

**Second Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Eighth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon	Riel	N.D.P.
VACANT	Minto	
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
VACANT	Turtle Mountain	
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 27, 2004

The House met at 10 a.m.

### PRAYERS

### ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, would you kindly canvass the House and see if there is an agreement to consider condolence motions this morning and this afternoon?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there agreement to consider condolence motions for this morning and this afternoon? [*Agreed*]

### MOTIONS OF CONDOLENCE

#### June Westbury

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I move, seconded by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

THAT this House convey to the family of the late June Westbury, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincere sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of her devotion to a useful life of active community and public service and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

#### *Motion presented.*

**Mr. Doer:** I rise today to celebrate the life of public service of June Westbury and to offer our condolences to her three daughters: Sheila, Pamela and Jennifer. Mr. Speaker, we all, of course, know that June Westbury was elected to this Legislature in 1979, taking the seat that was vacated in the federal election of Lloyd Axworthy, and she was a member of this Legislature until 1981. This was after a very, very active life of political representation as a councillor in the City of Winnipeg. She had a short political life in this Legislature but a long public life to the people of this province, to the people of Canada and to the people of this city.

Mr. Speaker, I knew her best as one of the members of the Carstairs political team, as I

understood it, in the election of 1988. I had met her before then and knew her qualities as an individual who had warmth and strength at the same time. You knew you were dealing with a formidable person if you were in a different political party than the Liberal team. She was very much part of the campaign team that was so successful in the 1988 election after the defeat of the Pawley government in March of that year.

Ms. Westbury is also well known throughout the community for her dedication and her involvement and her absolute support for the arts in this community. She, as I recall it, worked tirelessly on behalf of the ballet, the opera and I am sure other arts organizations that developed a very, very strong credibility for her dedication. She was one of the go-to people when arts organizations needed various campaigns, various activities to support their continuation and their enhancement. June Westbury was a go-to person in terms of a person you could rely on, I guess underscoring the old term that if you want something done right give it to somebody who is already busy.

Of course, June Westbury was always busy, and she always found time for arts here in this province. She obviously was a person who in this Legislature is known to the public, and this is the kind of irony of politics. She probably spent many more hours working on behalf of her constituents on many different activities, and she spent countless hours working on behalf of the arts organizations of this province, but she was well known for her insistence that this Legislature be truly equal with facilities that are equal for both men and women. This, of course, was a newsworthy item. When we celebrate lives we pay attention to the items that get in the news, but we know, only too well as MLAs collectively in this Chamber, it is those acts of representation day in and day out that really make a difference in people's lives and really make a difference in their communities and the quality of life in their communities.

I know that this obviously made a difference and it sent a very strong signal to everyone in Manitoba. This was a symbol to demonstrate that this Legislature was inclusive, this Legislative Building was a seat of government for all Manitobans and that

it could not remain as a one-dimensional or a unisexual building in terms of its facilities and services for the members that were here. So, in a small way but in an important way, a very vocal way, a very brave way—it was before my time—the message was sent to all Manitobans, especially those who are now elected that the old days are gone and the new days for inclusion are here.

Ms. Westbury was born in New Zealand and she met her future husband, Peter, here in Winnipeg. As I have stated before, she was very, very involved in raising her children but also very active in her children's schools, in her family's churches and in women's committees throughout the province. She was very active in the Liberal Party. She was party secretary from 1968 to '70, vice-president of the Liberal Party of Canada from '70 to '73. Of course, they would be very heady days in those days of the Trudeau government in Canada and in the election of '72 and then again the election in '74. She was a city councillor, an alderman as they called them then, in the City of Winnipeg from 1970 to 1979, so she would have been part of that whole unicity as an elected member. According to councillors whose comments I have read, they indicate to me and to all of us that, through the voice of 50 people, her voice was always heard. That again is a testimony because it is not always easy being heard at City Hall even with the present council, let alone with 50 representatives in that chamber.

She was on the boards of many organizations, VIA Rail, Manitoba health organizations, Children's Aid Society, Big Sisters, the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, Age and Opportunity Centres, the National Capital Commission, the Task Force on Maternal and Child Health, the Advisory Committee on Historical Buildings, Heritage Winnipeg and the Heritage Canada Foundation. She was a very, very articulate individual. Any time I had the opportunity to meet with her or speak with her, a very intelligent, articulate person, she obviously was very knowledgeable and very passionate about the issues that she held dear.

\* (10:10)

I noted that Bernie Wolfe, who had served with her politically and had also served in many heritage capacities, praised June Westbury's work and dedication to preserving our heritage. There is a lot of heritage preserved in this province, a lot more to still preserve that is still in the ambiguous area right now.

When one looks at the Exchange District, when one looks at the preservation of the buildings at The Forks, when one looks at the Heaps Building, when one looks at some of the other major buildings around Manitoba, whether it is in Neepawa or Brandon or the North, we know that preservation of our history is extremely important. At the same time, we build a future that is modern.

So I want to, on behalf of the members of this Chamber, say to her family and her loved ones and the members of her extended family that in this Legislature June Westbury was elected for two years, but in terms of contributions to her fellow citizens and contributions to this province, to this city and to this country, Canada, she worked tirelessly her whole life improving the quality of life for all Canadians but especially improving the equality of life for all citizens in Manitoba.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the motion of condolence on the passing of June Westbury and sympathy to the family and at the same time to speak in tribute to the accomplishments, the achievements and the legacy of June Westbury. As we know, she served nobly in this Legislature from the by-election of October 1979, when she was elected, through the general election of November 1981, for a period of just over two years.

It is interesting that June first got involved in politics when her husband was the founding president for the Osborne Liberal Association—I think that was after a redistribution—and he asked June to go out knocking on doors. She did so and she found she really enjoyed it, and she had a passion for this. She not only went out herself but she had two young children, Sheila and Pam, and they went out with her. She took them out as she went door to door, knocking on doors and trying to persuade people to vote for the Liberal Party.

What was interesting was that, in talking with Pam recently, one of her earliest recollections is of her and her sister, Sheila. At the time that Jennifer was born they thought this was such an important event that the natural thing to do was to go out and knock on the doors of all the neighbours and tell them that Jennifer had been born. So at ages two and four they were out there in the streets knocking on doors and saying that the great event had happened, that Jennifer had been born.

This is the sort of spirit of June Westbury and her family and their passionate involvement in politics. Clearly, this was something which June found came naturally to her. She had a passion for it. Over the years she made a major contribution in listening to people and attending to those small details as well as the larger issues which are so important to people's lives.

In 1970, after working on many elections for others, she ran and was elected to be city councillor. She served on City Council for nine years. She served admirably, a voice for her part of the city and a voice indeed for the larger concerns, arts, heritage, culture, as well as concerns for individual citizens. Particularly a passion of hers was her concern for seniors and the well-being of seniors.

In October of 1979 she ran in the by-election in Fort Rouge. She was elected as the MLA. A number of people, including Lynne Axworthy and Ray Scott, were really important in that first campaign and provided, together with June's effort, the co-ordination and the effort to be successful and to have June in the Legislature.

As an MLA, she spoke out frequently. One only has to look through the Hansard Index for the years that she was a member of the Legislature to see how often she spoke, on how many issues she spoke. It is quite a record and it is certainly an important record when you consider at the same time that she was known for her extraordinary attention to her constituents and, in particular, to seniors in the Fort Rouge area.

It was not an easy road for her. She was the only Liberal in the Legislature, and I can certainly sympathize with that, having been in that position for several years. But her position, in fact, was probably harder because she was not the leader of the party although, certainly, for Liberals around the province she was, in fact, the de facto leader because she was the only one in the Legislature.

She worked hard and she worked passionately. Just going to reference a few of the things that she talked about, mentioned and spoke about in her questions and in her speeches. February of 1980, she was talking about the importance of paying attention to day care spaces. In March of 1980, she was talking about the need for equal treatment and equal pay for women as for men and this, clearly, was an

important theme for her throughout the time that she was an elected representative, but also as she was a member of the Liberal Party or a member of the City Council. April 3 of 1980, she is talking about the importance of the rights of veterans. Again, the importance of groups of seniors and ensuring that people were well treated.

On the 18th of February in 1981, she is talking federal-provincial issues, the attention to negotiations going on and the need for strong representation for Manitoba. February 20, 1981, pensioners and the importance of pensioners being considered. Just one small quote here, she asks about the situation where someone 60 years of age receives all of her income from the interest on investments, that she will not qualify for a particular program or help regardless of the amount of money, how small or how little is in her income. Making sure that those who had only a small amount of income from that source were eligible for as they should have been.

In March of 1981, she spoke about the deplorable conditions being reported under which some women immigrants were working and the need for consideration for women and women immigrants who have not always been treated as well as they should have been. March 2, 1981, she talks about the importance of historical and heritage buildings, and making sure that the structure of our tax system and the structure of the supports provided by government is such that we have a real framework for making sure that heritage buildings are preserved and enhanced and that they contribute in a major way to our society in Manitoba.

Her attention was, of course, primarily, I think it is fair to say, on social issues, but when she spoke in the budget debate and at other times she also spoke about economic issues and the need for change so that the economic growth in Manitoba could catch up to the rest of Canada, because at that point and for many years around that period it was lagging behind the rest of Canada.

She spoke at length and eloquently on budget debates and Throne Speech debates as well as on a whole variety of bills. She talked repeatedly about the need for good, long-run planning and processes, about the need to address issues around those with children with special needs, those who have mental disabilities as well as physical disabilities. Again and

again, her concern for people who were disadvantaged, who were less well able to speak for themselves came through time and time and time again.

\* (10:20)

In 1981, she was concerned enough about the situations with seniors and condominiums to introduce two bills, Bill 23 and Bill 24, which dealt with the situation of the development of condominiums and making sure that seniors who were involved in circumstances where there was a transition to a condominium were well protected and well informed about what was going on and that people were not going to take advantage of seniors.

I think that is certainly a theme that was very strong throughout her whole career to make sure that government was there to ensure that seniors and others who were less well-off were not taken advantage of.

She had a good sense of humour at times. She waded into a debate, which was discussing some fishy issues, and I will quote briefly from this, "Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I really wanted to continue on this whale a bit because, continuing the fishy analogy, I wanted to thank the honourable Member for Inkster for the excellent imitation of *Jaws* today. My only concern, though, is that friends and others who are joining his school of thinking that they are going to be sharks too may end up just being the poor fish on the other side."

So she was concerned, whether it be in using humour or in any other ways, with making sure the sharks did not have a field day but the people who were regular fish and fish who were disadvantaged were being looked after.

She was, I think it is fair to say, not only an important spokesperson for the people of Fort Rouge and the people in Manitoba who were concerned about social issues, but she played a very important role in sustaining and building the Liberal Party provincially in difficult times.

She played an important role in keeping the Laurier Club, a forum for political discussions, going and active because she very much enjoyed discussion of policy and getting speakers from Manitoba and

from outside to talk about the critical issues of the day.

She was named Woman of the Year in Politics and Governmental Affairs in 1979, I think a tribute to her achievements at that point primarily at City Hall as a councillor but certainly leading into her time in the Legislature.

She continued her long involvement, not just as an elected member, but working in elections in other ways with the Liberal Party. I was fortunate to get to know June Westbury, to meet her on many occasions, to benefit from some of her astute political advice, thanks be in part, perhaps, to the fact that I am here today. I certainly owe a great deal as a Liberal representative here to the legacy that June Westbury left, to her concern, and to the fact that she drew many people to the Liberal Party in Manitoba.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will close just with an acknowledgment of the fact that June Westbury was a very significant contributor to our society in Manitoba and to the well-being of many, many people. She touched many lives. We want to thank her family for the not always easy times but for their efforts in allowing June to contribute in the way that she has done and she did. Certainly, though it was not always easy on the family, and the shock of defeat was not easy to take, but I think that what is important is that she made an incredible contribution in her years in politics, both at the front and in the back rooms, and that she will be remembered. Her memory will be treasured by many for many years to come.

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise today to support the motion of condolence on behalf of Ms. June Westbury and put a few words on the record. I would like to compliment both the First Minister and the Leader of the Liberal Party, the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), I should say, for doing, I think, a very exemplary job in describing the career of somebody who has sat in this Legislature but also who made a very, I think, a very positive impact on the people, not only of Winnipeg, but of Manitoba and beyond.

I think it is fascinating to know that June Westbury came here from New Zealand and met her husband-to-be, Peter, here. I understand that they had a cottage that they enjoyed very much at Victoria

Beach, was very much a part of their lifestyle when they could take time with friends and family to celebrate some of the wonderful places we have here in Manitoba. I think Victoria Beach is one of those places that everybody that has an opportunity to visit knows why it becomes a special place and why you want to take friends and family there.

I know that she, June, filled a very important Manitoban's position, who went on, as Mr. Axworthy did, to federal politics. When she was elected in a by-election she clearly came into this Legislature, and I would have to say from some of the comments that I have heard in the Chamber today and others that she was one who was a very determined individual, somebody who obviously understood that if she was going to come into this Legislature she was going to be a leader in her community and her constituency and indeed had, I think, a very, very strong impact as the representative, as the MLA from Fort Rouge.

I acknowledge that there are family members here. I understand that her three daughters, Sheila, Pamela and Jennifer are obviously, as well as other family members, very, very important and were very important to her in her career as she made a difference here in this Chamber and in the city.

I thought it was interesting that when she served as a city councillor, clearly the only way that I could think that anybody would get a comment from Bernie Wolfe as being a team player, as she did, was pretty high praise because we all know Bernie's passion for culture, heritage of buildings in this community and for Bernie to acknowledge June Westbury as a team player I think is pretty high praise for those of us that know Bernie Wolfe.

I think the other comment that I was made aware of was from Harry Lazarenko, who is currently a city councillor, and made a comment that June Westbury always represented the people that elected her. I think that is always a challenge for any elected official, whether it is at City Council, as June served her time there, or whether it is in the Legislature here in this Assembly, as she did when she was elected in the by-election, to make sure that you, as an elected official, always represent your people, the people who allowed you to have the honour to serve them. I think the comments that were made by Harry Lazarenko, again, are high praise of June Westbury's

integrity and ability to understand the role of an elected official.

\* (10:30)

I understand, as well, that the previous Leader of the Liberal Party, the Honourable Sharon Carstairs, has said that she took a lot of advice as well from June Westbury, as Mrs. Westbury was the lone sitting Liberal member in the Chamber. Sharon Carstairs made a comment that she was a strong resource for her as she got involved in elected politics.

I think that when you look and listen to some of the comments that have been made by the other two leaders of parties in this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, June Westbury was clearly an exemplary woman, an exemplary leader, somebody who, frankly, spent time supporting the arts as a patron of the arts, whether it was the Manitoba Opera or the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, somebody who took a great interest in trying to make this community better.

Clearly, her political beliefs were strong in developing the Laurier Club here in Manitoba and the comments that she received as the YWCA Woman of the Year award in politics and government affairs. She was an award recipient of the Canada 125 medal and the Queen's Golden Jubilee medal. I think that somebody like June Westbury clearly has left a tremendous legacy here in the province of Manitoba as a woman who wanted to get involved in public life because she believed, like so many people from time to time do not believe, that their single voice might not make a difference. I think June Westbury proved that to be wrong. One voice does make a difference.

I think that, to the family members that are here today and the members of the PC caucus, I would just like to take a moment to say thank you to June Westbury for getting involved, getting active in public life. As a resident of Winnipeg and of Manitoba, I can only think that June Westbury, in her own way, has made my life as a citizen of this city and of this province a better place to call home.

On that note, I would just like to send my condolences to the Westbury family and to say that you must be very proud, because somebody who has made the kind of legacy and left the kind of legacy

that June Westbury has left is one to be deserved and one to be proud of. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology):** I want to recall my relationship with June as a community activist. She was a member of this Legislature while I was the director of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg. I became director in 1976 and had worked for the United Church prior to that, although, I have to apologize, as an Anglican. She, of course, was an Anglican. I did work for the United Church at that time.

I think when you look through what June's life did, you see someone who in retrospect seems to have done things that many others may have done, but at the time she was a pioneer in many, many ways. I want to focus on those particular aspects of her life.

First of all, in 1947 not that many young, single women left home and travelled to work. This was quite an unusual time in human history. World War II was just over. There was a great deal of unemployment in a number of countries. Women who had been in the workforce doing non-traditional work were pushed back out at the return home of the males from their duties as soldiers. So it was a time of significant upheaval and significant questions about the appropriate role of women. Here was a young person from New Zealand who decided to go and see the world in 1947. Thank goodness she saw a lot of it but stopped here.

If you look on and understand that in 1970 a very new form of government had been designed for the city of Winnipeg to unify all of the suburbs and to, often against the wishes of many, create what we now a generation later call the city of Winnipeg. Those of us who served on school boards in the suburbs, so-called in those days, will remember the tremendous anger in many cases, and upheaval certainly in all cases, as the city attempted to figure out how to be one city having been 12 municipalities prior to that time.

So when June served on City Council for those tumultuous years, she was a pioneer at having to understand how to serve a small constituency, because we had 50 city councillors, and yet represent a broader vision. She did that very, very well.

She also might perhaps have passed by understanding that when she became a city councillor she

became, not just a member of the municipal hospitals board, but virtually immediately the chair. Now the whole understanding of community continuing care and extended care and chronic care was just beginning in those days. People like Evelyn Shapiro, Ms. Thompson, others in the provincial area, were pioneering the notion of what it meant to care compassionately for seniors and for those with chronic health conditions. There was June chairing the board of the municipal hospitals, which was then beginning the evolution which led many, many years later to the Riverview Health Centre, which is of course an exemplary institution today.

You look what else she took part in. We take it for granted now that we are attempting at least to be a more inclusive society, but she was on the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews. Thirty years ago this was not entirely an organization that everyone took for granted, that one should necessarily belong to. There were still tensions.

Unfortunately, some of those tensions are there today. But every time I encountered June in anything that we were involved in, I encountered someone who was passionately committed to human rights and to inclusiveness. Not just on gender lines, but on racial, on ethnic and religious and class lines.

I remember very much, when in 1978 the Social Planning Council was under the guidance of Agnes Hall, who many of you will remember as a great Liberal, a great Liberal in retirement in Vancouver. She was the partner of the late Gordon Hall, an appeal court judge and I have to say there was a little story about Agnes that during elections she changed her name to Agnes Hill so that she could campaign for her favourite party. She was never ever ashamed to engage the very best people she could in any enterprise.

Agnes took on the chairing of the Maternal and Child Health Task Force which had a wide range of tremendous people involved in it. Because at that time, this is not something that today we would think unusual, but at that time the notion of a community task force to engage Manitobans in the fact that we had some of the worst neonatal mortality rates in the country, in the inner city of Winnipeg, this was something quite new.

I remember Agnes saying to me, "We have to get June Westbury on this; we have to have June in

the task force." So we did. She contributed a great deal to the work of that task force over about a four and a half year period.

You look at her engagement in the preservation of the heritage of this city. In the 1970s, and even in the 1980s, there was that sort of temptation to tear down everything that was old and to see it replaced with something that was new.

June was engaged in the Advisory Committee on Historical Buildings, Heritage Winnipeg and the Heritage Canada Foundation.

Today, we think protecting heritage is a no-brainer. In the 1970s, there was still a lot of debate about whether this was even a worthwhile endeavour, let alone whether it was something that should command national resources, provincial resources and legal frameworks to protect our heritage.

So I remember June in one other particular way in that I may have in a very small, very small way helped contribute to having her here in the Legislature, because I must confess I did work for Lloyd Axworthy in that election that he won and actually won my poll in that particular election for Lloyd, so I may have helped to cause that election of your mother to this Assembly in a very, very small way, although Lloyd won very well in that first election, so it really was not my fault.

\*(10:40)

I do want to extend, through our membership, the MLAs in the Chamber, our thanks not only for her service here but for the fact that she was a champion for human rights, for women's rights, for children's rights, for the city as a whole, for our heritage, for the inclusiveness of our society, and I think that it will be very important that we continue to remember this person who took it upon herself to travel halfway around the world to make an enormous contribution to our province, and her memory will be cherished by all of us who knew her and worked with her. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Mr. Speaker, I do want to both celebrate the life of June Westbury and offer my condolences to the family today, particularly to Sheila, Pamela and Jennifer. June Westbury and her husband Peter were very close and dear friends of my parents back in the 1960s and

1970s and, in a very small way, I think June Westbury has a little bit of a role to play in why I am here.

It was back in the 1960s when Margaret Konantz, and this was a really unusual situation for a woman to be seeking office at the federal level in the 1960s, and Margaret Konantz was running for the Liberals in the constituency of Winnipeg South and June Menzies and June Westbury were working very hard on that campaign.

There was a rather new phenomenon that these women had invented at that time. It was the idea, the notion that a good way for a candidate to get to know her constituents would be to go around door to door. Prior to this, particularly in federal elections, the way of getting the message out was to have meetings and have public debates and have candidates' forums. There was very little door-knocking going on.

At that time, in the area particularly where we grew up, and we grew up just a few streets away from the Westburys in that area of Fort Rouge and Riverview, most of the mothers worked at home, and so they were at home during the day. So those involved with the campaign decided that a good way to get out and meet people was to go knock on their doors.

Again, a rather strange phenomenon at the time that just shows, maybe, the difference in respect level that citizens had for politicians at the time is they would go and knock on the door and actually invite the residents to come out to the street to meet the candidate. So you would have a group of individuals going ahead from door to door and actually, when someone responded, they would invite them out to the end of their sidewalk or to the curb to meet the candidate.

This was such a novel idea that the federal Liberals decided to send an up-and-coming young political hopeful from Toronto out to see what exactly was going on and to see if this phenomenon had any merit. I guess it must have, because John Turner later went on to become not only a sitting member for the federal Liberals but Prime Minister of Canada, and he was the young man that the Liberals had sent out from the East to see what these women were up to.

That was the start of my mother's involvement in politics because one day June Westbury came and

knocked on our door when my mother was home and invited her out to the front street to meet Margaret Konantz. That got my mother involved. That was the start of a very close and long-lasting friendship between my mother and June Westbury and our family and the Westbury family.

From that point on both June's career and my mother's career had some very, very strong parallels. They worked with each other. They worked for each other on various campaigns when either my mother was running or my father was running or Peter Westbury was the head of the Liberal association and June was working or when June was running. This friendship and this love of politics and political life carried on for years and years and continued to carry on right up until June's passing in February of this year.

It is interesting going back and to have the opportunity to look into my mother's scrapbook. The issues were so different back then that it is hard sometimes to relate to them. Certainly the issues at the time that they were fighting for, both prior to and after June's public involvement in the Legislature, the primary issue was to ensure that there was equality for women in the political field.

Again, back then most political parties had a women's organization. You had the political party where the executive was all men and it was run by men, and then you had the women's organization as kind of a sidebar in the sixties and seventies. Really a big part of the struggle and a big part of the fight was to get women a full seat at the table. It was not an easy thing to do, because typically what happened was at the executive association where the men were meeting, the women would be invited once in a while to come in and give their view. It was women like June Menzies and June Westbury and my mother that saw that there was an inequality there and an equality that needed to be addressed, and they worked very hard for years and years and years to try and ensure that women had a full and equal place at the table.

In the scrapbook there is an article dated Thursday, April 25, 1974, written by June Menzies and she is a legislative reporter and the title is "A Political Gain for Women," and it is really talking about a conference that was organized by my mother with a great deal of help from June Westbury. The title of it was *Women in Politics and Public Life*, and it was an attempt again to raise the issue in a public

way, that women deserved and should expect to have a full seat at the table. That was a struggle that June Westbury and others who she was close with fought for years and years and years before June was successful in her election bid at the provincial level.

I am pleased to say that it is a fight that, although I think there are many in the House would agree with me is not over, they carried a long, long way. There is a tremendous amount of credit that is owed to June and others who worked with her in that struggle.

I remember after June's passing there was an article in the *Free Press* and, again, I think the *Free Press* got it wrong. They minimized what the struggle was about. They talked about how June fought for a women's washroom in this facility. Standing in the House today, I am sure with all my colleagues we can look back and say how ridiculous could that have been that there was not a women's washroom in the Legislature in 1979, but the fight and the struggle really was not about a washroom. It was about making this place a comfortable place for women to be in.

While we still have a long ways to go, June was there and made a very, very significant contribution in making this Legislature a comfortable place for women to be and a place where women would be treated respectfully and equally, and history has not been that way. We are still in some ways treading on new territory.

I remember the elections as a young lad growing up, and I remember it was a different time for elections, as well. Family was involved and mostly I speak for my family but we were stuck in the basement folding letters, putting them in envelopes, and then finding all the friends we could to get out and deliver them around the neighbourhood. I think at times when I look back, we sometimes wondered why did we have to do this. There were other things to do. There were summer nights to enjoy and friends to go out and have some fun with. But we did it and even our friends who came along reluctantly, at the end of it I think they were all glad they did. It was a lot of fun and we formed a lot of very great friendships.

\* (10:50)

The other challenge, of course, was during an election period, you were somehow encouraged to

keep out of trouble, which was not always easy because we lived in a very tight neighbourhood where everybody's mother knew what everybody else's child was doing. I am sure the girls can appreciate how much difficulty that was for that period of four to six weeks of just keeping below the radar screen and making sure we never got caught tearing those bumpers off the back of cars. But it was a fun time and it was an interesting time.

June and Peter, as I said, had a very special relationship in our house and with our family. My recollection of June is that there was a vibrancy about her. She was obviously a very strong woman, but she was a very enjoyable person to be around. There was a sense of enthusiasm. There was always that infectious smile. You always felt comfortable around June Westbury. She was always very open and friendly. I know that she had a very strong relationship with her husband, Peter. When he was not politicking, he was creating. He always had a project, from what I can recall. Whether it was a project at the lake building the cottage, renovating the cottage or a project at home, Peter always had a project.

I remember vividly their visits to our house because, and again just a sign of the times, but nobody in our household smoked but Peter. He was about as close to a chain smoker, I think, as one could run across. It was unusual. We knew when they were coming over because the ashtrays always came out. That was just part of the process. But I know there was some very lively and entertaining times were shared by our parents during those early political times.

June Westbury certainly made her mark, not only in this Legislature but outside it. Reading the obituary we can all understand the tremendous contribution she made to her community, in terms of all the volunteer activities that she undertook, all the boards that she sat on, all the causes that she fought hard for. But that was not the biggest part of her life. The biggest part of her life was being a mom, and that is what it was all about. She was very devoted to her family. She was always there, I know, when her family wanted her and needed her. And as has been said before, she was just one of those incredibly active and busy people. The more that needed to be done, the more that June did. She always found time to concentrate on her No. 1 job, which was being a mother.

June Westbury spent her career, both politically and otherwise, fighting for equality. There were many fights. There was the fight for pension equality, which I know she fought hard for. Particularly in those days, pension equality was not common. Again, women were suffering because of that. There was a long and hard struggle to bring pension reform about so that women would be recognized as part of the partnership when it came to the assets that had accrued during a marriage.

There was a fight for better and more available child care, which again at the time in those years was simply not available. It is a cause that June and others like her took up with a vengeance. In a logical and a rational way, over the course of time and through their efforts, the advances were made until we see where we are today. In a lot of ways, individuals like June Westbury and her colleagues laid the groundwork for many of the social programs that we see today.

It was interesting. I was at the dinner that was held this year celebrating the achievements of women at the Women of Distinction Awards. Just to look back, I know the closeness that these three women shared throughout their lives. In 1977 June Menzies won the award for government and political affairs. In 1978 my mother, Win Gardner, won the award for government and political affairs. In 1979 June Westbury won the award for government and political affairs.

That to me is a tremendous tribute to the group of women that June was part of that carried on the fight and carried on the battle. She was vice-president of the Liberal Party of Canada at a time again when women just were not considered to be that high up in terms of the political food chain. So she made her mark and she did it very well.

I want to put on the record just a few comments from my mother: "I got to know June during the federal campaign of the late Margaret Konantz in the early sixties. We became part of the famous door-knocking group that is now standard procedure for most politicians. In 1968 we worked together on a study for the Manitoba volunteer committee on the status of women entitled *Women in Politics and Public Life*. This study was later presented to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. We felt very strongly that women should be in the mainstream of the party and not sidelined in the

women's groups. We concluded that women entering politics tend to be concerned about issues and therefore it was important to be talking to the men within the party who held most of the power for change. June was a very articulate debater. She contributed a great deal to the community in which she lived and raised her children. I valued her friendship very much."

Mr. Speaker, June Westbury has made her mark on our community and made her mark on society. She will be sadly missed by her family. I know it was difficult after she took her fall and was confined to a convalescent home, but she never lost her spirit. I think that is one of the memories that I will carry forward with my remembrances of June Westbury. She was a fighter. She was dedicated to whatever cause she took up. She was an activist. She was a feminist before that phrase was a popular phrase to be used. But, most of all, she was deeply committed to her partner, Peter, and to her family. We will miss her.

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** I rise today in support of this motion and to say a few words in celebration of the life of June Westbury. I did not know June very well, but from what I did know of her I certainly had a tremendous amount of respect for her.

I first met June in the by-election in 1979 when I was actually working on my father's campaign, Hugh McDonald, who was running for the PC Party at the time in the by-election. I can recall one day when we were out going door to door and I was out with my father and we ran into June. We had exchanged a few words and talked for a few minutes and quickly realizing, I guess, that we were not going to sway each other's votes we moved on, but I remember turning to my father at the time, looking up at him and saying, "Daddy, she is a really nice lady. Why are you running against her?"

He quickly grabbed my hand and took me to the next door but she was just a tremendous woman, certainly a strong advocate of women in politics and very knowledgeable, very articulate and absolutely passionate about what she believed in. I just want to extend my deepest condolences to the family, to Sheila, Pamela, Jennifer and to the rest of their family for their tremendous loss and, indeed, the loss of a great Manitoban. Thank you.

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Conrad Santos (Wellington):** Mr. Speaker, I had not met June Westbury, but I have read about her in the papers. I know that she was a councillor and then an MLA. All I know about her is what I read in the paper. But one thing that moved me to rise up today and speak about somebody who is a stranger in terms of warm personal relationship but really an acquaintance through some medium other than face to face is the fact that she came from New Zealand.

I recalled immediately that in New Zealand there was a progressive social network and social legislation. In New Zealand, if I remember right, everybody is covered by general coverage, no-fault. If you are a housewife and you slipped in your backyard, without going to the courts, you are entitled to compensation. What a progressive kind of legislation. You do not have to be an employee because being a housewife, to me, is full-time employment.

The other thing that I would like to say is that she worked for equality, an equality between men and women. All are equal before the Maker, whether you are a man or a woman. I would like to end right away by saying, what is man without woman? This man will be like a long-lost love groping in the dark like the cold, cold air without the sun. Thank you.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some brief comments and extend my sympathy to Sheila, Jennifer and Pam.

Mr. Speaker, I did not know June Westbury maybe as well as I had thought. This morning I was really pleased to hear the leaders of the respective parties articulate, the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), talk about June Westbury. A lot of things were said that I had no idea of. I have known June Westbury in a very political way. I have always seen June Westbury as the capital "L" Liberal.

When I think of the Liberal Party, one would think of individuals like Gil Molgat and someone that would be up there with Gil Molgat would have been June Westbury. Then you would have other individuals that would be around, you know, people like the Sisler family and Alice Cheatley and others, individuals who were there for the Liberal Party not only in good times but also in difficult times.

I first got involved, in fact, in the first provincial election in 1981. I was a teenager at the time and it was June Westbury's campaign. June was absolutely fabulous in terms of encouraging me to be involved. I was assigned a particular poll and that is where I had my first door-to-door experience. I can recall knocking on one door, being somewhat nervous, and a lady breaks into tears and she said, "Oh, you're a Liberal." She is so happy to see me and all this kind of stuff. I thought, boy, June has got some wonderful support here. She had me go into the apartment. She had this big poster of Pierre Elliot Trudeau and she says, "You know June and Pierre, they are right on, that is the person that I am going to be voting for, June Westbury."

I cannot recall ever hearing anyone saying anything negative about June Westbury whether it was when I was in the poll working back in 1981 or in recent years. People appreciated June for who she was. For me, June was a beacon. It is very difficult to be inside this Legislature and have a party of one, as in June's case, or two at times because you do not have the same sorts of resources. In order to get things done you have to put in that much more of an effort because you have a tenth of the resources. In order to be able to communicate that message out you have to put in that much more effort. What I see was a very difficult situation and an outstanding citizen who was able to take that situation and provide, in my case, a hope in terms of being able to get elected.

I remember back in 1988 when there were 20 Liberals elected, right away a lot of folks and attention went to who were our past MLAs, who we could go to for experience. Often Sharon Carstairs made reference to June Westbury. You know, Pam, I think that is one of the reasons why Jim Carr looked at Pam, as to bringing Pam into the Legislature. We wanted to be able to gain some of that integrity that June Westbury brought to the Manitoba Legislature, to be able to get a better understanding of how she was able to contribute and have that impact. She played a very strong role in the lives of many Liberals in this province. I know that, because over the years I have had many occasions to meet with a good number of Liberals and, as I say, every one of them had a kind word to say about June Westbury.

We heard about the Laurier Club. Shortly after being first elected, June had approached me and she said, "Kevin, I would like you to speak at the Laurier Club." I was somewhat nervous, I must say, at the

very least, Mr. Speaker, because June, I know, has had prominent speakers. John Turner was there. She helped me get John Turner to the University of Winnipeg when I was over at the University of Winnipeg, making sure that there were Liberal speakers, asking many to speak and making me comfortable in being able to give my first political speech. June gave me a chance. She gave me opportunities, and I truly believe that she gave opportunities for a lot of people. That is what I really and truly appreciate. The Liberal Party would not be where it is today had we not had people like June Westbury and Gil Molgat and Sharon Carstairs. So, in that sense, the democracy that we have in the province of Manitoba is healthier because of June's role in the past.

We hear about her actions in City Hall, which, again, just speak volumes for her character and her integrity. I, myself, can only hope to be able to try to emulate some of the things that June was able to do. On that personal note, just to extend my heartfelt sympathies to the family and friends with her passing.

But I for one know that Ms. Westbury's name is going to be in Molgat Place or the Liberal headquarters for years to come, because there are many people that acknowledge the endless efforts that she put into the Liberal Party, and in fact to the entire province and to our nation as she was heavily involved on the federal side.

I can remember her throwing the John Turner scarf around my neck, saying I had to get out there to support John Turner. June was very much a team player. When there was an election, she got involved and, even with her limited abilities preceding her passing, she was still involved and took an active interest. Even in talking with Brenda Sinclair [*phonetic*] over at the Laurier Club, just tremendous, tremendous amount of respect for Ms. Westbury and what she brought. She made the Laurier Club. There is no doubt about that and the Laurier Club contributes to this day and will continue to contribute well into the future.

So with those few words I just want to extend my sympathies to the family. Thank you.

\* (11:10)

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

Would honourable members please rise and remain standing to indicate their support for the motion.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

**Peter Burtniak**

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I move, seconded by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray),

THAT this House convey to the family of the late Peter Burtniak, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincerest sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of his devotion to duty in a useful life of active community and public service and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reflect on the life of the Honourable Peter Burtniak and to offer our condolences to his wife, Olive, of 55 years, daughters, Audrey and Arlene, and son, Calvin, to their spouses and to their grandchildren who affectionately called Peter "Pappy" in his life.

Peter lived an exemplary life. He was recognized on his passing as a person with tremendous character. Tremendous character. Words like loyal, solid, citizen, builder were utilized by a number of different commentators including Ed Schreyer, who served with Peter in this Legislature when he was first elected in 1969.

His character I think is instrumental in his life as a citizen because he was not only a farmer in his own community, he was active in the Manitoba Farmers Union, the Manitoba Federation of Agriculture and the Manitoba Pool Elevators organization. His dedication to his people ultimately led him to run for political office as a farm implement dealer in Fork River, Manitoba. He did run in 1969 and was successful in his election. He was a member of the first NDP government ever elected in Manitoba and he was re-elected in 1973.

His character, his intelligence, his dedication to his fellow citizens, allowed him to be appointed by former Premier Schreyer to the Cabinet, the first Cabinet, to have him ultimately hold a number of

significant portfolios. He was Minister of Culture and Tourism. He was Minister responsible for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. He was Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System. He was Minister of Highways and ultimately and after that president of Roads and Transportation of Canada and Minister and chairman of the board of directors of the Manitoba Telephone System and vice-chair of the Manitoba Transport Board.

Mr. Speaker, these were in the 1969 period and these were exciting times in Manitoba. Not always times that were not without controversy, but of course Peter was involved in this new government that developed many new initiatives in this province.

One of the initiatives that was controversial, it is still noted today to have had some of the largest citizen participations that ever took place outside of the legislative steps, was the creation of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, the creation and fulfilment of a promise that was made by the New Democrats in opposition and ultimately carried out in government in the early seventies, carried out in its implementation throughout the administrative responsibilities Peter brought to this responsibility.

This challenge was significant because although the government had been elected, it was a minority government. So in the middle of a controversy and debate that was worthy of this Legislature, this new entity was created to reduce rates for car owners here in Manitoba; to reduce the discriminatory practice, particularly with young people, on their car rates. More importantly and not something always appreciated in the discussions of car insurance, the whole issue of retaining capital here in Manitoba. This would be very consistent with Peter's views and the government's views as a member and an activist in the National Farmers Union of the day.

But the fact that hundreds of millions of dollars were being taken out of the province and invested in Toronto or New York or Zurich was also very much part of the goal of the government in creating the public insurance corporation.

Peter was very involved in the creation of that public insurance corporation such that he was given the job of the leadership of that very major Crown corporation, that new Crown corporation in the ultimate Schreyer years in Cabinet.

It is noteworthy, Mr. Speaker, as we stand here and talk years later, some 30 years later, after the controversy of that legislation, that over a billion, \$200 million of Manitoba ratepayer money for car insurance is now invested in virtually every community school in Manitoba, \$1.2 billion is invested in virtually every hospital in Manitoba. So unlike other provinces that have suffered some difficulty with the depression in the market in the last couple of years. The whole issue of reliable investments for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, and reasonable rates for investing in capital decisions for hospitals and schools was also very much part of the debate on public insurance, and part of the legacy of that Schreyer Cabinet I would suggest, and part of the legacy of Peter Burtniak.

I know that people will talk today about the rate increases in various provinces and compare that to public insurance, but I think the great outstanding legacy of public insurance, in my view and in the view, I am sure, of Mr. Burtniak and former Premier Schreyer when they began this program, was the ability to retain investment for our own communities, a tremendous legacy, I think, and one which, under the scrutiny of different governments, particularly in 1979 with the Burns Commission that was established by a former government after the Schreyer government was defeated, did articulate the whole issue of investments here in Manitoba and investments in the province. Ultimately, the Lyon government did not change the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. Essentially, they kept it as a Crown corporation for, one would argue, the benefit of all Manitobans.

\* (11:20)

Certainly this has been very much part of Peter Burtniak's life in politics here in the Legislature and life in the Schreyer Cabinet as part of his work in this Legislature. He was also known, though, as a tremendous MLA for the community of Dauphin and for the people of the Parklands region.

There are many, many activities and projects that exist today in the Parklands of Manitoba and exist today in Dauphin because of the loyal and hard work of Peter Burtniak. Many of us, probably all of us, have visited the Ukrainian Selo site south of Dauphin, which is now not only the site of the Ukrainian Festival, but it is also the site of

Countryfest and has had multiple uses since it has been established.

It is the national Canadian centre for the Ukrainian Festival. It is a centre that has hosted the Queen; it has hosted people from all over the world. It is now, I think, the site of Ukrainian-Canadians from all over Canada to visit their relatives annually at that site.

This is a tremendous legacy, but that is not the only investment that was made in the community by Peter Burtniak. He is known for his work on roads, which obviously is very important for the region, his investment in education with the Dauphin Regional School.

He was involved in building a regional government building on Second Avenue in Dauphin to give, again, the signal that government services can be delivered outside of the Perimeter Highway, outside of the beltway, if you will. He was involved in building the MPIC building in Dauphin. He did a lot to really say to the people of Manitoba that Dauphin, Manitoba, is a regional economic and service sector of Manitoba.

This was very, very important, I think, in terms of the transition of Dauphin and the Parklands region, the tourism activity that was developed. I think Peter would be very proud of the fact that last fall the National Fly Fishing Championships took place in the Parklands region, an area that was not normally thought of in that kind of capacity.

But certainly when you look at all the tourism activity, the ski hill and the development of the lakes and the hiking trails and the community hiking trails, that was always the vision of Peter Burtniak, to have the Parklands region, one of the most beautiful regions in Manitoba, and probably the member from Dauphin would argue that it is the most beautiful region in Manitoba, to have that enhanced and encouraged.

We know that Peter, as I say, was involved after politics with being involved with the Roads and Transportation Organization of Canada as president. He was, as I say, involved in other community activity in terms of transportation. I know he loved to spend time with his family and spend time with his friends.

On behalf of the people of Manitoba, I would like to thank the Burtniak family for the time that they sacrificed on behalf of the work that Peter had to put in to make Manitoba a better province.

He truly has made Manitoba a better province through his elected duties and responsibilities. We cherish his life and we remember his great contributions to Manitoba, to the Dauphin and Parklands community, and to the country of Canada. Thank you.

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the motion brought forward by the First Minister in honour and support of the condolence motion in memory of the honourable Peter Burtniak.

I listened very carefully to the First Minister's comments very eloquently put on the record. I thought it was interesting when the First Minister talked about Mr. Burtniak's ability to find himself elected and immediately be in the position of coming into Cabinet and having the ability to fill so many roles in Cabinet.

I think it speaks volumes of an individual who the Premier at that time, Mr. Schreyer, would have had the confidence in the ability to put somebody into Cabinet and indeed give Mr. Burtniak, as he served the term of government in numerous Cabinet positions, Tourism and Recreation, Cultural Affairs, Manitoba Telephone System, Highways, Minister responsible for MPIC.

I would like to just for a minute think, because I was not there, but try to believe perhaps if Mr. Burtniak was a man who ran a business, a farm implementation business.

I can speak with a little bit of experience, having grown up in a small community with a father who was a farmer, that those kinds of places, those farm implementation industry businesses, were incredible places for all family members I think, particularly young boys and girls perhaps, but I can speak as a young boy. We would go to those kinds of places and there would always be some form of a coffee machine and there would always be some place where there would be people that would be standing around that coffee machine. Perhaps there would be some gleaming new farm implement machinery somewhere around that was available to go and crawl on and try, because perhaps it was a shinier

tractor than what you happened to have in your own farm.

There were always people who were interested in talking about issues. I think somebody like Mr. Burtniak clearly had the ability to gather people, to allow them to talk about some of the issues that were important to them, whether they were agricultural issues or whether they were just municipal issues, or whether they were just issues that were of concern and on people's minds.

So I have this image of Mr. Burtniak being sort of the go-to guy in the area that would be there to listen, to talk, to be a part of people's lives. In fact, I would say that perhaps that was one of the reasons that his public life was one that should be celebrated, because for him to be elected, then to have the ability to serve at the Cabinet table I think is a tremendous accomplishment and recognition of his ability.

I note some of the words echoed by the First Minister about Mr. Burtniak as being somebody who was solid, somebody who was very loyal. I think those are characteristics of somebody who is a very noble, honest, trustworthy individual. Certainly the people in the constituency of Dauphin saw that and saw that it was proper to get behind him as the person that they wanted to represent their interests in the Legislature here in Manitoba.

I just get this sense of somebody who was a very solid individual, who believed in his community, believed that he would try to bring forward some of the issues that were placed in front of him, that he could bring forward to this Legislature and, as all people that get involved in public service, try to just make other people's lives just perhaps a little bit better and try to make some of the issues out there a little bit better understood so that there can be some resolution brought to those.

I note that the honourable Peter Burtniak is survived by his wife, Olive, of 55 years. I think that in itself is just a tremendous accomplishment, that that relationship obviously was one that was very, very special and I think that in itself is something that strikes me as something very, very special not only for Peter and Olive but, clearly, for all of their family members. To be a part of that I think is very special.

I would very much like to pay tribute to the honourable Peter Burtniak, somebody who obviously

made not only an impression on his community but made an impression on Manitoba in the sense that he served in government, served as a Cabinet minister in various roles and, clearly, his ability to be involved with Manitoba Pool Elevators, Manitoba Farmers' Union, or the Manitoba Federation of Agriculture.

\* (11:30)

I think that Peter Burtniak was somebody who left a very lasting impression. I think that Mr. Burtniak has made that kind of legacy that we, as those who have followed behind in his footsteps as elected representatives, will always have the ability to look at and cherish and be mindful that there are people that have served in this Chamber that deserve recognition and are worthy of everybody's words today to pay tribute to somebody who was very special in the province of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):**

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a privilege to represent today some of the same people that Mr. Peter Burtniak represented from 1969 to 1977 in this Legislature. I think it is important for all of us to acknowledge those who have come before us in this House and recognize their contribution and recognize that without them none of us would be here today.

From that perspective I want to personally express my debt of gratitude to Mr. Peter Burtniak and his family for their contribution, not only to our constituency and the Parkland area, but to all of the people of Manitoba. I want to say that I was very touched when I attended the funeral to view a display of pictures that showed many of the things that Mr. Burtniak was involved in, along with Olive and his family, in our community. It is funny; sometimes you see things going on in 1969 that continue today. There is a picture of Mr. Burtniak and his family in the Dauphin Ukrainian Festival parade on the wall that they showed at the funeral. Some things never change, some things always remain important, and I really appreciate the way that Mr. Burtniak represented the people of our area at these very special events that we have in our communities.

Mr. Burtniak was very effective in this House, he was very effective as a minister and he was effective because he was so connected to the people that he represented. It has been mentioned that Peter

farmed in the Fork River area. It has been mentioned that he was an implement dealer in Fork River. He had all these things going, but on top of that he was such an integral part of the community and the communities next neighbouring his community of Fork River.

Mr. Burtniak was able to bring in a lot of people who had not previously participated in the political process, people who lived in communities like Sifton and areas like Stony Point, areas throughout what was then the Dauphin Plains constituency, people who had felt out of the loop in the 1960s leading up to the 1969 election, people who still had a voice, people who mattered but were not participating, people who had trouble understanding in English the politics of the day, people such as Peter Burtniak and before him, people like Fred Zaplitny, who went out farmsite to farmsite talking to people in their languages, talking to people and assuring them that they had a right to come forward and participate in the political process.

Peter was a master at that farmsite-to-farmsite politics and going from one farmsite to the next, talking about those issues with people, listening to people to hear what they had to say about the issues of the day, and big issues. At one point, Peter as a member of the Manitoba Farmers' Union, took part in a debate about the colour of butter in this province. On the surface it might seem like a fairly insignificant issue but it was really something that was important. I cannot remember that debate, but for those of you who can, it did have important economic effects in this province. From that to trade issues to the big farm questions, Peter campaigned at a time in our area where there were a lot more farmsites than there are today.

Little community halls were important political tools in those days and Peter Burtniak was very adept at bringing people from the farmsites into little communities in the surrounding districts at town hall meetings, explaining what the government was doing, talking about what his vision for our area was. The Premier (Mr. Doer) very eloquently put his finger on a number of things that Peter had in his vision for our area, things that he worked on, moved forward, and we can point to today with a whole lot of pride as to parts of our communities, Dauphin and our surrounding area.

In 1969, I think it must have been very exciting to be involved in politics. It is today too, but in 1969

there was a feeling that there was change in the air. There was something new on the horizon and I think the folks in the Dauphin constituency wanted to be part of that and they knew they had a champion in Peter Burtniak. They knew they had a fellow who was one of them, who could step forward and represent their views as part of this new government that was being formed. I can attest to this because one of my campaign workers in the 2003 election, she is well into her 80s now, was first involved in Peter Burtniak's 1969 election, and Kay Basaraba was one of my most energetic campaigners in 2003. Kay was in there talking about the days of 1969 and talking about the excitement and all of the good things that came forth from the election of a New Democratic Party government. Kay got a lot of people excited again in 2003 to come out and vote and support the NDP.

People like Kay and others, I think, take it upon themselves to educate those of us who are younger, who were not as involved in 1969, about how it was then. Another fellow in my constituency, it could have been his first time he was eligible to vote in 1969, always remembers and tells me about the time Peter Burtniak just drove out to his farmsite to arm-twist his mom and dad into voting for him. He still talks about that. Those things did not happen a lot, but I think Peter would like to see those kinds of things happen more often today rather than the big slick advertising campaigns and television commercials and stuff. I think Peter would like us to be able to look our constituents eyeball to eyeball and talk to them and listen to them and then reflect those views here in the House.

I just want to close by saying Peter, I think, will be remembered most for his commitment and his dedication and his hard work. I think he will be remembered as an excellent constituency MLA. His commitment to our constituents was commendable. I think his commitments to Manitobans as a Cabinet minister will be remembered and I know his commitment to his family will always be remembered.

On behalf of Michelle and Alex and myself, I want to express our condolences to the Burtniak family, to Olive and their children and their grandchildren. I also want to thank the family for sharing Peter with us in the Dauphin and Fork River areas, and I want to say thank you to the family for supporting Peter as he did an excellent job working on behalf of all Manitobans. Thank you.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I rise in support of this motion of condolence and sympathy to the family of Peter Burtniak. I rise to pay tribute to Peter Burtniak and his efforts when he was a MLA in this Legislature from 1969 to 1977.

I think that I would like to focus on three particular areas. He was a farmer who grew up north of Dauphin in the same area that a very good friend of mine, Marvin Krawec, grew up. So I have some knowledge of the farming conditions in that area. They were not always easy, and clearly Peter's involvement as a farmer and his involvement in farm organizations I think were quite important in his participation in politics and in what he brought to this Legislature.

\* (11:40)

Secondly, I want to comment on his role in the establishment of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation which certainly has served for the most part very well for people in Manitoba and made a contribution in a number of ways.

That is not to say that there is not always room for improvement, but I think it is important to acknowledge the role of Peter Burtniak in this area as a minister involved at the beginning of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation as a Manitoba institution of which I think we can all be proud and which has worked well, as I said, not without some issues. I certainly get my share of calls from people who have problems with MPIC, but I think that we need to recognize his efforts in this area.

Thirdly, I want to talk a little bit about Peter Burtniak's Ukrainian origins and his contributions to helping us understand the important contributions Ukrainians have made to Manitoba. The memorial and the festival site south of Dauphin is an important one for all Manitobans. When there are activities there, it highlights the contributions that members of the Ukrainian community have made.

I know from talking with people in the Ukrainian community the struggles that people went through in the terrible years in the Ukraine in the 1930s. How that has marked and served as a reminder to all of us of the importance of standing up for human rights and of the importance of remembering the episodes around the world like that

terrible famine in the Ukraine and the way it was handled in the 1930s with the loss of so many lives.

Certainly, as we proceed to improve the situation for human rights and understanding and better approaches to individuals and to communities, that is one of the signature, sad, tragic, awful events of the last century which we must never forget and hopefully with the Museum for Human Rights, it will be a place where that event and the other terrible atrocities that were associated with it can be particularly remembered as a reminder that we must always strive to do better, that we cannot forget issues of human rights, and that we must always be on our guard when it comes to issues of human rights.

Peter Burtنيak certainly had a lighter side to him and was ready for some fun. In, I think it was July of 1970, when he was the Tourism and Recreation Minister, he and Mark Smerchanski, who was the MP for Provencher, together jointly participated in the opening of the Winnipeg Beach recreational facilities. They released as part of the ceremony 100 helium-filled balloons drifting over the lake, and it certainly created a memorable occasion. Those of us who have the occasion from time to time to get to Winnipeg Beach can now be thankful for that effort, which was part of what Peter Burtنيak was involved with when he was the Minister for Tourism and Recreation.

So I want to conclude by recognizing the contribution of many family members. Anyone who serves in the Legislature does not serve without some hardship to the family members. Anybody who serves here does not serve without the family members having in one way or another made a big contribution to that service and to the public life of Manitoba. So we acknowledge that today and thank you for what you have contributed to Peter's career and to the life and the society that we have in Manitoba. Thank you.

**Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere):** It is with deep sadness that I rise today to recall the rich life of Peter Burtنيak. Although we mourn, this is a day of celebration. Peter lived a full, productive, admirable life. He was a long-time farmer who successfully pursued many endeavours, not the least of which was an impressive political career.

Peter was born in Fork River, Manitoba, in 1925. He worked for many years as a farmer. He was also a businessman, operating a farm implements business in the Fork River area. He became involved in the Manitoba Farmers Union, the Manitoba Federation of Agriculture and the Manitoba Pool Elevators and ultimately made the decision to run for political office.

Peter's dedication to the people of Manitoba cannot be understated. He chose to support the New Democratic Party at a time when that party had never formed government in this province. He was truly a man of morals, compelled more by his passionate beliefs in what was right than a desire to achieve power. In 1969 he decided to run for the party in the constituency of Dauphin and was elected to represent that riding, becoming a member of the first NDP government in Manitoba's history under the leadership of former Premier Ed Schreyer. Mr. Schreyer has described his former minister as a loyal soldier, recognizing his support for the party, with little historical chance of power at that time.

As a former Canadian history teacher of many years, I want to make a personal observation of Peter Burtنيak. What I am about to say is not just for the official record here but is also for the family that is here today in the gallery. Peter was interested in serving the public good. He did not seek headlines in the daily newspapers. He did not seek photo opportunities. He did not get up in the Legislature to make a lot of noise.

However, when he spoke he was listened to because he spoke from the heart. People identified or connected with his style in the Legislature and in the community. He had a very different style but a very effective style that connected with people all over Manitoba.

He always conducted himself as an MLA should. He conducted himself in such a way that constituents respected him personally as well as the public office he held. He had great character.

Often MLAs want to score political points at the expense of their opponents, but Peter could rise above politics. He only wanted to serve Manitobans. He raised the level of debate in this Legislature and also the decorum of this Legislature.

Peter was an honest man. He was dedicated to his work in public life. Peter never forgot his people in the constituency. He was loyal to his convictions and what you saw is what you got. He was always mindful of why he was elected, where he came from and who elected him. This seemed to manifest itself in everything he did.

I want to say to his family in the gallery that they can be proud of the legacy that he left. No doubt he was a great husband, father and grandfather, and also a great public servant. If you follow his footsteps and study his rich life, your own life will be enriched. Today we all celebrate his rich life which we can all learn from. He truly touched many people.

\* (11:50)

He retired in 1988 and he spent his retirement with his wife, Olive, three children and four grandchildren.

On behalf of the House and the New Democratic Party I offer sincere condolences to all of them on this loss. While Peter's death is a loss to all of us in Manitoba, it is they who mourn the passing of their family member. Thank you.

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

Would honourable members please rise and remain standing to indicate their support for the motion.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

Is it the will of the House to call it twelve o'clock? [*Agreed*] The hour being twelve o'clock, we will recess, and we will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

**Second Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
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