer living in an urban community, I can put on the record that there has been an explosion of mice. And what is one of the major reasons that the mouse population has grown? Well, it's the destruction of habitat, of forests, where natural predators for mice—hawks, owls, other creatures that feed on mice—actually no longer have a place to live and are no longer part of the ecosystem.

So every time the government turns its back on situations occurring when forests are being destroyed, whether it's in the city of Winnipeg or whether it's outside of Winnipeg, whenever habitat is being threatened, whenever habitat is being destroyed, it is actually a boon for mice, which are pretty low on the food chain but who then become the carriers of Lyme disease and then allow any tick that feeds on them to then go and infect other people. And, indeed, although deer may be a favoured blood source for adult female ticks, mice are actually the main culprits. And so it happens that mice are thriving when we don't look after the environment. And a study in Minnesota actually suggested a rising abundance since the 1980s has been due largely to the fact that there are more and more mice.

The other piece, as I'd said, is that the milder temperatures caused by global warming are likely a big factor paving the way for the ticks' ongoing northern invasion. This government's response to climate change has been somewhere between weak and non-existent. We know that there's going to be a carbon tax—not a carbon tax coming in September 1st, as the government had wanted, but some time after that because my NDP team has stood up against that, but, unfortunately, not a single cent that is going to be collected under that tax is going to go to measures to encourage Manitobans to lessen their carbon footprint. And what a missed opportunity by this government. We hope—as the summer goes on and as the fall goes on—we hope the government will listen. We hope they will change their ways, but that won't happen unless the government actually listens and realizes that their poor decisions, their

non-existent green plan, their carbon tax which doesn't actually reduce carbon, they will only understand if they are prepared to listen that the decisions they're making are not just bad for the economy, they're also bad for people who have the misfortune of contracting Lyme disease.

So I think it's very important that we continue talking about the awareness and prevention of Lyme disease. I'm looking forward to what more of my colleagues have to say this morning, and I hope that we truly can work together to reduce the number of Manitobans who will contract a very, very difficult disease—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired.

Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas): It gives me great pleasure to stand in the House today to talk about this very important topic that we know many Manitobans, you know, have to struggle with because it is a fact of life. You know, we do live with ticks. Ticks do live in this province, and as my colleagues had said, you know, going into the bush, sometimes that's a risk. You know, you're taking your children out there; you're taking your dogs out there. Dogs actually sometimes bring those ticks into your house and they actually will release themselves from there and go and crawl on someone else. So, you know, you're taking risks all over.

We're back here in an emergency session. You know, last week—or, two weeks ago, I brought in the Pride awareness. And this government talked it out. People are committing suicide due to not being accepted. *[interjection]* And I'm not sure, maybe the member over here—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —will get up and have his time to speak. You know, he wants to shout across over here and talk about whatever he's spewing. He should have got up when he had his time but, you know, he'll sit there and continue to talk.

So, you know, when we're talking about Pride and they're yelling across here that that's not an emergency when we have people who aren't supported, recognized and are committing suicide and he's shouting across, saying that's not true. Well, I can tell you it is. I know people and students and I've worked with many people in the community who, for them, it is an emergency. So, you know, it's unfortunate that you feel that way.

So this is an awareness—you know, working in education, I've worked with many children and, in fact, I worked with a teacher that contracted Lyme disease 'uple'—up in Buffalo Point and he was off for the whole year. He started his year, he was in—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —school for maybe two months and then he was gone. And kids need stability, you know. They need to absolutely know how to prevent Lyme disease, how to take out ticks. *[interjection]* And the member from Southdale over there across is yelling across. He could have got up and had his time to speak on Lyme disease, but he sits there and, you know, yells across at me and continues to do this every time I get up, as do the member from Rossmere, you know. They had their time to speak, I don't know why they continue to—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —yell across at me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I just want to remind everyone to have decorum in this House and respect each other here. And let's just get on with debate.

Mrs. Smith: You know, it's unfortunate they can't show respect to this side of the House. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order.

Mrs. Smith: You know, they continue—*[interjection]* And now they're all clapping and cheering on that side. They had their time to speak, we weren't talking while they were speaking, but yet they can't give that same respect back. It's unfortunate, you know. *[interjection]* And the member from—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —St. Vital over there—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Again, I just want to remind everyone about decorum here. But I also want to remind the member, too, if she can stay on the topic of Lyme disease.

Mrs. Smith: I am trying to stay on the 'topit' of—topic of Lyme disease, but when I have people heckling me on the other side, that is preventing me from actually speaking and talking—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Smith: —about this.

So, as I was saying, there was a teacher in the school that I worked with. And he was there for

about two months. He had gone to Buffalo Point for one weekend where his family has a cabin. And he contracted Lyme disease. And this was a teacher that—it was a middle school. Well, actually it was a K-to-8 school, but he was involved right across, you know, every grade even though he taught grade 7, 8. Kids loved him. He was outside every recess. He was playing with them. Kids would go and spend time in his class during lunch time because he always had his class open and spent his lunch in that room with those kids. And I can tell you that it drastically affected those kids because now they had someone who was a stable person in the school now leave, someone who was a confidant, was an ally to LGBTTQ. Everyone knew that they could go into his room and discuss whatever. And, all of a sudden, you know, he was sick.

And I remember the school, and it was actually the students who created an awareness in the school

through a fundraiser that they were doing. And they wanted to fundraise some funds and raise awareness around the topic of Lyme disease and how easy it is to get Lyme disease. You know, if you go into the bush, into some tall grass, you know, your likelihood of getting Lyme disease is actually high because there's so many ticks out there and unless you're careful and you know how to remove them, that can stay in your body and it can grow and you can develop Lyme disease.

So this teacher had—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. When this matter's before the House the honourable member has five minutes remaining. The honourable member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) has five minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 12, 2018

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