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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
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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	Man.
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	Ind.
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
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
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, Hon.	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	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
YAKIMOSKI, Blair	Transcona	PC

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 4, 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

Hon. Colleen Mayer (Minister of Crown Services): Good morning, Madam Speaker.

We wish to proceed with Bill 207, the Manitoba conservation officers recognition act—[interjection]—second reading. We'd like to proceed with second reading, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 207 this morning.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 207—The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act

Madam Speaker: Therefore, moving to second reading, Bill 207, The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act.

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member from Thompson, that Bill 207, 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: I'm very pleased to once again bring The Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day Act forward. Although many members in the House have spoken to this bill in the past, all members who feel they have something significant to say in the debate on this bill will again have the opportunity to stand in this House and let all Manitobans see how they spend their important time serving.

I sincerely hope everyone who speaks today shares my determination and commitment for passing this important non-partisan bill and wants to ensure we will have unanimously passed this bill supporting and recognizing our conservation officers prior to 11 a.m. today.

Madam Speaker, as stated, the purpose of the conservation recognition day act is to recognize the history of conservation officers in Manitoba, to recognize the training and responsibilities of conservation officers in Manitoba and to recognize those who've passed in the line of duty.

Madam Speaker, conservation service has had a long history in our province, beginning in 1889, under the leadership of Conservative premier, John Norquay.

The protection of game act was one of Manitoba's first conservation acts. Over the years, legislation and enforcement powers changed, with jurisdiction flowing from the federal government to the provinces and, in 1998, game guardians became natural resource officers.

In 2015, after years of discussion with the government of the day, The Conservation Officers Act finally received royal assent. It provided that conservation officers had the powers and protections of peace officers while carrying out their enforcement duties.

Madam Speaker, as our laws and descriptions of conservation officers changed over the years, so has their responsibilities and training. Today's officers are highly trained select group of men and women prepared to tackle a diverse work environment, protecting our natural resources.

Often working independently in a physically demanding profession, today's officers are expected to work in three main areas, including law enforcement, resource management and disaster management. When performing law enforcement duties, our officers' job is to ensure that hunting, trapping and fishing are carried out safely and legally. Their job is difficult and dangerous. They can face many dangers while performing these duties.

Resource management entails working with wildlife officials, conducting population surveys, determining hunting seasons and closures, while

working closely with indigenous communities and stakeholders. It involves working with cottagers to establish safe buffer zones between cottages and 'forestez'—and forests, to help control a fire, should one get out of control.

It involves working with trappers and enforcing the use of humane traps. Our officers are attending schools to help educate our children about resource management, and they work on projects throughout Manitoba, making recommendations for resource management to minimize environmental impacts of such projects. They also provide ongoing monitoring of projects that receive government approval.

Disaster management is usually an emergency response. Whether it's a raging forest fire, a flood of the century or a train that derailed, containing products that are potentially environmental concerns, our officers are professionally trained and at the ready. They are quick to set up incident command centres, initiate evacuations, deploy resources to save lives and help mitigate the severity of any potential damage.

Members opposite have suggested my bringing this bill forward is disingenuous, using this word to try to suggest my actions are insincere. If the members who stated this for the record would take the time to look up the meaning of the word, they will find 'disingenuous' means one typically pretending to know less about something than one really does, which certainly is not the case here, Madam Speaker.

I have a great deal of personal experience and knowledge about—[*interjection*]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lagimodiere: —conservation officers, their profession, the challenges they face on a daily basis, the challenge they have faced over the years. This knowledge comes from family members and many friends in the profession.

My grandfather was a conservation officer until his untimely passing following a Bombardier accident. While on patrol, he was attempting to navigate down the banks of the Saskatchewan River when one of the skis caught a willow root. This caused the Bombardier to come to an abrupt stop. The force dislodged the load he was carrying. The load moved forward to the front of the vehicle, pinning my grandfather's head between the dash and the seat. This resulted in a fractured skull, the need for numerous surgeries and a metal plate to repair the damage. The sequela from this accident and numerous surgeries produced a debilitated man, who passed shortly from kidney failure.

Madam Speaker, my uncle also started his career and worked as a resource officer for many years before moving to other government departments. My brother-in-law was, until recently, a conservation officer. When younger, I was a firetack crew foreman, fighting fires in northern Manitoba as part of the current conservation department.

Attending the annual conservation officers' convention banquets in Manitoba has been a highlight of our years since 1986. I have had the honour to attend ceremonies welcoming our newly appointed officers, as well as attend retirement parties for our officers.

Offers—officers have invited me to observe their recertification courses for shotguns, rifles and handguns. Officers and government personnel have invited me to learn about the firefighters program in Manitoba. This fall I was invited to tour one of our firefighting warehouses.

I personally know the majority of officers and their families in the province. I have cared for many of their pets as a veterinarian. I have watched their children grow and choose careers. I have shed tears with members and family over the loss of fellow officers and family members.

* (10:10)

Madam Speaker, too often members opposite use this tactic to try to place on the record statements about members on this side being disingenuous or lacking empathy. It is important you understand these statements are not accurate.

Madam Speaker, we have gone on the record providing details of those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice in the performance of their duties. I personally knew three of these officers that lost their lives, as well, the families of two of the officers. Out of respect, the names of the fallen officers will be read into the record once again: Charles Morrish, April 3rd, 1966, drowning; William McLeod, May the 12th, 1967, complications from a gunshot wound; Allan Assiniboine, July 27th, 1976, drowning after the boat he was in exploded; Robert Logan, November 3rd, 1983, a motor vehicle accident; Keith Bartley, November 19th, 1989, a motor vehicle accident; Kenneth Skwark, June 28th, 1995, a helicopter crash.

We need to remember these brave officers all left families, colleagues and friends to mourn their passing. It's not just important to have this day for those who have lost their lives; we need to support their colleagues, their friends and their families.

Madam Speaker, today's conservation officers represent a special kind of law enforcement officer, serving from our inner cities, deep woods, boreal forests, wetlands and our lakes. Our officers patrol on foot, in watercraft, in off-road vehicles and in aircraft. They serve with courage and professionalism. The conservation officer service is in an elite, versatile team that is professionally trained and equipped.

Today, they use modern technology to solve crimes, safeguard Manitobans and protect our natural resources, enforcing the laws we, as legislators, make. Manitoba's resource officers are our provincial government's largest and most visible law enforcement representatives in Manitoba communities.

Many Manitobans and all the officers I have spoken to lately, have asked me to express how disheartening it was to see members opposite speak out this bill previously. They asked that we all get together today and pass this bill before 11 a.m. Conservation officers need a day of appreciation, need to be thanked.

All members opposite who have spoken to this bill in the past have stated they support and stand up for civil servants. Now is their opportunity to stop playing politics to show they can be trusted, to demonstrate they mean what they say and to follow through by supporting this bill.

Madam Speaker, now is the opportunity to show our conservation officers they are important, they are appreciated, they deserve a day of recognition.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Questions

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

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'd like to ask the member, how many conservation officers are currently working in Manitoba?

Mr. Alan Lagimodiere (Selkirk): We all know that, over the years, after a decade of debt, decay and decline, the previous government had seriously—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lagimodiere:—guttured the resource department. At one time, we had 140 members serving in the province, and I believe today we're around 80 members.

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Can the member for Selkirk please provide a brief description of the legislation and what it will accomplish?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Well, thank you for that question. As I stated originally, Bill 207 would designate October 1st in each year as conservation officer recognition day, and this day will be to recognize the history of conservation officers in our province. A day to recognize the training that they go through, the responsibilities conservation officers perform on a daily basis in Manitoba and a day to recognize those that have lost their lives in the performance of their duties.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Yes, I thank the member for introducing the bill, and I'd like to know just what measures the member is planning next October 1st if this bill passes so that conservation officers can be recognized on that particular day, and what measures will be taken to create better awareness of the roles of conservation officers?

Mr. Lagimodiere: Well, I thank the member opposite for that question, and I have discussed the plans of what would happen with conservation officers recognition day, not only with the conservation officers in the province, with schools, with stakeholders, with the department and many Manitobans the very first time I introduced this bill.

However, today it appears it's somewhat premature because we still haven't even had the support of the opposition to get this passed.

So let's get something on the record once we get this passed.

Ms. Fontaine: So I just want to take a quick moment to disabuse the member for indicating that we haven't supported it. We've actually passed it twice. It's not our fault if your boss doesn't call it.

And, secondly, Madam Speaker, I want to disabuse the fact that, in fact, it is your government that is not filling positions currently available for conservation officers.

So I would ask the member: What's he going to do to get his boss to actually fill those current vacant positions?

Madam Speaker: Just a reminder to the member that when putting questions forward it should be through the Speaker in a third-party manner, please.

Mr. Lagimodiere: Madam Speaker, I think it's time that members opposite stand up and take responsibility for the problems they created in the province of Manitoba here.

For instance, borrowing money to the point that our interest rates today and the amount we have to pay to our debt amounts to about \$1 billion a year, Madam Speaker. We could do a lot with that money, bringing in services for Manitobans, supporting our civil servants, more money for our hospitals, more money for our educational departments. That was a problem that they created. They need to take responsibility for that. Thank you.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I know throughout the House here we all talk—all sides talk about the importance of consultation.

I just wonder if the member from Selkirk can tell us who he consulted with and what were their responses.

Mr. Lagimodiere: Well, of course, initially I consulted with the conservation officers in Manitoba. I also consulted with the Manitoba lodge owners association, many of our grand chiefs in Manitoba, our chiefs in Manitoba. The Manitoba Metis Federation was consulted. I talked to different school divisions. I talked to individual Manitobans, and it's important to note that following the last session where I introduced this bill, social media was alive with wanting to know what happened and why it wasn't passed—the second reading wasn't a pass, so I ask all members opposite to get on board and make sure that this is passed today. Thank you.

Ms. Fontaine: Madam Speaker, I would suggest that the member ask his boss, whether or not he wants to do it through social media because his boss is in Costa Rica, but ask him why they never called the bill.

I would ask the member, through you, Madam Speaker, why they never called the bill to committee.

Mr. Lagimodiere: Unlike the NDP, our government has always supported our resource officers and have always been there for them. I said originally that I have attended the banquet for our conservation officers since 1986, an annual event, and while the NDP were in power, I can recall one incidence—one incidence alone, Madam Speaker—where there was a representative

from their government to actually meet with those conservation officers and talk to them.

Since we've been elected, we've been there; we've had representatives there twice. Our minister has been there for the last convention. Thank you.

* (10:20)

Mr. Bindle: Could the member for Selkirk please tell the House how this bill will empower, engage and re-energize the conservation officers' service within Manitoba?

Mr. Lagimodiere: It will be a day for, of course, all Manitobans to acknowledge the training and the dedication of our officers in the province.

And being in business for over 30 years, having hundreds and hundreds of employees over those years, it always intrigued me as an employer as to what actually motivates people to want to stay in a job. And unlike the NDP, who would suggest it's only money, a lot of times it's the recognition and the dedication you have to that type of profession that keeps you in it.

In fact, veterinary medicine—there are a lot of physicians that aren't paid big salaries, but the people remain because they're appreciated.

Ms. Fontaine: Madam Speaker, I'd like to ask the member again, because the member keeps shirking the answer and not—pivoting to things that are completely irrelevant and certainly not accurate.

I would ask the member why this bill is not a priority for his government.

Mr. Lagimodiere: I think the fact that this is the third time that I have stood in this House and tried to get this bill passed tells us right now that it is our government that wants to see these civil servants recognized for what they do in the province. It's the members opposite who take the time to put information on the record—nothing about the bill, Madam Speaker. Everything about their cottages, how they love fishing. The list goes on and on.

And, if you review Hansard, which I've told members that have got a hold of me on Facebook to go ahead and check Hansard and see what the members put on the record.

Thank you.

Mr. Isleifson: For the first time, a week ago, I sat and watched some television with my father. And he wanted to—me to change the channel to a certain show. I've never seen it before, but it's called North Woods

Law, and it's all about conservation officers in the US and what they do to perform their duties. Very good show.

I'm wondering if the member from Selkirk could kind of expand on that concept and kind of explain what the duties of a conservation are here in Manitoba.

Mr. Lagimodiere: As I stated, our members are involved in a lot of different areas, law enforcement being one of them, enforcing the laws with hunting and fishing in Manitoba. As well as that, they would also help out with DUIs. They have the authority to make charges there. They're involved with resource management. I went into quite a bit of detail with that. Disaster management is an important area for them to cover.

And people don't really realize this, but in our provincial parks they are the members out there that are going to the camp sites ensuring safety is being followed on a daily basis with all of those that are involved in our—camping in our parks over the long weekends and throughout—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

The time for this question period has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): First, before I begin debating this bill for the third time, I do want to just say miigwech for the little gift that you provided us. It was nice. The member for Minto (Mr. Swan) and I are kind of fighting over the chocolate-covered almonds, so it was a good breakfast to start with. Yes. So miigwech for the little gift, it is much appreciated in our caucus.

So, Madam Speaker, the—you know, standing up in the House today reminds me of the movie Groundhog Day because, if you recall that movie from 1993, it is a weatherman who, for whatever reason, keeps living the same day over and over and over and over again. And that's where we are this morning again. Instead of, you know, debating other bills that members—you know, the backbench could bring forward in respect of private members' bills—super, really, important bills like, I don't know, training for judges, supporting, you know, buffer zones for women and girls and staff at abortion clinics—you know, all kinds of amazing bills that could be brought forward, because the member for Selkirk's (Mr. Lagimodiere) boss didn't see this bill as a priority and didn't call it when we passed it twice. Here we are again using up precious time in the

morning, and I'll remind members that, you know, private members' business is very limited.

We each have the ability in a very limited time and space to be able to bring forward a private members' bill. And here we are again, third time around debating this bill which—let me be absolutely clear, because the member for Selkirk keeps putting false information on the record that we didn't—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —support it. We have supported it and we have allowed it to pass twice.

It's not our fault if the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Pallister)—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: Madam Speaker, it is not our fault if the Premier of Manitoba doesn't see the Manitoba Conservation Officers Recognition Day as a priority for his government. It's not our fault. The member keeps blaming us for some reason. We've allowed it to pass twice.

I would suggest to the member very strongly to go and talk to his boss, and ask his boss. I know that members opposite are a little bit intimidated and sometimes a little scared to talk to their boss. But I would suggest to him—I would suggest to them to say, you know, Premier why are you not supporting Manitoba conservation officers. And Premier instead, you know, why are we trying to blame the NDP for—when, clearly, Hansard shows that we've allowed it to pass twice.

So, you know, I know that the member for Selkirk is committed to this bill. I get it. I respect that and I congratulate him on his perseverance of bringing this forward three times now. But I would also encourage the member for Selkirk to go ask his boss and may actually demand from his boss that when this bill is, you know, passed again to call it to committee and, you know, they're in government they have all of the power in this House. So that's my gentle, gentle recommendation for the member.

I do want to just comment a couple of things in respect of some of the answers that the member just said only a couple of minutes ago, and one of them was the comment in respect of that there was no representation at conservation officer events. That I would suggest to the member is not factual. But, if the member for Selkirk wants to bring up representation at events, I would like to bring up for the record that members opposite—and there's quite a few if them so

they can divvy up their time. I fail to see many of the members at these rallies. I never see any members at labour rallies that, you know, that are coming out—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —to look for public—or to fight on behalf of public service workers. I don't see any of the members at any events, walks or vigils in respect of—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: —funding cuts to the North Point Douglas Women's Centre. I never see them there. And we're talking about some of the most marginalized communities that this government, and organizations that this government and members opposite are a part of, that have cut needed and valued dollars from. But I never see them at those events.

So I don't think—I think it's pretty disingenuous for the member from Selkirk to bring up representation at events when they have so many members, but they cannot see fit to come even just, you know, outside the office and down the stairs outside. And I can give an example, Madam Speaker, of when there were hundreds of people here to talk about the meth crisis and not one single member was outside to listen to people that were talking including, you know, youth that were there to talk about their—meth crisis and how it's affecting them.

So I also do want to just talk about the member pivoting in respect of the fact that this government has not filled vacancies for conservation officers and then somehow pivots it to interest rates. If the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) is so concerned about what he deems the NDP's failure, why is he sitting on his hands and allowing his hands and allowing his boss to not fill current vacancies in—for conservation officers and also management? And this goes to what we've said here in this House—on this side of the House, many, many times.

* (10:30)

It's not enough, Madam Speaker, to bring forward a private member's bill in just recognizing. You have to—and, for instance, the FASD bill. In respect of the dollars that need to be committed for the infrastructure to—so that this is actually a live bill, so that it's not just one day out of the year that we recognize them, but every other day of the year, conservation officers are being put at risk because they're not filling vacancies, and they're not filling management positions.

So I would suggest to members opposite that if you are so committed to Manitoba conservation officers, again, while you're having the discussion with your boss on why he has not made this private member's bill a priority and why he has not called it to committee, I would also ask him at the exact same time why they're not filling positions that are currently vacant for Manitoba conservation officers.

Finally, Madam Speaker, in the last couple of minutes that I—you know, the member for Selkirk put on the record that, you know, we talk about that it's only money. I don't know what the member—what kind of misinformation the member is putting on there, but when people dedicate themselves to a job, it's not just for money, and certainly nobody on this side of the House would ever say that their job is just about money. We understand and we live first-hand that people are committed to their job because it is their passion. They love Manitoba. They want the best province that they can have.

And, you know, the fact that we still have Manitoba conservation officers that are on the job despite being overworked because this government hasn't filled the current vacancies that they have—it's not just about money. And we would never say that on this side of the House.

So I do want to take a moment in my last minute to just honour Manitoba conservation officers. We know that they work hard. We know that they are dedicated to their work. [interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Ms. Fontaine: We know that they are experts in their field. We know that they have good relationships with communities, including First Nation communities, and try to work in partnership.

We know at the same time, Madam Speaker, that Manitoba conservation officers are currently overworked and stressed and have actually vast more work that they have to do—undertake and vast more areas that they are required to undertake because this government has failed to look at the vacancies and 'fulfill' its duty as a government to ensure that Manitoba is protected with an infrastructure—a robust, full complement of Manitoba conservation officers.

So, you know, again, I hope that the minister—or, the member for Selkirk, as soon as this is over, goes to find his boss and says, you know, look, I really need to have a conversation with you. Ask him those questions. Let us know—come back and report to the House what his boss said. And then we can move

forward with a private member's bill. But again, don't come into the House and try to blame us for something that we've passed twice in honour of Manitoba conservation officers.

And so, with that, I say miigwech to everybody in the House for listening to me. It's been a good morning thus far, and I wish everybody a great day today.

Mr. Kelly Bindle (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I fully support Bill 207, the conservation officers service recognition day bill, and I want to thank the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) for bringing it forward today. And I sincerely look forward to seeing it pass this morning, allowing it to advance to the next stage and eventually become enacted. And that is the opportunity that we have today.

Conservation officers are the third largest armed law enforcement agency in Manitoba, and this bill serves as a thank you to them for their dedication and commitment. 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. Recognizing October 1st each year throughout the province as Manitoba officers service day will help Manitobans show their appreciation to these officers. And because—this is a completely non-partisan issue, as I believe every member of 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, some may wonder? 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 by all-party support.

Law enforcement, resource management and disaster management has evolved considerably since the early days. 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.

In the late 1990s, natural resource officers first started carrying sidearms 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, without having sidearms, simply because it was their duty.

Madam Speaker, today's conservation officers have many duties. They're involved in and are responsible for parks and security; they oversee seasonal park patrol offices and campgrounds and cottage subdivisions within our provincial parks. They're involved in firefighting and supervising fire management teams. They're involved in forestry. They work with forestry staff, timber companies, First Nations and other groups to manage timber harvesting. They're involved in fisheries enforcement, sport, commercial and subsistence fisheries and liaison with rights-based harvesters. They are the lead provincial agency for fishery and wildlife enforcement, including licence enforcement, and assisting inspectors at checkpoints and aquatic evasive species check stops. They assist RCMP in search-and-rescue operations on land and water. They have a canine unit available. They perform public outreach and offer education programs. They provide trapline enforcement and maintain harvesting statistics. And they provide recommendations for regulation and management of the province's natural resources.

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, such as fentanyl and carfentanil, when responding to emergencies.

Among other numerous duties as assigned, they are on a—on-call day and night and risk their lives whenever they respond. Like all enforcement agencies, they're easily identifiable as enforcement officers by bad guys, and they risk resentment, retaliation and revenge from criminals. There is also the potential for members to experience PTSD from some of the incidents they witness. On top of that, they have families that worry about them.

Madam Speaker, I've received the submission from a retired conservation officer that I'd like to read on to the reactor—on to the record. And I quote: Conservation officers are the front-line protectors of Manitoba's wildlife, fisheries and forests. They are highly educated and trained in constitutional law, conservation enforcement, problem wildlife management and human interaction. Our conservation officers have extensive peace officer authorities and responsibilities. They are Manitoba's third largest law enforcement agency to carry firearms on their person and in patrol vehicles. They are trained to Canadian law enforcement firearm standards for their personal protection and the

protection of the Manitoba public. The nature of the profession requires conservation officers to rely on themselves with respect to completing the objectives and demands deemed appropriate by Manitobans. These readily identifiable, uniformed officers patrol every corner of Manitoba, whether densely populated, like our cities, or sparsely populated, like our great North.

The conservation officers service enforces the conservation laws of our province. Their job involves ensuring that hunting, trapping and fishing are carried out safely and legally. Enforcement of applicable laws require the collection of evidence, charging and prosecution of poachers. Day or night, apprehending poachers is a dangerous—is dangerous work. Remember that virtually every person encountered by conservation officers likely possesses some sort of weapon. Every wildlife poacher has at least one firearm, knife or axe. Every fish poacher has at least one knife. For the record, poachers typically possess multiple firearms and multiple edge weapons. Every hunter inspected for compliance has a firearm, archery bow or crossbow. Every hunter has a knife or hatchet. Anglers typically possess a knife and needle-nose pliers. Every campsite has an axe, hatchet or knives. How many hikers carry these tools? Let's not forget that bear spray is another commonly carried personal defence tool by Manitobans, not always legally either. Every day conservation officers prepare themselves mentally in the event they may encounter one or more of these potential weapons under illegal circumstances.

* (10:40)

Today, Manitoba conservation officers serve as members of the Western Conservation Law Enforcement Academy's cadre of instructors. Recruits from all four western Canadian provinces and Yukon attend the academy prior to beginning their careers with their respective jurisdictions.

The conservation officer services paid a hefty price with the loss of six members while on duty. These officers lost their life while serving the people of Manitoba. They left behind grieving families and friends, and how could anyone deny these families the honour of recognizing their loved one by an official day? That's from Andre Desrosiers, retired conservation officer.

Madam Speaker, this bill was brought before the House June 12th, 2018, and it was also brought 'behouse'—before the House October 30th, 2018, and it was spoken out both times and I'm hoping today it's not spoken out.

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 all their families.

What better way to do that than to pass Bill 207 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, what we know, and whenever called upon our conservation officers will do what they have always done—their full duty.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Speaker, conservation officers have important roles in our province in preserving species, in biodiversity, in the stewardship and—of fish and wildlife populations in fighting fires and looking after our parks and many more duties.

I hope that the Manitoba conservation officers recognition day will serve as a focus on the history of Manitoba's conservation officers and an opportunity to talk of the stories of their contributions.

Too often in the past the focus has been on populations in difficulty. Moose, in recent years, is an example, but well-managed populations where the populations of wildlife and fish are doing well, get little attention. But it is important that we thank conservation officers for these efforts because they are important and we need to recognize the things that are going well as well as the areas where there are problems.

Officers are also to be thanked where they have been front and centre in calling attention to species in difficulty. An example would be the efforts of a conservation officer, I think he was based in Dauphin, who called attention to the need for measures to address the low walleye populations in Lake Winnipegosis. Unfortunately, governments of that day in the 1980s were not ready to listen, and we have continued low populations of walleye in Lake Winnipegosis due largely to poor political leadership and not any fault of the conservation officers.

Perhaps this day can also help to bridge some of the divides which have been present in the past between conservation officers and Manitoba's indigenous community. I understand that more indigenous officers are now being hired, which is a step in the right direction, and that more effort is being put into improving relationships with indigenous communities.

When we debated this—I think it was a year ago, or when it was introduced a year ago, the conservation officers at that point were down to 90 in Manitoba, as reported by the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere).

I'm sad to hear today that the number has fallen to 80. It's not going in the direction and we hope that this can be turned around because conservation officers are important.

One area where conservation officers are as important is in the area of tourists to Manitoba. Conservation officers play an important role in our parks, in managing our fisheries and managing hunting species which are hunted. In this area, conservation plays an important role—and we know the government is talking a lot about improving tourism, and this is clearly a support of conservation efforts. Officers should be part of that effort.

I have noted previously in this Legislature that when I have talked to people involved in the tourism industry, that one of the significant reasons for the increased tourist spending in 2017 was, in fact, many anglers coming to catch walleye, in particular, but other species as well on Lake Winnipeg.

This points out how important it is to have really good management of the fisheries on Lake Winnipeg, so that the fisheries are in good shape and so that we can continue to attract tourists, as well as, I should add, having a very strong commercial fishery. The commercial fishery has been there for many, many years and is a very important contributor to our communities around the lake and to the well-being of many people in Manitoba.

Conservation officers in the past have been heroic. I note, in a previous speech in this Legislature, that the MLA for Flin Flon had talked of his relative, Ken Skwark, who died in a helicopter crash fighting forest fires near Leaf Rapids.

I think it's important that we pay tribute to such officers who have contribute—who have been hurt or injured or killed in the line of duty, and that, I think, is an important part of what we need to be doing when we have, finally, an official conservation officers recognition day.

I will mention another story which involved conservation officers, and this was the transplantation of young bald eagles from Manitoba to restore bald eagle populations in Massachusetts and in New Jersey. And this occurred in the 1980s, starting, I believe, in either 1983 or '84, and lasted for about a decade.

At this time, I—as I remember, there were no breeding pairs left in New Jersey and certainly no successful breeding pairs raising young. With the young eagles which were taken from Manitoba, the population of breeding bald eagles in New Jersey has grown since then steadily and, a few years ago, passed 100 breeding pairs of bald eagles in New Jersey. Quite a remarkable number, quite a remarkable turnaround, and Manitoba conservation officers had a role in that.

It is stories like this which are not often told which we need to bring forward when we have the conservation officers recognition day. We talk about the species which are endangered very often. We talk less about species like the bald eagles in New Jersey which were endangered and have now recovered and are thriving. And those are important stories to tell as well because it tells us that we can reverse, at least some of the time, the situation of endangered species and bring populations back to health.

So, Madam Speaker, it is a happy occasion when I get to speak about conservation officers. I am sure that conservation officers will be in Manitoba for many, many years to come. They have a tremendously important role, and their position and their abilities and their training and their activities should in fact be strengthened, as should their involvement and partnership in working with people in our indigenous communities.

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Merci. Miigwech.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I'm pleased to speak about Bill 207, and maybe the member for Selkirk will be third time lucky, because we know that—because this bill has now been called—it's now the third time the member for Selkirk, who I like, has brought on. And, you know, this bill is kind of a parable for the way that this government operates.

* (10:50)

You know, just yesterday I stood in this House and I talked about how—what used to be the excitement of Throne Speech day appears to have completely disappeared with this government. And we talked about throne speeches used to have—not just people sitting on the floor but a full gallery, and we know that this past Throne Speech there were still people on the floor, but as my colleague from Fort Garry-Riverview said, the upper deck was like watching a CFL game from Toronto.

The first time the member for Selkirk stood up and introduced this same bill, I remember that day well because there was a gallery filled with conservation

officers who came down. And, of course, that bill was acceptable; as the opposition, we didn't hold it up. And it passed second reading. And then we waited, and we waited and we waited for something to happen. And nothing happened. Somehow, even though I believe the member for Selkirk, and I want to say this honestly, I believe he feels passionately about this bill. Unfortunately, the powers that be in his caucus didn't feel the same way.

So the next time the member introduced the bill, of course, they left it until the very last time that the Legislature sat before the summer break and there was a couple of conservation officers. If I recall correctly, it was pretty much conservation officers related to members of the PC caucus who came down. This time, of course, the third time the member introduces the bill—because they are the government, they knew this bill was going to be called, well, probably for months, and they couldn't find a single conservation officer who was prepared to come down.

I'm glad we now have guests in the gallery. We've got members of Manitoba's incredible Polish community. They're going to be—that are down here to watch the debate, 11 o'clock, which I think is going to be a really positive debate and I look forward to the resolution moving forward. But with this bill—*[interjection]* Well—and the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko) says, well, you could pass this bill. Maybe he'll get up after I'm finished speaking and he'll explain why the first time the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) introduced this bill and we passed it through in a timely way, nothing happened. Nothing happened because despite the words that the member for Selkirk has put on the record, which I again believe are sincere and well-meaning, his government does not care about conservation officers, because this government does not care about the civil service. This government does not care about providing the public services that Manitobans depend on.

And, you know, it's not the first time we've had this exact problem occur with a government which we know has a substantial majority. I know my friend, the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry), I'm going to be supporting his resolution in a few minutes. He brought in a really good bill two session ago to protect reservists' jobs. There's changes to the employment standards act. And I remember that day. I stood in favour and we supported— and we sent it through in one hour in this House and I know the member for Kildonan was a rookie, was rather excited and told everybody how his bill had passed and then his government never bothered to send it to committee.

And I, again, I don't hold that against the member for Kildonan because it was a good bill and that's why the next time it came on we did pass it and they did manage to take it through to committee.

But I remember after the government forgot about the member for Kildonan's bill, they actually set aside the business of the Throne Speech. They set aside the business of the Throne Speech to bring on a special government motion to say, basically, you know, we completely messed up and we completely forgot about the bill that the member for Kildonan had brought forward. Can we just have a do-over? We're not going to negotiate, we're not going to come to the opposition and say, we made a mistake, let's sit down and let's negotiate something. No, they decided they were going to try to use their majority to break the rules of this House and just somehow resurrect a bill. *[interjection]*

And, oh jeez, says the member for Lac du Bonnet. I can only imagine how embarrassing it would've been. And, of course, just yesterday, we had the Minister for Crown Services who we know is not overburdened with work, have to get up and effectively do a correction. And she had to get up and basically say: You know what I said on the record the other day, that was completely wrong. Here's what's right.

You know, it's almost like we've got to add another item to the orders of the day. Like, we almost need a government erratum section so that ministers can stand up and say, you know, we had some backbenchers that had some good ideas. It's a shame we completely ignored them. Here's what we're really going to do. *[interjection]* So, well, speak to the bill, says one of the members. Well, I'll be happy to. And I actually give some credit to the member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for actually putting together and synthesizing some of the numbers because, of course, my colleague, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine), asked the question today: how many conservation officers are there in the province of Manitoba? And the member for Selkirk answered, well, there's 80. And unfortunately for the member for Selkirk and for the government caucus, when you say things in the House, it actually gets recorded. And I give credit to the member for River Heights, who remembered that the last time that question was asked, the member for Selkirk, just a couple of months ago, said there were 90 conservation officers in Manitoba. So in the past couple of months, this government, which we hear cares so much about conservation officers, has cut the number of conservation officers by 10 in just a couple of months.

You know, we've been asking questions every time we get to Estimates. How many vacancies are there? What are you doing to fill these vacancies? Why are you leaving these vacancies? And we're hearing, from every corner of the civil service, frustration from people that are trying to do their job, trying to do the best job they can for the people of Manitoba. And, all of a sudden, they may have a co-worker who retires or a co-worker who goes on long-term leave or a co-worker who's terminated and there's no one coming in to pick up that work. And all of a sudden, a hard-working public servant who was doing their job is now being required to do not just their job, but someone else's job, as well.

And, adding insult to injury, this government has said, oh, on top of that—on top of the fact we're not going to fill vacancies and we're going to cut positions and we're going to send things elsewhere, we are also going to legislate and require a pay freeze. We are not going to negotiate with your union. We are simply going to dictate the fact that when you sign a new contract, you are going to get a zero per cent pay raise for the first year, a zero per cent pay raise for a second year, and then 0.75 and 0.75 per cent for the two years following that.

If the member for Selkirk (Mr. Lagimodiere) has any questions as to why we have some doubts about his government's interest in what conservation officers do, I want the member for Selkirk to know that there is a pretty big body of evidence—and a growing body of evidence that this government is proving every day—that they do not care about civil servants, including our Manitoba conservation officers.

Our NDP team supports conservation officers and will continue to do so. And Manitoba is home, we know, to beautiful natural spaces—perhaps a few less of them as this government weakens environmental protections, as this government appears to be on track to license projects which could very well have a major impact on our environment. We do recognize the important work conservation officers do to enforce laws that protect our natural resources, educate the public and aid the courts in investigations. *[interjection]* It's very important work.

And I know the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Ewasko), of course, wants to silence—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Swan:—any other members of the Legislature who may wish to speak, and I know that's the

anti-democratic way that some members of this government caucus seem to feel. He can't explain—or maybe he will explain how it was this bill passed through the House quickly and then his own leader and his House leader and his Cabinet decided it wasn't actually worthy of going to a committee hearing.

And I don't think there's going to be any answer to that. I don't think the member for Lac du Bonnet is going to get up and speak, just as the member for Lac du Bonnet, of course, has not been up in this House to explain what he did when his own government cancelled the expansion to the personal-care home in his own constituency. Not a word about that.

So, you know, I know the member for Lac du Bonnet from his seat, you know, just next to us is always very quick to heckle. And, you know, Madam Speaker, he likes to heckle because he thinks, because he can be quieter on this side of the House, that you can't hear him. Well, we certainly can hear him. And, you know, the member for Lac du Bonnet has a lot of things that he truly should be answering for.

So, you know, we do have some more things to say about this bill because we support public servants. We support conservation officers.

Mr. James Allum (Fort Garry-Riverview): At my house, recycling day is on Wednesday. It appears, in the Legislature, every day is recycling day with the government of Manitoba.

Look, my sister from St. Johns said it best. We've passed this bill twice. Go—*[interjection]*

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Order, please.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 10 minutes remaining.

* (11:00)

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 2—Celebrating Over 200 Years of Polish Culture in Manitoba

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

The resolution before us this morning is the resolution Celebrating Over 200 Years of Polish Culture in Manitoba, brought forward by the honourable member for Kildonan.

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I move, seconded by the member for Lac du Bonnet,

WHEREAS the first Polish people to arrive in Manitoba were a group of ex-soldiers from the Des Meurons Regiment, who came to the Red River Settlement with the Lord Selkirk expedition in 1817; and

WHEREAS many waves of Polish migration through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought tens of thousands of Polish people to western Canada and especially Manitoba in search of a better life; and

WHEREAS Manitoba is the birthplace of the Canadian Polish Congress, established in 1933 as the "federation of Polish societies" to unite Polish organizations throughout Canada and represent the Polish community on a national level; and

WHEREAS Holy Ghost Parish was established in 1899 and is the oldest Roman Catholic parish of Polish heritage in Western Canada, and maintains its Polish tradition with mass delivered in Polish with a pulpit and altar specially constructed for the visit of Pope Saint John Paul II to Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Manitoba is home to many Polish dance ensembles which are renowned for their vibrantly coloured, hand-crafted costumes which have been imported from Poland, or carefully replicated in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS many Polish Associations are active across the province, preserving traditions that have been passed down through the generations of Polish people in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS Pilot Officer Andrew Mynarski, born in Winnipeg of Polish heritage, was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his courageous and selfless attempt to save the life of his crewmate from the fires of their downed Lancaster Bomber on 12 June 1944; and

WHEREAS the presence of over eighty-five thousand Manitobans of Polish descent has enriched Manitoba as a province; and

WHEREAS Poland and the Polish diaspora in Manitoba and around the world celebrated the 100th Anniversary of Polish Independence on November 11, 2018.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize and celebrate over 200 years of Polish immigration to

Western Canada, the subsequent preservation of Polish language and culture, and the greater enrichment of Manitoban society through the presence of the Polish community.

Madam Speaker: Prior the member sending that up, I wonder if he could please read it again and read it exactly as was printed.

Mr. Curry: I move, seconded by the member for Lac du Bonnet,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the celebration of over 200 years of Polish immigration to Western Canada, the subsequent preservation of Polish language and culture, and the greater enrichment of Manitoban society through the presence of the Polish community.

Motion presented.

Mr. Curry: It is my honour to be here, of course, always on behalf of the good people of Kildonan, but, of course, also this entire Legislature as we can come together and celebrate our diversity and culture.

The resolution celebrates the Polish community in Manitoba and how they have contributed significantly to the province's social, economic, political and cultural fabric.

The first Polish people to arrive in Manitoba were the De Meuron regiment who were with Lord Selkirk and his expedition to the Red River Valley in 1817. For over 200 years Polish people have been coming to Western Canada, they've been coming to the Red River Valley. They've been arriving to Manitoba looking for an opportunity for a better life.

Today there are over 85,000 Manitobans of Polish descent and heritage, and this impressive contribution to the Polish—of the Polish community to our greater society is what we come here to celebrate today.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Now, Poland gained independence in 1918 by agreement as part of the peace that ended the First World War. But modern Poland was still surrounded by its enemies. It defended its new borders through a series of skirmishes and wars that ended with the Polish-Soviet war of 1921.

But after that Polish people from around the world were joyous as they were able to have a new state and country to call home again, and many returned to their homeland from across the world.

Kazimierz and Aniela Ciura returned to Poland from the United States with their son Karol as the peace settled into the Polish countryside. In Poland their family would grow with the births of Kazimierz, Aniela, Wladyslaw and Wanda. After some years, they travelled to Canada and arrived in Halifax on 25 August 1928. I table a copy of the immigration book that documented their landing here in Canada.

Wladyslaw Ciura spent much of his childhood in McCreary, Manitoba. He would go and to serve in the Navy during the Second World War. He met a girl in Prince Edward Island named Jean and they were married. Along the way he changed his name to Walter Curry. He is my grandfather and that man sits in the gallery with us today.

I was not raised in a Polish speaking house, but always we had ample servings of kielbasa, rye bread and pierogies. When we drove up to Birds Hill Park on many family outings, once in a while dad would always mention that's where Pope John Paul II gave Mass in 1984. Someone would say, he was Polish like us. I didn't really know what that meant.

As the member for Kildonan, I am pleased to represent a diverse community of people from across the world. People have come to Manitoba looking for a better life, or sometimes taking flight from a less precarious situation. But we celebrate our Polish culture as part of our mosaic fabric that makes up not just Winnipeg's North End, not just Winnipeg itself. Manitoba—but Canada truly is a society that values new Canadians who arrive and those that build into our cultural mosaic.

We celebrate and enjoy Polish culture all the time. Of course, the Manitoba social is enjoyed at many a Polish hall across the North End.

Again, something that growing up not recognizing that this coming together of culture had significantly more significant meaning, for when people arrived they only had their language, their church and they needed places to meet, and these places still dot our community.

It's important to remember though that today when we have events like Polish Fest we also enjoy other cultures. The Ukrainian choirs and even the Japanese taiko drums joined us at Polish Fest in the past, and I see this is just another example of how the Polish community and culture is weaved, intertwined, with our Manitoba fabric.

As I grow up, I look past—guidance as people came to Manitoba. Sometimes they were fleeing from

terrible circumstances but they always made their home and their Polish culture a part of their identity. As Polish culture is in the storefronts as we see them in names as we pass by in the North End. We see it in every community. They are professionals. They are doctors. They are teachers. They are priests. They are politicians. They are everyone in our society and all at once we join together to enjoy the fruits of their labour.

I must mention, of course, our church, Holy Ghost Parish in the North End, the oldest Polish church in western Canada. It's a special home for many people, and growing up, playing sports there, I never realized the significance. And now, as an adult, of course, it truly is such a magnificent jewel in our North End. I couldn't be more happy to spend as much time as possible there.

Of course, we have our Polish community and our organizations. I'd be remiss to not mention the Polish Canadian congress, essentially founded here in Manitoba, something that has grown over the many years. We're joined today by Grazyna Galezowski, the president, Polish Canadian congress. We also have very many—we have many other groups such as Polish Gymnastic Association Sokol, again joined by its members' Sokol Hall, a Manitoba 'aav' that's been home to many gatherings, whether it be wedding receptions, wedding or baby showers, sometimes even funeral receptions, but the community gets together and they join in their friendship and their culture and their family, rejoicing in their language and shared identity.

There is also the Polish Combatants' Association. I think something that many of us forget that at the end of the Second World War, Poland again felt the iron grip of occupation, and many Polish people decided not to return home. These veterans of the Second World War and veterans of worst situations of imprisonment in the Soviet Union formed an association that is thriving today.

Of course, many of us, when we go to Folklorama, sometimes our only connection to these cultures—we see the SPK Iskry dance group that must be mentioned that started by Henry Lorenc, one of the founding leaders of the Folklorama movement. When we celebrate culture in Manitoba we celebrate our various mosaics that bring us together.

It was a Polish man who was one of the founders of the idea of Folklorama. Again, our culture is interwoven with Polish culture as we journey along.

I also would be very happy to mention our wonderful museums that contain and experience the Polish culture like Ogniwo Polish Museum on Main Street which has incredible archives. When I brought my grandfather there to take a look and he gave his oral history. There's a wall of suitcases that is at the entrance and the suitcases donated by people who came to Canada from Poland and he pointed right in the middle and said, that's like the one we had. And right away that connection happens again through my grandfather, through his experience being born in Poland, raising my family and myself not necessarily in a Polish household but that connections and those mosaic weaves together again.

Of course, we still have the Cooks Creek Heritage Museum, near St. Michael's Church, that preserves much of our Polish and Eastern European culture. As people were finding a new life on the harsh prairies they were finding themselves with community. Through church, we have this.

I couldn't be more happy, of course, that Manitoba has special significance, military history with Andrew Mynarski, officer-flight officer who was awarded the Victoria Cross posthumously. He was part of the No. 419 Moose Squadron and aboard a Lancaster Bomber. As many people have seen the Canada heritage moments, he tried to save his friend who was in a burning aircraft. He could not and the burns that he sustained would go on to kill him.

* (11:10)

He died, but his friend lived somehow. He survived the war and he told the story of Flight Officer Andrew Mynarski. Today, we commemorate that name with school, through our politics. But it is of note that Andrew Mynarski was the only Manitoban-born recipient of the Victoria Cross during the Second World War, the only Polish-Canadian recipient of the Victoria Cross.

He grew up not very far from where I live now. He grew up very close to what I like to consider the heart of our diversity in Manitoba. Winnipeg's North End has always been a place where different peoples—down the street from St. John Cantius Fraternal Aid Society building is an Ethiopian church. The fabric is woven in together.

As we share in our culture, we can always remember that the cultures are ones that we can celebrate with acts like this. This resolution calls for us to celebrate our differences not as things to divide us, but things that we can bring together; that we can share

in our different foods, our music, our culture, our singing, our languages; and that we're better when we share more of those things.

We're better when we can share the church. Whether it's celebrating the 100th anniversary of Polish independence that we did with many of my colleagues. I was proudly joined by the Minister of Infrastructure (Mr. Schuler), the Minister for Sport, Culture, and Heritage, the member for Southdale (Mr. Smith), the mayor of Winnipeg, members from federal government and standing-room-only attendance of members of our Polish community who celebrated 100 years of a modern state of Poland in the heart of Garden City. If it was a nicer night out, I would have walked to the event. But it's something where I consider it's a part of our community; it's woven, intertwined, in that the same facility will house various different student groups as they sing their Christmas carols.

But I know for certain that with 100 years the modern state of Poland celebrated this year, it is the perfect opportunity for us in this Manitoba Legislature to call together and say that we celebrate our Polish heritage. We stand with our Polish friends, our family, the people around us. And, like myself, some have changed their names and may not even know that someone who you've known for years has Polish heritage, just as I do not know the language, but I do know that I'm proud to be of Polish heritage.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Questions

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed in the following sequence. First question may be asked by a member from another party; any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties. Each independent member may ask one question; and no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): I thank the member from Kildonan for bringing up this private member's bill. I want to ask my colleague: Why is it important to recognize the heritage of Polish Manitobans?

Mr. Nic Curry (Kildonan): I'd like to quote from my good friend Grazyna Galezowski that Poland disappeared from the map of Europe for 123 years, but we never lost our culture, our language, our traditions. Polish people have a strong spirit to fight for freedom. With so many of that spirit of yearning for freedom and so many Poles who are connected to our community, I think this is the perfect moment to

celebrate our Polish heritage because the spirits that united Polish people is what we care for and value in our province.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): I'd like to ask the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry): Can the member share with us what various stakeholders have been saying about the benefits of celebrating 200 years of Polish heritage?

Mr. Curry: I'd like to thank, of course, my friend Magda Blackmore from Ogniwo Polish Museum who is doing incredible work to help preserve our Polish culture. When I learned that this museum was in place, I hope I can spend more time, because I, as a historian, love to see this, and I know that they have been yearning for a greater idea of how we can join Poles together to celebrate our culture. I hope this resolution is a small part of it. But it's the organizations that are working to this very day that I know strengthen Polish culture in Manitoba.

Ms. Marcelino: I'd like to ask my colleague: What inspired you to bring this bill forward?

Mr. Curry: The events I've been able to participate in as a new politician; it is close to home. When people ask if my connections to the area—when I say, well, my grandfather was born in Poland. Many of the community they said, and I take it with great honour, oh, we have one of ours in the Legislature now. It is a part of my heritage. I want to celebrate all of our cultures in Manitoba, but being able to represent our community, new and old Polish people, ones who were born in Poland, ones who were born in Canada like me, I wish to further my efforts here in this Legislature and to do service to those few people who have said, I'm their Polish man in Legislature. These are the things that entuse me and why I brought this resolution forward.

Mr. Scott Johnston (St. James): Can the member indicate what the significance is of recognizing 100 years of Polish heritage in 2018?

Mr. Curry: As I made note, November 11th is special significance for many of us in Canada, but in Poland, especially, it is Independence Day. It is the day that the modern state of Poland, after years of occupation from the partitioning from the various empires, celebrates its independence. It is an event the Polish community in November 10th at Seven Oaks Performing Arts Centre in my constituency of Kildonan celebrated, and it was said by many, this is the first time in a long time that every Polish group imaginable came together to celebrate at once. And this unity of our Polish

community is something I hope this resolution can also help encourage and support.

Mr. Ted Marcelino (Tyndall Park): Can you please speak about the history of Polish immigration to Manitoba, in a few words?

Mr. Curry: Polish immigration had many phases. The few Polish soldiers who came with Lord Selkirk signified the first Polish people to come to western Canada. Of course, at the end of the 19th century, many Polish people left what was mostly the Russian empire and various other empires; they had no country of their own. But also, after the Second World War, many Poles came who were not able to return home because of fear of punishment from the aftermath of the Second World War. And many of my friends who came in the 1980s, like my sergeants who trained me in the military, were some who came in the 1980s. So the various ebbs and flows of Polish migration continue this day, and I look forward to any other Poles who decide to make Manitoba home. The best place they could do so would be in Kildonan.

Mr. Ewasko: Again, just like to commend the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry) bringing forward this important resolution this morning.

Can the member further elaborate on the contributions made by the Polish community to our province's economic, political and cultural fabric?

Mr. Curry: The people of Polish heritage are employed at all levels of government. It is something where we have members of Parliament, members of this Legislature, of course, city councillors, members who make up, as I mentioned, say, the founding of Folklorama. But also we look around our shops. We look around the name fronts of a dentist's office or of an accountant's. We look to teachers. We look to our religious institutions. And we pass by these, and you see underneath some language that is not common to everyone, and that's often Polish, and it's something where all across our area.

The most important I'd like to make note, of course, that in the 1960s, a young boy born in Poland, he started a small entrepreneurial business. It's been in operation for generations, and that's Curry Industries, founded by my grandfather, Walter Curry, who's with us. Poles are everything to our—

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): The member's time has expired.

Mr. Marcelino: My grandkids attend Holy Ghost, and will the member from Kildonan support additional funds for independent schools?

Mr. Curry: I'm very happy that our Catholic independent schools have many various people in them from various walks of life. Myself, at St. Alphonsus School, there were members of our Filipino community that I played sports with, I studied with. It is something where I'm very happy. This resolution, of course, is something that speaks to our culture, and I hope we can, especially come together and say that Filipino students at Holy Ghost School is exactly what's right about Manitoba.

* (11:20)

Mr. Johnston: Can the member share with the House the courage and sacrifice that the proud—that proud Polish Canadians gave back to their province and their country during world conflicts, particularly World War II?

Mr. Curry: Certainly, I'd like to, of course, make note—a just recent passing, my great-uncle Kazamierz Curry, also known as KC. He served with the Air Force. He was one of the many Canadians who helped liberate one of the Nazi camps that was calling for the end of the Jewish people.

But also Polish combatants fought throughout Italy, and they served with Canadians in Italy. And, when they could not return home, many Polish combatants looked to Canada as a place for their refuge. And they make up so much of our community.

Their bravery and sacrifice was, of course, noted, and they were given special privileges to come to Canada. They were given special assistance, because the Canadians who fought in the Second World War knew that the Poles were people who yearned for freedom and justice, just as we all do here.

Mr. Tom Lindsey (Flin Flon): Thank you, acting assistant Deputy Speaker. Could the member tell us that—while he introduces a motion today to recognize how important the Polish contribution has been to Canadian society, could the member tell us how important it is to recognize all immigrants, no matter where they come from and what their contribution to Canadian society is?

Mr. Curry: The importance of bringing forward this resolution is certainly more timely. Of course, we celebrate Polish independence, a hundred years, and last year we celebrated 200 years of Polish immigration to Canada.

Certainly, every culture that finds refuge and home and yearns for freedom is the best part of Manitoba—that we have all these various cultures coming together. And why, especially, I think it's notable for Polish culture is that so much of Polish culture is intertwined in this mosaic, as I discussed earlier.

My own heritage—I am but one quarter Polish, and yet I consider myself of that heritage. And so many others in our province, I think, do so. And they are mixed with Ukrainian or many others from, say, eastern Europe, but across our spectrum. And because Polish culture is so intertwined, I think it's valuable to bring it up today.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): I'd like to thank the member for Kildonan for bringing forward this wonderful resolution that we're proud to be discussing today, and to be able to support. I also want to thank the guests of the member from Kildonan for joining us here today in the Manitoba Legislature.

I was just hoping that the member from Kildonan could speak a little bit to the population growth of the Polish community here in Manitoba.

Thank you.

Mr. Curry: I did mention that 85,000 Manitobans do draw Polish heritage, but I'd like to, if the member would be happy, take this opportunity, that many people maybe do not commit to that. I even have a friend who was born in Poland, and I've been convincing him to come to more events. And he says, well, I'm trying to be Canadian.

I think the most important thing to remember is that sharing our various cultures is Canadian. Enjoying and encouraging our languages from abroad, of Polish—is good that we can mix that with other cultures, and that the community—as I say, is—the Polish community is intertwined with all of Manitoba.

It is hard to go across this province and not find those connections, like dots across a map, where Polish people had been and had contributed to our greater society.

Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): The time for questions has expired.

Debate

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): Debate is open.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): I want to commend the member for Kildonan for bringing forward this resolution this morning. And I do want to, I guess, more formally welcome members of the Polish community who have joined us in the Legislature again. It's always great to see representatives of this tremendous community coming down to our Legislature.

You know, I've put on the record many times that, as a member of this Legislature, it should be an education. And, if you can come to the Legislature every day and learn something, that is definitely a good thing. And I will be very honest; I learned a lot when I attended the great event we had just outside these doors in the rotunda last year to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Polish settlement in Manitoba.

And, when I first heard about the event, I sort of scratched my head, because I thought, well, I kind of know the timelines of when other important communities arrived. I know when the Icelanders arrived and why; and, when the Mennonites arrived and why; and, when Ukrainians started arriving and why.

And I—to be honest, I was surprised to hear that there has been a permanent Polish community in Manitoba for now more than 200 years. And that—now, of course, I think most people now know the story, that the first Polish people to arrive in Manitoba were a group of ex-soldiers who actually were part of the De Meuron regiment who came to the Red River Settlement with the Lord Selkirk expedition. And I expect some of those ex-soldiers had a look at the fertile plains here and maybe reminded them a little bit of their home in Poland and decided they were going to stay and build their life here.

And we know that at that time it was only a small amount of Polish immigration. We know that changed later, in the 19th century, when the Canadian west was opened up in a great wave of immigration, not just from Poland, from a number of other countries. But we know that the Polish community became very, very strong. We know also because of unhappy events in Poland, there were further waves of immigration as Poles fled extremism and the impact that it had on their country.

I sometimes say that we are very lucky in Manitoba that the various communities and the various cultures that have joined us here in this province have enriched all of us. And of course, having Polish friends and some Polish relatives over on the other side of the family, we know that, like many other cultures, the

Polish culture is you-must-eat culture, which I think has enriched all of us. I think the member for Kildonan (Mr. Curry) and I would agree.

We also know that the Polish community in Manitoba remains very vigilant against extremism of any form. And I've had the opportunity attend a very sombre event which takes place every August. And that is the commemoration of Black Ribbon Day. Black Ribbon Day commemorates—well, I guess commemorate may not even be the right word, but it acknowledges the pact that was made between the Stalinist USSR and Nazi Germany to partition much of central Europe. And those of us who know history will appreciate that when the Second World War began, Poland was actually the first victim of the collusion between the Stalinists and the Nazis. And that unhappy country was attacked from both frontiers. And that country was partitioned between two extremist, horrible forms of government. And we know the Polish community here has never forgotten that. And it is so valuable to have people in our community that can speak to these very, very important things.

And we know, of course, that there was a great celebration just recently as Poland celebrated its hundredth year of independence. It was a day of great celebration, but I must put on the record that there were also some dark clouds behind the celebrations, not here in Manitoba, but celebrations back in Poland, as we know there were some elements within Polish society with a radically different view of the open, welcoming traits that we see in our Polish community here in Manitoba.

So, on behalf of our NDP caucus, we certainly support this resolution. We certainly support the vibrant Polish culture in Manitoba—in Winnipeg, but also outside of Winnipeg. We look forward to what other members will have to put on the record to commemorate this tremendous community. And we look forward to this resolution being passed with unanimous consent of the House.

Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Wayne Ewasko (Lac du Bonnet): It gives me great pleasure—thank you. And I'd like to thank all the members of the House for clapping for my opportunity to stand up and put a few words on the record to the member from Kildonan's great resolution.

It is, again, as I say—representing the Lac du Bonnet constituency, it's given me great pride in knowing that my constituency is quite diverse. And from having a Polish background myself, I'd like to

thank all the guests for attending this morning in the gallery and, of course, also give a shout-out to the member from Kildonan's grandfather, who's 93 years old, Mr. Walter Curry, up in the—behind the Speaker's Gallery there, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

* (11:30)

I'd like to say *dziękuję ci [thank you]*, because, as growing up with Polish and some Ukrainian descent, and on my mom's side Czechoslovakian, which, you know, the member from Minto put a few words on the record in regards to the hardships of many Slovak countries, and I know that Poland was basically wiped off the map of Europe for roughly about 123 years, and it is a big tribute to the type of people Polish people are, and they hold their culture and their language near and dear to their heart. They're hardworking people, and I know that my grandparents, my great-grandparents, actually, who came over to this great country of ours, Canada, were pioneers, and we have to thank many pioneers who came over from Europe and put the hard work in with—whether it was with shovels, axes, you know, borrowed tools at times, and I know my great-grandparents started off on a small patch of land of about 10 to 20 acres.

I myself, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, grew up on a small farm just southwest of Beausejour which is actually sort of the homestead of my family.

And so they came here, not asking for much; they just were absolutely thrilled to be in a safe country where they could go and they either had to cut down the trees and pick up rocks, and I know even in my past on the farm, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, we had to go with stone bolts—stone boats and pick up stones and throw them on the headlands and now, if we would have only thought in advance, we would have piled those stones on a different pile and sold them to the people in the city because they're paying many, many dollars for all these rocks for the landscaping here in the city and other places.

I would also like to give a shout out to Mrs. Grazyna Galezowski, who's the president of the Polish Canadian Consulate, is here in the gallery with us today as well, as well as Mr. Marian Jaworski, who also, I know, that works—and that's just to name a few.

And, again, I'd like to applaud all the hard work that the member from Kildonan has put into this resolution to commemorate the over 200 years, and it's heartwarming and heartfelt.

Thank you, *dziękuję ci [thank you]*, to the members of the Liberal caucus and also the members

of the NDP caucus who are supporting this unequivocally this morning so that we can see that this resolution passes, because I know, again, the hard work that the member from Kildonan has put, not only into this resolution, but into various bills and the everyday hard work he puts in representing that community of Kildonan, so again, to the member from Kildonan, thank you.

I know, as we're getting closer to Christmas, you know, many, many—and I know some people would argue here in the House, but—and it's hard to believe that a lot of the great foods that the Polish people have brought to our country and we share. I know that I indulge, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, quite extensively over the Christmas holidays on pierogies and cabbage rolls, and just last night my wife and I were discussing a certain evening—we have to find an evening where we can make *nalesniki* for our many extended families, where that's one of our special dishes that we take around to all our family occasions over the Christmas holidays, so we have to get that done in the next couple weeks, where we'll sit down in an evening.

And now our boys have also joined in to help us with that and we make anywhere between 70 to 80, 85 separate crepes, and, of course, cut into bite-size pieces and, then, of course, thrown into a casserole dish and smothered and baked in heavy cream.

I don't know—we should almost break for lunch here right away, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker.

And, of course, I have to say that I know one of the staples, one of the foods that the Polish people have brought to the community, or to the country, and are sold in many of our grocery stores, pickled herring. And, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, in our house, my dad, it's coming up to four years since my dad's passed way, but every Christmas, every Easter, every celebration we make sure that we purchase some pickled herring so that we have it on the table in a tribute to my dad and also my grandparents who also enjoyed it. I don't mind it. So far—

An Honourable Member: It's an acquired taste.

Mr. Ewasko: It is an acquired taste, like the member from Minto just said. And my boys are, they try it, I almost say that they're coerced into trying it each and every year; they have to have a little bit. And so that's what we're looking forward to the upcoming Christmas season and celebrating with good friends and also trying to hold on to the culture.

Unfortunately, you know, I think back to many of the stories that my dad had told of growing up on the farm and with the hard weather and walking, you know, walking across the field to the one-room schoolhouse. And I know that much like Poland being wiped off the map in Europe, here in Canada when they were speaking their language and they would go to school, they would be strongly encouraged not to speak their own language. Strongly encouraged. They would actually get the strap, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, if they spoke Polish or Ukrainian or anything other than English in school. But I think that also speaks to the resiliency, the hard work ethic and the mindset to keep that culture and to pass it down to generations and generations. And, unfortunately, I don't know many words in Polish or even in Ukrainian, but I do know a few and some I can share in the House and some I can't.

And so, with that, I just wanted to put, stand up today and put a few words on the record, and again thank the member for Kildonan bringing this forward. It is great to hear that all sides of this House, this Chamber, are going to support this resolution.

So, with that, Mr. Acting Deputy Speaker, *dziekuje [thank you]* to all of the people in the gallery, to all Polish people, the 85,000-plus speak Polish people here in the great province of Manitoba. Thank you to all sides of the House for supporting this resolution and Merry Christmas to everybody. Thank you.

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

Point of Order

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): The member for Kildonan, on a point of order.

Mr. Curry: On a point of order, I ask for us leave if I can include the guests that we have in our Chamber viewing debate this morning into Hansard.

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): Is there leave to include the names of the guests of the member for Kildonan in Hansard? *[Agreed]*

Magda Blackmore, Reverend Valery Bykowski, Jacek Chojczak, Chris Curry, Mike Curry, Walter Curry, Grazyna Galezowski, Lech Galezowski, Marian Jaworski, Jadwiga Krupka, Michael Kulasza, Margaret McCulloch, Wanda Slawik

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): I believe I should also say it's not a point of order.

* * *

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): Debate is open.

Ms. Flor Marcelino (Logan): Again I thank my colleague for bringing this PMR, and I thank all our visitors, *dziekuje ci bardzo [thank you very much]*. Close? And it's for all the Polish community past, present, and future for the contributions they have provided, they have provided, they have given to Manitoba in the past, in the present time, and in the future time to come.

* (11:40)

I have a very, I have some special fondness for anything Polish. I have many very good memories during my time in government when I was minister of Culture, and afterwards minister of Multiculturalism. I had the pleasure of attending so many Polish events, cultural events, and they were all wonderful, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The food was great, the music especially and the dances and the people.

One of my favourite composers happened to be a Polish composer, Chopin. I love his music and no wonder Polish musicians are top-notch in the world. And I had the privilege of watching, I think it was the 100th anniversary of Sokol cultural group. And it was at a few years ago at the playhouse—is it?—no, Pantages. And they invited Polish performers, the male singer, the female singer—they were amazing. And the choir—oh, it was the choir's 100th anniversary—the choir was amazing as well.

So, also, I looked forward, or I have enjoyed attending the yearly event; it's a summer event held at Kildonan, Polish Fest. You enjoy the music, the dancing and the food, and you mentioned kielbasa. There's even something there that's very tasty.

But, anyway, the contribution of the Polish community, we do value and appreciate, and as an immigrant myself, our community, the Filipino community, has not been here as long as the Polish community, but we do learn a lot of lessons from the Polish community: how they endured the harsh elements of the Manitoba weather, how the members of the community thrived and prospered. They're into all of—into all walks of life and professions. They have great doctors and scientists and musicians and many in the performing arts as well, as well as in the social sciences. So Manitoba had—is very lucky to have the Polish community in our midst, and their many, many contributions, not just to our culture but to every fabric of society, is palpable.

And my colleague had mentioned Andrew Mynarski. If one would—has—if you—if we haven't read the full story of Andrew Mynarski, we need to study it and read it because we will learn not just courage, not just faithfulness, not just love for the country and also for fellow human beings, in the story of Andrew Mynarski.

And one final note. I was treated to a concert when I was in Los Angeles. And this was the compositions of Ignacy Jan Paderewski. Did I say the name right? Anyway—and the beautiful music led me to read more about the story of the man, and his story is, again, another one not just for the books but for everyone to learn from. His story—well, he was in the US, and his friendship—and because of his stay in the United States, his—he became the prime minister of Poland after the war. And, because of the value of him as a person and while he was in the United States he made friends with people there, he was able to get so much help for his country to be able to recover from Second World War. So that's a big lesson for all of us.

So, again, thank you to the members who are of the Polish community or—who are here now, and thank you to the Polish community for all your contributions, not just to Manitoba but to all of Canada.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Burrows): Again, I'd like to thank the member from Kildonan for bringing forward this resolution and for all of our guests who have joined us here in the gallery today to hear the debate on the resolution.

I'm going to keep my remarks very short as I'm sure there are many members who want to speak to this resolution, and we want to make sure that it passes before 12 o'clock today.

Like many immigrants to our province, those of Polish heritage who immigrated here have really contributed to the economic success and diverse development of our province. It goes without saying that Polish people have profoundly contributed to our province in a wide variety of fields, from music and entertainment to education and politics to serving in defence of our country. Canadians of Polish heritage have found success in our country and have enriched our province in many ways.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba is the birthplace of the Canadian Polish Congress, who represents the

interests of Polish Canadians throughout Canada. We are also the home of Holy Ghost Parish, western Canada's oldest Roman Catholic parish of Polish heritage.

We have also seen many community members keep their traditions alive in our province. For example, Polish Manitobans have been passing activities such as dances and other traditions along through each generation, ensuring that members of the community can identify with their heritage and remain very proud.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm grateful for all that the members of this community continue to contribute to our province and for the opportunities to learn more about their community and Polish heritage through my friends within the community and through resolutions such as this one today.

In closing, I want to thank the member again from Kildonan for bringing forward the resolution, as the beautiful culture that Polish people have shared with us is truly wonderful, and we're very fortunate to have this opportunity to continue to learn from their hard work and dedication and courage that Polish immigrants and their descendants continue to share with us. Thank you.

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): The question before the House is the resolution put forward by the member for Kildonan.

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

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (Official Opposition House Leader): Is there leave to call it 12 noon?

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): Is there leave to call it 12 noon? *[Agreed]* Oh.

Mr. Curry: Just quickly, is there leave to call the vote unanimous?

The Acting Speaker (Andrew Micklefield): Is there leave to call the vote unanimous? *[Agreed]*

The resolution is passed unanimously.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, December 4, 2018

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