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

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

The House met at 10 a.m.

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

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

Please be seated. Good morning, everybody.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Ian Wishart (Acting Government House Leader): Could you please call for debate on second reading Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act, sponsored by the honourable member for Brandon East.

Madam Speaker: It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 205 this morning.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 205—The Filipino Heritage Month Act

Madam Speaker: I will therefore call second reading, Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act.

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): I move, seconded by the member from Riding Mountain, that Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act, now be read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Isleifson: Just before I get right into the act, I do want to take the opportunity to celebrate you, celebrate our Premier (Mrs. Stefanson), celebrate all the women on all sides of our House as we celebrate International Women's Day today.

And I like that we're celebrating, because the—fits right into this bill, because this bill is about celebrating. And I can't take a lot of credit for putting this bill together, Madam Speaker, because it is with some fortunate changes in our government that I'm able to stand here today and be honoured to bring this bill forward for second reading.

You see, this bill originally found its way to the floor back in 2021—I believe it was Tuesday, May the 24th or 25th—I think it might have been the 25th, under the leadership of the now-Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration (Mr. Reyes).

So I want to thank the minister at this time for the work that he put into this bill, the research that he did—obviously having, you know, the heritage himself, and I will say, we have been privileged with a few of Filipino heritage.

I remember in 2016 when we were first elected, a bunch of us got an invitation by the minister to go have a Filipino breakfast, and it was some place in northern Winnipeg. I would probably ask him to take me there again because I would probably get lost on my own, but it was an incredible experience.

And again, it gives us an opportunity to even look around the House and see the different ethnics—the different backgrounds that people bring to whatever it is.

Madam Speaker, when royal assent is received on this bill, Manitobans will recognize the month of June of each year as—in Manitoba as Filipino heritage month. We may ask: Why June? Why is that significant? We all know that June 12th is Philippines Independence Day. Therefore, selecting June as Filipino heritage month is designed by no accident.

Again, I've had many of opportunities to speak with folks of Filipino descent. I know I've had the distinct pleasure when I was working in health care—I was a non-violent crisis intervention instructor, and we had many Filipinos in the health-care industry,

whether it be an RN, an LPN, front-line workers—whether it could be a health-care aide—everybody in the RHA at the time had the opportunity to go through training.

And again, where I respect all ethnic backgrounds, it certainly brings a lot of—to the forefront of how well we can all get together, how our communities are built. I, myself, as of Icelandic descent—we celebrate Icelandic descent. We have a monument out on the grounds of the Legislature.

Why don't we take the opportunity to celebrate everybody? Everybody in this room, everybody in this building has some history that would be very unique to celebrate. And to look at, you know, how the different backgrounds bring social economic development, diversity to communities, and that's one of the biggest things that I've always talked about, even when I was on city council and we talked about the significance of a growing community.

And we look at employers like Maple Leaf coming in—and not just Filipino workers at Maple Leaf—certainly, from all different aspects and different backgrounds. But they're part of the community. They're what drive us in Canada.

If it wasn't for the diverse backgrounds of different cultures, Canada would be totally different, and I would hate to see what that would be. We have such a beautiful country, but the Filipino community has played a large part in broadening the culture in Brandon in Winnipeg and all over our great province.

Madam Speaker, I know others want to speak to this. I know this bill's been to the floor before, so I don't want to take up a lot of time this morning.

I would really like to see this bill get passed today, as we have discussed it previously, so that we can get moving on bringing in the public—having that consultation, a third reading, and then having this ready for royal assent, but I think it is important that we talk about some key features—key successes in our province that some folks may not know.

Manitoba, currently, has the largest per capita population of Filipinos at 6.5 per cent. Across the country, Winnipeg has the largest per capita Filipino population of nearly 10 per cent. Manitoba has more Filipino community organizations than any other province.

Every June, Manitoba celebrates Philippine Heritage Week. And, of course, June 2019 was the first federal celebration of that heritage month. June

was chosen at this time because the Philippines had gained independence from Spain in June.

* (10:10)

So again, Madam Speaker, half a century later, the Winnipeg Filipino community is the second fastest growing community in the city. So again, we have an opportunity to hear—to celebrate the Filipino Seniors Group, the Manitoba Association of Filipino Teachers Inc., the Philippine Heritage Council of Manitoba, the Philippine-Canadian Centre of Manitoba.

The list goes on and on, but in my limited time I do want to give a shout out to the Brandon Philippine community. I'm—and many of you can simply go on Facebook, join their Facebook community, and see what they do, see what they bring to the community, see the family awareness that they have in providing unity and saying, what is life all about? It's about loving each other. It's about coming together when you're out of your home country to a new country, and opening your arms and welcoming others to create such a great province.

So again, Madam Speaker, the Philippine community has played a very large part in broadening Manitoba's culture in many ways. Celebrating Philippine Heritage Week every June is a great way to show and appreciate the culture in our province.

So I know I still have some time left, but again, I do want to cede the floor so others may speak as well, and hopefully we can all get together and pass this bill today.

Thank you very much.

Questions

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

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): I thank my colleague, member from Brandon East, to bring forward this bill.

Just wanted to know about the consultation process. Before drafting this bill, who was consulted?

Mr. Len Isleifson (Brandon East): Again, I know I've had many conversations with the Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration (Mr. Reyes). As I mentioned, and I was—I wanted to

make sure when I first started speaking this morning that I had mentioned that this bill came forward from that member.

So my consultation was limited. It was through the minister. I do have a couple of really good Filipino friends back in Brandon that I have talked to as well. But again, that is why I thought it was important that I mention right away that this bill was not designed by myself, but it is my honour to bring it forward, and I'm sure the minister would love to answer that question, if he had the opportunity.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): I wonder if the member would like to outline to us some of the impacts on his own community, for having so many Filipinos in the community now.

Mr. Isleifson: I thank the member from Portage la Prairie for that question.

As I've mentioned, when we look at diversity in our communities and building our communities, bringing new talent in really helps us.

We look, as I've mentioned, at health care. I worked in health care for 21 years. I really saw a difference there. When we brought—when many of them come with nursing, when many of them come as health-care aides, it helped the entire community.

And the nice thing that I see here in my community of Brandon is the Filipino community reaches out, right? They have an event every year—when we're allowed to—have our winter fest, they have a pavilion where they share their culture. They share their history with others, and—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): My constituency, The Maples, is home to one of the largest populations in Manitoba. Filipinos are hard-working, caring, family-oriented people.

My question is, what will this bill mean to the Filipino community here in Manitoba?

Mr. Isleifson: I thank the member from The Maples for the question.

And again, this bill—as you're aware, we celebrate Philippine heritage on June the 12th. There is a week that is celebrated federally. This will give us an opportunity here in Manitoba to celebrate the Filipino heritage and their commitment to what they provide to your community, to the entire province of Manitoba, for an entire month. And I hope we all take the opportunity to reach out to those in our community

with Filipino backgrounds, with Filipino heritage, to join in and learn.

I always say, we can always learn more. And every day, when I come to this House, I learn more. And going through bills like this, and why I was excited to be able to bring this forward, it gives me an opportunity to educate myself and move forward.

So I hope we can all get together and celebrate in June.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson) for bringing this bill forward this morning.

And I was hoping that the member could speak a little bit about the different Filipino association groups here in Manitoba, as well as how he intends to celebrate this June.

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

I'm going to jump right to celebrating in June. I have reached out to the Brandon community already, some time ago. And we do plan on having a barbecue for the community to celebrate. And again, it's about—to me, it's about knowledge. It's about putting their message out there. They're part of our community. It may even just open roads for other ethnic groups to come forward and celebrate.

And I know when we talk about what is out there, the Philippine Heritage Council of Manitoba is an organization that really helps provide that information to Manitobans, along with the Philippine-Canadian Centre of Manitoba. I think I named a couple of other ones: the Filipino Seniors Group—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain): Being a rural MLA, I'm certainly cognizant of what Filipinos mean to rural communities such as Russell, Virden, Minnedosa, Shoal Lake, in terms of providing employment in the community and for their entrepreneurial spirits.

I'd just like the member to please tell the whole House what Filipino immigration has meant to Manitoba as a whole.

Mr. Isleifson: I thank my friend for that question.

When we look at the ability to grow Manitoba, to provide for fellow Manitobans by filling vacant job positions, by giving us a promising outlook on tomorrow, we can look at the Philippine community to fit right in and do that.

As the member mentioned, it's not just in Brandon that they're in, they're not just in Winnipeg either, but they are in smaller communities throughout Manitoba such as Neepawa, such as Rivers, such as The Pas, places like that. So it really gives us an opportunity to make Manitoba a better community because of their contribution to the province.

Mr. Brar: We are proud of our Filipino friends in Manitoba.

Just wanted to ask the member what the PC government is doing to support the Filipino newcomers to Manitoba.

Mr. Isleifson: Again, I thank the member for the question.

You know, I'm proud to be part of a government that is really opening up the immigration process here in Manitoba, to bring more valued input into our communities. And the Filipino community is no different. Right? We have a program that allows newcomers. And we all welcome—I've heard it many times in this House by—every one of us have said something about newcomers to Manitoba, and how opening we are to bring them in. They're not just people, they're family here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: Are there any further questions?

Mr. Sandhu: How has the Filipino community has been celebrating Filipino heritage month during the pandemic?

Mr. Isleifson: Again, I know a lot of things changed throughout the pandemic. I did stay in touch with my local Philippine community. Again, unfortunately, because everything was, you know, closing and opening and things like that, that we didn't get to do a lot of celebrating. But I hope we can all get together this June and make up for it, when things are open and the Filipino community is out there, that we can all join them in our own local communities and help celebrate their heritage.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): Well, good morning, Madam Speaker, and thank you.

Would like to ask the member: Will his government make paid sick leave program mandatory so that those disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, such as Filipino Manitobans, are able to access paid sick leave?

* (10:20)

Mr. Isleifson: You always—this is like that game on TV where you expect the unexpected, right?

This bill is about celebrating in June—
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Isleifson: —Filipino heritage month.
[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order.

Mr. Isleifson: So, Madam Speaker, I, again, encourage all members to pass this bill today. Let's get to third reading. Let's pass this in the House. Let's get royal assent in June so that we can all get together and celebrate, for the entire month of June, Filipino heritage month.

Mr. Nesbitt: Madam Speaker, I know that heritage—Filipino Heritage Month is celebrated in provinces across Canada and things.

I'd just like to ask the member why he feels this legislation is so significant at this time in Manitoba?

Mr. Isleifson: I thank my friend, again, for the question.

When we look at the contributions the Filipino community have made to Manitoba thus far, and I think I even briefly talked about their—the social impact, the economical impact, the political impact. We've had amazing political impact in this House. Even the Leader of the Opposition a couple of years ago was an amazing female Filipino.

So their contribution—and I apologize for using that, it's not their contribution—the contribution of Filipinos in this province are invaluable. Now, sure, there are other ethnic groups, as well, but let's celebrate this one because the Filipino—

Madam Speaker: The member's time has expired.

This time for question period has expired.

Debate

Madam Speaker: Debate is open.

Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows): I thank the member from the other side of the House to bring this bill forward. This gives us an opportunity to talk about celebrating cultures, celebrating heritage, celebrating languages, values, traditions.

The Filipino community in Manitoba, they are great in number. They are great in their way of living. They are great in context of their contributions to Manitoba socially, politically, culturally, religiously.

I know so many Filipino friends in Manitoba. When I decided to run for office in 2019, that was the first great opportunity, when I got to sit together with people of the Filipino origin—sat together, talked to them, walked with them in the streets in Burrows, ate together. So I found so many similarities between my own culture and Filipino culture.

The first thing I want to mention is food. You meet a Filipino friend, go to their home, go to their office, go to a setting where they are hosting you. They would tell you to eat first and talk after—and I have experience with the ladies as old as my mom. They would not let you self-serve the food. They would take a plate, serve the food by their own hands—so humble, so respectful, so loving. So that was my first experience interacting with the Filipino community.

Another thing I love about this community is when they address people, they would prefer to say them brother or sister. When I see communications between Filipino employees working in Manitoba, they would be saying, say, *kuya Jon*, not just Jon. And similarly, if they are interacting with somebody who is a female, older than them, they would use the word *ate [older sister or friend]* before their name. That means older sister. And see the richness of the language. *Ate* is not just sister, it's older sister. And I can't remember that word, but they have a different word for the sister who is middle sister—not the younger, not the old, the middle sister. So that's the richness of the language.

And we have seen—we have discussed in the—in this Chamber before, as well, that Filipino community, they have contributed in various ways to the Manitoba economy. They have contributed in education. There are Filipino teachers. There is the Filipino teachers' association. They have contributed in meat industry—not just in Winnipeg, all over Manitoba. Neepawa, La Broquerie. And they have contributed—it's well known—in the health sector as well, insurance, retail businesses. So, we recognize and we are proud of our friends from the Filipino community.

My experience is that, in my office, we are a diverse team. And if we get a chance during coffee time, so different people would start sharing their own words. Cross-cultural teaching, I would say. And one thing funny happened once in my office. Somebody from Punjabi origin came to my office and they happened to be born in Manila, so I wanted to give a surprise to one of my team members, and I called her in my office and I introduced, and that person started

speaking in Filipino. And she was like, oh, you look like a Punjabi. You speak Filipino. And they became friends.

So what I want to say is that language, heritage, culture, dances, your cultural attire, these are the bridges that connect people. You meet somebody in a shopping mall, and if they greet you in your language, that's a great, pleasant experience for everybody. So I think we should be doing that with each other.

I have got an opportunity to take my little one to a martial arts classes, and that's called *Sikaran*. *Sikaran* is kind of karate—that is Filipino karate, I would say. And such platforms create a community. I see people from different backgrounds attending those classes, making friends, organizing events, and when I see an event where food is being served, where they are performing their martial art, and all of a sudden, they would play another music and start dancing. So that's like communicating with your cultural tools across the cultures. So I am very happy that today we got an opportunity to talk about Filipino culture.

When we talk about politics right here in this Chamber, we have two people from Filipino heritage who are representing Manitobans in this Chamber. We are proud of them. And I also want to mention two more names: Flor Marcelino, who happened to be leader of Manitoba NDP; Ted Marcelino. I call him Tito Ted. I never call him Ted. We are friends. We became friends in the 2019 campaign. So, funny stories. He would be—sometimes say, hey, I'm Ted Singh [*phonetic*], so he would use a Punjabi middle name with his name.

So I mean to say that languages, culture—those are the things that connect us, and we shouldn't miss an opportunity where we can use this culture, this language, our heritage to make friends, to respect each other and bring in harmony in this society.

* (10:30)

I have attended Pinay breakfast events. I have attended other cultural events organized by the Filipino community. I have visited so many times Filipino cultural centre of Manitoba. So that's a landmark, one of the landmarks that tells us about the history. Because we know that it was in 1950s when our friends from Philippines started coming to Manitoba, and they made a big difference in the development, in the economic development of not just this province, but of Canada, as well.

And when we talk about the painful stories, recently, we were heartbroken when one of the young Manitobans of Filipino origin, he lost his life while working. So that also indicates that we need to make our workplaces safer.

We also know that the people of different backgrounds, because they are working in different industries, they are disproportionately impacted by, say, COVID, or other diseases, or other happenings in this society. We need to think that way and we need to bring in supports for those friends of ours.

So there are so many things that I wanted to discuss, a few more words like: lolo [*grandfather*], lola [*grandmother*], tito [*uncle*], tita [*aunt*], kuya [*older brother or friend*], ate [*older sister or friend*]. These words make me happy, and I try using them, and I try making friends across cultures, and I'm happy that I got this opportunity today to speak about this bill.

Thank you.

Hon. Jon Reyes (Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Immigration): The member from Burrows said the word harmony, and he also mentioned back last May that he wants—he—I say, I quote, and I also want to appreciate the member of Waverley for bringing this bill forward by rising above the party level to involve their member who seconded the bill.

So as you can tell, that there's been a lot of influence from the 'Filip' community to the member for Burrows (Mr. Brar), and I'm glad that you shared those stories because I, myself, could share a lot of stories from your community. You know, Tito Ted calls himself Ted Singh [*phonetic*], in your community they call me Jon Jinder [*phonetic*]. So I would just want to let you know that. So I really value that.

And the member from The Maples knows that—I don't know if my aunt still works for you, but I know, prior to you going into politics, you had mentioned my aunt was working for you. So I know there's a lot of, you know, similarities with our communities and, you know, I want to thank both of you for, you know, being leaders in your respective areas and representing the Filipino community over there.

I had to have a bit of a chuckle because I know my—the member for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), who I'm thanking so much to sponsor this bill, mentioned that we did go out for Filipino breakfast in northern Winnipeg. But I—it's was a chuckle because I know I heard the member for Point Douglas (Mrs. Smith) had a chuckle. It's the North End of Winnipeg, and there's a restaurant there called

Pampanga, which is, I believe is in Point Douglas. Many businesses in that area, that I really love to support.

I want to thank the member, again, from Brandon East for sponsoring this bill and going forward into this second reading and, hopefully, pass into the third reading.

I also want to give a shout-out to the Brandon and Westman's growing Filipino community, as well, because I've been there many times. Last August, I met with Mr. Roland Liwanag and Ms. Edith Strange, who's actually the owner of TimTom Asian Grocery. As you've mentioned, there's a lot of businesses, a lot of people moving to rural Manitoba from the Filipino community, so it's very valuable for our province.

As we know, the Filipino diaspora is evident in Manitoba culturally, socially, economically, politically, and, where can I start? Well, I can start with the member for Burrows started with. You must be hungry, because I am—food—and I look at the member for St. James (Mr. Sala). Max's Restaurant, our friend that owns Max's, there. He serves really good food. I know the member for Notre Dame (MLA Marcelino) has had events there, as well. Really, really good food there.

So we know there's been a lot of influence in terms of—from an economic standpoint. So it kind of mixes together—cultural, the food, but the economic standpoint. And you see that there's three Jollibees now in Winnipeg. Right? Jollibee was actually supposed to open in either Vancouver, Montreal or Toronto—the larger centres—but you know why they chose Winnipeg? Because of our large Filipino community, and our large Filipino community throughout Winnipeg.

Isn't there a Jollibee in your neck of the woods now, for the member of Transcona? I think there is. [*interjection*] It's Concordia—member from Concordia. So close by though, close by.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I don't want to disrupt the member too much, but I'm going to just remind members that when you are speaking about issues, that you make it in the third person and you do not reflect on asking somebody about you or your. So if the member could just remember that—and all members, because sometimes we forget.

Mr. Reyes: My apologies, Madam Speaker, just very enthusiastic about this bill and—as I think we all are

because the Filipino community has had such a great contribution to this province.

When I talk about the social aspect of things—many associations in our province. I know my dad, when he immigrated back here in the late '60s—from an activity standpoint, basketball is our number one sport in the Filipino community and not only do we have these basketball leagues in Winnipeg, but we also have them now in rural Manitoba that have created these leagues. And, you know, back to food and sports—they bring community together.

From an economic standpoint, I've already mentioned some of the influence of these Filipino chains that have moved to Manitoba and who have created jobs for many Manitobans. And, you know, companies as well valuing the labour of the Filipino community.

We talk about politics. I've said this time and time again, I'm very proud that, you know, Manitoba was able to produce the first Filipino MLA in all of Canada, the late Dr. Conrad Santos, as well as the first Member of Parliament, Dr. Rey Pagtakhan. We're very proud of that, and you know, Canada—Filipinos across Canada looks at Manitoba as a benchmark because of the contributions.

So from the '50s all the way 'til now, you know, we've had, you know, nurses, professors, textile workers—they've been able to sponsor their families coming here through the different immigration streams and most notably PNP. And now we have many professionals and educated individuals coming to our province.

As—because it's International Women's Day, as—as the founder and past president of the Manitoba Filipino Business Council, I want to give a shout-out to that organization which I once led, and now they have two female leaders in that organization, Ms. Jackie Wild and Ms. Katrina Daaca, who are the president and vice-president of the Manitoba Filipino Business Council. I want to give a shout-out to that because of International Women's Day.

So, I don't want to continue on and on because I think we should finally give this community its respect for their contributions to Manitoba. And that—and you know, we deserve to have a month to celebrate Filipino heritage month, because of all the contributions that they've done from a cultural, social, economic and political aspect.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The next person I have on my list is the honourable member for St. James.

Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James): I'm proud to have an opportunity to speak about the achievements of Filipinos here in Manitoba and of course to speak about this bill.

Before I do so, though, I just want to take this opportunity to say happy International Women's Day, especially to our colleagues here in the House. It's been over 100 years that we've been celebrating this important occasion and today when we can celebrate the achievements of women, of course not only in Manitoba, Canada, but beyond, internationally.

And it's also I think just a good opportunity to recognize, for me, how proud I am to be in a caucus with such incredibly strong women that are doing really incredible work, not only here in the Leg., but who've been doing that work for years and years and years. So I just want to use this opportunity to thank them for their work, and to recognize them on this important day.

This bill proposes, of course, to recognize Filipino heritage month here in Manitoba. We know it's already been recognized federally, and it has been celebrated here in Manitoba, of course, in June. And it is an important thing that we're exploring the potential for recognizing that officially here as a province.

*(10:40)

Filipinos have been calling Manitoba home for decades. We've got second, third, and, in some case, fourth generations here in our province, and we've got just such a large population: about 75,000 Filipino Manitobans—7 per cent of our overall population; the densest number of Filipinos in any province on a per capita basis.

And we see Tagalog is now one of the most commonly spoken languages in our province. And that's just so incredible, and I can hear it in my own community when I go to the grocery store, when I go to my daughter's school, I can hear the language spoken.

And I just think it contributes so much to making our communities a richer place to live to be able to hear that language and to be able to get exposed to the culture in that way. In my own constituency in St. James, we're seeing more and more Filipino community members.

I see within my daughter's classes—large numbers of her fellow students are of Filipino descent. And again, that's just such a wonderful thing to see the richness and diversity growing in our communities, and it is wonderful to see Filipinos coming in growing numbers to St. James.

And I think, you know, this is maybe most strongly reflected in the fact that at our local grocery store, at Family Foods, which is just next to my constituency office—in the deli, pancit is a regular item on the menu, which reflects sort of our growing local Filipino population. And again, just a great thing to see that richness coming our way.

As I said, Filipinos obviously have a long history in this province. They've contributed so much; that history goes back to the '50s and '60s when we saw some of the first waves of immigration coming here. Folks who were coming were nurses, teachers and doctors, and we know that in the following decades, we had other waves of Filipino immigrants coming to support other industries, for example, our technical and engineering fields.

And, of course, many came here to help support our growing garment industry in Manitoba. And this is a very proud history of Filipinos helping to grow—support that industry, and in fact, arguably, are responsible for helping to really create an economic boom in Winnipeg for their support and the talent and skills that they brought to the development of that industry.

Filipinos have become a fabric—part of our cultural fabric here in Manitoba now. We've got wonderful street festivals, which I've been fortunate to attend. We've got an incredibly thriving arts and—Filipino arts and cultural scene. Of course, the Filipino Journal, the Filipino heritage council, all contributing to the growth of that cultural scene here in Manitoba.

Magdaragat is an important group that helps to promote Filipino culture in this province, and I know I've been really lucky to see some of the incredible performances by young people at the Folklorama—the Filipino Folklorama pavilion that have been put on by Magdaragat.

And really, just incredibly important work in helping to promote—preserve Filipino culture and give young Filipinos here in Manitoba an opportunity to access their culture, to participate in it and to help other Manitobans fall in love with it and gain a deeper appreciation of the culture.

And, you know, at this point, it's clear that the culture is so embedded in Manitoba that I think there's arguments to be made that, you know—as I mentioned, foods like pancit or lumpia are so common that they're arguably just as Manitoban as rye bread or farmer's sausage or honey dill sauce—it's really becoming part of our cultural sphere here in Manitoba.

And, you know, speaking of food, others have mentioned it already, but it is obviously a huge benefit to our cultural environment but to our restaurant—the restaurants that we can access as Manitobans—that we can access all this incredible Filipino food.

I'm thinking of restaurants like Rice Bowl, Pampanga, and in my own community, Max's who's—as was mentioned earlier by one of our colleagues—is making really incredible food right in my community in St. James and really proud to know those—the owners there who are doing great work again in bringing Filipino food to Manitobans.

It's also worth noting, I think, in terms of Filipino culture—and this is something I've had the opportunity to learn in speaking with Filipinos and getting to know Filipinos within my community—that the Filipino community in Manitoba may all speak Tagalog, but there is a huge diversity of culture, of languages also within the Filipino community. It's not homogenous. There is diversity within our Filipino immigrants here in Manitoba in terms of their—the languages that they speak, and that's also something to be celebrated and recognized, and is really incredible to learn about.

And we can see that, again, in some of the various restaurants that are—that have grown here in Winnipeg, that we can get access to those various regional cuisines from the Philippines and learn more about those cultures that way.

Politically, of course, we have so much to celebrate in terms of the political history of Filipinos here in Manitoba. As has already been mentioned, the first Filipino MLA in Manitoba was Mr. Conrad Santos. Very proud that he represented our party, and, of course, he paved the way for many others, including, of course, Flor Marcelino, who was the first Filipina and first woman of colour elected into this Legislature. And, of course, she later became the leader of the official opposition, did an incredible job in that role, and just really proud to—of that history here in Manitoba of the involvement of Filipinos here in our politics in the province and their contributions.

Economically, others have spoken about this, Filipinos have contributed enormously—enormously—

to the economic development of this province. They've helped to create thriving economic industries, sectors. We can see that in some of our rural communities like Neepawa, just how important they are to the development of some of the agricultural processing businesses there, like HyLife. And just have become important and key elements within those communities, and they're absolutely integral to the growth and future prosperity of those communities, as well.

So really, really wonderful to see that this growth isn't just limited to Winnipeg; that it's, in fact, part of our entire province and it will be integral to the growth of our province going forward.

You know, one thing that I think is really important to mention is that the Filipino community was so important to helping our economy to continue to sustain itself throughout COVID, and continues to be important. We think about their work in our health-care sector and their willingness to take on so much additional risk in doing so. And we know that as a result of their work in helping us in various roles throughout our health-care sector, that they bore a disproportionate amount of the burden of COVID. And we owe Filipinos in this province a huge debt of gratitude for that willingness to take on that risk in support of all of us here in this province. So that's a really, I think, important thing that we need to recognize.

And another important thing that needs to be recognized in celebrating our Filipino culture here in Manitoba is, of course, the recent tragedy, the tragic losses that the community has faced, most recently in the loss of John Lloyd Barrion, and a couple years back, the loss of Jaime Adao. And, of course, we've seen our Filipino community here in Manitoba organizing to make our communities safer with Filipino-led organizations like 204 Neighbourhood Watch, who are doing incredible work to make our communities safer, better places to live, and are organizing, frankly, to help our communities to be just safer and happier places to be.

So I thank the party—the government for bringing this bill forward for consideration. Look forward to further debate, and happy to have a chance to put a few words on the record.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): Magandang umaga, which means good morning to you.

I'm exceptionally grateful to have the opportunity to rise again and speak a little bit about our exciting Filipino heritage here in the province of Manitoba.

But before diving into it, I think it's really exciting, and I just want to state and share it with the House, that I believe we've officially reached a milestone here in Canada, and now have over 1 million citizens and permanent residents of Filipino heritage here in Canada, and I think that is pretty dang cool, Madam Speaker.

Now, there's a large Filipino population in my community in Tyndall Park, all over the north end of the city and throughout the province of Manitoba. It's growing quite rapidly. But I do actually think that the largest Filipino population is in the heart of my riding in Tyndall Park, and so I'm a little bit biased and I have a lot to say about the community.

Last time I spoke to this bill I talked a lot about the history of the Philippines and how our Filipino community continue to grow here, in Manitoba, and how they have contributed to our economy.

* (10:50)

This time I want to speak a little more personally. I believe many of my colleagues know this, already, but the Filipino community would not be where it is today without the Provincial Nominee Program, and I personally attribute so much of this program to my late Tita Linda Celones. I know the member from Waverley will know who Linda Celones is, and she passed away several years ago from 'pancreatitis' cancer. But without her, I don't believe that thousands and thousands of the Filipinos who currently reside here in Manitoba would be here. She worked endlessly and tirelessly. She was constantly—like, I'm pretty sure she could dial in her sleep, Madam Speaker. She was constantly on the phone. She was constantly meeting with Filipino families, both here in Winnipeg, but also in the Philippines.

You know, my Tita Linda, her husband, my Tito Henry, they were best friends with my parents. And they often brought my parents to the Philippines. I think my dad's been there over 10 times now, Madam Speaker, and I've been there three times. She made sure that I got to the Philippines a few times, myself. And while we were there, we worked on immigration seminars. We would meet with people in hotel rooms—hotel conference rooms, and in schools, and we would just help with the application process, because there are a lot of questions about the Provincial Nominee Program and I think that's something our Province can actually do a little bit better in making this a clearer progress and bringing back that family reunification component of it.

Aside from doing the immigration seminars, Madam Speaker, in the Philippines, there's a line. The line is: It's more fun in the Philippines. And there's a lot of truth to this. My colleagues have spoken a lot about the amazing food, so I won't get too much into that. But some of my fond memories in the Philippines are—I think about the LRT and the MRT, if anyone has been there. These are, like, impressive train, subway, above-ground—I don't know what the official terminology is for it, but it's like a metro, almost, and it goes from one end of metro Manila to the other end, like, across and X-roads. And it's impressive. You get on one stop and you can be at the other side within half an hour, and if you compare that to driving in metro Manila, it's not comparable. But it's one of my dad's favourite things to do. We hop on the LRT and we say, okay, let's get off at stop number three. We don't know where we're going. We're going to explore, and we'll often jump on some jeepneys and some tricycles and just get to know the province a little bit more.

The one thing I have yet to do in the Philippines—and I am determined on my next trip, I will do—is see these white, sandy beaches. It's something many of my friends and family here in Winnipeg and throughout Canada have told me about. And, you know, I'm digressing a little bit, Madam Speaker, but I think it's pretty cool. I now have Filipinos in my family. My uncle married a Filipino woman, and they had a baby together, so I have a little baby cousin Sarah, who is half-Filipino. That makes me exceptionally proud. I'm looking forward to the next trip to the Philippines. Hopefully, it will be sooner, rather than later. A lot of that will be dependent on COVID restrictions and how the world, kind of, plays out.

Over the last few years, my father and I have had the opportunity to host Filipino heritage events. And the reason we chose to do this, a few years back, was because of how kind and hospitable the Filipino community have been to my family. They've truly welcomed us in and because of that, we wanted to be able to give back in some way. So, a few years ago, when we first started this, it was because the federal government had declared June as national Filipino Heritage Month and the Province followed shortly after, which is terrific.

And so, a few years back, we went to Maples Collegiate—this is back when I was the MLA for Burrows, still, before the boundaries changed—and we had an all-day shindig of sorts. We had exhibitions set up. We were handing out awards to people who have made movements within the Filipino community here,

in Manitoba. We had great food set up, and photo booths, and basketball tournaments going on all day. It really was, like, a 12-hour event. And it was a lot of fun. We had 3,000 people come out, throughout the day. And, unfortunately, our plan was to do that the following year, but then COVID sort of happened.

And so the following year, what we did is we came up with a video competition of sorts. So my father and I reached out to everyone we knew and we reached out on social media, and we said, if you have Filipino heritage within your family and you want to participate, please submit a short video telling us why you're proud of the Philippines, and we had almost 100 submissions. And so we had a big Facebook live event, and we watched some of these videos. And to the winners, we ended up having Jollibee dinners, with these constituents of ours. And it was a wonderful opportunity. And, I think, we really made the best out of celebrating Filipino heritage during a pandemic.

Now, last year, restrictions started to lift up a little bit, but we still weren't allowed to have a big event, and so what we did is, my dad and I went to two different locations. He went to the Dr. Jose Rizal statue and I went to the Safeway parking lot on Keewatin and Burrows, there.

My dad did his short little video, and then I got to do a really fun video where Larry Vickar helped arrange for me to be able to drive the jeepney around, and many in this House will know what the jeepney is: it's like a long, rectangular vehicle that comes from the Philippines, lots of colours, lots of sound, lots of fun.

And so I got to drive it around Tyndall Park a little bit, and there were people coming out of their homes and taking pictures with the jeepney. It's an iconic image from back in the Philippines. So that was a lot of fun and that was sort of a way that we were able to celebrate Filipino heritage in June last year.

Now this year, fingers crossed, Madam Speaker, we're going to be allowed to have a bigger event. And I asked my father if I should share a little bit about it, but he said no, no, let's make it a surprise. And so I'm not allowed to give any details quite yet, but it's going to be on June 1st this year. All of my colleagues will be invited. It's going to be lots of fun and just another way that we can celebrate.

And, you know, Madam Speaker, the last thing I want to say before wrapping up is just a big thank you to the Filipino community over the years, even

prior to politics, for being so kind to all of us Manitobans. And I'm reiterating a lot of what my colleagues have already said and shared, but the Filipino community is so hard-working. They are so kind. They are so hospitable, and we are truly lucky here in Manitoba to have such a large Filipino community with us.

And I know I'm excited, Madam Speaker. I'm actually getting married, and my wedding social is going to be at the PCCM. And so—[interjection] Thank you, yes. I had wonderful holidays.

So with those few remarks—and I want to thank the member—again—for Brandon East (Mr. Isleifson), for bringing forward this resolution, and I'll leave it at that.

Thank you.

Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie): Congratulations to my colleague on her upcoming wedding.

And it's certainly my pleasure to put a few words on the record in support of this bill, Bill 205, The Filipino Heritage Month Act. I think it's very appropriate that we do that in Manitoba, and many people have outlined the high percentage of Filipinos in many of the communities. We've heard an awful lot about the urban areas, and I would love to share a few more words with—about the rural areas, but we're hopeful that people will—across the House will support this, so I'll sit down and let anyone else who wants to speak, but—do so.

Thank you.

Mr. Nello Altomare (Transcona): I just want to say a few words just briefly for—regarding International Women's Day and the leadership here in this Chamber by yourself as Speaker, of course the Clerk that we have in the Legislative Assembly. I'm also honoured to serve with our caucus chair, member from Point Douglas, and of course our House leader, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Fontaine).

Now on to The Filipino Heritage Month Act. You know—and this is very important, because as we know, Madam Speaker, the immigrant experience is the Manitoba experience in many ways. People of my culture also started in the garment industry when they first immigrated, moved into other areas, restaurants, professions, and of course, the political process. All very important pieces that add to the mix that is Manitoba.

But I do want to also say, though, that the 'disproporshmate' impact of the pandemic on the

Filipino community has to be noted. Because of the amount of people that work in health care that are of Filipino origin, and because of that, there needed to be a recognition, more than just saying very kind words.

* (11:00)

You have to put in place structures that support communities, like paid sick leave, Madam Speaker. Like affordable, accessibly child care that doesn't cripple a family's income. That is—these are some of the things that would really improve the lives not only of Filipino Manitobans, but every Manitoban.

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

RESOLUTIONS

Res. 3—Recognizing Manitoba's Historic Role of Women in Politics

Madam Speaker: The hour is now 11 a.m. and time for private members' resolutions. The resolution before us this morning is the resolution on Recognizing Manitoba's Historic Role of Women in Politics, brought forward by the honourable member for Seine River.

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): I move, seconded by the member for Kildonan-River East (Mrs. Cox),

WHEREAS March 8th is International Women's Day; and

WHEREAS Manitoba was the first province where women received the right to vote; and

WHEREAS many Indigenous women advocated for the suffrage movement but were unjustly excluded from receiving its benefits; and

WHEREAS Mary Two-Axe Earley was a fearless advocate, who advocated for Indigenous women to gain the right to participate politically and highlighted the inequality faced by Indigenous women; and

WHEREAS Manitoba extending the right to vote to women was a historic achievement and the result of the hard work of the "Famous Five" and many others; and

WHEREAS Nellie McClung, a Manitoban, was a leading woman in the Famous Five and the fight for women's suffrage; and

WHEREAS as a result of the changes influenced by the Famous Five, Edith McTavish Rogers was the first woman elected to the Manitoba Legislature in 1920; and

WHEREAS the Nellie McClung Foundation is still working to advance the equitable status of women in society; and

WHEREAS the House is currently sitting during a historic time as the first Manitoba Legislature with a female Premier; and

WHEREAS although it is easy to take for granted the currently held hard-won rights and privileges the struggle to get here must not be forgotten.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the groundbreaking achievements and the historic efforts women have made in Manitoban politics and celebrate these glass-ceiling-shattering accomplishments.

Motion presented.

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: It is an honour to rise today and present the resolution honouring the many women who have carved a path and broke the glass ceiling in what has been predominantly male professions.

Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

As I look around the Chamber this morning, I am in the presence of women who have been recognized for their work and are honoured in their current roles in the Legislature.

The Province of Manitoba continues to advocate for women in key positions within our democratic system. A few months ago, Manitobans elected their first female Premier (Mrs. Stefanson). Premier Stefanson joins an impressive group of women who currently hold key positions within our province: the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker and Clerk of the Legislative Assembly.

March 8 is International Women's Day, a day that celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women; also a day that celebrates and brings attention to the historic achievements women have made in Manitoba.

Deputy Speaker, Manitoba's—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Order, please. The honourable member did refer to Premier Stefanson, and I am advised that that is, unfortunately, incorrect. The Premier is to be referred to as the honourable First Minister or the Premier.

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Okay.

Manitoba's history is filled with milestones honouring women who have been crucial in achieving recognition for women. Recently, the province of Manitoba celebrated the 100th and 106th anniversary, which saw women first able to cast a vote and then participate in elected roles. On January 28th, 1916, the women's suffrage act passed third reading in this Chamber. Manitoba became the first province to no longer exclude women from voting or holding elected office.

This marked the beginning of equality. Females represent approximately half of the population and bring a voice to issue of which men have no understanding. Deputy Speaker, 107 years ago this Chamber would have looked different. There would have been no women in the Chamber in an elected position. This would mean approximately 14 MLAs, five Cabinet ministers, our Speaker, our Premier would not have a seat in their constituency. These positions would have been filled by men.

Imagine, no female voice, no representation of half of the population. In other words, women had no input in governing Manitoba.

Manitoba continues to lead in the progress for honouring and recognizing the significance of women. Our government has been involved with many initiatives that focus on promoting women in Manitoba. Some of these initiatives include the Nellie McClung Foundation, which works to promote the memory of Nellie McClung and her group, the Famous Five, the Manitoba Status of Women Secretariat and Equal Voice Manitoba.

Historically and currently, Manitoba has been and is a role model for the advancement of women in the political arena. Manitoba was the first province to no longer bar women from voting. These women brought a wealth of information with them and viewpoints that would reflect a population that had not had a voice in politics and the legislation of the province.

Women could be represented by one of their own. These perspectives are necessary for a government to create policy that is equitable. The women who are currently sitting in this House have made history. I hope to see more women put their names forward in the future and add their voice to the democratic process. These women have managed to balance a family, an ever-changing work schedule, all the while

being role models for future generations of female legislators.

The people of Manitoba will be celebrating International Women's Day today. And I wish to celebrate by having both sides of this House unanimously pass this legislation. I wish to take some time in the House, today, to celebrate some women who made a difference and helped improve the lives of women in the province and everywhere. And there is certainly no shortage of women worthy of distinction under this topic. I believe that the celebration of women in this province is deeply necessary, and the voices of strong Manitoba women are essential to the future development of this province.

I came across a small business based out of Calgary in 19—sorry, in 2019. This business is diverse and honours women in all roles. From clothing to books to podcasts, this business does it all. The connecting thread between all these avenues is they are linked by the theme of empowering women, empowering women to participate in spaces traditionally held by men.

They had a shirt for sale that reminded me of the important women in my life, women who had mentored and led and taught by example, taught me never to let another person determine my limits nor let anyone tell me I am not able to do the work. This shirt is a simple black top with the following words written in white: A woman's place is in business, academia, law, medicine and finance. The messaging empowered and encouraged women to reach for and break through the ceiling which has historically separated women from obtaining employment in a patriarchal-dominated environment of society. Interestingly enough, the name of this business is Madame Premier.

Deputy Speaker, I would also like to take the time today to recognize an important program which works to increase the representation of women in elected positions. We need to continue to strive to elect women and increase their representation in politics at all levels. In 2016, Equal Voice opened a Manitoba chapter to help achieve this goal. This multi-partisan organization is the result of hard work from three female politicians. This organization works to motivate and facilitate women currently, and in the future, to become involved politically.

Another incredible initiative this organization takes is they organize the Daughters of the Vote. This event allows women from all 338 federal ridings to travel to Ottawa and participate in mock parliament. This parallels closely to the mock parliament run by

the Manitoba Political Equality League in 1914. These events facilitate the networking and incubation of ideas between our future female leaders. We are listening to them now, and their voices are continuing to grow.

I believe the first Daughters of the Vote took place, in the modern form, in 2017. And although the format has adapted to the current situation—the last two years—I am proud to see this initiative grow. Daughters of the Vote is an initiative that was created by Equal Voice, which equips participants to get involved in politics and other community activism, by creating connections between them and current members of Canada's political institutions. The program had its first iteration in 2017 and was created to celebrate the anniversary of some women gaining the right to vote.

Deputy Speaker, many women have been influential and trailblazers in their community and in their professions. We recognize the significance of Mary Two-Axe Earley as an elder advocate for women and children and human rights activist. She was a pioneer of the Canadian women's movement. She highlighted the abuses Aboriginal women faced under the Indian Act. She fought for the rights of Aboriginal women who married out of their community or moved out of their community and who were denied status, treaty and property rights.

Viola Desmond challenged racial segregation and helped start the modern civil rights movement in Canada; Sharan Tappia, Pam Rebello and the AWOW board for their work to recognize and honour accomplishments of Asian women in Winnipeg; Dr. Jeannette Montufar for her contribution and dedication to science and engineering and for encouraging women to enroll in STEM professions.

* (11:10)

Deputy Speaker, I'd just like to touch on some women who have been significant in our history: 1885, Helen Nielsen Brown, the first female accepted as a student at the University of Manitoba; 1920, Jessie Kirk, the first female city councillor in Winnipeg; 1920, Florence Edith MacTavish Rogers, first female MLA of Manitoba; 1950, Joyce Stevenson, the first female municipal leader in Minnedosa; 1980, Ruth Krindle became the first female judge in Manitoba and county court, and in '84, the Queen's Bench; 1984, Sharon Carstairs, first female Manitoba political party leader; 1992, Susan Thompson, first female mayor of Winnipeg;

Thelma Forbes, 1963, first female Speaker—1963, the first female Cabinet minister.

Deputy Speaker, International Women's Day recognizes all the great achievements of women. This day not only reflects on the many contributions from women, but looks forward to empowering future generations as women stand shoulder to shoulder with men in work, politics and community.

In closing, I will quote Ms. Nellie McClung: I am a believer in women in their ability to do things, in their influence and power. Women set the standards for the world and it is for us women in Canada to set the standards high.

Thank you.

Questions

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Question period of up to 10 minutes will be held, and questions may be addressed in the following sequence: first question may be asked by a member from another party, any subsequent questions must follow a rotation between parties, each independent member may ask one question. And no question or answer shall exceed 45 seconds.

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): So we all know about the very significant accomplishments women have made in politics, in policy in our government and in our community.

So I want to ask the member, what policies of the PC government, if any, are there that strengthen women's political participation in the electoral process?

Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River): I'd like to thank the member opposite for that question.

Our government has been part of Equal Voice Manitoba and daughters of the electoral. We promote and encourage women to step forward, put their name on a ballot and share their experiences with other women and girls who are mentoring to become part of the political world.

Mrs. Cathy Cox (Kildonan-River East): Thank you to the member from Seine River for this very informative presentation and information.

I would like to ask the member and my colleague: Who are some female leaders that have inspired her as a member?

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: I'd like to thank my colleague for that great question.

There have been many individuals who have set examples for other women to follow: Dr. Jeannette Montufar with her practice, with her engineering degree, her acknowledgment throughout not only Canada, but internationally; Sharan Tappia as well with her presidency on the AWOW board and recognition from a lot of women who come to Canada and within their own profession strive to become leaders—and not just necessarily as leaders, but also women in my previous career. I worked with a lot of women who were leaders within their own community, within their own family units and they showed and taught a lot of individuals what it was like to learn from yourselves and to never give up.

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

Mr. Mintu Sandhu (The Maples): Thanks to the member from Seine River for bringing this PMR forward.

My question is: Is the PC government prioritizing employment, equity and affirmative action policies?

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: I'm sorry, I didn't quite catch all your question. Could he repeat the question?

Mr. Sandhu: Is the PC government prioritizing employment, equity and affirmative action policies?

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Thank you, member opposite, for the question.

Our government believes in women and, as such, our Cabinet reflects the number of women that we have in positions representing key portfolios who are able to go out and speak on behalf of women to the population that, previously, would not have had females representing.

Mr. Bob Lagassé (Dawson Trail): Can the member share of her experience as a Manitoba female politician?

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: I'd like to thank the member opposite for that great question.

Female politicians in Manitoba have had to do a little more than most. We've had to manage to balance family. We've had to take a look at career. But what it has given us is a great experience. We have learned a lot from other women who have supported us, family members who have supported us, and as a result, we are able to put a voice to the words and thoughts of individuals who are unable to be in this Chamber.

Mr. Moses: So, we know that we've got a lot of work to do when it comes to bringing about gender balance

and gender parity in our community and in politics. This Chamber, for example, has never been—had gender parity or gender balance. I don't think any government Cabinet, for example, has ever had any—government has ever had gender parity. And so, same goes with many organizations around our community.

And so I just want to ask about, you know, is the PC government considering implementing actions to bring about a gender-inclusive policy, such as things like The Abortion Protest Buffer Zone Act, which they have voted down in the past, is that something that they would reconsider in future days now that they're celebrating and—

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

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Thank you, member opposite, for that question.

Our government has, and will always continue to support individuals regardless of their race, male or female. We believe that a person's ability to be able to present themselves to work in any profession should be supported.

We also have, within our caucus, many varying interests and very different backgrounds and professions which all bring to the table an idea that is unique to them, but creates the whole of the team.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'd like to thank the member for bringing forward this resolution today on International Women's Day.

I'm hoping that the member can share with us what is it that this government is specifically doing to help make this Manitoba Legislature a more accessible place for women, whether they are candidates, MLAs, working women throughout staff in the building, more accessible when they have young families.

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: I'd like to thank the member opposite for that question, and also wish her a happy International Women's Day, as well.

Our Legislature has always been open, and always been welcoming. And the tri-party Equal Voice group that we have encourages women to learn more about the Legislature and to learn from those who have held positions. The vote for the daughter has also encouraged individuals from across Canada, 338 federal ridings, to go to Ottawa and learn more about what politics will be, not only within their province, but throughout the country of Canada.

Mrs. Cox: We know it's so important to have women here representing constituents in the Chamber. We know that women bring a different perspective when they sit around the table.

I'd like to ask the member from Seine River what International Women's Day means to her?

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: I'd also like to thank the member for that great question, and also to wish her a happy International Women's Day, I forgot.

International Women's Day means a lot of things to myself. I have worked with a lot of women through the years and have been very proud to have learned from them and to see the strengths that they have to get them through what would normally have been a very challenging situation. The ability to see the good, to see that there's always a better way out and to never give up—that taught me a lot about having challenges in life.

* (11:20)

Family members, mentors, working with women, my colleagues—

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

Mr. Sandhu: Why does the PC government prioritizing cuts over people? Why not adequately funding grassroots organizations that build the capacity of the girls and women to participate both individually and collectively in social, economic, political and public life?

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Thank you, member opposite, for the question.

Our government has supported—and will continue to support—programs for women. We have given money to the northern areas: \$800,000 to promote programming for women in their community and to encourage every woman who would like to try going into the Legislature to put their name forward.

Mr. Lagassé: Can the member share of any organizations that help work with women in politics?

Ms. Morley-Lecomte: Thank you, member, for the question.

Manitoba is very fortunate to have a number of organizations that promote women in politics. Nellie McClung and her Famous Five have supported, encouraged and been mentors for a lot of women who have wanted to participate or even have thought about putting their name forward and were concerned about

the challenges that might have come up with. And Equal Voice, daughter of the voice is another one that's also supporting and encouraging women to put their name forward and bring a voice to women's issues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time for questions has expired.

Debate

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

Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook): I'd like to wish all women and members of this Chamber, in particular, a happy International Women's Day. I'd like to thank the member opposite for bringing forward this resolution.

But I do want to ask the question and kind of make the comment, is why is it—seem so limited? Why does the recognition of women's role in politics seem so limited to just that side of the Chamber?

Why isn't that recognition coming across to this side of the Chamber, outside of the Chamber, within the province, within the country, internationally? Instead, it seems, again, very limited to trying to pat themselves on the back, which is unfortunate that they're going to take the important day of International Women's Day to just kind of pat themselves on the back.

There is a lot of women in politics. There is a lot of women that always felt they had to be behind the scenes, just simply because they're women. And members on this side of the Chamber within our NDP party, within my family, my community, and all our communities here have that recognition, and that true recognition for women all over. Not simply in politics—and I know this resolution speaks specifically to politics, but there was no mention of the women in Indigenous politicians.

Right now, today, for example, we have a number of female chiefs in Manitoba: our regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations is Cindy Woodhouse; our national chief, RoseAnne Archibald; Mary Simon, the Governor General; Lieutenant-Governor, here in Manitoba; the Speaker of this House; the Clerk. There is a number of roles in politics, rather than just having to say an elected official.

As a father of four daughters, myself, I take great pride in—and I've always told my youngest, who's 14, and just turned 14 on Valentine's Day, is—she is going to be the next chief in our community. She is going to be a female chief in our community—and she is very

involved and very—asked a lot of questions about what I do, what my role. I don't know if she's the only one. I'd like to hope she's not—that still watches a lot of the videos, watches the House broadcasts to see how this place works.

And there's a lot of young people and a lot of young women that feel this isn't the place for them. And that falls on all of us, and in particular, here today, that falls on the government making women feel that they can't do that and they can't come to this place and be heard and be equal.

And that's the key word here. You've heard the word equal. You've heard the word parity. Is that true? Is that truly the goal of this government, to achieve that, or is it just to achieve it within themselves—because they're not even doing it within themselves.

And we talk about—and members opposite have always referred to having respect for all parties, for all Manitobans no matter what gender you may be, no matter what race you may be. But to be able to say we have parity and we treat everybody equal—well, no. There's still clearly a double standard. There's a double standard from that side of the Chamber.

And it was evident just the other day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the member from St. Johns simply asked a question to the First Minister about work: Do you show up to work? And it wasn't a male, it wasn't a female issue. It was just a matter of work. Do you work on the weekends? It was a very simple question, and if there's reasons to not—and I understand, people have commitments, people have families—then just say so.

But instead it gets deflected, and what happens? What—in that moment, when the member from St. Johns asked that question, didn't raise her voice when she asked the question. She wasn't out of line to ask that question, and it was just simply a matter of being a woman on this side of the Chamber in politics raising a question.

And what happened in that moment, the mean-girl mentality happened in that moment, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Minister of Health (Ms. Gordon), minister of mental health and well-being, Families Minister and the First Minister all got up and attacked the member from St. Johns—attacked the member from St. Johns for asking a question.

So we had those kind of things in this Chamber—and we talk about respect for women in politics, that has to go both ways. The member from St. Johns

respectfully asked that question and got attacked for asking that question.

She's also a mother. She's also a woman on this side, in this Chamber. So what was the difference? The difference is she asked for accountability. She asked for equal say. And she asked simply for an answer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on International Women's Day there has to be that firm commitment to support women in this Chamber, their voice, their ideas. They are truly the givers of life and we would not be here—I would not be here without my mother, my grandmother. And as a male in this Chamber, I have great respect for that, simply that, the givers of life.

So, on International Women's Day, it needs to be treated as such. We have to have that respect and be able to hold each other account, to be able to ask questions, to be able to look for answers without fear of retribution, without fear of being called down or intimidated.

And I'll be very clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The member from St. Johns absolutely was not intimidated. And I take great pride to be able to say that that member—and I stand behind that member for that way of thinking, for that work ethic to be able to say this—I want to speak and I want to say what I have to say because she stood here to represent not only herself, but her family, her communities and all of Manitoba. So she shouldn't have been attacked to be able to just speak her mind.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we kind of go into election mode, whether it be provincial elections or federal elections and those kind of things, there's a lot of untapped potential and there's a lot of untapped potential in women here in Manitoba.

* (11:30)

And there's a variety of different reasons, as I mentioned earlier, that they may feel like this isn't their place to talk or they can't do this. And I think that's something that has to change across government as—to set that example. To be able to say we want to do this, we want to achieve parity, we want to achieve equality, and these are concrete steps that we want to do to be able to do that.

So let's put those in place. Let's not come forth with a resolution to just simply talk about it. Let's do something in terms of a bill to be able to say, this is what we're going to do. This is what we want to achieve. This is a goal that we want to achieve, and

this is the timeline that we want to achieve that goal. And that's true recognition and true acknowledgement for women in Manitoba, to be able to say we're going to, not just talk about it, we're going to put action behind our words.

And I know members opposite, members on this side, we want to see that. We know—we all know—in our minds and in our hearts, what the right thing to do is, to get to that parity, to get that equality. And it's not a matter of just a recognition on a piece of paper. Let's put those actions. Let's put equality in these seats. Let's put equality in this Chamber. Let's put equality in this government. Let's put equality in this province.

Women should not have to feel like they have to fight extra hard just to get to a level of equality. But it's unfortunate that that's the way that society has treated that way of thinking. And it's unfortunate to be able to do that. It's unfortunate to be able to say that we have to fight that extra fight.

This government has to put supports behind women not only in politics but across Manitoba and across all aspects of this province—not just in government, not just in the ministerial departments, but across, overall, in our school system, in our professionalism, and those kind of things that come for.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, earlier I had mentioned the mean-girls comments, and I do want to retract that. It was inappropriate of me to say that. But I do want to acknowledge the fact that that way of thinking, and that attack on the member from St. Johns was inappropriate.

With those few words, I'd like to say thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Audrey Gordon (Minister of Health): To all the women in the Chamber at this moment and in this Legislative Building, across Manitoba and across Canada, I want to say happy International Women's Day.

International Women's Day marks a global celebration of the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. But it is also an important time to have conversations about work still needing to be done to ensure equality and safety for women in our province.

The international theme, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this year, is Break the Bias. While the world has come a long way in ensuring women have more equality and opportunity, we know there are still disparities.

Sometimes these are more readily discussed and documented with statistics and evidence, but these are also daily experiences happening in our homes, our communities, workplaces and, yes, governments.

While progress is being made, events such as the recent pandemic can reveal the gaps that are still there. A 2021 report from Statistics Canada indicated that in the first year of the pandemic, women were more severely affected by employment losses. This is on top of existing statistics that verify the existence of a gender pay gap between women and men. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development marks Canada as having the eighth highest gender pay gap out of 43 countries.

As the pandemic continued, there were concerns that women would be disproportionately affected by impacts of child care and caregiving. Last year, Mr. Deputy Speaker, our government invested more than \$600,000 to initiatives that support women to develop careers in trades in Winnipeg and in four northern and remote communities.

We also partnered with our federal counterparts on a multi-year plan to improve affordability and accessibility of quality child care for Manitobans. These initiatives aim to help ensure women have more opportunities in the workplace.

When we look back at some of the milestones reached by women, some of these are only in the last 40 years. In 1980, Ruth Krindle was the first Manitoba woman to be appointed a judge by the Government of Canada. Canada's first woman astronaut, Dr. Roberta Bondar, went into space in 1992. The first Black Canadian woman, Jean Augustine, was elected to the House of Commons just in 1993. In 2007, Leona Aglukkaq was the first Inuit woman Member of Parliament to hold a senior Cabinet post. In 2015, Amanda Lathlin was the first First Nations woman elected to the Manitoba Legislature. And our current Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) is the first female premier in Manitoba's history.

I also look, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at MLAs: Edith Rogers, first woman to be elected to the Manitoba Legislature; Flo [*phonetic*] Marcelino, first Filipino Canadian woman elected in Canada and Manitoba; I've already stated Amanda Lathlin; Senator Sharon Carstairs, first woman to lead a Manitoba political party.

And it was just this morning as I woke up and reflected on the importance of today that I thought about my own victory and my own journey into

politics. And it was in 2016 that I first ran for election in the area of Fort Rouge. And I was so welcome—welcomed and embraced by the community—and I was not successful in terms of gaining a seat here in the Manitoba Legislature, but I was successful in terms of showing women who look like me, girls who look like me, that they can run for election and they can be taken seriously and they can do well.

And, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was in 2019 that I decided to run again, to shatter the glass ceiling that prevents people of colour from sitting in this Manitoba Legislature. And I ran in the constituency of Southdale, and I want to thank all the constituents in that community for their warm welcome, for their support and for putting their vote behind me and electing me as their MLA.

And then I was so honoured and humbled in January of 2021 when I was appointed to Cabinet and made history by being the first Black Cabinet minister elected in this province—but more so, the first Black woman Cabinet minister.

And Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a lot of work to do within this Chamber, within government and across our province. Election doesn't mean that you're immediately embraced not necessarily by your team, not necessarily taken seriously by your colleagues or by those who you manage in your portfolios.

And so what I have done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to continue to go into communities, into classrooms, into boardrooms to say and to continually send the message that people of colour deserve to take their seats in this Manitoba Legislature and to be a very strong voice for our community.

And I want to share with you on a personal level a story that impacted me deeply. I was in my constituency for an act-of-kindness day that was being held at one of our community centres where we were handing out hot chocolate and cookies to individuals that were skating on a skating rink nearby. And I went throughout the area and invited people that I saw that may not have known that we were doing this, handing out—and this act-of-kindness day, to come over and join with us.

And there was a young girl that was skating on the skating rink. She reminded me of myself when I first came to Canada: new skates, barely broken in and trying to learn how to skate. And she probably looked my age as well at the time I arrived in Canada as a newcomer. And she skated off the ice and went to sit with her mother. And I walked over and I asked

them to join us in the act-of-kindness day. And I—after talking with them for a bit, I—and hearing that they are newcomers and live in the community—I introduced myself as the MLA for the area. And the young girl responded and she said: I see your picture on the benches and I'm learning about you in school.

* (11:40)

And so sometimes we don't understand that we're not just here for ourselves. We're here for that young girl; we're here for other women who want to take their seat in this Manitoba Legislature.

And so today, I stand humbly before this Chamber to say that, in many ways, we need to do better. We need to support each other as women in this Legislature. We need to support each other in the work that we're doing, and remember that, just like that little girl at the skating rink, every day we're being watched in terms of our conduct and how we treat each other.

And I just want to conclude, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by saying we have a rich history of women paving the way in science, technology, arts, politics and more. Now we look forward to what the next 20 or 30 years can bring, and how we support today's girls and women. We can do this by continuing to challenge stereotypes, and actively creating environments free of bias and discrimination.

As part of marking International Women's Day, we can ask ourselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what are we doing to break the bias in our daily lives and as a community.

Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Just a friendly reminder to all members, when referring to a member of this House, one must do so by the constituency, and not in the less formal first-name, last-name formula that we use maybe in the hallway or other places. *[interjection]* We okay? Yes?

Mr. Jamie Moses (St. Vital): I want to wish all Manitoban women a happy International Women's Day, all the people in the Chamber here, a happy International Women's Day, and especially to, as been mentioned by previous speakers, all the women who have made and broken milestones to get into the Chamber and who've made accomplishments to be here, and not only to make accomplishments to be here, but also have done so much work in their communities to make them better places.

I also want to just highlight something—and I know the member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte), in her opening comments, highlighted some of the great accomplishments women have made historically over the years in Manitoba. I just want to add, kindly, one person to that list: Inez Stevenson, who was the first woman—first Black woman—elected in Manitoba. She was a school trustee elected in 1974, first Black woman to hold elected office in the province of Manitoba.

So I think that, right there, is a milestone, a trailblazer, Inez Stevenson, so I just wanted to friendly add that name onto the list for the member to Seine—of Seine River, to make note for future times when she's speaking about trailblazers, women trailblazers in our province, that that name, I think, could be added to that list of other people.

And I think that, with this, you know, being International Women's Day, and us speaking about women who've been trailblazers and who have done so much work in our communities and in politics, you know, as an elected official, we get a lot of credit already for some of the things we do.

And so I thought it would be appropriate right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for me to take a step and a few minutes to thank, and honour, and say my appreciation and really celebrate the work that so many women do in my community in St. Vital. There are so many women leaders who've took leadership roles to serve, to work for, and to make my community in St. Vital a better place.

And so I want to take a few minutes to thank some of those women in my community. And I'll start with—if you look at our education system, our people who are leading young students in their learning and their journey to become better people, we start to look at some of the principals in our community.

I want to name Jill Mathez at Dakota Collegiate and Dionne Deer at Glenlawn, who are both principals of our high schools who are doing terrific work to build up their communities and their school communities; as well as Lisa Lewis, Nicole Mager, who are at Hastings and Lavallee schools, respectfully; and, as well as the Michelle Jean-Paul divisional principal in the LRSD. These principals are in my neighbourhood and are working to improve the lives of students—and not only doing that through education, but doing that as an examples of strong female leadership in our neighbourhood.

I also want to take a minute to thank the many female leaders who are leading our child-care systems. And as parents know, during the pandemic, child care became a huge issue and parents realized how important it is to have important good-quality, high-quality child care in our communities.

And it's many women who step up to lead these organizations and help to provide that early learning for children in our communities.

And so I want to thank those leaders, those female leaders like: Chayna, at Bambini Montessori; Candice, at Little Saints; Bonnie Ash at Morrow Avenue Daycare; Heather at St. George Before and After School Program; Sherry at St. Vital Child Care Co-op; Marguerite at Victor Major before-and-after-school program; and Kathy at Windsor Cares for Kids. Them and all their team are providing essential early learning services to so many kids in our communities, and that is needed now; and that is part of a program, part of what our community needs to do to support women who want to work, who want their kids to have a good quality early child-care education, and these women are doing it by supporting those young people and by leading by examples as strong women leader in my—in St. Vital.

And I also want to just highlight some of the other strong community people who hold leadership roles in my neighbourhood—namely, Angela Konkin of Marlene Street Resource Centre; Flo and Corrine of the Barbara Mitchell Family reserve centre; Michelle Meade who leads the—of the Greenway; Laurie and Michelle of Save our Seine. These are women in our community who are working every day to not only make their—whether it's their family resource centre or whether it's beautifying our neighbourhood through the Greenway to make it better—to make it better. And they are, you know—again, not only doing it by their work, but blazing the trail and showing that people in our community that women can take on those leadership roles—and not just do them, but they excel at them.

I also want to thank people like Tara Snider at Sara Riel who work to—with people's—helping their mental health; Regina Teplitsky of Old St. Vital BIZ; Adria of Windsor Community Centre and Carmel of Norberry-Glenlee Community Centre. These centres and these people have stepped up when many others wouldn't. Many of these positions are not paid. They're volunteer work. And they are stepping up and, frankly, going 'beeove' and beyond in many cases to help their organizations, to make our communities

better and leading our neighbourhood to become a better place for all people, and doing it for an example for women to see that there are roles for them not just in the backroom, but up front. There are roles for them to be the spokesperson for an organization and the leader for an organization.

And so I want to thank all those champions in our neighbourhood for the work that they do. They might not often get the praise for that work, but if they are—it's deserving of praise because it is the sort of work that makes communities enjoyable. It makes communities not just place to live, but makes them a place that people call their home and that they're proud to be a part of. I know that I—personally I have met these folks and I'm thankful for the work that they do. My family takes part in many of the organizations—many of the events that these organizations provide, whether it's visiting the Greenway or whether it's participating at breakfast with Santa at some of the community centres that are hosted and organized by women.

But I also want to take a few minutes that I have left, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to really look at what we want to do with this International Women's Day. And, you know, while we rightfully celebrate that the time here—we also want to note that it's not just good enough to celebrate International Women's Day. It's not just good enough to say the words and celebrate it. It's also, you know, our duty as elected officials to really put the action behind those words, and to make concrete steps to ensure that we create more spaces where there is gender equity and gender balance, and create spaces where women feel comfortable entering rooms.

* (11:50)

And whether that's in corporate culture—you know, I don't know how many, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I would argue to say that there are very—there's not often gender balance when you look at our corporate world, and our corporate structure as an executive tables around our province.

And I'd also challenge and say that it's quite clear that in this Chamber, we don't have that gender balance and we've never had perfect gender balance in this Chamber, and it's our job as legislators to represent the values of Manitobans. The best way we can do that is by having true representation. True representation in our province means having more women elected officials.

So we ought to, as a priority, find steps and find ways to encourage women to enter politics, to get into

politics, to get into seats like this and to not only advocate for women but to encourage women to step up; step up and take the challenge of entering and putting their names forward into politics.

And so, I hope that members opposite are sincere with these efforts for International Women's Day because I do hope that we in this Chamber can actually have a more representative place, so that we can make laws and policies that are going to be in the best interests of all people in Manitoba.

And so, as I take the last few moments here, I hope that the sincerity of the opposite side to bring forward this resolution is also met with a needed action to take concrete steps to make women feel welcome, feel safe, feel invited in politics and to the variety of community and leadership activities that we have in our community.

Thank you very much for the time today.

Ms. Cindy Lamoureux (Tyndall Park): I'm thrilled to be able to stand this morning and speak in response to the member's resolution, Recognizing Manitoba's Historic Role of Women in Politics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, several thoughts immediately come rushing to my mind as I read through the resolution. Firstly, it's incredibly important to recognize that not all women were and continue to be treated equally. We need to remember this to ensure we do better now and we continue to do better moving forward.

Throughout the resolution, several women are mentioned and for myself, personally I'm flooded with thoughts about Sharon Carstairs and Edith Rogers, and I just want to spend a moment talking about the two of them.

I've spoken about Sharon Carstairs in this House quite a bit over the years because she holds a special place in my heart and the hearts of my family for the role that she played. Carstairs understood and continues to understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that women and young people are really, really needed in politics.

I believe Carstairs helped reinvent politics here in Manitoba and has provided hope and inspiration to so many, including myself.

I have memories of swinging on swings at her cottage as a young girl, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I like sharing the story that when Sharon Carstairs was the Manitoba Liberal leader here in Manitoba, my father was actually a provincial politician and she gifted my

family a baby blanket while my mom was pregnant with me.

And I was actually carried home from the hospital in the baby blanket that Sharon Carstairs gave to me. And I'm not a very sentimental person overall, but I still have that baby blanket to this day, and every time I see it and I think about it, I attribute it to Sharon Carstairs and that personal touch she had in politics, in addition to her amazing ways of addressing this House.

Edith Rogers also comes to mind, and this is very topical for me because I just finished reading a short profile about her and—written by Gail Konantz, if I'm pronouncing that correctly. And the way I understand it is, Edith Rogers was a bit of an anomaly. This is in addition to being the first woman elected in 1920 to 1932 as a Liberal, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over a hundred years ago now.

And she was firm and fierce, and you want to talk about having a withering stare, when I hear the stories about her, Mr. Deputy Speaker; but she was also kind and incredibly gracious and, although it wasn't right, she knew when she was being taken advantage of and I think she was a lot smarter than she often let on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think there's a lot of truth to this, even for us women today. I think that all of us face a lot of things that others don't necessarily pick up on, but we know. And I think we could do a better job at communicating that with each other and supporting each other in the House.

There's a lot that we can take away from this, and being remember—being reminded to be kind. And I think about even just yesterday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, here in the House, the—Madam Speaker had to get up several times to remind people, folks on both sides of the House, listen respectfully. Be kind in your responses. There is a way to do this job graciously, and I think that we can all do a lot better at that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm really proud to be part of a party that encourages me as a woman, and helps lift me up as a woman. And just two things I want to share because—about my two male counterparts here.

I've got a wonderful leader, MLA for St. Boniface, who was actually the one who allowed for—not allowed for me, he gave me the book to read about Edith Rogers just the other day. And he goes out of his way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to allow me the opportunity, whenever I want the opportunity, to speak about any issue here in these Chambers, not only women's issues. He says, Cindy, if you want to be at

the front of this, you can be at the front of this. And I consider myself exceptionally lucky to have such a strong leader that is allowing a path for that.

I also have a wonderful colleague from—the MLA for River Heights, who also goes out of his way. Together we're a great team, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And he always allows for me to take space when I need space, whether that be in caucus, whether that mean at events. Even this morning I attended an event for International Women's Day about Afghan refugees, and he said, Cindy, we want to make sure we get you up there, how would you like to contribute? And he allowed for me to say the thank yous to everyone and to recognize everyone. And, again, I'm just, I'm very lucky to have such a supportive party.

I'm really conscious of the time, but I did want to share a few more thoughts, I'll just condense here, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I don't agree with a lot of the things that the Conservative government do, a lot of their policy, and I want to sort of say that before I say that I do think it is extremely commendable and absolutely incredible that we have a first female Premier (Mrs. Stefanson) here in Manitoba. I think that is breaking down barriers, and I am proud to be in the Manitoba Legislature during this time.

I also want to continue to encourage this government, as I do every year on International Women's Day, that we need to continue to improve the Manitoba Legislature. A few years ago, we had baby change tables installed in the washrooms, which is wonderful. We have this empty restroom downstairs that could be better utilized. I think we need to think about child-care options here in the Manitoba Legislature, and I want to continue to push the government to do this, as well.

So, last of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, although this resolution is timely on International Women's Day, there's still so much to recognize and to celebrate. There's so, so much that needs to be done, and it's important that it's not lost upon any of us.

Thank you, and we look forward to supporting this resolution.

Hon. Sarah Guillemard (Minister of Mental Health and Community Wellness): I just want to say that I'm blessed to come from a long line of women—

strong women in my family, those who knew the strength that only comes through hardship and choosing love over hate. A bitter heart destroys a woman and tries to bring others down, but a loving heart builds the future.

Thank you to my mother, Jenny Chudley, who raised me with the knowledge and wisdom passed down to her through generations of trailblazers. Mom, you taught me to seek the truth, to live honestly with the knowledge that I am created with love and I am tasked to share. My thoughts today are with the women of Ukraine, those who have taken up arms to defend their country and protect their children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will sit now in hopes that everyone will pass this resolution in honour of International Women's Day.

Thank you.

Mr. Matt Wiebe (Concordia): What an honour it is to rise to wish every member of the Legislature, every person in Manitoba, a happy International Women's Day.

You know, I was reflecting on the display that we have outside the Chamber of women of historical note of the Legislature, and what's crazy is that I served with many of those women. This isn't ancient history, this isn't a long time ago, this is women who are still breaking barriers. Some were mentioned about—in the House here, but I just want to mention Rosann Wowchuk, our first Finance minister; Theresa Oswald, our first Health minister—

* (12:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Time—the time being 12 noon, this House is adjourned—*[interjection]* Oh.

When this matter is before the House again, the honourable member for Concordia will have nine minutes and 20 seconds remaining.

The time being 12 noon, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. today—*[interjection]*—recessed, okay.

The time being 12 noon, this House is recessed—not adjourned—recessed until 1:30 p.m. today. My apologies.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

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