

**First Session – Forty-Third Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Tom Lindsey  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Third Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
ALTOMARE, Nello, Hon.	Transcona	NDP
ASAGWARA, Uzoma, Hon.	Union Station	NDP
BALCAEN, Wayne	Brandon West	PC
BEREZA, Jeff	Portage la Prairie	PC
BLASHKO, Tyler	Lagimodière	NDP
BRAR, Diljeet	Burrows	NDP
BUSHIE, Ian, Hon.	Keewatinook	NDP
BYRAM, Jodie	Agassiz	PC
CABLE, Renée, Hon.	Southdale	NDP
CHEN, Jennifer	Fort Richmond	NDP
COMPTON, Carla	Tuxedo	NDP
COOK, Kathleen	Roblin	PC
CROSS, Billie	Seine River	NDP
DELA CRUZ, Jelynn	Radisson	NDP
DEVGAN, JD	McPhillips	NDP
EWASKO, Wayne	Lac du Bonnet	PC
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GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	PC
GUENTER, Josh	Borderland	PC
HIEBERT, Carrie	Morden-Winkler	PC
JACKSON, Grant	Spruce Woods	PC
JOHNSON, Derek	Interlake-Gimli	PC
KENNEDY, Nellie	Assiniboia	NDP
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LAGASSÉ, Bob	Dawson Trail	PC
LAMOUREUX, Cindy	Tyndall Park	Lib.
LATHLIN, Amanda	The Pas-Kameesak	NDP
LINDSEY, Tom, Hon.	Flin Flon	NDP
LOISELLE, Robert	St. Boniface	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MARCELINO, Malaya, Hon.	Notre Dame	NDP
MOROZ, Mike	River Heights	NDP
MOSES, Jamie, Hon.	St. Vital	NDP
MOYES, Mike	Riel	NDP
NARTH, Konrad	La Vérendrye	PC
NAYLOR, Lisa, Hon.	Wolseley	NDP
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OXENHAM, Logan	Kirkfield Park	NDP
PANKRATZ, David	Waverley	NDP
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PIWNIUK, Doyle	Turtle Mountain	PC
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SALA, Adrien, Hon.	St. James	NDP
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WHARTON, Jeff	Red River North	PC
WIEBE, Matt, Hon.	Concordia	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rick	Swan River	PC

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, October 8, 2024**

*The House met at 10 a.m.*

**The 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 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.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**The Speaker:** The honourable deputy House leader—government deputy House leader.

**MLA David Pankratz (Deputy Government House Leader):** On House business.

**The Speaker:** On House business.

**MLA Pankratz:** Honourable Speaker, could you please call Bill 216 to resume debate—second reading.

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—  
PUBLIC BILLS**

**Bill 216—The Manitoba Small Business Month Act  
(Commemoration of Days, Weeks  
and Months Act Amended)**

**The Speaker:** It has been announced that we will resume second reading debate on Bill 216, The Manitoba Small Business Month Act, commemoration of days, weeks and months act as amended.

The debate is standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler), who has eight minutes remaining.

Is there leave for it to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot? *[Agreed]*

It will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot.

Other speakers?

**Mrs. Kathleen Cook (Roblin):** I am very pleased to rise today to speak to this small business month act.

I—and before I get into the substance of my comments, I just want to take the opportunity to highlight a few of the very many important small businesses in the Roblin constituency because, as I understand it, this act is intended to highlight the importance of small businesses to our economy and to Manitoba's communities.

And certainly in the Roblin constituency, we are blessed to have many important small businesses that are providing jobs to people in the community and helping build Manitoba's economy. And small businesses do so much more than that, Honourable Speaker.

They provide places for community members to gather, particularly hospitality businesses. In many cases, small businesses are philanthropists, and they support many of the events that go on in our communities. I know, as a former community centre board member, we often relied on small businesses to sponsor our community carnivals and pancake breakfasts, and indeed, without them, those events would not be happening.

One such business in my constituency is Morris Insurance. It's owned by Dave and Nancy Morris. They live in the constituency of Roblin, they do business in the constituency of Roblin, and I can't recall exactly how many years their business has been in existence, but certainly they are out sponsoring every hockey tournament, every event that goes on in Charleswood and often in Headingley as well.

They are very active members of the community. Dave Morris is involved with the Rotary club and all of the good work that they do. And certainly, actually,

my next door neighbour is the son of the—Mr. Morris that started the business, Gary Morris. He operates the other branch of Morris Insurance over in Westwood.

So businesses in Manitoba grow, they provide benefits to our communities, and I'd just like to thank Morris Insurance and Dave and Nancy and their son Gary, as well, for all of the work that they do in our community that benefits us all.

There have also been a number of other small businesses that have opened in the Roblin constituency in recent months, small businesses. One of those is—it's called Konez, and it's a ice cream shop in Headingley. My colleagues are quite big fans of Konez because it's right on Highway 1 and I know many of them like to stop there on their way back into their constituencies when they leave here.

Konez recently had some difficulty with the construction, actually, on Highway 1. Their access was cut off, and that speaks to one of the issues that small businesses deal with on a regular basis: it's construction. And while we all acknowledge the need for construction to improve our roads and our bridges and infrastructure in our communities, there are measures the government can take to mitigate the impact on small businesses.

One of those measures is to communicate adequately with businesses well in advance so they can prepare. In this case, the business actually had prepared signage well in advance of the anticipated construction, but they weren't able to get it up because they didn't know when their access was going to be cut off.

And that's unfortunate, because as a new business, they were just trying to get off their feet and get up and running in the constituency, and to have those kinds of unnecessary roadblocks thrown in their way can be really damaging to a small business that's just getting started.

We were also pleased in the Roblin constituency to welcome Boardwalk fries and shakes. There was definitely a need for another fast food option in the constituency, and I went and visited them over the summer to welcome them to the community and introduce myself as their MLA. And it was, I have to tell you, if you get a chance, stop by Boardwalk. It's right on Roblin in the strip mall by the No Frills. I haven't had a milkshake that good in a long time. They're real milkshakes; it's not out of a machine.

But now we'll talk a little bit about the bill that we're debating this morning, and certainly I have

no objection to establishing a small business month. I think that's a great idea. The challenge is that it seems a little bit like lip service to small businesses in Manitoba, Honourable Speaker.

It's all well and good to establish a month to celebrate the many contributions that small businesses make to our communities, to honour entrepreneurs for their courage and the risks that they take and the work that they do. But that has to be backed up with action, and I fear, Honourable Speaker, that what we're seeing from the new NDP government are actions that run contrary to the spirit of this very bill and actions that are going to harm small businesses in Manitoba.

For example, I spoke at some length about this last week when we were talking about changes to regulatory accountability in Manitoba. But attempts by the now-government to repeal regulatory accountability legislation in Manitoba—they are, in fact, gutting regulatory accountability legislation in Manitoba, legislation that made Manitoba a leader in red tape reduction.

\* (10:10)

And as I mentioned in my comments previously, red tape has a real, tangible financial cost to small businesses. And while the minister categorized accounting regulations as needless and unnecessary and a waste of time, I stand by my comments that small-business owners would disagree with that assessment. Because we can't—we need to measure what we're doing in order to measure whether we've made any progress. You can't cut red tape if you don't know how much red tape you have. *[interjection]*

And the Attorney General (Mr. Wiebe) is heckling me.

Let's talk about some of the other measures that the government has taken that are going to harm small businesses in Manitoba, aside from gutting red tape legislation.

We've got the elimination of the school tax rebate. We've talked a lot about how this is going to impact homeowners, but it's going to impact businesses, as well, because they're not going to get anything now. They were getting a 10 per cent rebate on their school taxes every year. Now, any business that owns their property is going to see those costs go up. In fact, businesses that rent their property are going to see that their costs go up.

We saw this government defund Green Team programs by \$4 million this year, and I can tell you a

story about how that impacts businesses. When I was in university, I was a Green Team student. I worked for the West End Business Improvement Zone, and our job as Green Team students was to support small businesses. We removed graffiti, we watered flowers, we connected with businesses in the community on behalf of the business improvement zone. Cuts to Green Team funding will impact small businesses and will impact our communities.

I also want to talk about the carbon tax, which has an impact on small businesses. It drives up their costs. They see no relief from this government.

This government also took steps to eliminate the commission on PST submissions that small businesses made. And I think they erroneously thought that that would have no impact on small businesses, and that's where they're wrong, Honourable Speaker.

Businesses are—many small businesses in Manitoba are operating on very small margins and every little bit helps, and this government is just taking away the little bit that is there for them.

And finally, Honourable Speaker, I think it's really important to touch on some of the challenges faced by the hospitality sector, in particular. Over and over, I speak to small businesses in the hospitality sector who tell me that they have not recovered from COVID. The challenges are myriad.

There are labour challenges. A lot of people left the hospitality sector during the pandemic and have not come back. Costs have gone up. Small-business owners will tell you that every line of their budget has gone up in recent years, and they need cost relief where they can find it. That could come in the form of payroll tax relief. That could come in the form of an increase to the \$500,000 corporate income tax threshold. But we see none of that from this government. Instead, we see measures that are in fact going to make things cost more for small businesses in Manitoba, and that's a shame, Honourable Speaker.

And that's why while I like the idea of establishing a small business month act, I would like even better the action to back it up. Small businesses have indeed, as stated directly in the act's preamble, small businesses face significant hardships during difficult economic times. And what is this government doing to address that, Honourable Speaker? Very little.

I would urge members opposite to do more than lip service for small businesses in our province. Take action to reduce costs for small businesses, to help them out with things like labour-force shortages, to

actually cut and not increase red tape. That's what small businesses need in Manitoba.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**Mr. Josh Guenter (Borderland):** It's a pleasure to be here this morning. It's a pleasure to be here and to be part of a team that has many members who are small-business owners and have experience running a business. And we are the party of business, and I am a member representing a part of southern Manitoba that is very entrepreneurial. Probably, if there's one thing we're known for, it's for the entrepreneurial spirit that inhabits Winkler and Altona and Morden and Steinbach—the breadth and width of southern Manitoba.

And people down there are very hard-working and industrious and like to take risks and step out there and take the chance that perhaps their idea may become a success. And, of course, not all of them work out, but many have. And I can think of many businesses in my constituency and in—as well, my colleague from Morden-Winkler has many businesses in her constituency as well.

And frankly, across Manitoba, I think there are mom-and-pop shops, family-run businesses, small businesses all across this province and here in the city of Winnipeg, made up of people who, through their sweat equity and their hard work, are trying to make a go in very tough times.

And this is the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) economy, this is Justin Trudeau's economy and these days are not easy. And we can talk about some of the challenges that small-business owners face today. And I'd like to go through some of those challenges, and—because we are here for a purpose; we're not here just to blow smoke.

I think, perhaps, legislators here, especially on that side, forget that from time to time: that this isn't just a series of motions and rituals that we go through to fulfill our function and to be able to fatten our pension and that sort of thing. This is really about serving Manitobans, and Manitobans sent us here to be their voice.

And I know I'm here to speak for the constituents in my constituency, who, this morning woke up at 5 o'clock or 4:30, 6 o'clock—woke up early and went to work. And they're plumbers, they're welders, they're construction workers, they're truck drivers, they're school-bus drivers, they're teachers, they're people who make our economy function and who pay taxes and who contribute significantly.

And these people are not the problem. These people should be celebrated. Our small-business owners should be celebrated. They are not the kind of people who draw on our social systems. They are not the kind of people who end up in our prisons. They're not the kind of people who cause problems in our communities. These are people who contribute and—not only through their taxes and through providing employment, but these are people who contribute to many good causes in our communities.

And one of the successes that our government had was the Building Sustainable Communities program, which, sadly, the NDP completely eliminated. But one of the successes of that program was that communities would raise funds towards a community playground or some important project, and the community would rally behind that.

And small-business owners would cut cheques and support those fundraising efforts. I can think of one project in my area, the pedestrian bridge that—in Plum Coulee, that comes with a price tag of about \$400,000. It's a very significant expense for a small—relatively small community of about 1,100 people.

And so that bridge would unite the two halves of that community, because there's a waterway that divides it. And small businesses got behind that project and raised those funds, and our government did as well. And for every dollar that the community raised, we chipped in a dollar as well.

So there are many things like that that happen all across—many great projects that small businesses contribute to in their communities. Sadly, the NDP is no longer there to support those efforts, and I think that that's deplorable.

But as I said, this is—these are challenging days. These are a challenge—this is Justin Trudeau's economy, this is the NDP economy. And I'd just like to go through some of the ways that the NDP is costing small business money. Because the past is not—the way the past looks is not necessarily the way the future will look, and I don't think we can just take for granted that people across Manitoba, business owners, will just continue to toil away while the burden of government on their back gets bigger and bigger, the tax burden gets bigger, the regulatory burden gets bigger, and that they will just continue to sacrifice and toil away.

\* (10:20)

At some point in time, you know, you get things like capital flight. At some point in time, these people

have had enough and they say enough is enough, we're getting out of here.

And when that happens—and it's happened in places around the world, and it is actually happening here in Canada, where now—where for six years in a row, Canada has gotten poorer, not wealthier. We're actually going backwards now, and so—in terms of per capita GDP. And that is incredibly concerning when you're living in a country and in a province where people are getting poorer, where the unemployment rate is going up, where the tax burden and the regulatory burden is increasing, and where governments are trying to socially engineer the country and replace the work force with temporary foreign workers and others who help to make it more difficult, drive up inflation—drive up unemployment and make life more difficult, the cost of living more difficult, for Canadian—Manitoba families who live here.

So one of the most concerning things though, that the NDP is doing is the—my colleague, the member for Roblin (Mrs. Cook) talked about it, and it is their repealing of The Regulatory Accountability Act, which I think is just incredible, you know, incredibly disappointing, and will for many businesses be very frustrating.

When we took office in 2016, there were nearly 1 million regulations, provincial regulations, on the books here in Manitoba. Think about that: 1 million regulations on the books.

And that's something we have to be careful about as legislators. We love to pass laws. We feel it's in our nature to do so. That's why we're here. But often those laws get passed on to folks who write the regulations. These are unnamed bureaucrats and, for better or for worse, they write the regulations. By the time they're done, the average Manitoban, the average taxpayer, small-business owner, is saddled with all kinds of regulations they've got to live with and everybody else is unaware of. And it has hugely detrimental impacts on our economy.

And so it's incredibly disappointing that the NDP government is repealing The Regulatory Accountability Act without any consultation and abandoning the one-for-one rule aimed at curbing regulatory burdens.

And I'm proud to say, as I mentioned, there were 1 million regulations on the books when we came in in 2016, the PC government, and within a few years, we managed to reduce that by 10 per cent, and we

instituted the one-for-one rule: for every new regulation brought forward, one had to be stripped out.

And so CFIB Manitoba says this is particularly troubling for Manitoba small businesses, 90 per cent of whom want the government to commit to red tape reduction. The absence of regulatory accountability measures will undoubtedly exacerbate the burden of regulation, posing a significant concern for many entrepreneurs.

And so, you know, we can talk about taxes and how taxes are going up in a couple of months. Manitoba will be—Manitobans will be subjected to probably the largest tax increase—gas tax increase we've ever seen in the history of this province. We already know that property taxes are going up by nearly \$150 million, so property taxes are going up.

And I, you know, I think it's worth wondering, given the current fiscal trajectory of this government, a \$2-billion deficit, no—and no balance in sight, whether the PST will be going back up, because that's exactly what the NDP did after they promised not to do so. They raised the PST to 8 per cent, something that we then lowered and made right with Manitobans when the PCs took office.

And so raising taxes, increasing the regulatory burden on small-business owners, I don't think this NDP government has small-business owners' interests at heart.

Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Before I recognize the next speaker, I would just remind all people that are speaking in debate to try and keep their comments focused on the thing that we're supposed to be talking about and not to vector off too far.

**Mr. Konrad Narth (La Vérendrye):** Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this private member's bill, and I'd like to thank the member from Seine River for bringing this forward. It's important that we recognize small business as stated in the bill.

The first point, over 95 per cent of Manitoba businesses fall under the category of small business. Similarly, to the member from Borderland, my colleague to my right, I represent a corner of the province of Manitoba that is very entrepreneurial.

The entire southern half of Manitoba has much of the entrepreneurial industries of—whether it be manufacturing, construction or agriculture—added-value businesses that are throughout our province are in that southern portion of the province. So it brings

me great pride and pleasure to speak to the importance of recognizing, as this bill sets out to do, recognizing small businesses in Manitoba.

I know the member for Seine River (MLA Cross) has a great background and experience in this, being a small-business owner herself, as am I. I grew up in small business and my entire life, I've represented small business in ownership, whether it be through my family or me personally.

I know the value that small business brings to the local economy and, in turn, the provincial economy. My background—education background is economics, and we all know the multiplier effect terminology in economics, and it's most directly related to the effects that small business have on an economy.

And that being the multiplier effect is that every dollar that's spent locally multiplies, doubles each time that it touches another hand so long as it's able to stay within the community. So, when you have small businesses in Manitoba, it's important that we support them.

Large corporations—many times ownership is outside of the local community. Not that large corporations don't bring value to our province, but the multiplier effect is not the same for the local economy.

So the effects of small business, they're not only seen in the households of the business owners, they're seen in the households of the neighbours, and it trickles right down to our community clubs, even to our schools.

We talk about a nutrition program for students in the province. These are programs that have been run without government involvement, at a community level, thanks to the entrepreneurial spirit of small businesses in communities across our province.

Small businesses realize they have the greatest connection to their employees and to the families. They understand the struggles that an employee has with bringing their spouse to a doctor's appointment and their children to sporting activities.

These are people that don't need a union to force them to take care of their employees. They know that if they don't take care of their employees, their employees will not be committed to their business and will not allow the growth of those businesses. So small business is the backbone of our province.

As the member from Seine River had outlined in this bill, the importance of small business, I'm hopeful that this is the turning point for our NDP government

to recognize that importance and finally recognize small business and the place that small business has in our province.

In the past, we've seen that NDP leadership in this province and NDP governments just don't quite see the connection between growth of economy and growth of revenue for taxation. There's only one taxpayer in this province, and if we're able to enable their growth rather than discourage it through additional costs and regulations, we're going to be able to see everybody grow and flourish and prosper, and that be everyone from the local business owner to the employees who they have as partners building their business to the families that they support and the communities which they reside.

\* (10:30)

So it's important that we recognize things like eliminating the school tax rebate. For commercial businesses—is raising property taxes by \$150 million. These are direct impacts to small businesses. Many times, we talk about that the expenses that are burdened on to small business are just passed on to the consumer.

That may be true in large, commercial settings, where you can look at economies of scale. There's a direct—there can be a direct correlation. I would argue that that same correlation does not exist in a small community business, and those of us in this Legislature who've had the great opportunity of participating, whether it be working or owning a small business, realize that those costs that are passed on to the business owner, many times cannot be directly passed on to the consumer.

Not that that is an answer to the additional burden, but I want to highlight to this government and to the member bringing this bill forward, the importance of reducing costs for business owners is a benefit to all Manitobans. It trickles down to the employees, that trickles down to their families and inevitably to their communities supporting the province's growth as a whole.

So raising taxes on those who contribute the growth to our province is counterproductive. Eliminating the basic personal amount and raising income taxes to people like doctors, engineers and other professionals. These are people that are independent, these are business owners, many times individual business owners that employ not only themselves but the support staff around them, are burdened by additional income taxes.

That means that the multiplier effect that I started my presentation today with is decreased. So, as we say in a community each time that that dollar is able to touch another hand, it multiplies. When there's less of it, obviously the multiplier effect is reduced, and that's an exponential reduction.

Like I say, communities rely on small businesses and the contribution that those small businesses have. When you go across our province, we can see community organizations and community spaces have the name of a local business owner or local business as the sponsor of that space or facility.

And these business owners realize what it takes to contribute to the benefit of their province. So defunding programs like Green Team programs by \$4 million, this is forcing non-profit organizations like camps, daycares and community centres to be forced to find the revenue streams elsewhere within their community. It's the small business owners and those that support the small business owners that are stepping up to the plate with their own dollars to support and contribute to those organizations and those spaces.

So as Manitobans, we realize the need when it's presented to us and we're there to support it. But it's important that government supports Manitobans, supports small businesses, instead of additional taxation. Support instead of taxation is what my message is here today.

I support recognizing an entire month for small business and the importance that it plays in Manitoba.

Thank you.

**Mr. Doyle Piwniuk (Turtle Mountain):** I want to put a few words on the record when it comes to The Manitoba Small Business Month Act. I know it was brought forward by the member for Seine River (MLA Cross). Appreciate where she had over the years—we were actually at a conference together in Toronto, and she was telling me how her and her husband own a meat shop. So it was kind of nice that, you know, we had something in common.

I had a—I was a small-business owner myself. Started when I was 26, bought my business in Virden, Manitoba, and had the opportunity to actually grow the business. And I feel I wouldn't be here today if I didn't have that opportunity. I want to thank the connections that I had.

I know the member for—my colleague from Roblin had indicated that—she talked about Dave Morris.



Well, when I became an insurance agent, that was one of the—he were there—became one of my colleagues. We were part of the Premier Group—insurance group. And we had a coalition of a whole bunch of businesses throughout Manitoba. And a lot of them were in Winnipeg, and Dave Morris' insurance agency was part of that. Our previous premier, Brian Pallister, his insurance agency was in Portage la Prairie, he was also part of that Premier Group. So I got to know a lot of people throughout the province being in the coalition of small-business owners and to have the opportunity to really get to know that industry very well.

Also, I had the opportunity also to focus on financial planning, part of our—part of the insurance agency, because we had to diversify. I grew that business and built up the team there and became a financial planner for over 20 years. And I really value the—working together as a small business and knowing everybody in the financial world who also had small businesses in Manitoba. So I had an opportunity to really network with the business owners.

And to this day, I think when it comes to being a party member, being able to raise money. I know who to go to, because I have such a big network when it comes to small-business owners in the province of Manitoba. And one the reasons I think I'm here today was—it was the time when the Selinger government raised the PST to 8 per cent.

I was also in the oil patch area where we should have boomed; the oil—the Bakken oil finds were greater in the Sinclair area, the Melita area, the Virden area. There was a boom going on. And the unfortunate thing, because of our—the tax policies of the Selinger government, it made a disadvantage of people wanting to even start a business there. The red tape that was applied to wanting to start a business.

I remember people who left the Virden area or the Melita area to go out west to find opportunities in the oil patch because there was more of a boom going on there in the '80s and '90s. But when the 2000s, they had the opportunity to come back, because we had our own oil boom going up in the southwest corner.

And I remember, Honourable Speaker, the thing was, the population should have really grown in that time period. And the census from the—during the boom, I always am fascinated by census, of how communities grow in our area. And our census in the Virden area only grew by 2.3 per cent during an oil boom. And I look at Moosomin, and their population grew by over 13.5 per cent in that one four-year period, because they attracted.

When we had people coming back to Virden who wanted to incorporate or wanted to start a business, there was so much red tape, so much taxes, that they decided to go to Moosomin. Moosomin actually sent out literature out there in the mailboxes to say how more advantages to be—to do business in Saskatchewan. That really hurt us. And good on them; they basic saw the opportunity there.

When we formed government, we were competitive. We have a—we have competition when it comes to our football team with Saskatchewan Roughriders, Winnipeg Blue Bombers. But we wanted to be competitive when it came to taxation, because you have to understand that we're competing with a lot of industry to come to Manitoba. This helps our small businesses prosper. The more industry that comes into our communities, the faster the community grows.

The network of people that come in to work in these industries also allows—provides spouses maybe working in health care and daycares or teachers. So it's very important that small business is so important in our economy right now.

And, Honourable Speaker, when it comes to, you know, the disadvantages of the NDP government and—the member for Dauphin (Mr. Kostyshyn) would remember the days of raising the PST. And not only did they raise PST, they just really did not focus on small business, especially in rural Manitoba. Because they did not do the highways in southern Manitoba. I think in his constituency of Swan River, their highways were lot better shape than ours was.

\* (10:40)

Meanwhile, we had more industry, more revenue that came out of our southwest corner, and we had a lot of businesses that were—a lot of people employed in the oil patch industry that put more people on the highways, especially on 83. But the 83 Highway from Duck Mountain to Swan River—there was prestige. There was not even a blemish on that highway.

Meanwhile, we had all the traffic on the oil boom south of Virden to Melita, the two biggest oil towns in the industry with—along with agriculture, and our highways were crappy. And it was because this NDP government did not focus on reinvesting in our infrastructure.

So that really hurts small businesses because when you—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. I would ask the member to try and keep his comments relevant to the bill we're discussing.

**Mr. Piwniuk:** So, Honourable Speaker, when it comes to infrastructure, it was important because when you have infrastructure in communities, it helps the businesses.

When we did the Highway 23 when I was the minister, the amount of \$80 million that went into that highway, there was a lot of benefits from all the small businesses that were along that highway. They saw the opportunity of more traffic when it came to a better highway, more traffic, more people stopped in those towns. On Highway 23, a beautiful highway now, people with motorcycles—riders will come on a weekend and go into these small communities and spend their money on small businesses, Honourable Speaker.

That's what I was trying to get at the—when it comes to investing. And it also provides jobs in the region too. When contractors come in, they employ people, and these are small business owners too, when it comes to contractors. So the importance of making sure that the small businesses are being taken care of and appreciated because they've employed more people. And I've got the stats showing that unionized employees in the province of Manitoba only make up a 16 per cent.

Meanwhile, so many people are employed in small businesses around the province here, Honourable Speaker. And it's so important that this current government, this current NDP government, doesn't lose faith on when it comes to small businesses how much they employ individuals in this province.

And it's so important that we give them tax advantages, what we did when we were in government, when we tried to be more competitive, because at the same time, our tax rate—competitive tax rate keeps the small towns, keeps the businesses thriving, but also provides services in those small towns, like attracting doctors.

Because more of the—more businesses, the more people you have in your area, the more people that need health care, that need education. These are the people that bring people into these small communities. And it's so important that, even when it comes to taxation, doctors who can competitively go to Saskatchewan and Alberta because they have a better business environment there.

We saw that difference between the two, and as there's more advantages, like why I was talking about the oil industry, more member—more individuals moved into Saskatchewan, creating up their small business environment to be very healthy.

Moosomin, Saskatchewan has now surpassed the town of Virden—the size of Virden now because they are attracting the small businesses, they're attracting industry. And when you attract industry, you also attract more services that are required by the employees that live in that community.

So it's so important that if they're going to come forward when this bill here, when it comes to the small business month act, they have to make sure that they take into consideration small businesses, and not every business out there makes a lot of money, contrary to some members on that side who've said that they think that every small business is profitable.

There's some challenges, struggles, and especially in our neck of the woods when it came to the time when the Selinger government raised the PST 8 per cent. When we live along the Saskatchewan border, on the west side, and now my constituency of Turtle Mountain straddles almost three hours across from Pierson, Manitoba, all the way to Darlingford. That's a long stretch across—along the US border.

So when we have a disadvantage of raising taxes, it hurts our small businesses along those border towns, or in Saskatchewan, along the Saskatchewan border too. This is a big impact, so I'm hoping that, in the future, that they don't raise the taxes, they keep the environment a competitive environment, especially when we're competing with services with Alberta and Saskatchewan when it comes to health care.

We got to create a good environment for small businesses, because when small businesses do well, everybody does well.

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

**The Speaker:** The honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Perchotte).

**An Honourable Member:** I want to thank the member from Riel for bringing this—

**The Speaker:** I just need to correct it: the honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

**MLA Jeff Bereza (Portage la Prairie):** I want to take this opportunity to—I made a mistake there—the member from Seine River for bringing forward this important information because small businesses really

are the backbone of our community and they do so much for our communities out there.

I rise today to speak on Bill 26. The bill proposes the formal recognition of October as small business month in Manitoba. It is a piece of legislation designed to acknowledge the vital role of small businesses that play in our province's economy, our community and our daily lives.

And I don't think we think enough about, really, what small businesses are.

Who would've ever thought that a company such as Shindico, that started in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, would be recognized as a small business—one of the largest real estate developers in the world now. But to look at small businesses and what they give back to Manitobans is second to none.

You know, the amount that they give in philanthropy, the amount that they give to help build hospitals, to build cancer-care centres; to see Mr. Albertson's *[phonetic]* sign on St. Boniface Hospital, when I go there for my heart checkups, makes me think every time I see one of those Paul's Hauling trucks rolling down the road in Manitoba, the effect that small business has on all of us here in Manitoba.

**An Honourable Member:** It started in Virden.

**MLA Bereza:** Started in, yes, it started in Virden, Manitoba, with a fella that emigrated here from another country, that took this business to—and grew it, and grew it.

I look in our own community, and I know I've talked about the MRI once or twice in this Chamber, but I look at a company out there called PCL Construction which started as a very small construction company, again. But right now in Portage la Prairie, that small business has over 420 people that are adding to the economy in Portage la Prairie.

So these small businesses, not only are they contributing to our community, but they're also contributing to jobs. And very good jobs that these small businesses contribute every day to our community: 120 electricians working, eating, sleeping in Portage la Prairie to grow our economy there as well, too.

Small businesses of—are the backbone of Manitoba's economy. They provide employment opportunities. They foster innovation and contribute significantly to the character of our neighbourhoods and towns.

Again, I want to reflect on my own community and some of the things that have been done there, and this week, we're having a United Way kickoff in Portage la Prairie. And I can tell you, it will be inundated with small businesses that contribute to the United Way, that give every day. So, again, small businesses in Manitoba create and give so much more back that we don't recognize enough.

And, again, to the member of Riel, I think this is an opportunity—Seine River, I'm sorry. My apologies to the member from Seine River for calling it the member from Riel. *[interjection]* Yes, but Riel is also a good place as well too. So whatever we say, no matter what constituency that we represent here in this room, it's the backbone of small businesses that contribute to that.

One of the small businesses that I do worry about right now, though, is our agriculture producers. And those are all small businesses that have started out, but there's so many things that contribute, other than Crown lands, to the small businesses of Manitoba.

\* (10:50)

But where I worry about those small agriculture producers out there—we have to defend them as well, too. And I think that's what's important that we look at in Small Business Week as well, too.

We have to defend them against this tax—carbon tax that the federal government has imposed. And so, the small business—the carbon tax, how it impacts, and if I could give a lesson on how it does impact the small businesses of Manitoba, the agriculture producers out there, how they're affected by the carbon tax: if I'm growing wheat, I'm going to pay 11 times carbon tax on that loaf of bread. I'm going to make less than 18 cents and pay carbon tax 11 times.

So that's how it's affecting small businesses. The—when we look at—and, again, it's like—I participate in agriculture in the classroom, which, again, is a very big part of our economy here. And I'm sorry I don't get to see the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Kostyshyn) at those Ag in the Classroom events, but maybe another day.

But, again, when I look at the Ag in the Classroom events, I think it's important that we recognize what the farmers bring to the community, is that we bring in—that we have there. Again, when I go to Portage la Prairie and when I see that there's going to be a United Way event, a hospital foundation event, a community foundation event, who do I see there? I see the small businesses. I see the farmers that are there, that are

contributing to our economy, who are giving back so people can live better in our communities out there, live better in our provinces, do better in our provinces and be able to deliver in our provinces as well, also.

Raising awareness, one of the key benefits of small business month is it would raise public 'awareness'—awareness of the importance of small businesses to the Manitoba economy. And, again, we look at what these economies do, and I want to talk about doctors, because doctors are their own businesses as well, too.

But we must make sure in their small—because they're small-business people that give back every day to the community. But we must also support those small businesses, those small-business doctors, and make sure that we give them the proper tools, the proper diagnostic equipment so that they can stay in Manitoba.

We must be able to present a tax structure for them that makes it good to stay in Manitoba, not to move away to Alberta, not to move away to Saskatchewan, but to continue to live here in Manitoba. They stimulate our local economy.

Another significant advantage of Bill 216 is the potential economic boost, and don't they provide an economic boost to us? When consumers are encouraged to shop at a local business during small business month, money circulates within the local economy. It's those little grocery stores in those little communities like Austin, Manitoba, or Neepawa or Virden or Brandon—we need to continue to support them.

There's the grandiose grocery stores and that, that are out there, but you know what? They are not giving back to the local economy like these entrepreneurs are in these days here. Money circulates within the local economy, supporting not just the businesses themselves, but also the workers they employ, the communities they serve—this kind of economic activity strengthens Manitoba's overall economic health.

I want to talk about what the small car dealers give back to Manitoba. You know what? Manitoban car—*[interjection]* I know I'm being heckled from the other side here. I'm being heckled by people on the other side that are heckling me for the small-business people—of giving back to Manitoba. I can't believe—*[interjection]*

**The Speaker:** Order.

**MLA Bereza:** —I'm being heckled on something like that.

Small-business month would also serve as a platform to discuss and address some of the challenges that these small businesses run into every day, from people like we're hearing on the other side. Many small businesses struggle with issues such as a limited access.

I just want to say thank you for giving me the opportunity today to speak on small businesses—

**The Speaker:** The honourable member's time is expired.

### Introduction of Guests

**The Speaker:** Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would like to draw members' attention to the public gallery where we have with us some guests. We have with us today the family of the late Premier Douglas Campbell, his daughter Dwili Burns, granddaughters Shannon and Lindsay and family. And Douglas Campbell served the people of Manitoba as the MLA for Lakeside for 47 years, which might be the longest continuous tenure as an MLA in the history of the province. Mr. Campbell served as premier for 10 years before retiring from political life in 1969.

We welcome you all to the Manitoba Legislature.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** I know our—my time is limited today, and I was very excited to get up and put some words on the record in regards to the member from Seine River's bill, The Manitoba Small Business Month Act. I appreciate that member bringing this forward.

And as I was reflecting on what I was going to say today, I had to think back, because I've been involved in small business my entire life, and I put a number to it; it's been 40 years—40 years that I've been involved in one way or another with small business.

I started my first business at the age of 16. Sixteen years old, I created a company, and when I tell people the name, they get it. They get the idea wrong; it was called Lawn Boy Services. And people envision me out there mowing lawns and trimming hedges, but in fact it wasn't. I was creating a lawn service system of weed control and fertilizer.

And creating that business, I purchased a number of trucks and equipment. I've had people working for me since I was 16 years old. I had to go through

courses and be certified and have insurance. And then I had to learn marketing. And I had to get out to these businesses and find—develop relationships from suppliers.

And the downfall is, at 16, you're not allowed to own anything legally, so I had to have a partner. So that partner was a name only until I turned 18 and then I got that back in my own name.

So, as time went on, I discovered that when you're new in business, there's a lot of mentors out there. And when I was knocking on doors, and I was a kid, I'm asking people to grant me terms to—on purchasing products for them and giving me 30-day terms before I'd pay for it.

I think back to those small-business owners that looked at me and seen the sincerity in me, and knew that I was going to come back and be honourable to my agreement, who gave me the opportunity to move forward in business. And for those people, I'll always be thankful.

And as the businesses transitioned, I ran that business for just about four years, and eventually sold the equipment to one of the companies that's one of the larger suppliers of fertilizer and weed control in the province today.

So I did make money at it. I learned, at a very young age, I was going to—I was working full time; I was going to school in grade 12 at the time, and I was running this business. So, if you want to accomplish anything, small business is the way to do it. You can easily move forward and make whatever you—

**The Speaker:** Order, please. Order, please.

\* (11:00)

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have seven minutes remaining, and I would remind all honourable members that it is still also standing in the name of the honourable member for Springfield-Ritchot (Mr. Schuler), who has eight minutes remaining.

**The Speaker:** The hour being 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions—the honourable Government House Leader.

### House Business

**Hon. Nahanni Fontaine (Government House Leader):** On House business.

**The Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

**MLA Fontaine:** Pursuant to rule 34(11), I am announcing the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be one put forward by the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mr. Wasyliv). The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Cancel the Gas Tax Holiday Extension and Bring in Real Solutions for Cost-of-Living Crisis.

**The Speaker:** It has been announced that, pursuant to rule 34(11), that the private member's resolution to be considered on the next Tuesday of private members' business will be the one put forward by the honourable member for Fort Garry. The title of the resolution is Calling on the Provincial Government to Cancel the Gas Tax Holiday Extension and Bring in Real Solutions for Cost-of-Living Crisis.

**MLA Fontaine:** I would like to announce the Standing Committee on Justice will meet Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 6 p.m. to consider Bill 16, The Regulatory Accountability Reporting Act and Amendments to The Statutes and Regulations Act; and Bill 209, The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Expanded Training for Judges and Judicial Justices of the Peace).

I would also like to announce the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Thursday, October 10, 2024 at 6 p.m. to consider Bill 7, The Public Sector Construction Projects (Tendering) Repeal Act; Bill 9, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; Bill 21, The Public Schools Amendment Act.

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## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 21—Orange Shirt Day

**The Speaker:** The hour now being 11 a.m. and it's time for private members' resolutions, the resolution before us this morning is Orange Shirt Day, resolution 21, brought forward by the honourable member for Seine River.

**MLA Billie Cross (Seine River):** I move, seconded by the member for St. Boniface (MLA Loiselle),

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government currently recognizes September 30th as Orange Shirt Day as a direct response to "Call to Action 80" by which the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called for a statutory day of commemoration for the harm caused by the Residential School system; and*

*WHEREAS the symbol of orange shirts was originated by the experience of Phyllis Webstad, who bought a new orange shirt with her grandmother, which was taken from her when she entered a Residential School; and*

*WHEREAS Orange Shirt Day commemorates the children who were forcibly taken from their families near the end of September and shamed for their culture and identity within in the Residential School system; and*

*WHEREAS Orange Shirt Day gives Manitobans a day to reflect on the legacy of the Residential School system while honoring the strength of Residential School survivors and Indigenous families; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government is ensuring that the Manitoba education system makes the next generation aware of Residential Schools and the impacts of colonialism; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government is committed to educating Manitobans on the truth of Canada's history in order to walk the path towards reconciliation; and*

*WHEREAS the Provincial Government is dedicated to working with survivors and uplifting their voices, as they were once silenced.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to affirm the crucial importance that is this, the first Orange Shirt Day since this day became a statutory holiday, and the efforts of the Provincial Government to hold space for Manitoba families to be together to reflect and continue to walk the path to reconciliation.

**The Speaker:** I would first ask for leave to consider the resolution as printed. *[Agreed]*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba be urged to affirm the crucial importance that this is the first Orange Shirt Day since this day became a statutory holiday and the efforts of the Provincial Government to hold space for Manitoba families to be together to reflect and continue to walk the path to reconciliation.*

#### **Motion presented.**

**MLA Cross:** I'm really proud to rise to this resolution today, not only as a Métis woman, but also as a teacher, also as a human being that lives in this province.

And as someone who's had a great deal of privilege in my life growing up in Canada, I think it's important that we always speak to the truth and that we do our very best to make sure that everybody in Canada understands that truth and is educated as much as possible.

I'm very proud to be a part of a government that is righting a historical wrong by honouring the survivors of residential schools, the families that—communities that were left behind and those children who never made it home.

September 30th is now known as Orange Shirt Day in Manitoba. It was one of the first bills we passed as an NDP government. This past September 30th, many Manitobans came out to honour those who were impacted by the residential school system and came to celebrate Indigenous culture.

I want to first begin by speaking a little bit about the moniker given to this system: residential schools. I would argue that these were, in fact, not schools. These were institutions where children were stripped of their identity, language, culture and histories. This was a cultural genocide perpetrated by the Canadian government upon Indigenous peoples in this country as a means of control, as a means of not honouring treaties, as a means of creating a system where Indigenous people were marginalized so that European settlers had an economic advantage in this country.

I guess I want to begin by talking a little bit about my own family history. I'm a very proud Métis-Ukrainian woman. My father's family emigrated from Ukraine and were settlers to this land. On my mother's side, my grandmother was a Métis woman, and I understand what that means. That

means that I had settler ancestors who came to this land a very, very long time ago, made Canada their home and, you know, the Métis Nation was created of relationships early on in the history of our country.

And so, in understanding that, I know that on one side of my family, there were economic advantages. My father's family had the ability to create generational wealth. On my mother's side of the family, they were marginalized. They weren't allowed to own land. Their land was stolen from them. They were put in a system where the Indian Act created policies that intentionally held Indigenous people down. Residential school system was just one of those policies and probably one of the most harmful.

It's important to understand that in 1871, we signed Treaty 1 here in Manitoba, and just a short five years later, the Indian Act was created as a means of not honouring the treaty that was signed that day.

My mom's side of the family never owned land, didn't own property. My grandmother never owned a home. She always rented. She, we believe, attended residential schools until the age of two. My grandmother was born in 1916, so in 1921, as an Indigenous child, she would have been forced to attend these schools and did so for a few years, at which point her family made the decision to leave their town and take their daughters and live on their trapline.

And so my grandmother couldn't read or write. She understood how to live on the land. She understood how to survive in that way, but coming to the city after as an adult made life much more difficult for her. Not being able to read or write—imagine going to a grocery store, imagine going to a bank, imagine trying to do anything and you have to rely on someone else and hope that what they're telling you is factually correct, hope that what you're signing is what you think you're signing. Asking someone in the store: What does this say?

I can't imagine the shame that she felt, but I know she did feel it. I know as a child I was encouraged to always say I was Ukrainian like my dad. I'm really fortunate to be very light-skinned and white facing, a privilege that not everybody in my family had, and that meant that my life was a little easier because I could code-switch. For those who don't understand what I mean by code-switching, at any time I can choose to hide my identity because of the way I look, but not everybody has that privilege, and that is definitely a privilege.

\* (11:10)

On my father's side of the family, as newcomers to this country, they were given land. They were given an opportunity to create a way of life, and so I want to encourage everybody listening today, and all members in this gallery, to reflect on your family's story. What opportunities and advantages were you given over the First Peoples of this land? How was your life made easier while their lives were made more difficult?

That's privilege, and that's something, as people in this Chamber, we need to understand, so that we can accurately and appropriately represent the people in our constituencies.

Orange Shirt Day is a way that we can start learning about the truth: the truth of what happened in this country. In 1874, the first residential school opened in Canada, and in 1996, the last one closed. That's only 28 years ago. Not so long ago. This is not ancient history.

These institutions were a place where children were forced to attend and remain in. If they ran away, they were captured and brought back, sometimes by police officers. If their families tried to prevent them from attending these institutions, they were faced with jail time or punishment.

I want everyone to think about their own children. I want you to think about your grandchildren if you have them. I have a four-year-old grandson. I can't imagine him being taken away from his parents and his family to attend a school far away with strangers. I can't imagine what he would feel trying to go to bed at night. I can't imagine what he would feel being told that he should be ashamed of his family and his language and the way that he looks.

And that's what happened in these schools. These were not schools. They were not educated on reading and writing and math. They were educated about how to be a proper Canadian, how to assimilate and be part of the mainstream.

What government officials did at that time was strip children and their families of the privilege of being together, about teaching one another how to love and care for each other. For Indigenous people, their language is tied to their histories, it's tied to their knowledge systems. Imagine a child being stripped away from their family and not learning their language, not learning their histories, not understanding where they came from, or the belief systems or how to care for this land, something they have done since time immemorial.

We can learn a lot of lessons from Indigenous people, and I think we're starting to today. We're starting to understand the importance of what this earth gives us, and it's my hope that by learning these truths and understanding what has happened, that we can move forward in a much more positive way so that everybody in Canada belongs, so that everybody has a chance to prosper, so that everybody has a chance to own a business without a barrier.

I want to encourage folks when you go shopping, when you go to small stores, when you go to places, look around and tell me how many Indigenous teenagers you see working in malls, you see working in restaurants. There are still barriers to our young people even today.

As an Indigenous education teacher who was a white-facing Indigenous woman, experienced micro-aggressions from colleagues, and that's based on a lack of knowledge, that's based on a lack of ignorance. And what I'm about to say is not to attack the other side; it's to hopefully educate and have them understand our perspective.

The campaign that was run in 2023 hurt us. It hurt Indigenous people; it hurt many of us in this room personally. I—imagine campaigning every day, knocking on doors, you're trying to talk about policy, you're trying to talk about the good things you can do and you're faced with racism and micro-aggressions at the door because you're a white-facing Indigenous woman.

Having to defend why it's—why we should look for people that are missing, why we should look for Indigenous women, why they matter. Historically, our societies were matriarchal societies. Our women were powerful and we respect them.

You know, when you think about residential schools, this was all a means of changing the belief systems of a group of people, changing who they are, what they know and how they move forward in a world.

I want to finish by saying this. I want everyone in this room and everybody listening at home to imagine this for a moment, and I'm going to use a smaller setting so—but I want you to think about it in bigger terms of a town.

Imagine going to a family function where there are no children present. We all know that we have family parties, we have events we go to, community events. Children's laughter, children playing, their hugs, their enthusiasm, everything that they bring to

that moment makes it so much more special. Imagine being in a place where those children's voices have been taken, where their laughter has been taken, where their hugs and their love has been taken.

I hope everybody in this room jumps on board and votes in favour of this resolution today.

Thank you so much for your time.

### Questions

**The 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 the parties; each independent member may ask one question. And no question shall exceed 45 seconds.

The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** I want to thank the member from Seine River for bringing this resolution forward.

My question is: What is the ultimate goal? What does that member wish to come out of this for the future?

**MLA Billie Cross (Seine River):** I thank you so much for that question because it's a really important one. My hope is that every Manitoban, and every Canadian for that matter, learns the true history of our country, learns to understand why Indigenous people face the challenges that they face today.

It was manufactured by government policy. Imagine being a child growing up where the only love you have is maybe a couple months of the year with your family, learning and watching how your parents model family life or how they model the way you live, your language, your understanding.

But the rest of your time is spent in an institution in a room with a bunch of other kids that are crying for their parents, that are just—

**The Speaker:** The member's time is expired.

**MLA Nellie Kennedy (Assiniboia):** Manitobans did something historical on September 30. They came out in the thousands in places all over the province to reflect on our country's history and celebrate Indigenous resilience.

My question for my colleague is: How did she spend Orange Shirt Day this year?



**MLA Cross:** I thank my colleague for the question. I spent this Orange Shirt Day honouring the survivors, the victims and the families of residential schools, celebrating the resilience of Indigenous people that we are still here today; we are trying to hold onto our languages and our way of life.

Our team attended the pipe ceremony at The Forks, participated in the march to RBC Convention Centre where they—we were member—in the grand entry and attended the powwow Wa-Say put on to honour residential school survivors. And finally, I honoured my grandmother on that day. I took some time to reflect with my mother and chat about my grandmother and reminisce.

**Mr. Grant Jackson (Spruce Woods):** Again, like my colleague from Selkirk, I'll thank the member for Seine River (MLA Cross) for bringing this important resolution forward. It's not—my question isn't directly mentioned in the resolution but the honourable member for Seine River mentioned it in her remarks—comments about the Indian Act.

And so, you know, I think this stems from a very harmful piece of federal legislation and I don't think there's anybody that would argue that that is a good act that's in effect.

And so I would ask the member for Seine River if she has any thoughts on changes or what she would like to see to improve the situation in terms of reconciliation with respect to the Indian Act?

**MLA Cross:** Thank you for that great question. The Indian Act is extremely complicated piece of legislation. You're going to hear folks that want it abolished and you're going to hear folks that say, if we do do that, then some of the rights that were given back to Indigenous peoples will be stripped once again.

And so, I think the key here is educating people about the Indian Act. There's so many folks that don't even understand what it is or know how big that piece of legislation is. As a teacher, I had the opportunity to teach students about it. The book is this thick; it's insane.

And so I think education—I'm going to quote Senator Sinclair and—not perfectly—but education got us into this; education is our way out. And when I say that, I don't mean just Indigenous peoples—

**The Speaker:** The honourable member's time is expired.

**MLA Kennedy:** An NDP government is following through on advancing reconciliation in Manitoba, honouring survivors of residential schools and celebrating Indigenous culture is righting a historical wrong in this country.

\* (11:20)

My question for my colleague is: What does it mean to her to see Orange Shirt Day become a statutory holiday?

**MLA Cross:** Thank you to my colleague for that question.

This day is an opportunity to actually live up to the phrase Every Child Matters. It acknowledges the past, but it also takes a look to the future for Indigenous peoples—how we move forward, how we move forward as one Manitoba.

We're seeing a renaissance of Indigenous culture, and I'm so proud that our team was able to accomplish this significant step towards reconciliation in our first year.

Thank you.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I thank the member from Seine River for bringing this very important resolution forward.

As an educator who believes strongly in education also, what educational programs for Orange Shirt Day have the NDP implemented since you've been in office?

**MLA Cross:** Thank you to my colleague for that question.

I think one of the most important things we did was create a grant program that I know a number of schools applied for and received, and in turn, they did their—they used that—those funds to educate not just the school community, but the greater community.

As a teacher who worked in resident—who worked in residential schools, sorry—as a teacher who worked in schools, every September we focused on the residential school system to try and educate students. Moving forward, we need to educate everybody.

**MLA Kennedy:** It's been just over a year since Manitobans voted for change and for a government that follows through on our commitments. Everything we've been able to do so far means so much to our team as we make progress on behalf of Manitobans.

My question for my colleague is: What does Orange Shirt Day mean to her?

**MLA Cross:** Thank you to my colleague for that question.

Orange Shirt Day is near and dear to my heart because of my family's experience. What it means is that we're acknowledging the truth of a system that perpetrated a genocide against one group of people in this country.

We're recognizing truth, but we're finding a way to move forward together so that we can prevent future politicians, future educators, future people in leadership positions from not understanding the truth and perpetrating micro-aggressions or racist policies or comments towards others. And that happens often because of a lack of education and a lack of understanding.

This is our chance—

**The Speaker:** Member's time is expired.

**Mr. Perchotte:** I want to thank the member for Seine River (MLA Cross) for speaking from the heart. This is a very important issue.

How many of the truth and reconciliation calls for action have been implemented by the NDP government since you've taken office?

**MLA Cross:** Thank you for that question.

I know in this piece of legislation alone, we touched on two specific Calls to Action. I'm just trying to find the numbers so I accurately depict them. I believe it's 62 and I believe it's also 80, if I'm correct, in just this one piece of legislation.

But we're not done. We understand the importance of these relationships. We understand of righting a historical wrong. We understand of working with all Manitobans and nations and governments from all places, so I know that we'll implement many, many more.

**MLA Kennedy:** Orange Shirt Day is just one of the ways that reconciliation is advancing in Manitoba. That's why our NDP government is being a true partner with Indigenous peoples and recognizing their autonomy as another level of government.

My question for my colleague is: How else can we continue to advance reconciliation in Manitoba?

**MLA Cross:** Thank you to my colleague for the question.

Advancing reconciliation in Manitoba can look like a lot of different things. It depends on the Manitoban. It could be buying a pair of beaded

earrings from a Métis or First Nation artisan. It could be by attending powwows to learn more about Indigenous culture and why they celebrated these events. It could mean being an active listener to Indigenous peoples or educating yourself on the true history of Canada.

At a provincial level, our government has provided funding for organizations who are hosting events across their communities on Orange Shirt Day. These are just a couple examples, but, you know, there's no small steps in reconciliation, every step matters.

**Mr. Jackson:** Just to follow up on my colleague from Selkirk's last question regarding the TRC Calls to Action.

What measures does this new NDP government have in place to track government progress on implementing the Calls to Action, and how will that information be shared with Manitobans?

**MLA Cross:** Thank you for that question.

I know that we have an Indigenous secretariat in our government that is working really hard to make sure that we implement as many Calls to Action as we can, to make sure that we're moving forward on the path of reconciliation and bringing Manitobans and all of our colleagues along with us on that journey.

I know that having a team as diverse as ours is, and having 10 Indigenous MLAs, we are putting our heart and soul into every piece of work we do to make sure that all Manitobans are represented, and that we are doing our very best to make sure that reconciliation is something that we can all participate in.

**The Speaker:** The time for questions has passed.

### Debate

**The Speaker:** The floor is now open for debate.

**Mr. Richard Perchotte (Selkirk):** As I'm standing here representing the people of Selkirk, the constituency, I've always said that Selkirk is an Indigenous community first. And the people of Selkirk are very proud of their heritage.

*Mr. Tyler Blashko, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

Throughout our opportunity to stand as legislator—'legislatorts,' we have the opportunity to attend many events, as well as the public out there has a large opportunity to attend events because the previous Orange Shirt Day, the Indigenous day celebrations that we had in the summertime, they're not just for one

race of people. These are celebrations that happen where everybody's invited.

And the Orange Shirt Day celebrations that we had in Selkirk park recently, as I got there early, I was excited to see what was going to take place. I always know that the cultural point of view, the dancing, the speeches, the knowledge keepers who speak, do such a wonderful job.

When I arrived, there was a fire keeper there and there was a fire going that day, and that fire keeper had his work cut out for him. The wind was blowing like you could not believe. They would hang flags on the building which would quickly slide down the rope that they had up there, and they had to get that tied in place.

One of the things that stood out for me the most on Orange Shirt Day was up along in Selkirk park, there's a dike that runs around the park, and up along that pathway on the dike, they had the 94 Calls to Action down there that you would actually walk through. And they had half of them one way as you'd walk and you'd stop and reflect and read and read and read, and as you turned and walked back the other way, you'd come across all 94 Calls to Action.

And if you stop and look, and you actually try to empathize with people who've been marginalized and in this situation, your heart would feel heavy. But when one of the knowledge keepers came up, and they came out speaking how, part of the '60s scoop, they were taken from their home and they were put up for adoption, and they were adopted from a family in Philadelphia.

That family loved this girl as she was growing up, treated her as one of her own. But yet she longed for her rightful place in this world, a place that was stolen from her.

It took her many, many years to track down her heritage and find out where she's from. She's since reclaimed her name, she is a strong advocate for truth and reconciliation, but we need to understand that we need true truth and reconciliation, that we mean something.

\* (11:30)

Just a few short weeks ago, there was an event here held in Winnipeg called the mino-pimatisiwin. I attended that event. I seen our Premier (Mr. Kinew) there, speaking to the crowd. I seen the member from Lagimodière there. And as I was at that event watching the display that was happening from all the

Indigenous people in the room, proud of their heritage—there was people from Nunavut there, people from all branches and different sects of the province of our country—I met the parents of Rebecca Strong, who is the winner of Canada's Got Talent season four. They were extremely proud of their daughter, and I got to talk about some of the challenges that were happening for her after winning, and a lot of those challenges are racially motivated.

And if people truly know me, they would know I don't judge people on race, sexual orientation, their religious beliefs. I judge people on how they treat others. That is my only measure I have. If you treat others well and you're kind to people, then I think you're a good person. If you're ignorant and you try to dominate and push people down, I have zero respect for you. And as you take a look in discovering the truth, many people still deny any of the calls to action that are required. They deny them.

Denying something doesn't make it go away. We've all had arguments with a spouse, a loved one, a friend, that you said something you didn't mean. Doesn't mean you didn't say it if you deny it. You have to own that. And if you own it and say, I take responsibility for that and let's move forward, you can apologize, you can make amends and you can do great things in life.

I've always given opportunity where opportunity was deserved. We recently spoke to a previous bill, and in that bill, we talked about recognizing small business. And in small business, I had the opportunity to hire many people and everybody I hired was based on their attitude and their ability.

And if we can remove racism and if we can remove barriers and we can have people come into our workforces, into our communities, and we hold each other up, we can do great things. One of my proudest moments is hiring a young lady, and I've mentioned this before, but, Valerie Lang.

She came to work for me at 18 years old, and by the time she was 19, she was in charge of a shift of people where the average age of that shift was probably 52 years old. She didn't get that job because she was Indigenous. She didn't get that job because she was female. She didn't get that job because of her religious beliefs or her sexual orientation. She got that job because she was a determined, intelligent, very hard-working woman, and we recognized that. And that year, she won the Aboriginal Youth Achievement Award, and for that, I am so proud of her.

When we lift each other up, we can accomplish so much. When we have an opportunity, as the members across, because they hold government, to fund organizations that can increase the ability of marginalized communities to stand up, to be recognized, to give them a pathway forward for education—and I truly believe what the member said, from Seine River: education is the key. And I say it all the time; education can accomplish so much. It can raise you out of your current position and bring you to any level you want to be. The opportunities are only limited by your opportunity to receive education.

Education can turn a bigot into an ally—proper education. And I've seen it as I campaigned and knocked on doors and I talked to people, and there's a lot of bigotry out there. There's a lot of hate, but when you sit there and you talk to people, people just don't understand, and if you can educate people on the history of where we are, what we can accomplish if we hold together as one people supporting each other.

I have said many times in this Chamber how our behaviour is childish. This is—I'm very impressed today. Everybody is listening 'intently' and that's what we need to do on a daily basis, because that's how we make change. And I do want to thank the member for Seine River (MLA Cross); your passion on this shows strongly.

So I encourage everybody to listen and to engage. Thank you.

**MLA Robert Loiselle (St. Boniface):** Orange Shirt Day, la Journée du chandail orange. Those three words bring warmth to my heart and I'm proud to be part of a government that actually made Orange Shirt Day a stat holiday here in Manitoba.

And it makes me proud as an Indigenous man, as a Red River Métis, as a father of two and as an educator, that now officially we can gather as one Manitoba on Orange Shirt Day to remind ourselves of our place and our role as Manitobans as part of reconciliation.

Last September 30th, we gathered at the Oodena Celebration Circle, a profoundly important place in the history of Manitoba, as Indigenous people have been gathering there for over 6,000 years. We gathered there at 9 o' clock in the morning for a pipe ceremony, and then at 11 o' clock we started walking as part of the march for Orange Shirt Day.

And I looked around, Honourable Deputy Speaker, surrounded by over 15,000 people, and what I saw was incredible. I saw incredible diversity. Not

only did I see my First Nations brothers and sisters, my Métis brothers and sisters, my Inuit brothers and sisters, but I also saw all of my relations. I saw my African brothers and sisters, my East Indian brothers and sisters, my Filipino brothers and sisters, my settler brothers and sisters. And it made me so proud as a Manitoban.

And it reminded me that maybe one of the reasons why we have to have an Orange Shirt Day, une Journée du chandail orange, is because of colonialism—and not just Manitoba's colonial past, but the last 500 years of colonialism here in the Americas. When European powers came to the Americas, whether it be the Spanish, the English, the Dutch, the French, the Portuguese, it's estimated that there was over 100 million Indigenous peoples in the Americas. And that number has gone down drastically over the last 500 years because of disease, loss of territory, war, et cetera.

\* (11:40)

But we've been rising out of colonialism now for the last few years here in Manitoba. Manitoba feels different; it feels as though people are recognizing that, you know, it's a new day, we're one Manitoba and we can do so much better. And when I looked around on Orange Shirt Day, I recognized that colonialism doesn't only affect the Americas. It affected India, Australia, New Zealand, the Middle East. But it also reminded me that here in Manitoba, we could work together.

I'm always reminded of the words of Louis Riel. Louis Riel had a dream that Manitoba could become an Indigenous, bilingual, multicultural province where everyone is welcome and where everyone can live in peace. But it's not just living in peace, it's learning how to live in peace. Learning to co-exist. And Orange Shirt Day is about that, it's learning to co-exist together.

Récemment, l'Honorable Député-Président, nous avons perdu une grande dame. La Chef Merrick. On s'est rassemblé ici, dans ce Palais Législatif, pour se rappeler d'elle et de ses mots qui me tiennent encore à cœur qui parlaient de coexistence.

Nous avons l'opportunité de vivre ensemble sur ce territoire, où nous partageons les ressources, l'eau, l'air et toute l'abondance que cette province partage avec nous. Et quand nous avons marché ensemble le 30 septembre dernier, ici à Winnipeg, comme à Brandon, comme à Portage-la-Prairie, comme à Selkirk, Thompson et j'en passe, nous avons

marché ensemble. Parce que nous voulons, comme Manitobains et Manitobaines, faire mieux.

Je suis le fier père de deux filles. Et quand on parle de la Journée du chandail orange, on se rappelle des enfants disparus, des familles affectées et des survivants. Il est inimaginable pour moi qu'aujourd'hui, qu'un père de famille, qu'une mère de famille – qu'une famille en général – se fasse arracher leurs enfants.

Les pensionnats autochtones étaient des institutions qui arrachaient des enfants de leurs familles pour les assimiler. Pour détruire leur culture. Pour faire disparaître leur langue. C'est inimaginable. Et c'est pourquoi aujourd'hui, à chaque opportunité, comme à la Journée du chandail orange, je rappelle à tous ceux alentours de moi – que ce soit de jeunes enfants, que ce soit ma famille, que ce soit des gens du public – qu'on doit toujours se rappeler d'où on vient. On doit toujours se rappeler qui nous sommes. On doit toujours se rappeler de la direction dans laquelle on se lance.

Et la Journée du chandail orange, pour moi, est une excellente opportunité qui nous donne la chance de se rappeler qui nous sommes, d'où on vient et où on s'en va ensemble, en tant que communauté – que ce soit de communautés culturelles, de communautés autochtones, métisses, Premières Nations, Inuites, et de se rappeler ensemble du potentiel de notre avenir.

Notre potentiel n'est pas notre passé : notre potentiel est notre futur, où nous devons marcher ensemble, mettre notre passé colonial de côté, décoloniser nos institutions, décoloniser nos écoles et d'être fiers. Et la Journée du chandail orange nous donne cette opportunité pour être fiers de qui nous sommes. Nous avons le droit d'être fiers de qui nous sommes.

Nous avons aussi marché avec des survivants le 30 septembre dernier. Et la Journée du chandail orange nous donne l'opportunité de mettre la lumière sur les maux du passé, mais de reconnaître que nos enfants sont notre futur, et qu'il est à nous de les outiller, de se rappeler du rôle important de l'éducation au sein de notre province, et de travailler ensemble pour faire de demain un jour meilleur. Je suis extrêmement fier de notre gouvernement pour avoir finalement mis en place une journée fériée officielle – donc la Journée du chandail orange – et je reconnais l'important travail de la députée de Rivière Seine (MLA Cross), qui a mis d'avant cette résolution. Je l'apprécie beaucoup, comme j'apprécie beaucoup mes collègues.

Donc ensemble, vers l'avenir, nous pouvons accomplir un Manitoba meilleur.

Merci, l'Honorable Président.

### **Translation**

*Recently, Honourable Deputy Speaker, we lost a great lady: Chief Merrick. We gathered here, in this Legislative Building, to remember her and her words, which are still close to my heart as they spoke of coexisting.*

*We have the opportunity to live together on this land, where we share the resources, the water, the air and all the abundance that this province shares with us. And when we marched together on September 30, here in Winnipeg, as well as in Brandon, in Portage la Prairie, in Selkirk, in Thompson and so on—we marched together. Because, as Manitobans, we want to do better.*

*I am the proud father of two daughters. And when we talk about Orange Shirt Day, we remember the missing children, the families affected and the survivors. I cannot fathom how today a father, a mother, a family in general, would have their children ripped away from them.*

*Residential schools were institutions that tore children away from their families in order to assimilate them. To destroy their culture. To make their language disappear. It is unfathomable. And that is why today, at every opportunity, such as on Orange Shirt Day, I remind everyone around me—young children, my family, members of the public—that we must always remember where we come from. We must always remember who we are. We must always remember where we are going.*

*And for me, Orange Shirt Day is an excellent opportunity to remember who we are, where we have come from and where we are going together, as a community—be it cultural communities, Indigenous communities, Métis communities, First Nations communities, Inuit communities—and to remember together the potential in our future.*

*Our potential is not our past: our potential is our future, where we must walk together, and we must put our colonial past aside, decolonise our institutions, decolonise our schools and be proud. And Orange Shirt Day gives us that opportunity to be proud of who we are. We have the right to be proud of who we are.*

*We also marched with survivors on September 30. And Orange Shirt Day gives us the opportunity to shed light on the wrongs of the past, but also to recognise*

*that our children are our future and that it is up to us to equip them, as well as remember the important role of education in our province, and to work together to make tomorrow a better day. I am extremely proud of our government for finally establishing an official public holiday, Orange Shirt Day, and I acknowledge the important work of the Member for Seine River (MLA Cross), who put forward this resolution. I appreciate her very much, as I appreciate all my colleagues.*

*Thus, together, looking to the future, we can make Manitoba a better place.*

*Thank you, Honourable Speaker.*

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** Your Honourable Speaker, esteemed colleagues and fellow Manitobans, I want to speak today, being an educator for 35 years, want to focus more on the educational portion of it, and I really appreciate the things that I've been hearing from the heart on some of the experiences with the fellow colleagues from both sides of the House.

Today we gather to reflect on solemn—on a solemn and important day, Orange Shirt Day. This day is a time of deep significance, not only for the Indigenous communities but for all Canadians as we confront the painful history of residential schools and their lasting impact on generations of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Orange Shirt Day, marked annually on September 30, reminds us of resilience and strength of Indigenous communities and, more importantly, of the many children who were taken from their families and forced into the residential school system. The orange shirt, a symbol that emerged from the personal story of Phyllis Webstad represents the loss, trauma and injustice endured by these children. Yet it also stands as a powerful reminder of our collective responsibility to honour the survivors, remember the lost and commit to the ongoing journey of reconciliation as we observe the day in Manitoba, a province deeply connected to Indigenous histories and cultures.

It's crucial to reflect on its significance and the lessons it holds for all of us. Orange Shirt Day is more than a day of remembrance; it's a day for learning, for truth-telling and for embracing the path toward healing and reconciliation.

At the heart of Orange Shirt Day is the story of Phyllis Webstad, a survivor of the residential school system. As a six-year-old child, Phyllis was excited to

attend school and proudly wore a new orange shirt, gifted by her grandmother, and you can just picture her walking into school that first day with this beautiful orange shirt that was gifted to her.

However, upon arriving at the residential school, her shirt was taken away along with her sense of belonging, identity and culture. Phyllis's experience is one of many heart-wrenching stories from children who endured the trauma of residential schools, where their languages, traditions and connections to the family were systematically erased.

The orange shirt has become a symbol of the stripping away of Indigenous culture and identity, but it also represents a call to action, a call for Canadians to recognize the injustices of the past and to ensure that every child matters. Phyllis's story is a reminder of the deep, personal loss felt by Indigenous children and their families and the intergenerational trauma that still affects Indigenous communities today.

\* (11:50)

To truly understand its significance of Orange Shirt Day, we must confront the legacy of residential schools in Canada from the late 1800s until 1996. More than 150,000 Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their families and sent to these governmental-funded, church-run institutions.

The goal was clear: to assimilate Indigenous children into European-Canadian society and to kill the Indian in the child. The policy of cultural genocide left deep scars that continue to affect Indigenous peoples across the country.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, known as the TRC acronym, established in 2008, documented the horrors faced by these children: physical, emotional and sexual abuse, malnutrition and a profound disconnection from their families and cultures.

The commission identified over 4,100 children who died while attending these schools, but the true number is likely much higher. Many children never returned home and their families were left without answers.

In Manitoba, several residential schools operated for decades, contributing to the loss of Indigenous language, culture and identity. The survivors of these schools or families and their communities continue to feel the effects of this traumatic history.

Orange Shirt Day compels us to remember the survivors and the children who never came home. It's

a reminder that the work of reconciliation is ongoing; that we must never forget this dark chapter in our history.

Orange Shirt Day is also a day for truth-telling, acknowledge, and as we heard, many of our colleagues sharing stories, and the opportunity to get together at the many different functions of Orange Shirt Day and to share stories.

And that's the power in healing; acknowledging the truth of what happened in residential schools is a crucial step in the path toward reconciliation. It's a truth that can be difficult and it can be uncomfortable to confront, but it's one that must be faced, and if we're to build more just an—or if we're going to build more than just an equitable society.

For many years, these stories of residential school survivors were silenced and the full extent of the abuse and trauma wasn't widely known. The TRC work brought these stories to light and it's our responsibility to can share—or continue to share them.

As the TRC's Calls to Action remind us, education is key to reconciliation. We must ensure that future generations understand the truth of residential schools, the impact they had on Indigenous peoples and the ongoing challenges of Indigenous communities face as a result.

In Manitoba, we have taken steps toward truth-telling through education, community engagement. Many schools, organizations and communities now observe Orange Shirt Day as an opportunity to learn about residential schools and the experiences of Indigenous peoples.

The education is essential, and I had the opportunity to deliver the grant, which was provided by the government, to our superintendent in Swan. And he was very grateful, you know, for receiving this, because it just—it helped him with some of the expenses and to ensure that this education was taken forth.

As the core of Orange Shirt Day, it's a message that every child matters. This simple but profound statement reminds us that every child has the right to grow up in a safe, loving environment, free from harm and with the opportunity embrace the identity, language and culture.

The residential school system robbed Indigenous children of this right. Reconciliation is more than acknowledging the past to creating a future where

every child truly matters. This means addressing the ongoing disparities faced by Indigenous communities.

Orange Shirt Day calls on all of us, Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike, to commit to this work. Reconciliation is a responsibility—is not the responsibility of Indigenous people alone; it's a shared journey that requires all Canadians to play a role, whether through supporting Indigenous education, advocating for policy changes or simply listening to the stories of survivors.

We have a part—we all have a part to play in building a more inclusive and just society.

In Manitoba, we're fortunate to live in a province rich with Indigenous cultures and histories, and we have the opportunity to learn from the work alongside Indigenous communities as we walk the path of reconciliation.

Orange Shirt Day reminds us of the important allyship. As non-Indigenous people, we must be active allies in the work of reconciliation. This means listening to Indigenous people standing in solidarity with their struggles and using our privilege to advocate for change.

It means recognizing the ongoing impacts of colonization and working to dismantle the systems that perpetuate inequities and injustice. As we observe Orange Shirt Day, we must celebrate this resilience and commit to working to the continued reconciliation of Indigenous cultures.

In conclusion, Orange Shirt Day is a day of profound significance for all Manitobans. It's a day to remember the children who were taken from their families, to honour the survivors of residential schools and to reflect on the ongoing work of reconciliation. But it is also a day of learning and a call to action.

As we wear our orange shirt, let us remember reconciliation is not a one day event; it's life long. Regardless of their—of background, grow up in society, values and respect their identity.

Let us move forward together with humility, compassion and a shared commitment to building a better future for all Manitobans.

**Mr. Logan Oxenham (Kirkfield Park):** It's an honour to rise today to speak briefly on this important resolution.

Through Orange Shirt Day, Manitobans can continue to learn about the generational impacts of residential schools and honour the survivors of resi-

dential schools. We have to let this day be one of remembrance and the celebration of Indigenous resilience, to heal the Province's relationship with Indigenous peoples.

Through this—throughout the province, we want to recognize the work of the incredible Indigenous activists and their contributions to creating and pushing for Orange Shirt Day.

Thank you, Honourable Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Trevor King (Lakeside):** Thank you to my colleagues and Honourable Deputy Speaker. Thank you for the opportunity for a couple of minutes to put a few of my words on the record, and I want to thank the member for Seine River (MLA Cross) for bringing this very important resolution forward that continues our walk to the path of reconciliation here in this province, how important it is to honour the Orange Shirt Day.

While I got a couple of minutes, I really just want to emphasize how thankful I was to be acknowledged as long—along with many other of my colleagues, MLAs, being acknowledged from the Premier's (Mr. Kinew) office to be able to give the opportunity to present some of the grant letters to our constituents

in our—that we're planning the local events for Orange Shirt Day and many others.

I had the opportunity to—there wasn't many events going on in my constituency, but our Stony Mountain Métis local was planning one and I was able to present the grant letter to them for the amount of \$1,500 in order to put on their '60s scoop event of their Métis local in Stony Mountain that I was very honoured to be able to attend as well.

They invited me—I presented the grant letter to Larry Flett, who I've known for many, many years in Stony Mountain. Larry, a good friend of mine, my wife comes from Stony Mountain so we got to know Larry very well.

So Larry was kind enough to invite me to their event—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order.

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

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



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, October 8, 2024**

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