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of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
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PROCEEDINGS
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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Forty-Second Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALTomARE, Nello	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma	Union Station	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian	Keewatinook	NDP
CLARKE, Eileen, Hon.	Agassiz	PC
COX, Cathy	Kildonan-River East	PC
CULLEN, Cliff, Hon.	Spruce Woods	PC
DRIEDGER, Myrna, Hon.	Roblin	PC
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	PC
EWASKO, Wayne, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
FIELDING, Scott, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
FONTAINE, Nahanni	St. Johns	NDP
FRIESEN, Cameron, Hon.	Morden-Winkler	PC
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
GORDON, Audrey, Hon.	Southdale	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
GUILLEMARD, Sarah, Hon.	Fort Richmond	PC
HELWER, Reg, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
ISLEIFSON, Len	Brandon East	PC
JOHNSON, Derek, Hon.	Interlake-Gimli	PC
JOHNSTON, Scott, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
KINEW, Wab	Fort Rouge	NDP
LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAGIMODIERE, Alan, Hon.	Selkirk	PC
LAMONT, Dougald	St. Boniface	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom	Flin Flon	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya	Notre Dame	NDP
MARTIN, Shannon	McPhillips	PC
MICHALESKI, Brad	Dauphin	PC
MICKLEFIELD, Andrew	Rossmere	PC
MORLEY-LECOMTE, Janice	Seine River	PC
MOSES, Jamie	St. Vital	NDP
NAYLOR, Lisa	Wolseley	NDP
NESBITT, Greg	Riding Mountain	PC
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Midland	PC
PIWNIUK, Doyle, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
REYES, Jon, Hon.	Waverley	PC
SALA, Adrien	St. James	NDP
SANDHU, Mintu	The Maples	NDP
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield-Ritchot	PC
SMITH, Andrew, Hon.	Lagimodière	PC
SMITH, Bernadette	Point Douglas	NDP
SMOOK, Dennis	La Vérendrye	PC
SQUIRES, Rochelle, Hon.	Riel	PC
STEFANSON, Heather, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
TEITSMA, James	Radisson	PC
WASYLIW, Mark	Fort Garry	NDP
WHARTON, Jeff, Hon.	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt	Concordia	NDP
WISHART, Ian	Portage la Prairie	PC
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC
<i>Vacant</i>	Fort Whyte	
<i>Vacant</i>	Thompson	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

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.

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 territory and that Manitoba is located on the treaty territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk nations. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of treaties and treaty making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Hon. Doyle Piwniuk (Acting Government House Leader): Yes, Madam Speaker, I want to suggest that we debate 205—Bill 205.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 205—The Filipino Heritage Month Act

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will continue with debate on second reading of Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act, standing in the name of the honourable member for Concordia, who has three minutes remaining.

An Honourable Member: Picking up speed.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): Yes, I'm letting the House catch up here, and I appreciate the warm welcome here this morning because this is an important bill, and it is an important bill to be debating here this morning.

I just wanted to start at the outset, Madam Speaker, to say that, you know, we are in full support of this bill. And this is an important bill to our caucus because it really speaks to the kind of partnerships that we're looking for with communities throughout Manitoba.

You know, we talked—I think in—last week, if I'm remembering some of the debate that I heard in the Chamber, there was a lot of talk about the support that newcomers here in Manitoba and different communities have for one another.

And I know first and foremost, on many people's minds these days is actually the conflict in Ukraine just because, of course, how serious and pressing it is.

But to see how others are stepping up to support people who are looking to come to Canada to join in our province and to be here as a safe place, I think, speaks to every—the importance that every single community sees in presenting a welcoming place here in Manitoba.

This, I believe, is one way that we can do that. It's not the only way.

And so, it's—while it's important to remind the government that words are words and actions are actions, that they need to step up and they need to ensure that their words have some actions behind them, that it's not just enough to say that we support communities, that we support newcomers here to Manitoba, but, in fact, that we put in place real policy that supports and helps to encourage them to flourish.

I think that's the main message that we want to send to all Manitobans.

So, you know, we—as I said—we support this bill and it is something that we want to see come to a vote because we know how important it is, and when all of us get a chance to gather in person, I am so hopeful, Madam Speaker, that we can all join together in person to celebrate Philippine independence this summer. And we can do it as—together as a Legislature with this kind of bill and this kind of message coming from this Legislature to the Filipino community to say how much we appreciate your contributions to Manitoba, how we want to work with you to further

those contributions, how we want to continue to work together.

We see all people in this province as the keys to building a prosperous Manitoba coming out of this pandemic. When we get to gather together in celebration, I know that it's going to be a wonderful time.

So thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to speak, and look forward to seeing this bill come to a vote.

Mrs. Cathy Cox (Kildonan-River East): I'm honoured and proud to rise in the House today in support of Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act, that legislates June as Filipino heritage month in Manitoba.

And I'd like to thank my friend and colleague, the member from Brandon East, for introducing this very important legislation that will ensure Manitobans will in perpetuity have the opportunity to celebrate and recognize our vibrant Filipino culture and heritage.

Our Filipino community is such an important part of our ethnic and cultural fabric. Their contributions to our province are immense not only economically but also socially. And I can say with confidence, from the bottom of my heart and from my own personal experiences, that the Filipino community is caring, compassionate, hard-working and generous. And they wear their hearts on their sleeves, Madam Speaker, and are always willing to step up to help those in need.

Madam Speaker, while I was the chairperson of the Children's Hospital Foundation bazaar at the Winnipeg taxation centre, I had the opportunity to observe the generous nature of our Filipino community first-hand. There was always so much to do to reach our goal, and it was always the Filipino employees that were first to step up, asking how can they help. They made thousands and thousands of spring rolls, and prepared pancit for sale. They sold tickets, and they were a huge part of ensuring we reached our goal of helping sick kids here in Manitoba.

I have such fond and remarkable memories of the Filipino nurses, the health-care aides and the workers—provided my mom with such loving and compassionate care during her time at Concordia Hospital. They brought joy and laughter into what was often a very dreary time in her life.

Madam Speaker, since the start of the pandemic, Filipinos have been on the front lines in hospitals and

personal-care homes, working and challenging settings where they toiled tirelessly not only as caregivers but also filling in as replacements for family and friends.

And I want to say from the bottom of my heart to our Filipino community, for the hope, the compassion and the dedication and the care that they have provided to Manitobans during these three turbulent years, thank you very much.

Madam Speaker, today, I also reflect on the presence of three Filipino members of the Marcelino family who served in this Chamber: my former CRA colleague, Ted Marcelino; the former leader of the opposition, Flor Marcelino; and her daughter, the current member who represents the constituency of Notre Dame.

* (10:10)

And I ask the member from Notre Dame to encourage her colleagues in the NDP caucus to stand together with us and support this bill.

Our Filipino community has done so much to build and help our province prosper. I ask all members to stand together in solidarity and show our Filipino community the respect they so deserve, by voting unanimously in favour of this bill.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): It is my honour to put a few words on the record regarding bill 204, the Filipino heritage act month act. I'd like to thank the member from Brandon East for bringing forward this very important bill. I am in support of this bill, and my caucus is in support of this bill.

Madam Speaker, Filipinos are hard-working, caring, family-oriented people. I just want to highlight a couple of the people that I have worked with. First one is Vickey. She is aunt of MLA from Waverley. She is working with Unicity Taxi since 1976. I was only four years old at that time. I just spoke to her this morning. After retiring from Unicity she is still—whenever called back to help or to train the new person, she is back there this morning training a new person.

And also, another person that I worked with at Unicity Taxi is Tess. She was our accountant. She worked with us for 46 years. This is the dedication they put into work. This is how hard they work.

Madam Speaker, this bill proclaims the month of June each year as Filipino heritage month, which

would coincide with the Filipino–Philippines Independence Day. Philippines Independence Day takes place every year on June–12th June.

While in-person celebrations were cancelled or scaled back for a couple of years, we are hopeful that this year, 2022, we will be able to celebrate this day of independence with the Filipino community once again. We look forward to seeing parades or participating in programs, spend their day in the parks with family and friends, do other celebration activities and enjoy the day with the Filipino community.

Filipinos are now recognized as Winnipeg's largest ethnic minority, making up almost 9 per cent of the city's total population. Madam Speaker, here in The Maples, we have 31.4 per cent of the population of the Filipino heritage. And Tagalog is Manitoba's most spoken–second most spoken, and Canada's fifth most spoken language.

I have the honour of working with a hard-working lady named Beth, who is my CA. She's skilled both in English and Filipino language. Beth was able to reach out to the thousands of our constituents and learn their concerns, whether personal or family or general concern in our community about what is happening in our province.

Another CA I'd like to highlight, Madam Speaker, is Sanjit Sidhu, otherwise–likewise, could communicate in Filipino or Tagalog dialect, even though Punjabi is her native language.

In The Maples constituency, we are able to reach out to the masses of visible minorities.

Madam Speaker, I'd also like to highlight a few of the politicians that were elected under NDP banners. Conrad Santos was first elected to Manitoba Legislative Assembly under our party in 1981, and there is no doubt that Dr. Santos paved the way for many Filipino politicians in Manitoba and also in Canada.

Madam Speaker, another person I'd like to highlight is Ted Marcelino. He is another prominent Filipino Manitoban that was elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly in 2011 representing the Tyndall Park.

Madam Speaker, I think not too many members know, that was the first time I ever tried to run for a–office. I was contesting the nomination in the Tyndall Park and that's the time–first time I ever met Ted there. Well, they had a tent outside and I said, Ted, well, I was–this is me, Mintu. And Ted said, you know what, let's eat food first, then we will talk.

So, even during the recent election, 2019, our office, myself, Ted and the member from Burrows had the same office. So, Madam Speaker, each and every day when we go there, first thing is food, then Ted will take us one by one and talk to us. You know what, we were nervous, we were new. He wanted to make sure we are calm and going out, talking to people, so he was telling us, do this, do that. Same thing at end of the shift, pretty much you can call the shift at end of the day. We will go back and Ted will call us again, let's chat; let's eat something and let's chat.

So that's how wonderful Ted Marcelino is. To this day, whenever I need some kind of advice, he is there for me.

And also, Madam Speaker, another NDP person that I–who got elected under the NDP banner is Flor Marcelino for the first Filipina and woman of colour to be elected in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly in 2007. She also served as interim leader of NDP and leader of official opposition from 2016–2017. Her appointment to the Cabinet in 2009 was also another first.

So, Madam Speaker, as I said earlier, we on this side of the House are in full support of this bill. This is the kind of bill when I will come to the floor, be sure to be talking, be sure to be highlighting our constituents, be sure to be highlighting our friends.

So there was no denying that we are in support of this bill, but also highlighting it. My side of the House, each and every member had something to say about someone in the community. In this side of the House, all 17 members want to get up, give their 10 minutes. We have so, so much to share.

But this, Madam Speaker, as I said, I'm–fully support of this bill, members of our caucus is in fully of support of the bill. Looking forward to be unanimous–passing this with unanimous consent and enjoying, come June, cultural activities, language activities and joining the parade, hopefully, this year.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (10:20)

Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland): I'll be very brief, so as not to delay the passage of this bill. It sounds like the members opposite are willing to finally help us get this bill through this morning, and so I just wanted to be very brief and say I think this is a wonderful opportunity to recognize Manitoba's Filipino community, making June Filipino heritage month.

I think of the experiences that I've had interacting with members of the Filipino community. My time as a student at University of Ottawa, I attended a church in Ottawa at which these wonderful Filipino ladies took pity on me and kept me fed and they were just wonderful people to get to know.

But it seems that happiness, hard work, are national traits from which I think we as Canadians could learn a lot. They contribute in so many ways to our provincial fabric and our national fabric. And so, Madam Speaker, I think this is a great way to recognize all that they do and contribute.

I'm proud to say as the member for Borderland that there is a small but growing Filipino community in Altona, and, actually, they've started a Filipino restaurant there, Potpourri of Flavours, which I highly recommend for anyone ever down that way,

But, Madam Speaker, without any further ado, I urge the passage of this bill this morning. Thank you.

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to share a few words on The Filipino Heritage Month Act.

And before I begin, I would absolutely like to say that we are in full support of this bill, and I'm privileged to be able to share a few words before passage here this morning.

First and foremost, I guess before I begin, I do want to point out, being that we are sitting here in the Chamber, privileged enough to be able to serve the people of Manitoba in our role as an MLA, that I would like to make mention of the notable Filipino Manitobans that served, in particular, for the New Democratic Party.

Conrad Santos was first elected to Manitoba Legislature under our party in 1981, and there is no doubt that Dr. Santos paved the way for Filipino politicians here in Manitoba.

Ted Marcelino is another prominent Filipino Manitoban that was elected to Manitoba Legislature in 2011, representing Tyndall Park.

And, of course, the NDP's Flor Marcelino was also a prominent member of the Filipino community, and was the first woman of colour to be elected to the Manitoba Legislature Assembly in 2007. She also served as interim leader of the NDP and leader of the opposition from 2016 to 2017. Her appointment to Cabinet in 2009 was also another first. She was the first woman of colour to be named to Cabinet in the province.

And, of course, my colleague—my current colleague, the MLA for Notre Dame, who speaks very eloquently, very passionately, for the Filipino community here in Manitoba as well as all communities here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, while this act and this bill brought—Bill 205 brought before us this morning shows appreciation, it's meant to do so much more. It's meant to do so much more than just—when you think about appreciation, you think it's just a simple thank you. To me, this bill needs to be about appreciation, recognition, respect—overall, not just once a month, not just one month out of the year, but always.

The Filipino community here in Manitoba has been so very embedded in society now and our demographics here in Manitoba, and it's such a positive impact and a positive influence, and you see that first and foremost, I guess, Madam Speaker, in the health-care field.

Nurses, health-care aides—and when I think of the term a great bedside manner, I can't help but relate that comment of great bedside manner to the 'Filocupino' community—nurses, the health-care aides and the doctors that are there that bring that—while you're in the hospital, most times, you're there and it's not a positive experience in terms of your medical conditions while you may be there, so you're looking for supports.

And it's—I mean, there's supports in terms of actual medical care, but there's also supports in terms of emotional care and being able to make that stay a little bit easier. And members of the Filipino community thrive at that, and it's a great experience to be able to go to the hospital, for whatever reason you may have to go, and feel that there's somebody there that cares.

And members of the Filipino community in particular are—in this instance, in the health-care field, make that experience a lot easier to cope with and easier to handle. And for that, that's—there's a great deal of appreciation that's owed.

So if we can do something as small as this—and, albeit, we need to do a lot more in terms of actual recognition to say, you know, we want to spend this month to celebrate. But we need to spend those—the year to celebrate. And that's what's important, Mrs.—Madam Speaker, because being in that health-care field, and in particular over these last couple of years, was very difficult, and the Filipino community was very disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

So that community, while they're always there to support us as Manitobans, we also need to be there to support them, and that's where it's very important that we do things such as this, but also do more. And I think it's very imperative of us as Manitobans—and our duty as Manitobans—to do more, to do you part and then some. And I think that's what makes us a better Manitoban—a better Manitoba overall.

And, Madam Speaker, there's a lot of different aspects—and, I mean, we focus maybe on health care, and the health-care field in terms of the Filipino impact and the positive impact on our communities. But there's so much more: doctors, lawyers, professionals, farmers—all aspects. And it speaks to the very true diversity of what we are here in Manitoba and we need to celebrate that diversity. And here we are today being able to bring forth Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act, to be able to do that in a small way, but as I said, we need to do more.

There's a lot of—and this is more than just in the city of Winnipeg, in our bigger, urban areas—this also gets out to rural Manitoba and to northern Manitoba. And myself, being an MLA from northern Manitoba—well, north-central Manitoba—I'm seeing more and more of that impact, that positive impact about the Filipino community expanding outside of our urban areas, expanding outside of just the city centres and it's a fantastic experience to have.

I remember my experience years and years ago. And from where I am, it's Highway 304, you know, up to the—kind of, the northeast side of the province. And there's a place where the Manigotagan River crosses the Highway 304, and time and time again, I'd always come by there—and it's a great fishing spot—there's a falls right there and everything—and time and time again, so many times there's been a large number of Filipino families that come there to fish.

And I've stopped in there and we've shared stories—you know, where are you from, where do you live, what do you do?—those kind of things. And it's always been—and for the most part, Madam Speaker, there's been a lot of them that said, you know what, oh, I'm a health-care aide. I'm a nurse. My family does this, my family that. But we just kind of—it brings to me the knowledge of just being able to become a Manitoban and being able to celebrate that—and just sharing those stories.

You know, it wasn't the matter of, you know, I'm Indigenous, I'm First Nation, you're Filipino, you're Manitoban, those kind of things. It was just, we're all Manitobans and we're all here together and we're all in

one kind of group that we all relate. And it was just a matter of being able to go over the talk of fishing.

And I'm sure members on this side of the Chamber, members opposite, have had those experiences also. And that's the great way, and that's the fantastic thing about the province of Manitoba is being able to celebrate those achievements, being able to celebrate those storied—and, in particular, today, being able to celebrate those achievements, those stories and those accomplishments with the Filipino community of Manitoba.

So if there's the smallest way that we can show our appreciation by passing an act such as this, then I'm grateful. I'm honoured to be able to stand up and say a few words about that. But I also want to be very cognizant about the fact that we could always do more, and I think that's something that we need to be very, very adamant about, be very proactive about is let's do more. Let's do more to show our appreciation for the Filipino community here in Manitoba, and the contributions that those community members make not only to just a—certain fields, whether it be professionals, doctors, lawyers, health-care aides, those kind of things, but just overall.

Let's celebrate our students that are up-and-coming, you know, whether they be elementary students, junior high, high school, post-secondary—let's celebrate those students today, too, of Filipino heritage. Let's be able to say, you're our future.

One of the phrases that I've used so commonly, Madam Speaker, is our youth is not only our future, but they're also our now. So let's do that. Let's celebrate our Filipino youth now also. Because there's some point in time, Madam Speaker, where none of us will be sitting in this Chamber anymore, and we need those youth to be able to do that.

* (10:30)

And I'm sure my colleague, the member from Notre Dame, when she shares a few words, and very, very passionate about her history, her background, her family. She's very passionate and very proud to be able to say the community she comes from, her background, her heritage.

So when this bill was brought forward, it was just, wow, here we go. Here's something we can agree on. Here's something we can push forward. Here's something we can actually do and realize that it was long overdue.

And, I mean, there's been governments for many, many years now that have not done something like this. And, I mean, that is something that—we can work across all lines; we can work across the aisle; we can say this is something we need to support.

But again, Madam Speaker, it's about doing that and then some. So what can we do to support more? What can we do to enhance this, to make this show of appreciation more than just a piece of paper that says we recognize this one month out of the year?

Let's show appreciation for our Filipino community always. Not just today, not just tomorrow, but always.

So, Madam Speaker, in being able to stand up here and speak in support of this bill, and I know this is something that's very passionate on—from this side of the Chamber also, to be able to say we're in full support of this bill, and it is something that was long overdue, but let's do more.

Madam Speaker, with those few words, I'd like to say *miigwech*. Thank you very much.

Ms. Nahanni Fontaine (St. Johns): I'm going—I'm pleased to get up and put a couple of words on the record in respect to Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act.

I think that it's pretty evident that everyone in the House supports Bill 205. I think it's an important bill to recognize Manitoba Filipino citizens who have done so much in the community.

I just want to concentrate on a little bit of the contribution of the Filipino community here in Manitoba to our great, amazing province. I'm going to start by acknowledging some of the Filipino folks who sat in this Chamber, or who have been involved in politics.

And, certainly, I think it's important to start with Flor Marcelino, who was the first BIPOC woman to ever be elected in this Chamber, and that's quite a historic moment, not only for Flor, the former MLA, not only for her family, but certainly for all Filipino citizens here in Manitoba, but, more particularly, Filipino women.

So, you know, that moment when Flor was elected in this Chamber represented a moment that Filipino women could see themselves reflected in this space, a space that—as I have often said in this Chamber—was not meant for women, and certainly was not meant for BIPOC women.

And so I have an enormous amount of respect for that courageous step that Flor Marcelino took when she was approached to run for the NDP. And that commitment that she had in being a really good MLA. Flor was a really good, committed, dedicated MLA.

And, you know, it's not easy when you're in these spaces because you do still have to contend with and navigate what is, again, a space that historically—and still I would suggest contemporarily—the domain of men.

And, you know, I find it—you know, Flor had to put up with a lot of stuff in this Chamber, particularly when she was the acting interim leader for the NDP. I remember some of the things that the members across the way would shout at Flor.

So I do want to give Flor the recognition and the acknowledgment and the respect that she is owed and deserves in this Chamber as we sit and debate Bill 205.

Again, I also want to recognize Ted Marcelino, who also sat in this Chamber on this side of the House, who was a beloved member of our caucus—who folks may not know, always brought us treats, fried banana treats, I think they're called. I don't—and he was—I know when I first got elected he was somebody that you could go and just talk to if you needed to feel like you had family. If you were feeling kind of insecure on this new role, he was always there.

And, you know, I want to acknowledge our colleague, the MLA for Notre Dame. You know, Flor becoming the first BIPOC woman in this Chamber, in the same way as, you know the member for The Pas (Ms. Lathlin) and the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) and the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara), those historic moments are transformative in communities; they're transformative in the lives of BIPOC citizens.

And so, you know, we are very blessed to be able to work and—with the MLA for Notre Dame and to call the member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino) our colleague and our sister. We're so blessed to work with her. And, you know, for those folks that don't have much interaction with the MLA for Notre Dame or don't know her very well, she is so dedicated to this role and dedicated to her job and dedicated to her community and her constituency and dedicated to all Manitobans. And, you know, it's quite amazing when you, you know, you watch or you witness what the MLA for Notre Dame is accomplishing in her community and in her constituency.

And, you know, it's so important to have a woman, a Filipino woman like the MLA for Notre Dame in this space, because, again, the Filipino community see themselves reflected in her and in her work. But, more importantly, Filipino women see themselves reflected in her and in her work. And so I lift up my colleague from—the MLA for Notre Dame, I lift her up today and I say miigwech for all of the work that she does and she continues to do.

Why is it important to be reflected in this space? Why is it important that not only do we celebrate a—Filipino citizens here in Manitoba, but it's important that we have them reflected in here because, again, it is transformative.

And so, you know, we know that, predominantly, Filipino women played such a huge role in our health-care system in the midst of a global pandemic. I don't think anyone can say enough about the role that Filipino women played during the pandemic in the health-care system—and are still playing that role in home care, as nurses, as, you know, health-care allied professionals, all of these things that Filipino citizens play, predominantly citizens—Filipino citizens—Filipino women citizens play in the health-care system is so important.

So, you know, we support Bill 205. We support our colleagues past and present in this Chamber. But it's not enough just for the government to have a bill that is a recognition day. That's not enough. It's not enough to not pay people for their labour. It's not enough for this government to sit here and, on the one hand, express support and recognition for Filipino citizens here in Manitoba but, on the other, say that they don't deserve a raise or they don't deserve COVID hazard pay or they don't deserve, you know, when we have home-care workers that are driving from home to home or appointment to appointment and not getting the dollars that they are entitled to while they're driving. It's not enough.

So, you know, we've seen so many times from this PC government, both, you know, under the leadership of, you know, of the former premier, Brian Pallister, and under the current leadership of the new Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), that they talk outside both of their—on each side of their mouth. On the one hand, we support them, we recognize them, but on the other hand, we actually want to do the bare, bare minimum to ensuring that Manitoba Filipino citizens are entitled to equity within Manitoba.

* (10:40)

They are doing the bare minimum, like they do on every single other file that they have. The environment, the economy, whatever it is, they do the bare minimum. They think that Bill 205 is—that's it, that's great, this is all we need to do to show that we're committed to the Filipino community in Manitoba.

It is a start. And Filipino Manitobans deserve this. They deserve this, one hundred per cent. But they also deserve fair wages; they also deserve safety at work; they also deserve to be represented here in this Chamber. *[interjection]* And they deserve to be equitable in the policies that these ones who can't even—who are chirping right now—can't even listen to the last 20 seconds of my speech. They deserve to have that equity and that respect from members opposite.

So we support Bill 205. To that end, I would suggest that the PC caucus of Manitoba actually put more commitment into equity for Manitoba Filipino citizens.

Miigwech.

Mr. Mark Wasyliv (Fort Garry): I'd like to just put a few brief comments on the record in relation to this act.

Obviously, I'm very proud to stand in support of this bill and stand in support of the Filipino community here in Manitoba. They have obviously become an integral part of modern Manitoba and have basically an oversized influence and importance in our economy and our politics and our cultural fabric, and that's going to continue to grow. And I think that's a great thing for Manitoba, and this community certainly deserves this honour and this respect.

Being a member of an ethnic minority, and knowing that on the Order Paper a similar bill is coming in relation to the Ukrainian community, I do have to pause and put a few comments about these types of performative politics that we're seeing more and more of by this government.

It appears that as time wears on—and this tired government is, you know, failing even more—their approach to governing Manitoba is to sort of hide and to put forward these sort of symbolic acts in place of real governing, in place of real action, real policies that can actually make lives better.

And it's troubling for a couple reasons. I mean, I'm a member of a very large ethnic minority, one

that's a large voting block, as is the Filipino community. So we get to have these performative politics type acts brought before here.

I'm thinking about all the other ethnic minorities in Manitoba that are integral and contribute, but they're small, so they don't get recognition days, they don't get recognition months and they don't get the attention of the government. And that's very telling, because their contributions are no less worthy or important, and it just sort of smacks of this sort of empty, cynical politics, this sort of micro-targeting that we're so used to with the Stefanson government.

And, you know, as much as it's nice to be recognized and seen by the Province for your community's contribution, that recognition without more is empty. It's hollow and ultimately can be very disrespectful.

And we're seeing that play out right now with the crisis in Ukraine, with the Russian invasion in Ukraine, where, you know, this government tells the Ukrainian community here in Manitoba that we're appreciated and respected but that they won't spend any money on our issues, that they won't help in our time of need or our time of crisis.

And, you know, you can have all the acts in the world. When the community's voice never actually gets into this building, doesn't actually reach the government and the government isn't actually prepared to recognize the community's concerns and needs and act upon them, then, ultimately, these can be very empty and, ultimately, can be even hurtful to the communities that—whose name they are put forward in.

So I would encourage the government that, you know, this is great, we need to do that, we need to show respect to the Filipino community. But you just can't stop there—and I know that's their plan. I know that's where they want to stop. I know that's as far as they want to go with these things. But they don't want to actually address, and have never addressed the real issues affecting the Filipino community, just like they will not address and will not act on the real issues affecting the Ukrainian community, and I could go down the list.

And this government just wants to wrap themselves in whatever community flag without doing the hard work to get to know us, to know what our needs are and to reflect those needs in government policy.

And so, hopefully, this government will be better this time, that they will not only just pass this act, but they will bring in necessary reforms when it comes to our immigration process here in Manitoba. They'll

bring in necessary reforms with how we deal with service workers and how we respect them, how we pay them and whether we bring in a living wage. Because at the end of the day, you know, it's great to be Ukrainian or whatever, but if you can't pay your bills then that's something else.

And so, I certainly urge this government to drop the performative politics—I mean, it's transparent, everybody can see it, it's gross—and actually come back and start properly listening to Manitoba's communities and bring in the policies and the help that they're asking so desperately from this government.

So with those few brief words, I'm going to sit down because I'm very interested in hearing what my colleague has to say.

Thank you.

MLA Malaya Marcelino (Notre Dame): Madam Speaker—sorry, can you hear me?

Madam Speaker: Yes, we can.

MLA Marcelino: Thank you.

As a Manitoban legislator born in the Philippines and very much immersed in the Filipino culture, it is my humble honour today to rise, virtually, to speak to this very, very valuable bill that will mark June as Philippine heritage month.

Madam Speaker, every month growing up in my house was Filipino heritage month. My parents, from the very beginning, they tried to impart their love of country and its people to myself and to my siblings.

My own name, Malaya, Madam Speaker, it means to free; it's a verb. My brother's name is Diwa; it means soul or your conscious, the thing inside you that makes you human. I have another brother named Mayon. Mayon in Bikolano, another language of the Philippines, means beauty and it refers to a volcano in the Philippines with a very perfect cone. I have a sister named Awit, and her name is translated to the Psalms, like in the bible, or songs. And then I have a sister named Lualhati, and her name means glory, glory like when you're doing a prayer, when you praise God, glory to God.

And then even our dog, Madam Speaker, growing up, had a Filipino name. His name was Gilas, and it meant brave.

So as a parent myself, now, you know, we've continued this tradition. And I have two sons, my husband and I, and my son's name is Sandigan, and that means a strong foundation, and I have another

son, Damayan, and it means working together towards a common goal.

So, you know, growing up we were immersed in current events from the Philippines. My mother, Flor, had a newspaper called the Philippine Times and she was the publisher and editor of that. And as a high school student, I participated by writing articles for this newspaper. I interviewed, I remember, community leaders such as CKJS radio host Joe Capalad Sulit and another community leader, Perla Javate, who has too many accolades and too many years of service for me to do justice here. I even got to interview and write about a future president of the Philippines, Gloria Arroyo, back when she was only a congressman-congressperson.

* (10:50)

So, growing up in our household, we were also exposed to the many needs of the community, especially for Filipino migrant workers.

Madam Speaker, what was imparted to us at an early age was that language is the carrier of culture. I remember, over 30 years ago, my father, along with some members of the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers—they started a language program—heritage program called Wika for young children.

And I was too old at 10 years old to participate in that, and so I was in charge of preparing snacks for the little ones.

I would like to briefly lift up the contributions of MAFTI, again, the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers, under the current leadership of Genalyn Tan, for their more than 40 years of service bringing language instruction to children, youth and adults. And just a very wonderful group of volunteers there, volunteer teachers here. I've had the pleasure first-hand of seeing the calibre of 'instructure'—instruction that these teachers can provide. I, myself, take part in Filipino heritage language classes and will continue to do so.

I just want to use this opportunity to thank my last semester's teacher, Victoria Cabrera for her patience, and the other volunteer teachers who participated in my class.

Madam Speaker, there are other very very many important Filipino organizations that promote Filipino culture. For example, the Philippine Heritage Council of Manitoba, under the leadership of Perla Javate—they are responsible for Philippine heritage ball every

year, and with the pandemic, they shifted to online discussions about culture and community.

Another very important Filipino organization that promotes culture is ANAK. They target youth and young people to kind of talk a little bit more about history and identity. They have workshops yearly and even provide—and have provided lectures at the University of Winnipeg. They also provide youth mentorships, which is really important.

My younger brother Mayon participated in that, in the youth mentorships.

The Knights of Rizal is another very important organization that I'd like to highlight. They've been around for decades. They teach community members about a national hero, Jose Rizal, and their contributions to literature and to the Philippine revolution.

And there are more recent cultural organizations as well such as Kultivation and street festival and so many more that I hope to discuss in the future and to recognize these other organizations at a different stage of debate for this bill.

Madam Speaker, I'm very proud to stand with this NDP caucus. You know, full support of this heritage bill—this is a NDP caucus that has put forward very important bills on heritage recently such as The Emancipation Day Act and Somali heritage act.

And myself tried to put forward a resolution commemorating 500 years of Filipino history in celebrating the contributions of Filipino Manitobans last year, in 2021, but, unfortunately, the PCs killed that resolution and it didn't pass.

I'd like to thank the member of St. James for his words during this debate about issues plaguing the Filipino community, on community safety and justice.

I'd like to thank the member for Wolseley (Ms. Naylor) for her contributions to this debate, speaking about the Filipino queer community and their contributions to Manitoba.

I'd like to thank the member for Union Station (MLA Asagwara) who contributed to this debate by speaking about our Filipino health-care workers, the importance of paid sick days to our many Filipino front-line and essential workers and the need to be compensated properly.

I'd like to thank the MLA for Transcona who's contributed to this debate by discussing the minimum wage and affordability and the issues that many Filipino essential workers and front-line workers and

newcomers face and the hardships that they face because of, you know, only being on minimum wage.

And I'd like to also thank the member for St. Vital (Mr. Moses) who spoke very knowledgeably on the issues of the barriers to accreditation that many Filipino newcomers and immigrants continue to face and the repercussions of that to family members.

So, you know, there's been some discussion that we are—that the NDP is stalling this debate, and nothing could be further from the truth, Madam Speaker, because it is our intention to support this Philippine heritage month bill, but it's also our intention to possibly strengthen this through further amendments down the line, and it is definitely our intention to always be able to represent the needs of the Filipino community in any kind of chance that we get, because that's why we are elected, and that's why we're here: to bring forward the needs of our community and to represent them in this space, here.

And I will never be ashamed for doing that because there is no—at no time have I ever received a phone call from a Filipino community member asking me, you know, can I please have a June heritage month? I've been asked by Filipino community members, you know, my son has been murdered. What can we do to help me? What can we do? And then the families will say to me, what can we do to make our communities safer?

I've been asked by a—by Filipino community members, you know, I would like to be able to take my years of experience and my years of education and be able to work here in this country. How can you help me to do that? Those are the kinds of concerns that Filipino community members are asking me for.

And so we are taking this opportunity to discuss that, here in this House, and to be able to bring forth this bill to its next stage.

And, Madam Speaker, I actually have some ideas to make this bill even stronger that I would like to bring forth during an amendment stage, so—as our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) always says—stay tuned for that.

And with that, I'd like to conclude my remarks. This is a very, very important bill. Heritage and—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Are there any further members wishing to speak on debate?

If not, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act.

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

Hon. Wayne Ewasko (Acting Government House Leader): I'd like to see if it's the will of the House to see that the vote was unanimous?

Madam Speaker: Let the House show—is there will of the House to show that the vote was unanimous? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Ewasko: We'll see if it's the will of the House to see that the clock is 11 o'clock, and proceed to private members' resolutions.

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 11 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 7—Recognizing a Successful Agriculture Safety Week

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Recognizing a Successful Agriculture Safety Week, brought forward by the honourable member for Dauphin.

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): I move, seconded by the MLA for Portage La Prairie,

WHEREAS March 14, 2022 until March 20, 2022 was Canadian Agricultural Safety Week in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS during this time students and workers participated in learning activities which aimed to reduce the amount of agriculture-related accidents; and

WHEREAS agriculture work places are unique in the aspect that many of these work places are where families work and live; and

WHEREAS agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries in Canada, but Agriculture Safety week is working with farmers to reduce the amount of accidents; and

WHEREAS agriculture projects must take into account the safety of the task at hand, whether that is the safety of workers, customers, or the environment; and

WHEREAS producer groups, non-profits, government bodies, industry and researchers formed what is now the Canadian Agricultural Safety Association in 1993 to respond to issues of health and safety in agriculture; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Agriculture Safety Association works with partners in government, business, and farming organizations across the country to support initiatives that equip producers, their families and their workers with the information and tools needed to make farms a safe place to live, work and play; and

WHEREAS this event each year allows agriculture workers to gather and discuss the emerging safety needs that are unfolding in Canadian Agriculture.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba expresses its gratitude to the people of Manitoba and agricultural producers for their role in making this year's agriculture safety week a success.

Motion presented.

* (11:00)

Mr. Michaleski: Thank you again, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to get up and speak on Recognizing a Successful Agriculture Safety Week here in Manitoba. I know our government is very appreciative of the agriculture producers in our province, and, of course agriculture, is a major backbone in our province and it really affects almost everybody in the province.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

So, there's unique circumstances in the agricultural industry that are—that again, quite unique, they change all the time and the working conditions, the working environments are ever changing.

Again, you know that if you're living on a farm or you have employees, there is an extra level of importance, when it comes to safety, and without a doubt, over the years, safety is becoming a—has become a large part of operations on the farm as farms grow and as we have more employees coming different times of year.

Again, this is changing—an ever-changing environment, so safety is really a culture and a top-of-mind issue, so recognizing agriculture safety week is important, because we do need reminding. And this one week gives us an opportunity to talk about it and

discuss those things at a farm level or as a community level.

And we do need reminding, and I know I can speak for myself, you know, just keep drilling it in and what it takes every now and then is something to happen and you stop and you think about what you're doing, and, you know, that's an earned—or a learned response, sometimes, to just stop and think.

So, I do appreciate the work that's being done in terms of safety—farm safety across the sector—and it's helpful that there's people that are working to promote safety week and, of course, also doing it on a non-stop basis.

Again, if we're—again, very dynamic industry, lots of sectors, lots of people involved, and I would say it's changed over the years from—there's a lot more people that are involved outside the farm as support, that are getting involved in production, and I think—you know, and if we look to the future, you know, those—it's just seeing the fears of merging markets and changes in the marketplace are just requiring a lot more people to be involved in this, and when we do that, to be successful with any sort of strategy like that or emerging opportunity, health and safety is absolutely key.

And I know, just speaking in my own operation, when we have people that are coming in, they're not familiar with operations, they're not familiar with how equipment operates. Again, and that's not their fault, it's just a reality, so safety just becomes a bigger and bigger part of a successful strategy.

So, again—and I know as a farmer and also as a—someone that's worked in manufacturing for quite a few years, but I'll use farming as example, there's lots of times when there's people that come down, and whether it's after work or weekend warriors that come out and help, and they want to have fun on the farm, and we encourage that, but you know, you've got again—you've got a really moving picture, when especially at the spring and harvest seasons, and then you throw people in there as well.

And it can be chaotic and fun, but it is, again, a combination between family, and then you've got young kids that are learning and they're jumping into the whole operation, and again, there's a lot of people around, so safety, I know for us it just gets really heightened up at those times of year. And whether it's in the field or down the road or moving equipment around or, you know, we could have, you know, people—local cattle producers. They could be moving

cattle down the road exactly the same time as we're, you know, as we're moving a drill out into the field. So lots of issues of safety. That's why I say it—safety is a culture on most of the farms and people are really working to adopt safety practice, a lot of people helping.

Of course, equipment and technology has come a long way—built-in safety to improve. And I think that's really part of the good news, because based on the data from Workers Compensation Board the rate of injury in the ag industry has decreased since—of course, since our government was elected, but is a combined effort that is helping that along.

And—but, again, we have a mix of people that are coming to the farm. This is an area of risk and area of safety. And as an employer, we are responsible for knowing and applying the principles and laws intended to ensure the safety and health of all people working on the farm. So from my experience, from what I've seen, again, agriculture is—really has adapted and embraced safety and, of course, there's lots of programming that's there to help, whether they do it on their own or they do it—there is organizations that will help, you know, larger organization, more employees with help to get safety plans in place.

And—but the one thing that a lot of farmers—individual farms now—is the use of PPE. That's come a long way. I know, for me, I know it was a little bit late when they came to ear protection and those things. But now we've got ear plugs. We've got safety glasses. I used to go to the optometrist and he'd used to give me the gears because how come all these welding sparks are on my glasses? And I, well, you know, the safety glasses were across the shop, so I couldn't get it. So I used to get the gears over that.

So now we've got safety wear for your eyes and your ears and, of course, masks—you know, go back a lot of years, ate a lot of dust. But we've got a lot of equipment that's—you're able to sort of work around that and protect you in all the senses, like touching—again, gloves and protective gear when you're working around hazardous chemicals or other different environments. You know, there's protections that are out there and they are readily being adapted.

Last one, probably, is, again, with brain and mental health is something, again, people are a little more aware of that. You know, in the past it was pretty—it's been and it will continue to be times of intense pressure, whether it's financial or whether it's weather-related. You know, fatigue weighs in. There's a lot of the things that are going through the—

a producer's head at the time. And, again, you add in harvest time and plus a bunch of new recruits, it can be quite a thing.

So safety is absolutely important, and I do know safety from my experience has been high on the radar for lots of producers and lots of organizations—and, again, I support them. We need them. They're there to remind us and to keep reminding us, and that's not a bad thing.

So some of those, like keystone agriculture producers, Manitoba Farm Safety, they provide training, farm safety consultations, barn inspections. Again, there's people out there that can help producers, or operations or businesses, craft and look and evaluate their premises, their operations in terms of safety. You know, there's lots of organizations—Canadian agriculture safety association is another one.

Again, training is available to people like never before, and I know farmers are—you know, they may only have one or two employees, but they're using that. And Mr. Deputy Speaker, it's important. Agriculture safety is important and we do, again, need to be reminded, need to be constantly working on agriculture safety week.

So I want to recognize everyone who's helped so much during last week's Canadian agriculture safety week.

* (11:10)

We all want to make it home in one piece, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and there's lots of people that are helping in that regard.

Thank you.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held, and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: the 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.

The floor is open for questions.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): I appreciate the member from Dauphin for this resolution because farm safety is important for all of us, especially for those who work at the farms.

Just wanted to ask the minister: What is the PC government doing to support farmers and help them recover from the record-setting drought last year?

Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin): I thank the member for the question.

I know our government has really stepped up this year in terms of agriculture support during a pretty extraordinary drought situation in 2021. It was a large drought affecting a large part of North America, and I know we were there to—probably one of the bigger things I thought was, you know, changing the crop insurance program to the alternative use. That was a much-needed action that was taken to, you know—crops were deteriorating and there was some value, salvage value for feed, so I know that those two programs for—

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I note in the member's resolution the comment is that agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries in Canada.

I ask the member for Dauphin whether—what the per cent of farms are who have a farm safety plan, and can the member tell us the difference between, I mean, the time safe—work loss to injury actually only applies to farm workers, not to owners or family members, is that correct?

Mr. Michaleski: I thank that member for the question.

It's the issue of farm safety plans. Again, in my experience, in our—in my area, there isn't a lot but it's—it is a culture, without a doubt, where the producers and the farmers are—it's sort of like the environmental farm plans; they are adopting safety practices, safety investments. They're investing in time, training their staff. Again, it's nothing formal in terms of a plan, but I think when the—when you get into larger operations requiring more people there would be formal plans—

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

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I certainly thank the member for Dauphin for bringing forward this resolution.

And as an active farmer, can he outline some of the safety concerns that stand out to him, both on his farm and within the farming community?

Mr. Michaleski: I thank the member for the question.

And sure, there's a number of issues. I think a long-standing one has been hydro lines. When you're walking in or driving into people's yards, you notice that.

That's, you know, because we've had to transform our own farms, you know, to accommodate those, so you look for those things because you're just sort of—you get caught a few times and rip a few lines down, you stop doing that and you start watching that. So, that's happened to me.

So that's one thing I do watch, and I look at around for the traffic, the mobility in the yards—

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

Mr. Brar: When we talk about safety, we talk about safety of the workers, safety of the farmers and also safety of the business of—our farmers are running.

Just wanted to ask the member from Dauphin, in the event of a flood that impacts Manitoba producers, what supports is the government prepared to offer if hit by another difficult production year?

Mr. Michaleski: To answer the member's question, I don't have a crystal ball on what's in place in the event of a flood. There is—you know, there—that's a—that's very much a—something that is not permanently in place that I know of.

But I know when it came to the—look at the drought. Now, government—our government was there to help those producers during a time of need when there was feed shortages, when there was water issues. Our government was around this summer, like we always are, taking agriculture very, very seriously. And we were there—

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

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Thank the member from Dauphin for bringing this resolution forward. And I know, being a farmer himself, you've seen changes in safety.

And what are some of those things that you've seen that help farmers in Manitoba?

Mr. Michaleski: Thank the member for the question.

There has for sure been a lot of improvements over the years, I know in all-use equipment in particular. I know there's—you know, equipment of the past, you could hot-wire them, you could get them sort of moving and started, and right now there's a lot of

safety features that are built into equipment to prevent you from some accidents that could happen.

You know, it's—once you get out of the operator's seat, a lot of it shuts the machines down, shuts PTOs down, and—so you're not dealing with moving parts. That's probably—

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

Mr. Brar: Would the member mind sharing what they are hearing from the Crown land ranchers in the Dauphin constituency?

Mr. Michaleski: I want to thank the member for the question, and just remind him, you know, Manitoba cattle producers are the best, they are an incredible asset for Manitoba.

They don't want subsidies, like the member is—may suggest. They don't want subsidies, they want strong markets. They want comprehensive, stable markets with market access and they want to compete.

We're there to support them in this and make sure that they're—the markets are developed and they're protected. And our government is there to protect them and help them grow their sector for them and for the whole economy of Manitoba.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I'd like to thank the member for bringing this forward.

I wonder if he would like to outline some of the differences that make safety on the farm different from safety in other workplaces?

Mr. Michaleski: I want to thank the member for that question.

It—and I think I mentioned, too, a bit in my opening comments on this, but you really do have a live one when you're talking about agriculture operations, operating environments. It's changing all the time so you need to be safety conscious at all times.

And I can tell you, in—you know, in minutes or instants things can change, the whole picture can change, you know, whether it's people coming in or a breakdown or something happens, it's not an assembly line situation. It's a very, very—

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

Mr. Brar: Very respectfully, I would offer another opportunity to the member from Dauphin to share with all of us if he is hearing anything from the Crown

land ranchers in his constituency: phone calls, emails, letters.

If yes, what they're saying?

* (11:20)

Mr. Michaleski: Again, I want to remind the member again, you know, Manitoba beef producers up in our area, they produce some of the world's best—world's best—beef, and I know our government takes that sector very, very serious. We listened to them. *[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Michaleski: —and they asked for changes to Crown lands. They know there's emerging opportunities. We need to align the sector for growth in the future. The producers do not want subsidies. In spite of what—*[interjection]*

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Michaleski: —the member says, Manitoba producers want open marketplace. They want access. They've got a great product and we need to do everything we can to help them get it into the marketplace.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The time for questions has expired.

Debate

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The floor is open for debate.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): Today, the member from Dauphin offered us the opportunity to talk about our hard-working producers in Manitoba and those who work at the farms.

We call it farming. We call it agriculture. Farm safety is important, we all know, and we express our gratitude to the farmers, to the farm workers. It's important that we make sure the safety of everyone who works at the farms—not just at the farms, in any work setting.

So this resolution is a good one that recognizes a successful agriculture safety week, which was last week. And the member decided to bring in this resolution, spend some time to work on the draft and give us an opportunity to put a few words on the record regarding the safety at the farms, safety in agriculture settings, safety where ever people related to agriculture, ag professions work. So that's something good.

But what I see is that this member finds an easier way to talk about agriculture. We appreciate—

we appreciate—our farmers. We appreciate our farm workers. Everyone does appreciate because they feed us. We should be thankful to them for putting food on our table. But that's not something that's enough for the farmers. We need to do a lot more for our farmers, because we know that our farmers play an important role in our economy. They have built Manitoba. They have built Canada. They have played a critical role in our history, as well, not just in the economy. So we celebrate. We proudly say that Manitoba is a province that produces food not just for Manitobans, not just for Canadians, but for the outer world, as well.

So we know that this government has got not a very great record when it comes to the farming community. This government failed to stand with our producers when they needed them most. May it be drought, may it be flood, may it be COVID-19, they failed to stand with them.

This government needs to move beyond just appreciating the farming community. They, rather, need to do something concrete that the farmers appreciate, and I have talked to so many farmers after being elected and being given this responsibility as critic for Agriculture, the farmers do not appreciate what this government is doing for them.

This government is not standing strong with our producers. This government and its representatives, elected MLAs and ministers—they're not showing up at the gatherings of farmers where they want to discuss about drought.

I am a witness of such situations in 2021 when the farmers invited MPs, MLAs, opposition critics and ministers and their representatives, especially in Interlake. I didn't see a single PC representative standing with those farmers, listen to them about what they are going through during that drought period.

And, to my surprise, there was no regret message sent to that occasion where more than 100 farmers were actually waiting for a PC representative to listen to them, to offer something to them, to work together for them to get out of that situation or handle that tough situation.

We know that our farmers are doing a great job to serve the land, to maintain the land, to produce food for us in a sustainable manner. But those farmers need support from the current government so that they can have some load off their minds, because they are suffering from that. They are suffering from weather and other hardships. They are suffering from supply chain disruptions.

So that's when the government needs to show leadership to support those farmers, but, unfortunately, this government did not.

I, again, appreciate the member from Dauphin, who fails to answer my questions regarding Crown lands, to offer us an opportunity at least to talk about agriculture and issues our farmers are facing. I simply asked if the member from Dauphin is hearing from the Crown land ranchers around Dauphin area. In fact, the Crown land ranchers are requesting this member to listen to them, to support them, to talk to the Agriculture Minister, and this government is not responding positively to sit together and meet with those producers.

I got a chance to talk to them. So what they shared is—for example, I talked to one of the Crown land ranchers and the gentleman shared with me that five or six of his neighbours—they got out of business. He took up a pen and paper and started mapping the farms around his ranch: this guy left, that guy left, this guy left. So he is explaining how practically the Crown land changes that this government brought in 2019 is impacting their lives.

Practically, what happens when a producer needs, for example, help on culling, help on vaccinating their animals or help on repairing machinery? They used to just walk to next door and ask for help. Now there is no next door. They have to drive 30 minutes to ask for help. That's practical impact of these Crown land changes.

And those people are suffering with the rent which has been increased 300 times. Can anybody in this Chamber tell me an example of any business during COVID who got their rent 300 per cent up?

* (11:30)

And these producers share their pains with me, that we are those unfortunate people who feed you all and this government raised our rent 300 per cent. What that means is that this government is purposely, intentionally kicking them out of business.

When a government just thinks about money, they start auctioning these pieces of land to people with deeper pockets. What's the impact? The impact is that the young farmers who want to start their life, want to start a career in agriculture, in farming, they're not able to because they're not—they don't have that much wealth. They don't have that much money to bid the rich people out.

So this government is just caring for the rich, not the ranchers, not the family farms who have been feeding us for generations.

So while I appreciate this member for bringing in this resolution—which is important because it talks about agriculture safety week and agriculture safety—I also remind this member and the PC government to listen to Crown land ranchers, to do something to save our family farms. Because we need to bring in the next generation and we need to see our towns and—

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

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland): I certainly thank the member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski) for bringing forward this resolution on farm safety, and as we celebrated farm safety week the third week of March, just remind—it's a reminder to all of us that every day is safety day on the farm.

And farming is—has a rather unique—is a rather unique occupation because there's so many different jobs involved on a daily basis. It's not standing in one particular job or doing one particular job during the day, and so the safety skills are certainly many and varied.

However, there have been a lot of advances made in farm safety, and although we recognize that there are still much more to do and there has—you know, there continues to be incidents on—in terms of farm safety. I'm certainly—I certainly have my share of incidents on the farm over the years. But I was always managed to survive them and that was—but I know of many others who have had some really seriously debilitating accidents and even some deaths, and that's always sad when you hear about that and certainly when they were—could have been preventable too.

In terms of improvements, there's—machinery has improved a lot. The noise levels, a few of us can attest to noisy cabs on tractors from years ago, and we're probably paying the price for that. And when you look at the lighting on equipment, they have to go down our highways and—to—in order to travel from field to field, and certainly the lights on them—the warning lights—are much better. There still needs to be an awareness from the public that this is slow-moving equipment and sometimes very wide equipment that takes up a lot of the road. You know, there's been in advances in that.

Guards and shields are much more robust and on equipment now as compared to older equipment and—but they need—those guards and shields need to be

remaining in place in order for safety not only for the farm, farm families, the farm owners, but also for employees, and this is where a lot of training comes into place.

I know the member for Dauphin talked about harvest—spring and the harvest when you bring in extra help. I know that and—especially on some of the larger farms, I'm thinking of the potato operations where they have large crews come in for the fall. They do robust safety training for those employees because nobody wants to see an accident happen, so they're—they've been very robust on doing training.

Livestock industry, which I am very familiar with, I think back to the days of some of the really primitive handling equipment and the dangers that were out there. The handling equipment for cattle, in particular, is much better now and much safer for the owners of the livestock and for those employees that are working with them. But it still needs—there is much more work to be done on there.

The member from Dauphin also mentioned personal protective equipment, PPEs, as they're known, the high visibility vests; you see them being worn by farm workers now, the ear, eye protection. The dust protection that's available now is certainly advanced from years ago, and it's being used. And, as I mentioned, the safety training that takes place on farms, and there's organizations that are certainly—been very robust in doing training: the University of Manitoba and the ag diploma and ag degree programs, Assiniboine College and their ag program, Canadian Agricultural Safety Association, SAFE Work Manitoba, keystone agriculture producers has a farm safety program going.

I know the member from Dauphin mentioned Manitoba Hydro. On our own farm, we buried a lot of the hydro lines, which saves you from an overhead experience, particularly the bigger equipment now. But there's still a danger there that people need to be aware of, that you don't disturb those lines when you're doing ground work around your yard.

And, certainly, the mental health, as all industry has become—as the general population has become more aware of mental health issues, this is also on the farm safety. It is paramount that we recognize that there are mental health issues within the farm community, and there are organizations that are certainly helping to deal and help people cope with mental health issues. And it can be a very personal thing. And there is a recognition now that there should—there's no

shame in going forward asking for help if you do have mental health challenges.

And I think back to many years ago, a person who died who had mental health challenges, and back then there just was not the recognition, the places where he could have gone for help. And I think of Jim quite often now, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And today, there was—you know, we could've possibly prevented that death from happening. And so that certainly needs to happen. So, there—with—just a recognition, general recognition, that safety is everybody's responsibility, whether you're a farm owner, farm family, employees on a farm, it is certainly much more forefront now than in previous years where it was just kind of taken for granted and not really accentuated that we need to.

So, certainly thank all our farm families out there for the work they do, for the food they produce. We wish them—for the grain producers, we wish them a successful season this year. There's some puddles out on the farms, on the land right now that we haven't seen for a couple of years, so we hope that we have some adequate moisture. And for our livestock producers, it will certainly help to bring back some of the forages that have really suffered in the last three years.

And so, with that Mr. Deputy Speaker, we wish all our farm families and farm owners the very best in the coming season here, and safety is—should always be paramount for everyone. Thank you.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): Really pleased to have an opportunity today to speak to this resolution from the member from Dauphin. We know, of course, that agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries in Canada, and for that reason, this is an important week to celebrate, and to celebrate, of course, the work of producers in helping to make farming a safer activity and, ultimately, to make farms not only safer places to work but also safer places to be and to live.

And, you know, this week is also a good opportunity to celebrate producers in Manitoba, to celebrate local food production, to celebrate the incredibly important role that they've played in the history of this province and the development of this province and to thank them for their important work.

* (11:40)

So it is good to see this government attempting to celebrate producers here with this resolution. But it is really important to point out that this resolution is not a replacement for providing real supports to farmers

in Manitoba. In fact, you know, we've seen this government fail so badly to provide the supports needed to farmers, that if this goes on for many years, we won't have a lot of farmers to celebrate in upcoming agriculture safety weeks in this province.

You know, if we look to the decisions we've seen from this government, what seems to be clear is that they've been intentionally moving away from ensuring we have the proper support for smaller producers, for family farms, and moving towards privileging larger producers, corporate producers, and big money, and the role of big money in agriculture in Manitoba—and I think the biggest example of this is one that my colleague spoke to, which is the changes that this government has brought in to Crown lands regulations.

You know, I think this is—the changes that were made here are incredibly egregious and, really, I think it is important that we do what we can to raise more attention to the changes that this government brought in. Because the changes that they brought in have only served to increase the challenges being faced by small producers in this province, and, in fact, the changes promise to steal away the futures for a lot of family-run farms in this province, or families that run those farms. And that's a huge concern.

And, of course, my colleague, the critic for Agriculture, has done incredible work in connecting with a lot of these producers and learning from these families and hearing their stories, and those stories are concerning. And, you know, we've heard some—I think—some nice words from members of this Chamber that actually have experience, that are farmers themselves, or have a background in farming, and it is good to know that we have that representation here in the Chamber.

But I really would ask them about, you know, their genuine thoughts on the changes that have been brought in by this government, relative to Crown lands. I really would like to know their honest opinion about what their government has done to the future of these family-run farms.

You know, the changes that were made to the Crown lands leasing system, the changes to the point system that had been used for a generation, that helped to ensure small producers and family-run farms could continue to do their work, could continue to have those farms be owned and operated by families, by Manitoban families, has been modified in a way that privileges big money, that does nothing to support those family-run farms.

And those changes will massively increase the cost of doing business for those farmers. We know—we've heard from farmers who've seen 300 per cent increases in the cost of their lease—300 per cent, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Think about the impact on that if you're a small-business owner, what that would mean for you as somebody who's trying to do business. How can you possibly continue to sustain your operation as a small operator, barely—possibly facing a whole range of other headwinds and challenges in our current environment, whether they be drought or other challenges, and you're seeing a 300 per cent increase in the cost of your lease?

I really ask, again, the member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski), who's brought forward what I think here is an important resolution, how does that impact friends, family members that you know farming in the Dauphin area? And I know that we're talking about ranching, that Dauphin is sort of near the epicentre of where a lot of our ranching happens, and those—that region of the province. How are they responding to that?

You know, not only does it massively increase their cost of doing business—which I think all of us here can agree, if you're a small-business owner, would create significant challenges—it's placing them in competition with out-of-province money, with big money that can now come in here and kick them off the farm in exchange for these bigger corporate operations.

And I think the most concerning change, by far—and, again, I really wonder what it's like—and I mean this in a non-partisan way—I really wonder what it's like when the members from this Chamber who are from farming communities go back to their home communities and they're forced to face farmers who are facing down, or who—or sorry, who have faced down the—this change to this Crown lands regulation that no longer allows unit transfers. The loss of the ability to transfer their Crown land assets, those leases, when they, perhaps, choose to sell to their children to continue that family tradition is the equivalent of stealing away their pension. It's the equivalent of robbing them from their—of their futures.

All of these farmers, producers in those regions that may have invested for years, invested untold thousands of dollars, hundreds of thousands of dollars, perhaps, in capital upgrades to the Crown lands that would have been adjacent to their farms. They've made these huge investments, and now all of those investments are no longer worth anything.

How do we honestly respond to that? How can we stand behind that?

We're robbing them of that future. Because, if they can't sell, if they can't benefit from the unit transfer of knowing that when they go to sell their ranch to their child, that their—that family member is guaranteed to have access to that Crown land adjacent to their farm that allowed them to do the work that they were doing, the value of their ranch is effectively wiped out.

An Honourable Member: Well, obviously, you don't understand.

Mr. Sala: Well, I appreciate that the member from Midland is chirping here, and has raised his voice and is suggesting that I obviously don't understand what's happening here. But I would invite him to stand up and to explain to this House how the elimination of unit transfers is benefitting family farmers in Manitoba. I invite him to explain to this House where I'm getting this wrong. He can't do it. He can't do it.

Again, this government is stealing away the future of family farms in this province. They've stolen it away by eliminating unit transfers. So they can deny it, can, you know, make comments in this House, but, again, I would invite him to stand up and explain not only to this House, but to explain to the hundreds of producers who have organized against the changes that this government brought in.

They don't have to take my word for it, they can look to the 500-person meetings that have been organized in the communities that they represent. They can listen to the farmers who've reached out to say, you know, the changes that you've brought in are stealing away our future. *[interjection]*

So, again, the—I want to put on the record that the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) is laughing, and I think producers in this province would love to know that the member for Midland is laughing at commentary that's being made about what his government's done to take away unit transfers. He's laughing and suggesting that, ultimately, the information here—I'm guessing that he's suggesting the information I'm putting on the record is false. But again, I invite him to refute it.

It doesn't matter how many times he says it's false, it's not going to make it true; this is simply fact. The government stole away unit transfers. They've stolen away the first right of refusal for farmers to ensure that they can access those leases and they've massively increased the costs of doing business.

So we can stand here in this Chamber—and, again, I do appreciate what has been brought forward. I think this resolution is important. It is important to celebrate, you know, the need to improve safety within our agricultural sector in Manitoba. It's important to celebrate our farmers and their contributions to making farming safer in this province. But that does nothing, this does nothing to make up for what this government has done or what they've failed to do to support farmers in this province.

So they are going to be held accountable for these failures, and I—again, I've heard commentary from members opposite here. I want to hear them stand up today and actually respond to the substance of what's been put on the record.

We need to do way more to support our farmers in this province. We need to stop the cuts and we need to make sure that family farms can continue to succeed in Manitoba.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to begin my comments on farm safety week by—with a big thank you to the keystone agriculture producers for their efforts over many years to improve farm safety. The KAP organization is to be complimented for these efforts and to be applauded for making an important contribution to the safety of farmers throughout Manitoba.

* (11:50)

The MLA, in his resolution—the MLA for Dauphin says that agriculture is one of the most dangerous industries in Canada. It doesn't necessarily have to be this way. In fact, it is improving and, yet, the MLA for Dauphin also comments that in his area the proportion of farms with a farm safety plan is low.

Indeed, I've heard from another source that the proportion of farms with a farm safety plan may be as low as 5 per cent. There clearly is significant room for improvement in this area, perhaps, improvement in the way that farm safety plans are done as well as in the improvement in enlisting more farmers to develop and use farm safety plans.

At the MLA for Dauphin, when asked, what is a common example of a safety issue, talked about the problem of farmers using equipment in a way that pulls hydro lines down. Surely, a good item to put in a farm safety plan is the location of hydro lines or planning to put them underground, as the MLA for Midland has talked about, so that the problem of

dangerous hydro lines and interaction with hydro lines in a way that can be dangerous, can be diminished and the dangers associated with this can be eliminated.

The good news, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the time-lost-to-injury rate has come down significantly from 2011 to 2020. This is likely, in part, from improvements in machinery, equipment, which is becoming safer and safer in a variety of aspects, including reducing problems with hearing loss as many of the current cabs are much quieter.

But time lost to injury, I believe, includes only farm workers, not owners or farm families. Owners are also curiously exempt from following some of the safety approaches which are mandatory for workers. And owners, including anyone in the farm family, on a family farm are—I would guess—not included in the time-lost-to-injury statistics. So there is room for better improvement in the way we gather information on farm safety, and farm injuries and time lost to work. And I hope that the Keystone Agricultural Producers will continue to work and looking for improvements in these areas.

I had hoped that the MLA for Dauphin would have given more details on the most common farm accidents and measures to prevent such accidents. This sort of information is very important if we're going to make progress, day by day and year by year, in reducing accidents and in reducing injuries. Hopefully, the MLA for Dauphin will provide this information at another time, and give us this information on another occasion.

I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Manitoba Liberals are fully supportive of the efforts to improve farm safety and this resolution and believe that improvements in farm safety based on evidence and on common sense will be needed and important as we make progress in reducing farm injuries and farm accidents.

And, lastly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make a comment on the situation with regard to Crown lands, which has been brought up. Manitoba Liberals have met with many who have been very badly affected by the Pallister-Stefanson governments' changes to the management of farm—of Crown lands. We continue to believe that the approach taken was detrimental to many farmers and, indeed, to communities, because we need to be supporting not just farmers, but the whole communities.

And, also, that the approach taken may be quite detrimental not only in that it increased costs to

farmers, but it increased uncertainties, and one is not often optimum in terms of long-run stewardship of the Crown lands in the way that the unit transfers was taken away, and those who take over Crown lands may be more likely to be focused on short-term gains and long-term gains. It is something that will remain to be seen as things evolve, but it is—remains to be a concern.

So with this—those comments, I thank members for this opportunity to talk about a very important issue, which is farm safety, and I hope we can move together with farmers and Keystone Agricultural Producers in this effort to reduce injuries and make farms places which are safer.

Thank you.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Certainly, I want to thank the member from Dauphin for bringing this resolution forward.

As we know, last week we celebrated farm safety week, and one that's really critically important.

I do want to just say and make—shout-out also to the Keystone Ag Producers. I know when I was a minister, we took it very seriously and we've funded them to the amount of \$350,000 each and every year to talk about farm safety.

Also, the dealerships that put on training for other people and fertilizer companies and others that—is paramount that we learn about safety, whether it be livestock safety, whether it be machine safety and making sure that the animals have safety as well.

So I want to, again, just say—to thank you to the member for Dauphin (Mr. Michaleski) for bringing it forward and we'll call on the vote.

So, thank you, Acting Deputy Speaker.

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

Are there any other members who would like to speak?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is the resolution put forward by the honourable member for Dauphin. Is it the will of the—

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba expresses its gratitude to the people of Manitoba and agricultural producers for their role in making this year's Agricultural Safety Week a success.

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

The hour being 12 noon, this House is adjourned—*[interjection]*—recessed.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 22, 2022

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