

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

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Forty-Second Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AL TOMARE, 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
KHAN, Obby	Fort Whyte	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>	Thompson	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 24, 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.

Good morning, everybody. Please be seated.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

**Hon. Alan Lagimodiere (Acting Government House Leader):** Can you please call Bill 209, The Farmers' Markets Week Act, for second reading.

**Madam Speaker:** It has been announced that the House will consider second reading of Bill 209 this morning, The Farmers' Markets Week Act.

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

## Bill 209—The Farmers' Markets Week Act

**Madam Speaker:** I will therefore call Bill 209, The Farmers' Markets Week Act.

**Ms. Janice Morley-Lecomte (Seine River):** I move, seconded by the member from Riding Mountain, that Bill 209, The Farmers' Markets Week Act; Loi sur la Semaine des marchés fermiers, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** It is an honour to stand up in the Chamber today and speak about the many local artisans and farmers who sell their products at the local farmers' markets. Bill 209 supports local businesses, entrepreneurs, food sustainability, social connections and education on healthy foods and how local farmers are environmentally conscious.

Farmers' markets are not new. For centuries, people have gathered in places to sell their wares for money, barter for goods and services and meet with neighbours to catch up on local news.

In Winnipeg, the farmers' markets can be traced back to the 1800s, when individuals would come and sell their products. Before the '60s and '70s, many would go to the downtown area in Winnipeg, around the Market street area to be exact, and there, people would buy and sell their goods or exchange items for goods they didn't have.

Markets seem to have lost their following and disappeared from the Winnipeg scene. Bob Roehle, a resident of St. Norbert, was in Ottawa and went to walk through the local downtown market. He walked around the local market and saw the exchange of local goods and produce and decided that Winnipeg was missing this opportunity and a venue for local businesses.

On his return to Winnipeg, he began research into establishing a farmers' market and locations to host the venue. In July of 1988, the farmers' market was opened with eight vendors. Over the years, the market has grown and drawn in many of the local vendors. Today, there are 200 vendors that sell their products, totalling around 1,800 products, and produce produce to many tourists and locals who come to the market.

The success of the farmers' market has spread, and many areas throughout the province are boasting of markets that also sell local produce, product and wares to those who visit. Brandon, Swan River and Steinbach are just a few of the rural areas that have created venues for the market and have seen a growth in the size of their markets.

Madam Speaker, if one has never been to a farmers' market, they are missing a shopping experience. The venue showcases some of the finest artists and the best fresh produce locally grown or raised. Wooden spoons, custom made from various woods,

fitted for either a left- or right-handed individual or size to be able to scoop soup or be used inside a sugar holder for the table. Pottery, jewellery, wood art, homemade bread, pies, fresh vegetables, farm fresh eggs, cheese, butter, milk, certified beef, pork, fresh fish and bison are only a few of the many items available for sale.

Products are local to the area and the vendors, which means money not only is spent locally but the local economy benefits. Vendors create a social and business network with other local businesses. The interaction creates a symbiotic relationship that gives buying power to the dollar, which further supports local shops and businesses. The market prides itself on being unique to the market scene. The markets' vendors are local and the items sold are either a make-it or bake-it mentality.

So, in Ontario and BC or wherever anyone else would attend a market, you would find imported fruits and vegetables, not locally grown, or items that you would have had shipped in and for sale. One might see a stand that sells scarves or a mainstream product. The uniqueness of the market is to promote local. The St. Norbert Farmers' Market has been fortunate to see some of their vendors succeed and grow their project-products into larger markets.

Some market gardens are good for the environment. Local vendors grow garden produce in either greenhouses or on smaller plots of land, or have free-range raised animals. The omission of herbicides and other chemicals only strengthens the argument for small growers who are selling foods that are not only environmentally safe but free of unnecessary herbicides. The smaller radius of farms close to the market also supports fewer gas emissions as transportation costs are lower.

Madam Speaker, I had the pleasure of talking to many local vendors at various locations. The smaller venues offer them an opportunity to sell their product, connect with the community and not have to pay large amounts of rent for space, especially not knowing how well their product may do. The result is a system that benefits all who are on the buying and selling end of the products.

What may seem as small, with respect to a grain and cattle farm, in size and product output is misleading. The average income earned off an acre ranges between \$35,000 to \$50,000 depending on the vegetable crop that is planted. Considering that most small growers are usually around five acres in size, this is a substantial amount of money that is being put back

into the local economy of any community. The amount of revenue generated is in the millions. This supports the need to not only recognize the value in market growers but the important role they play in supporting smaller communities' economic viability.

The last few years have been a struggle for everyone. Regardless of the occupation or where you live, no one was spared the impact COVID had. The economy and the ability to shop and travel was interrupted. The value of shopping local was very significant in maintaining local economies. People were able to access the markets and purchase products and keep the local economy and the businesses operating. The innovative ways which saw people able to still purchase local and fresh further supported the market.

\* (10:10)

Opening online sites and supporting local businesses while following the health and safety guidelines kept the local economies operating. The St. Norbert Farmers' Market developed an online site, which offered shoppers many products. People would click on what they wanted, the packages would be ready at the drive-by pickup location at the market and vendors and buyers were able to still enjoy the benefits of local produce.

In addition, the ability for vendors to stay connected to their customers was important. The security and familiarity of knowing your food was still available and the same familiar face was still greeting you from their stand helped to remove some of the concerns, isolation and fears people faced around COVID.

Madam Speaker, COVID further highlighted the need for food sustainability. The disruption of supply chains and the dependency on larger retail chains to supply food and product helped to spur the desire to learn more about gardens. The increase in sales of garden plants and people returning to preserving foods and the uncertainty of work created an environment for small businesses. As discussed earlier, the markets are a great space to showcase local products and see entrepreneurs grow their businesses.

Families may not financially be able to afford the high cost of healthy and fresh food. Markets throughout the province for the last few years have worked in partnership with Direct Farm Manitoba. Markets in Morden and Winkler and in St. Norbert were part of the Direct Farm Manitoba program.

Direct Farm Manitoba is an association of farms and farmers' markets working to increase the number

of direct sales of agricultural products. Manitoba Community Food Currency Program, one of the initiatives, works with local community agencies to connect with individuals within their communities. And the individuals then take the currency they have, go to the market, purchase the items from the vendors that are part of the program, and vendors then turn in the currency money for actual funding at the end of the program.

Community currency is provided to the organization that gives it to their participants. Farmers and farmers' markets exchange the currency for products. The currency is returned to the organization for payment for the goods purchased.

The program also educates families on the value of good nourishment, provides an economy for small farmers and markets and further supports individuals who are on a fixed or low income. Last year, about \$20,000 worth of fresh farm products were sold to families through this program.

Madam Speaker, I could go on and on about the benefits of farmers' markets. In my constituency of Seine River, vendors have praised the value of a space to sell their products to the thousands of individuals who walk through the market every year. The gain through community, shopping local and introducing different products to consumers continually builds the local business and economy. Talking to visitors at the market, one quickly learns how visitors return to shop at their favourite booth, come for the ambiance and live entertainment and to socialize with others who they meet at the market.

Agriculture is the backbone of our economy. People have expanded on the roadside stops which sell seasonable vegetables. Through the years, businesses have grown, economies have benefited and our province has benefited from the markets.

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

### Questions

**Madam Speaker:** A question period of up to 10 minutes will be held. Questions may be addressed to the supporting—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 the member for Bill 209, The Farmers' Markets Week Act.

I want to ask the member, what actions should your government take to not only recognize but tangibly support farmers?

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

The market supports a lot of the local farmers because it provides a venue for them to be able to bring their product to sell, for them to also not have to expense or pay for a lot of rent that they may not find tables are cheap, and, this way, if the product is one that takes off, then they then have a market that they can grow upon.

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** I'd like to ask the member for Seine River why she chose the last week of July for the special week for farmers' markets recognition?

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** Thank you for the great question from the member from Portage.

The last week of July had been discussed with possibly being the beginning of August as well, but July represents a lot of the venues and individuals who are travelling to the province, tourists and part of them being able to sample some of the local produce as well.

And when you're looking at June or September: June, not all the markets are ready to go; and September, some are closing, so July was about the right time to present this—or honour the week.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, Madam Speaker, my question relates to the activities which the member would like to see on farmers' markets week.

Usually, when we have a special day or week we celebrate the—in this case, farmers' markets. What are the plans for celebrating, recognizing farmers' markets during farmers' markets week?

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

While meeting with some of the vendors and the St. Norbert Farmers' Market's executive director, they were looking at highlighting some of the main dishes that were provided, some of the unique foods that would be there and hosting a meal for individuals to be able to come and sit down and sample; also, putting in the local newspaper some of the events that would follow to highlight some of the pieces that people don't necessarily understand; and to also showcase

that it is a make-it, bake-it market, unlike in other provinces, so that people can understand and learn about food sustainability.

**Mr. Brar:** When we talk about farmers' markets, we think about local food.

I would like to ask the member, what steps are your government taking to support local food production and eating locally?

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** I'd like to thank the member for that question as well.

Speaking with Manitoba farmers—Direct Farm Manitoba, the lady in charge was saying that our government has been very supportive of local farmers, has also encouraged the sale of their product, and with the low cost in transportation and the uncertainty of food, it allows individuals who are in the gardening and agriculture and art world to be able to sell their food and keep the food line open for individuals who may otherwise not be able to purchase food.

**Mr. Wishart:** I'd like to ask the member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte) if she can explain how this is an environmental benefit as well as a commercial benefit?

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

Most of the farms located around the markets are within a 100-kilometre radius, so the reduction in the cost of transportation and gas emissions on the transportation of the produce makes it beneficial.

Small market gardeners also don't use herbicides that larger gardeners produce that you might purchase in stores have on them, so when you're purchasing, it is fresh. It doesn't have any chemical added to increase its worth.

And with, again, the make-it or bake-it, there's no imported. Everything is local and fresh.

**Mr. Brar:** I would like to ask the member, what steps would the member like to see the government take to expand farmers' markets in Manitoba?

**Ms. Morley-Lecomte:** Thank you for the question.

Farmers' markets, depending upon the season, can provide food security for individuals and a cheaper food option versus the cost of having it shipped in.

Swan River has a farmers' market, The Pas has a farmers' market, and for some of them to further be able to supply the farmers' markets, they can have funding with greenhouses like the one in The Pas has,

so that individuals are able to still purchase and eat fresh foods on a daily basis.

\* (10:20)

**Mr. Brad Michaleski (Dauphin):** I want to thank the member from Seine River for bringing forward this very important and very positive bill here today, Bill 209.

I know—and I can appreciate the member talking about the small acreage and the business potential on very small acres, so I think that opens up a lot of opportunity for people that want to get into production and into farmers' markets business.

So can the member speak about her personal relationship with farmers' markets?

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

Farmers' markets are a big part of any local economy. And when you're looking at the financial impact that it has and the amount of money that it generates, you're able then to employ within that community other individuals who support. So for every \$1 that is spent, about \$7 worth of off-business and development and investment happens.

I myself am from a farming background. My family still is in farming. And understanding where your food comes from and where and what you need to do to get the food to the table is important—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Mr. Brar:** Farmers' markets are important, as we all know, but I would like the member to tell us, why are farmer's markets so important and what's some immediate things we should do to enhance farmers' markets?

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

Farmers' markets are very important, again, for the local economy, for the families that frequent it, for the food that you're able to purchase at a lower cost, for the health of an individual who's looking for a healthy alternative, for individuals who are wanting to try different food.

As to expand the famers' markets, it would depend upon what is local to that area and have them come to the market and purchase a booth to sell their produce to the people who attend the market.

**Mr. Wishart:** I'd like to ask the member how farmers' markets can improve our society in general and

help the connection between urban and rural people strengthen?

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

The farmers' markets are key in that they're smaller and they showcase what an individual can do in a very limited space of land. And for families who have never under- or learned about how their food comes to the supermarket, understanding gardening and the maintenance and what goes into producing a garden or producing a food is very important.

The sustainability of your food, depending upon what happens with the chain of supply, can be critical, especially as we learned in COVID.

**Mr. Brar:** Through this bill, we are talking about small farmers and enhancing their livelihoods.

I would like to ask the member how well they protect the livelihoods of farmers when they're increasing their leases for Crown land?

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

'Farmet'—farmers' market gardeners are one-to-five acres in size and they utilize the space to get the most economic value from it. So if your vegetable garden or the produce that you're raising on it or livestock that you have sells for a different amount, you then range between the 35 to 50 thousand dollars, so it's economically viable for individuals who want to earn a living off of a smaller piece of land.

Thank you.

**Madam Speaker:** The time for this question period has expired.

### Debate

**Madam Speaker:** Debate is open.

**Mr. Diljeet Brar (Burrows):** When we talk about agriculture, we talk about agri- and culture.

Hope you had a good long weekend. I got a chance to attend a cultural event organized by mall walk culture and sports club, which was a live concert presenting singer Babbu Maan, and I was invited there. And it was sold out. And it was held at Manitoba Centennial Centre, that is owned by Manitobans.

So I want to congratulate the organizers of that event, and I want to thank those who were the reasons for this event to be sold out. And I want to tell those

who do not know that, my dear Manitobans, you own that concert hall, so let's support these government organizations so that we can earn money and spend back on your kids' education, health and infrastructure.

So, talking about agriculture, I have been given the responsibility to be critic for Agriculture in Manitoba. I have been serving Manitoba Agriculture for a few years, and I got a chance to know a bit about agriculture in Manitoba, a bit about farmers' markets in Manitoba.

I was, in fact, in charge of a farmers' market in Arborg when I was serving at the Manitoba Agriculture office in Arborg, and I used to organize farmers' markets, assist them getting their food safety licences, supporting them establishing that farmers' market in front of the library in Arborg.

And what I saw was, it's not just selling of produce. It's actually community building. It gives us an opportunity to get together. It gives the next generation an opportunity to learn about local foods.

It gives us an opportunity to understand how local food production benefits environment, how we can avoid long hauling of food from across the borders when we can produce food in the backyard, when we can produce food right—a few metres from our home, when we can produce food in our schools' grounds, when we can produce food in community centres' grounds—then why are not we taking up that opportunity and educating ourselves and creating an opportunity for addressing our mental health issues, networking with the community members?

So, thinking about these ideas, we thought of starting a community garden in my constituency, Burrows. And we have actually started work this weekend.

And I want to thank Mount Carmel Clinic for their support. I want to thank Maples Community Centre for their support to establish that community garden in Maples Community Centre premises. And I want to thank those seniors who worked together this weekend, building structures for establishing that garden.

So, efforts are on in the community, including Burrows, in rural areas, and we appreciate those who are for local food production. We appreciate those parents who take their kids to farmers' markets, who teach them on the ground, practically, hands-on training, producing local food, and also it gives us an

opportunity for our kids to know how our food is produced, where our foods come from.

They get to know the identification of plants. Sometimes they get to know identification of insects. When I was studying agriculture, we used to collect insects and identify them, and during our practical exam, identification would be a huge thing.

So farmers' markets are important, and I thank the member bringing forward this bill, Bill 209, The Farmers' Markets Week Act, because once we start recognizing something, that gives us an opportunity to talk about it. Same way as today, we are talking about farmers' markets, we are talking about local food, and we are also talking about young farmers. Because I have seen, most of the small farmers in Manitoba, as far as I know, are young farmers.

\* (10:30)

And I have met so many young farmers at various platforms who have shown interest that I want to get into farming—may it be hobby farming, may it be local food production, may it be a small greenhouse or backyard farming, kitchen garden, whatever you call it. I have also talked to so many ethnic communities who are for this local food production. And, Madam Speaker, I—when I empathize and talk to new Canadians, they miss their food products that they used to consume back home.

So we have an opportunity here. This government has an opportunity to bring similar projects that promotes ethnic vegetables, ethnic foods, so that people think that, yes, I'm in a new country but I don't miss my food, I don't miss the varieties that I used to have; for example, in Punjab, right—ladyfingers, okra. I like it very much, and there are so many community members that like it very much, but it's not very common here or, if it is, it's not—it tastes different.

So we need to make some efforts to bring in some ethnic vegetables, bring in some pilot projects in various communities. And we should bring in seniors who have time and experience and knowledge about those vegetables so that they can come together, work together in the community gardens and know each other and educate the third generation about how we produce vegetables.

On a bigger scale, when we talk about farming in Manitoba, the unfortunate part, as I feel, is that land is being consolidated to the extent that it's—we are losing the feel. We are losing the feel between the land and

plants and food and humans; it's changing. Agriculture is being—we have started looking at agriculture just as industry, but to me it's more than that. Agriculture is actually the connection between Mother Earth and human beings. We are breaking that connection by consolidating our farms, not only in Manitoba, but in Canada as a whole.

The researchers tell us that we are moving towards a direction where would—we would have just 200 farmers or 200 farms, about 50,000 acres each. How would that look like? That means we are eliminating humans from the land, pushing them out and bringing in just the machines. Well, we can produce maybe economically. Maybe we can produce more. We can exhaust our natural resources. But I am really, really worried about us being disconnected from the land, so we should make some efforts to connect people to the land, especially the next generation.

And, while I appreciate the member bringing forward this bill, I also encourage and request the member to talk to her colleagues on that side of the House to do something more, something better for the farmers in general in Manitoba, but especially for the young farmers in Manitoba. Because, you know, this morning when I was listening to CBC—everybody must have listened about what's happening in Whiteshell—people are being pushed out of their homes due to flooding.

So this government should do something to address such situations. This government should do something to support our Crown land ranchers so that we, as Manitobans, we should work together, live together to make Manitoba better.

Thank you so much, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Ian Wishart (Portage la Prairie):** It's a pleasure to rise to put a few words of support on the record for Bill 209. I'd like to thank the member for Seine River (Ms. Morley-Lecomte) for having brought forward this private member's bill. It recognizes a sector of agriculture and our culture, really, across Manitoba, that is really important.

There are over 40 farmers' markets in the province operating at various times, in various locations, and we are—in Portage la Prairie, we have a very strong one that operates pretty much year-round, moving from different venues—outdoors to indoors in the winter months—and, accordingly, has become quite strong.



We have a very significant vegetable industry, in particular in the Portage area, and they also tie into this. And that brings the diversity of foods that are offered in these farmers' markets much—makes it much greater. But when you look back in their history, you'll find that many of these current larger vegetable farms actually began their existence serving farmers' markets of one type or the other across Manitoba.

So it is a very strong opportunity for small farmers to enter the industry and to grow, and it also provides some experience—a good connection between the urban and rural people. And I do know an awful lot of people that attend farmers' markets, not only as customers, but also as vendors, and they say that the discussions and the information that is exchanged is a big part of what goes on at farmers' markets. It's people learning about the nature of the industry.

There are a few other little things about farmers' markets that kind of escape you in first pass but, when you look more carefully at, you'll see that there's a hidden benefit to it, I guess, if you look at it that way. When you sell into the current retail trade and the supermarkets, your product has to be absolutely perfect to even get on the shelves. A farmers' market is a little less discerning. I wouldn't say the product is inferior by any way, but if it has a little twist in the carrot or a little bump on the potato, it's still a very acceptable product in a farmers' market because, of course, it's being directly consumed and people understand that if you grow it yourself these sort of things actually do occur.

So, many of our vendors appreciate that opportunity. They could probably—it would be a real challenge to produce enough product for them to enter the full retail trade which is so demanding, not only here, but in other jurisdictions as well. So this is really an important opportunity, I guess, to get your foot in the door and enter the market.

But there are a lot of other benefits. We talked very briefly in question period about the environmental benefits. Farmers' markets very often use different production techniques, whether they're organic or sustainable or specialty; for instance, the specialty meats that are forage-fed are very popular at farmers' markets.

And it provides an opportunity for people to differentiate their product in the marketplace and accordingly get an established market for their product—maybe a bit of a premium over the regular commodity and style of production for the red beets,

in particular. And that's a real advantage for them to build the market, which they can follow up on online with their customers. And many of them do, and do direct deliveries, and, of course that grew substantially for many of them during the COVID era when direct delivery and direct sales were much more common and people were looking for that opportunity.

But, of course, we've had a few farmers' markets already, and I know that they're very well attended this year. And people are pleased to provide the opportunity to get out there and see the products, the new products, whether they're preserves or frozen or something in the craft sector. We haven't seen a lot of fresh produce yet, though I am told that this week we will probably be seeing asparagus hit the marketplace, which I really look forward to. I enjoy having that. And it is, in my books, it's the first product of spring. And though the spring has been a little slow coming, we're certainly looking forward to getting it out there. And this nice weather this week will probably push it to the marketplace.

A couple other things I wanted to mention: over the years, our supply chains have become longer and longer, and—which is great. I mean, we're able to get things like bananas and coffee that we don't produce and probably never will produce locally. And so we depend on that. But we have become very dependent on the supply chains.

\* (10:40)

For instance, the Bunny-Luv carrots, and I'll pick on them for a minute, which are produced almost exclusively in California, come an awful long way before they see a supermarket shelf here in Manitoba. And I would suggest, not unbiasedly, I guess, that local carrots are much superior to them and they don't come onto the market at year-round like you see with Bunny-Luv, but they're—because they store pretty well here in our conditions, we can produce them for—or we can have them at the market for about nine months out of the year, which is something that we certainly should be promoting and looking for. And the quality of product—root crop products like that in Manitoba is considered very high grade.

Of course, the potato market, I think we all know that fresh potatoes are one of the sought-after products and they store well. And—even though we do have a very substantial industry that processes them, but people still want them table-ready, to make their own products and produce their own types of specialties at home. And so that's another one that we see, and

things like red beets and parsnips and other local root crop products.

But there's a wide range of what they call the summer crops that are produced as well, things like the lettuces and the kale and the cabbage that are also available fairly early in the year and actually do store—especially cabbages will store for many, many months and are available well—'til well after Christmas as Manitoba product.

So this is just a few of the things that we look to. This is a great opportunity to recognize the value that farmers' markets have to our communities. It has a social value, it has an economic value, it has an environmental value. All of these things are very positive and provide an opportunity. Taking a week to recognize the value of this allows them—I mean, most markets occur once during the week, and they provide them with an opportunity during that week to do some recognition in their local market of farmer direct—or farmers' markets week in their particular venue.

So I appreciate the opportunity to put a few words on record in support of this. I'd like to thank the member again. I know it's very important to her, with her community and being closely associated with the market in St. Norbert for a number of years, which is one of the larger and better established and has shown the way for many others, and now is going basically season-long. And that's a great there—opportunity there—I've been there a number of times myself, and I certainly enjoy the visit. It becomes a social opportunity, a chance to visit with some of the growers because we do have people from our—my constituent, Portage la Prairie, that are regular attendees at that market. So, thank you very much for the opportunity to put a few words on the record in support of this bill.

**Mr. Adrien Sala (St. James):** Grateful for a chance to put some words on the record to this bill, The Farmers' Markets Week Act.

Obviously, farmers play a really important role in this province. They've played an important role in our history. I'm proud, actually, on my mother's side, which—that side of my family are all from the Dauphin region—to have a history of family farming. There were actually—my uncle still lives on a century farm that's been in our family, the Winters *[phonetic]* family, for over 100 years, and that land continues to be farmed, and I'm proud of that connection to our farming tradition here in Manitoba.

And I, myself, and my wife, we have a particular interest in local food and local food production and

we've actually been the hosts to a food collective here in Manitoba called Harvest Moon food co-operative that is essentially a food-buying club that connects farmers directly to consumers here in Manitoba. And they've got a number of locations across the province where farmers come and deliver their goods directly to Manitobans.

And my wife and I have been the hosts of a St. James drop-off location for this farm-to-table initiative for the last 10 years and have really enjoyed that, not only for the opportunity to bring farmer foods directly into the city and to give community members an opportunity to buy those products, but also because it's just been a great community-building initiative, and we've met great people through that and other people who are also interested in organic foods and good quality foods directly from our farmers.

So, this bill, it is important in that it does provide us an opportunity to recognize the importance of farmers' markets and, ultimately, the opportunity to develop more direct marketing, you know, channels for small agricultural producers in this province.

Everybody, of course, I'm sure, in this Chamber has had an opportunity to visit a farmers' market. St. Norbert Farmers' Market is a place where my family and I love to go, and, of course, they're just wonderful places to be and great community-building undertakings. So, really important that we continue to do what we can to make sure that farmers' markets remain healthy and are able to help farmers bring those products to market and to get those directly in the hands of consumers. And, of course, I'm sure we can all agree on that.

We also know that these direct marketing opportunities provide really great opportunities to reduce the emissions associated with the food that we eat. There was a number I read recently that suggested that for every kilogram of produce produced in Canada there's approximately 1.3 kilograms of emissions associated with that if it's, you know, bought through our typical channels, whereas local food purchasing drastically reduces the amount of emissions that are embedded in the food we eat, and that's obviously really important in the context of the climate crisis that we're facing right now.

So, while it is really important, of course, that we celebrate our farmers in Manitoba and that we celebrate farmers' markets, and I am glad—I am supportive, ultimately, of the intent of this bill—unfortunately, this government is 'varing'—doing very little right now to support the direct marketing of food to

Manitobans. And, in fact, this government has done a lot to make life harder for small producers in this province and, in fact, are threatening the very existence of the small producers that this bill purports to support, that it purports to want to help.

So I'd like to start by talking a bit about some of the missed opportunities to support small producers in Manitoba to sell more of their foods locally. You know, farmers' markets are a direct marketing opportunity for our small Manitoba producers, which are very important, but this government doesn't seem to have invested in helping to grow those direct marketing opportunities in any substantial manner.

We've got, as I described, food-buying clubs, like Harvest Moon food collective and others, that offer these opportunities for some farmers to be able to access consumers in Manitoba, to be able to sell their products directly to Manitobans, but there aren't enough of those.

And those kinds of opportunities don't just happen, you know, by accident, they happen because of the hard work of producers and numbers of producers who have gotten together to create those opportunities. But those require resources and they require supports that just aren't in place right now in Manitoba to the degree that they could be.

We know, in places like Nova Scotia, they've created direct marketing trusts there, worth, I think, something like \$2 million, that fosters the development of these direct marketing strategies for—so farmers can more easily get their products into the hands of people locally. You know, farmers do what farmers do; they're great at producing foods, but they're not marketing experts. And—well, some are, of course—but on the whole they don't have those skill sets, and in order to access those types of skill sets, it requires access to resources.

So there are a lot of opportunities that we can be examining, and we've seen this in other provinces, to grow supports for producers to be able to do more to market their products directly to Manitobans so that those foods can be consumed right here, and we can gain all the incredible benefits that come with that.

And, you know, my colleague from the Burrows referenced this, but there is, in particular, I think, growing opportunities, as it relates to specialty foods, to new Canadian communities that really want to be able to eat some of their foods from back home, but that, if they want to access them here, they have to access foods that have been shipped perhaps

thousands and thousands of kilometres, when we could be growing those things here.

\* (10:50)

So, lots and lots of opportunity, not only to, you know, to get healthier food in the hands of Manitobans, to help farmers to do better, but also, ultimately, at a much higher level to do more to support our Manitoban economy, to keep dollars here in the province instead of seeing those dollars be shipped away to food producers from out of province.

It's a great economic development opportunity for this province, and we can be doing a lot more in that respect, but it doesn't seem as though this government has placed much focus on that or has made that a priority. And that's a shame because our farmers here in Manitoba would stand to benefit, our provincial economy would stand to benefit, and, ultimately, Manitobans would stand to benefit.

So, you know, that's maybe more a—that's some thoughts, some considerations about what this government could be doing to support more direct marketing for local small food producers, but there's also the question of what this government is doing to small producers to make life harder for them that is—directly contradicts the spirit of this bill.

And the one thing that I'd like to focus on with the little time I have remaining is The Crown Lands Act that was brought forward by this government and the work that they're doing to ultimately make farming more expensive for small producers. And that is going to create increased challenges that are contributing to an environment, a landscape that favours bigger and bigger farms, which will remove the very small farmers this bill seeks to—seeks—purports to support—will remove them from our provincial agricultural system.

And we're seeing they're disappearing. We hear a lot about that, and that's a shame, because that, in many ways, is the fabric of this province. It's the fabric of rural Manitoba, and that's disappearing.

So this Crown lands bill, the Crown lands regulations changes are making life a lot harder for small producers. And it seems as though the only point of those changes was to increase government revenues, to increase the amount of money that's coming into government coffers, and that's coming at the expense of small-time farmers that—smaller farmers in Manitoba, and it's coming at the expense of their ability to continue doing what they do best.

You know, this new Crown leases approach massively increases their cost of doing business. We've seen 300 per cent increases in some cases, in the cost of those leases, which is, obviously, if you're a family farm, a small Manitoban producer, that is making your ability to operate nearly impossible. It's challenging your ability to continue doing business.

And, of course, one of the most gut-wrenching aspects of that policy, of that change, is that, ultimately, the changes that have been brought forward remove that first right of refusal for families. So if you've got a family farm that's invested in a Crown land modification to allow their ranch to be able to make the most of that ranch and to use that area that they've been using for however long, that farm—that family may have made those investments in that Crown land—that parcel of land, when it comes up for lease, is now on the open market.

And that family who may have made those investments—that family that may have made those investments, when they want to sell that, are now looking at not benefiting from that—from those investments. They've lost access to that. *[interjection]*

So I—you know, I know that the member for Midland (Mr. Pedersen) likes to debate that. I would invite him to come clarify why—where I'm wrong on that specific point. But that's just one example of how this government is making life harder for small producers.

We should support our small producers. We should support more direct marketing to Manitobans. We should support farmers' markets. We can do more in that, and this government needs to do better to make sure our small producers are healthy, well and can continue to thrive—

**Madam Speaker:** The member's time has expired.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Madam Speaker, farmers' markets are open, friendly places to get fresh, locally produced produce. They are wonderful opportunities to meet with and share stories with farmers, understand farming, as well as to enrich your diet and improve the nutrition in your daily life.

Madam Speaker, I certainly enjoy, as does my wife Naomi, going to the St. Norbert Farmers' Market, to the River Heights Farmers' Market, to farmers' markets when I'm in the area—Altona, Portage and others—the many, all over Manitoba.

The varieties of fresh produce, vegetables, fruits abound. And usually there are a lot of additional

special items which are homemade, from jewellery to pottery to wooden products; they're exciting places to be.

One of the regulars at the River Heights Farmers' Market is a farmer by the name of Stefan Regnier from near St. François Xavier. He has an organic farm. In addition to vegetables and fruits, he has honey and teas, free-run chickens and is a good source of information about what's happening. He uses compostable containers. He's an example of a friendly farmer with forward-thinking ideas, concerned about climate change and the environment, as well as producing really good produce.

This year, the ground has been wet there, and in so many other areas. There's even some standing water in his fields. Like many farmers, he's late putting in his crops as a result of the weather. So, inside his greenhouses the tomatoes are already well on their way. Outside in the field, he has managed to put in onions. He's getting ready to put in pumpkins, tomatoes, cucumbers, kale, lettuce, potatoes, carrots and much, much more.

At the River Heights Farmers' Market, there are many other vendors, producers, breads, delicacies, sometimes delicious fish sandwiches and a variety of craft products.

At the St. Norbert Farmers' Market, there's a wider variety of produce from local farmers, including bison and lamb, as well as pork, beef, chicken and all sorts of homemade treats.

And they are a joy to visit. They are fun to chat with people there, about their produce and their crafts, and very interesting places to be at Saturday morning in St. Norbert; or in River Heights, if you have a chance, it's Friday afternoons, starting in July 8th, continuing to July—or September 30th this year, 12 o'clock to 5 o'clock in the afternoon. A good opportunity to pick up produce before you head out to the lake and a great place to meet people and get some good food.

Manitoba Liberals support the last full week in July as farmers' markets week. It'll be an opportunity to celebrate the farmers' market tradition and to recognize that we can still, today, in Manitoba, and particularly during the summer and fall, get much of what we need to eat directly from farmers at our local farmers' market.

There are many additional benefits: the development of entrepreneurs, the local economy, the development of young farmers and small businesses,

the positive impact on the environment, the ability to operate during COVID when there were always concerns about transport from further away and, of course, building positive relations with farmers.

It's a very positive bill, and I hope that we can all support it.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to share a few words on the Bill 209, The Farmers' Markets Week Act. It's great to put out a resolution and bring forth a piece of legislation—[interjection]

**Madam Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bushie:**—that aims to show appreciation and to show a thank you to different levels and different farms in the province of Manitoba.

But, unfortunately, the—this government's actions say different. While this piece of legislation says a big thank you, great job, keep up the great work, the actions of the government show otherwise. And what I mean by that is, it's making it more and more difficult for smaller producers here, in Manitoba, to actually make a living.

So, when we talk about the farmers' market, agriculture as a whole, this government has made it extremely difficult to be able to actually make that living, to actually be able to—

\* (11:00)

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

## RESOLUTIONS

### Res. 17—Recognizing the Efforts of Flood Volunteers and Workers

**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 the Efforts of Flood Volunteers and Workers, brought forward by the honourable member for Swan River.

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** I move, seconded by the honourable member from Riding Mountain,

*WHEREAS last year Manitoba had the third-largest snowfall in 100 years; and*

*WHEREAS major flooding has occurred due to the high volume of snow and rain in Manitoba this spring; and*

*WHEREAS many people have been impacted both in the Swan River area and across the province; and*

*WHEREAS people from all impacted regions such as Peguis First Nation, Morden, Pembina Valley, and Westman have banded together in the face of flooding; and*

*WHEREAS this emergency situation has even brought together the leaders of both official parties together to take to the skies and survey the impact of this flood; and*

*WHEREAS local authorities, frontline workers, flood workers, emergency services personnel, provincial infrastructure officials, hydrologic forecast engineers, and the volunteers are continuously working hard to make sure they can provide the support to those who need it the most; and*

*WHEREAS Manitoba's volunteers have always stepped up in the time of need and didn't hesitate to stand up again now; and*

*WHEREAS these volunteers and workers have made a significant impact to address the flood at this important time and are working to prevent damage and ensuring Manitobans are kept safe.*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recognize the significant efforts of these volunteers and workers for their ongoing significant contributions to Manitoba's flood response and thank them for their contribution.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Think we will all agree this winter, this spring, has been one to remember. We have become very familiar with the terms Montana lows, Colorado low, Alberta clipper. It just seemed like week after week, day after day, these things seemed to be visiting Manitoba.

And our government's investment in flood prevention infrastructure has prevented this current flood season from being as bad as it really could have been, and we've begun the hard work required to repair the damage, correct the course and move forward toward balance in a sustainable way.

*Mr. Andrew Micklefield, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

This is a year where everyone came together, Mr. Deputy Speaker—got a change here—where everyone came together. It brought all—it brought communities together, and I think it's so important right now, while this is all fresh and everybody is so exhausted from their volunteer work, from the civil servants and everybody who was involved in this flood, to recognize them and to give them a thank you. This is a time for every MLA who's experienced something in their constituency, you know, to come together today and say thank you for what you've done.

And it's not over yet. I mean, there's still the threat in some areas. You know, water is beginning to recede. We know that. And this recognition will go a long way, knowing they are supported by all the MLAs who represent them.

Flooding in many regions has occurred, and our government's working to co-ordinate this fight against the flood. And I've heard a number of stories from different communities on what they have experienced.

Actually, yesterday, on the way in, I talked to a gentleman from Duck Bay, Manitoba, Colin Gunn, and Colin said he is just so proud of what the community has done and the people within the community. He said they were working day and night, and their wives and volunteers were cooking the meals and bringing it to the front line.

And he said they had 10 pumps set up along the road because they were so proud of the road within their community. They didn't want to see the shoulders get eroded, so they had these 10 pumps in a line going—three-inch pumps, and they were getting the water to relieve the pressure off of the road and it was extremely successful. There was no basements that got flooded in the community, and these were the things that happened.

So, you know, we can see—and, again, this morning, I had a conversation with a gentleman from Red Deer Lake, you know, and he was talking about how they're still isolated and they want—we want to make sure that we get that road open as soon as possible now that all of No. 10 bridges that got washed out were replaced and operational again—or not replaced, but were operational again this weekend, and so we got to start looking after these remote communities equal because these people in these communities are as important, and they work very hard.

The Manitoba Emergency Coordination Centre has been activated and is providing a lot of supports across the count—or, like, across the province and we

saw two big differences, you know. There was down in the constituency of Swan River, where we had flash floods because of the rain, the snow coming out of the mountains and just the turbulence, the creeks just overwhelmed. And then we have these situations where a lot of the lowlands, you know, the Red River Valley in the south, and then we also have the result, a lot of communities like Peguis who's down in some of the flood plain areas—Camperville, Pine Creek, Red Deer Lake, Sapotaweyak—those are the places that experienced a lot of, and they still are, because this is where the water ultimately ended up.

So our government's working with the impact at communities to provide fighting supplies and experts who can help mitigate the damage that a flood does, or the flood had occurred and can cause, and providing the equipment to the volunteers. These people are ready to rise to the occasion, so it's just a matter of getting them the tools to make sure their communities are safe.

On the way in yesterday as I drove through Ebb and Flow, and I saw at the top of the community there was water and they had great big sandbags around a couple houses, and they had breached all the approaches into all the other houses to get that water out of there as quick as they could so that they would not have to, you know, have the big cleanup of basements and some of the houses that these community members worked so hard—and it's kind of their dream home.

So that's why it's important today to recognize these people, because they all rose to the occasion, whether it was in Minnedosa—I know that my colleague there for Riding Mountain, he took a trip to Minnedosa last week to take a look and see what the community was doing there. They get the school kids to fill in the sandbags. Everybody contributed in some way.

And as of May 20th, there was still some concern about flooding, but we, you know, we've got—over the decades, things have been put in place: the Red River Floodway, the Portage Diversion, the Shellmouth Dam, you know, the Fairford Dam, Lake St. Martin emergency outlet channel. These things are all important as we go down because this winter was a tough one, but there's more to come. It may be another decade; it might be next year. We really don't know, you know, when this is going to come. And then that's when the communities have to rise and the people and the volunteers and they need the support of all levels of government taking part.

You know, there were a number of states of emergencies, actually, in my constituency recently that occurred: Barrows, Camperville, Pine Creek, Duck Bay. These all declared, you know, states of emergency. The RM of Ethelbert, the RM of Mountain that was so impacted by this flash flooding. A couple of Sundays ago, I was visiting a person, like, a constituent in Cowan, and they actually went for a walk down the road and they said in about 15 minutes they came back and they could hear the rumbling, and the water started coming through the bush. They said by the time they got to the house that water level rose three feet, in the matter of about 10 minutes.

So these are the kind of things that, you know, people were encountered with. Pretty terrifying and, you know, it would make somebody quite, well, I mean, quite scared, would be to put it mildly.

Our provincial parks right now, we saw this weekend, it wasn't the traditional long weekend that we usually see in May because there was a number of people that ended up not being able to get to their seasonals because of low water. We heard last night in the news, in the North Whiteshell, a lot of rapids. You know, the sandbagging, a mandatory state of evacuation.

So we're not out of the woods yet, but a lot of people for the last month have worked very, very, very hard, and today is a day that I call on all MLAs to give that recognition to those people who have been going and, you know, working tirelessly through the night to keep their homes safe, to keep their communities safe.

And, you know, places like that—the Little Saskatchewan River, we know has overflowed its banks right through the town of Minnedosa. You know, it declared a state of emergency. They opened their emergency operation centre just recently and—along with five others. There's five municipal emergency operation centres that are activated: Ethelbert, Minnedosa, Morris, Ritchot and, of course, in Winnipeg.

\* (11:10)

So, we're seeing so many of these things. Everybody has their little heroic story to tell. And they are heroes. Those people out there, every one of them are heroes that work day and night to save their home, to save their community. And I call on all members today, let's give them a pat on the back and recognize them through this resolution.

Thank you.

## Questions

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

**Mrs. Bernadette Smith (Point Douglas):** First off, I just want to, you know, start by thanking all of those volunteers out there that are helping to keep the, you know, families safe, to keep their houses above water, and, certainly, I know that they are, you know, very tired and need more support.

So I call on other Manitobans to get involved, get out there and help support those flood fighters. And also to the communities that are impacted, you know, having to leave your home, I know experiencing—you know, supporting members through the evacuation—the fire evacuation, how stressful that it is on families.

So I'll ask the member to provide an update on the flood situation is it—as he understands it right now?

**Mr. Rick Wowchuk (Swan River):** Okay, you know, the updates on the per day are on—the Minister of Infrastructure does daily updates and his personnel, his people who are on the ground get the accuracy of those particular updates.

So I would be hesitant not hearing them, from staff members, that we wait for his update today on the provincial flood forecast.

Thank you.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** I'd like to thank the member for Swan River for this. And we should be thanking those who are out protecting us as we speak.

Could the member please tell us, what are the most impacted areas in Manitoba that have been impacted this spring due to flooding?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Okay, I want to thank my fellow colleague on this good question.

Basically: north, east, south, west. We've seen things happening in Peguis, we've seen things happening in Barrows, Red Deer Lake, Camperville, Duck Bay. We've seen things happening in southern Manitoba in my colleague's constituency at Borderland, in Midland in the Carman area.

We've seen things, you know, happening in the North Whiteshell. So, just the whole province has been impacted in some way, in every direction.

Thank you.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** I want to thank the member for bringing this forward. Clearly, we want to thank all the people. This has been a very, very serious flood, affecting people all across Manitoba.

I was just wondering if the member could let Manitobans know the best place they could contribute, either financially, or if they wanted to sign up as a volunteer to help the effort to fight the flood?  
*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Just a moment.

The honourable member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk).

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Sorry, there, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

One of the avenues that occurred most was the—basically, the communities, the RMs, in declaring states of emergency were reaching out, you know, for the tools and mechanisms that they needed to fight the flood and to make sure that they have those provided in a timely fashion within the communities. So they—those would be—also, the people volunteered. There were a lot of individuals in the community who took on the role of leadership. And when they took on that role of leadership, the people surrounded around those particular people and they gave instructions and those things happened—

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

**Mrs. Smith:** I—my family's actually from Pine Creek-Camperville area, and I've received, you know, several pictures, I have several cousins, great-aunts, uncles that are out there actually helping to keep the water off their property and their neighbours' property and, you know, certainly doing their best.

So I'm wondering if the member can give us an update on what, you know, the flood situation is in the constituency that he represents and what the government is doing to support them to ensure that they're—they can go back to their homes once this flooding water has receded.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Yes, I thank the member for that question.

One of the updates—throughout the weekend, the main highways were open, the main travel routes

were—some, I know along No. 10 highway, which basically is a gateway to the North from the west-central area of Manitoba, there would be—crews worked around the clock in order to get it.

Now, it's very important that those main routes are open to make sure some of the more isolated communities get the help that they need to get any washouts—and I'm just—like I said, I was dealing with one this morning in the Red Deer Lake area, where it was brought to my attention that there was still a washout and that community was isolated, so—

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

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** I'd like to thank my honourable friend from Swan River for bringing forward this important resolution this morning.

I'd like to ask my friend how the provincial government, specifically the Emergency Measures Organization and Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure, has supported the volunteers on the ground in the Swan River constituency, but, indeed, throughout the whole province?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** I thank the member for Riding Mountain for that good question.

And a lot of the sandbags—sandbags is one of the things that has been or—provided, equipment, flood protection. The leadership and advice within the various types of departments is also important—hydrologists, the people that know what's going on, on the ground, so that they can offer some suggestions. They also—the emergency operation centres, you know; like in the town of Minnedosa, there was an emergency operation centre that was opened.

So these are the ways, the expertise that some of—

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

**Mrs. Smith:** Recently, my cousin had to travel to Dauphin for medical reasons and they had to actually take a detour of two hours around because the bridges flooded out and heaved the road up so no one can travel that way.

I'm wondering if there's any lessons that this government will take from this flood situation to ensure that those that need to get out of their community for medical reasons don't have to—especially in emergency—take that long.



**Mr. Wowchuk:** I think every time Mother Nature strikes, doesn't matter what government is in power, we always learn lessons. We learn how we can improve things, how we can do things better.

You know, I do know I was getting many, many emails and texts this weekend in the urgency to get No. 10 highway at the Pine River, the Steeprock River, the Bell River, open, and I do also know that the crews worked around the clock, 24 hours a day, everybody was on hand to provide access and this service.

And it was difficult, because, yes, some people were quite isolated from being able to get where they wanted to go. And that's why those crews worked around the clock to get those roads open, and every time, like I said, we can improve—

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

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Midland):** I thank the member for—my colleague from Swan River for bringing forward this resolution.

And I know that he only has 40 seconds, but are there any volunteers or groups that he would like to recognize that have been leading the flood fighting in his area? And we know how the flash flooding occurred, so if he could provide some names, that would be great.

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Yes, you know, there's—well, of course, the Emergency Measures Organization, but again, a lot of the groups, you know, were basically formulated within—you know, the different people came together. And they're just—there's heroic stories in every community during this flood, and they rose—and that's the thing about Manitobans. When Manitobans are asked to rise to the occasion, Manitobans rise to the occasion. And they have that resilience. And they have that ability to overcome.

I know that—you know, right now, in a lot of the agricultural land, people are wanting desperately to get their crops in, and so—

\* (11:20)

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

**Mrs. Smith:** Is the flooding going to impact the Swan River or Swan Lake watershed area? And if so, what can the Province do to assist the Swan Lake watershed conservation board in their efforts going forward?

**Mr. Wowchuk:** Yes, there's definitely—one of the pluses about this—having these high water levels this spring is that we had very extreme low water tables. We had extremely low lake levels in a lot of our lakes. I know Lake Manitoba, I was getting calls all the time about not being able to access docks and stuff like that.

So, our reservoirs, our lakes, our water table in the ground have that ability to be able to absorb a lot of that moisture and bring it back up to a standard where it was, to put forth moisture levels that are going to give us a good crop year. So, because of that, I really feel that we are going to be able to get, you know, through these high water levels and this high runoff that did occur, because, in that way, it's going to be able to be taken up in the storage capacity of those lakes is there.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Time for questions has expired.

### Debate

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

**Ms. Lisa Naylor (Wolseley):** I want to thank the member from Swan River for bringing forward this PMR and to say that, over the last few weeks, we've all been inspired by the Manitobans who have come together to fight the rising flood waters.

Certainly, on this side of the House, we've made a point of thanking volunteers whenever we respond to ministerial updates. And we're happy to have the opportunity to express our appreciation, yet again, by supporting this PMR. We don't have the time to talk about all the heroes of the past few weeks, but, thankfully, media organizations in this province have done a great job of sharing some of their stories, and I'm looking forward to highlighting some of those today.

On May 20th, the PembinaValleyOnline published an article with the headline, Millions of dollars in flood damage expected in Ritchot. It reads in part as follows:

"Ewen says as Mayor, he was proud, yet humbled to see residents helping their neighbours prepare for the flood. Now he says, more than ever, they need volunteers to assist with the cleanup. 'There is going to be a lot of cleanup for our residents,' he points out. 'They are tired, they are exhausted from the flood. We need to help them as best as possible, so if someone or anyone can volunteer thirty minutes of their time once, would be more than enough.'"

On April 27th, PembinaValleyOnline published an article with the headline: "We're here to help." Christian Aid Ministries deploys rapid response unit amid flood fight. The group has spent weeks sandbagging and cleaning out churches around Hochfeld and Altona. They co-ordinated with local churches to distribute volunteer labour more efficiently.

On April 26th, the Winnipeg Free Press reported on how many municipalities were preparing hard for the incoming flood waters, noting how Altona residents and officials had turned its curling rink into a sandbagging station in which staff and volunteers were filling 4,000 a day.

Community members in St. Adolphe also stepped up. According to SteinbachOnline, volunteers have worked for weeks to shore up properties outside of the town's ring dike. Some of this volunteering has been direct flood prevention, like sandbagging and building dikes, but people have stepped up in other ways as well, like picking up groceries for flood victims, donating food, a trailer and babysitting so that others would be freed up to volunteer.

Organizer Lesley Gaudry told the press that it's been really cool to see a lot of good will. People aren't forgetting about civic duty. In particular, she credited Natalie Chow for organizing the food, Kori Plesiuk for helping connect volunteers with residents, St. Adolphe ESSO for donating food and Marcel LaFortune for donating the use of a trailer.

Another great example of volunteers and workers coming together was seen in Minnedosa these past few weeks. Officials like Kate Moir, the municipal emergency co-ordinator for Minnedosa Minto-Okanah [*phonetic*] emergency measures committee and support services worked around the clock to manage low-lying spots at risk of overland flooding.

Another official to commend is Jim Doppler, Minnedosa CAO, although he was quick to pass the credit on to others in his town by telling the press that everybody steps up, whether they live in the town or the area, it's just that good neighbourhood good will.

The media reported that flood crews jumped into action on Wednesday, as news came in of a local greenhouse needing immediate help with flooding. Teams worked in shifts to supervise distributing sandbags.

Kate Moir said: And it didn't take much to find enough volunteers in Minnedosa, which is about 200 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg. There was a

steady stream of people coming from within our community, from the rural municipality and then from outlying communities coming in to lend a hand, she said. It truly has been a remarkable experience. Everyone is calling and saying, hey, how can we help?

Another group that stepped up to help flood prevention efforts in Minnedosa was local restaurant owners, like Maggie Ye of Sun Sun Chinese Restaurant, who has run the restaurant for a decade and prepared noodles, chicken balls and shrimp for volunteers.

She told the press, this is a very nice community, and people. They're always helping each other. So we just want to do our part. We're just a family business, we can be there and help, so we just tried to do something for our community.

And Janice Wahoski, who's lived in Minnedosa her whole life and serves as president of the town's Royal Canadian Legion Branch 138 Ladies' Auxiliary, organized a sandwich-making operation with a handful of women for the flood volunteers, compiling around a dozen loaves of bread into ham, cheese and chicken sandwiches: Any time someone needs assistance, we're more than willing to help, it doesn't matter what it is, Wahoski said. That's what we're here for, you know, the community.

More recently, as conditions worsened, a local football team and members of two nearby Hutterite colonies stepped in to help sandbag near businesses and other buildings at risk. One store owner whose property was protected thanks to the help of these volunteers was Krista Powell, co-owner of Gold Leaf Boutique, who told the press that as soon as someone puts a call out, everyone shows up. It's just absolutely amazing to see the community come together. It makes it feel just a little bit better.

Flood waters have also devastated the Interlake and Peguis First Nation. But as in other parts of the province, volunteers have stepped up to help. On May 4th, roughly 100 volunteers were on hand at Peguis to protect houses and other infrastructure, including 75 recruited by Indigenous Services Canada and headed by Bear Clan Patrol director James Favel and another 25 from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

These volunteers came from all over, like Harrison Anderson, a Pinaymootang First Nation resident currently living in Winnipeg. He signed up to help, saying, you can see it's pretty severe out here.

I've actually never done sandbagging, but this community really needs it, so it's definitely good to be here.

But the volunteering wasn't just limited to sandbagging. As Peguis residents were evacuated and had to spend Mother's Day in hotels across the province, a group of volunteers affiliated with Peguis First Nation schools worked to prepare packages, coffee, tea, chocolate mugs and more to distribute to 400 mothers from the community.

Terina Spence, who works as a receptionist in one of the schools, told the press: It's for Mother's Day, for the kids to give to their moms because they can't get out. They're stranded in their homes and they can't go shopping. This is something to make the moms feel good and for the kids to feel good too, to lift up their spirits because everybody is feeling down.

Another key organizer was Carrie Sutherland who told the press that: I think we need our spirits lifted and to commemorate all our mothers out there who are fighting the flood—the battle with the flood waters once again. They are the backbone of our community, and they will be the ones to propel us through. I'm almost in tears here, she said. We're all in this together, Peguis people. I know we'll come through this, we've come through it before. We will survive. Sutherland described the gifts as a show of love, saying that this is a little package for your child, or just for you to boost your spirit and let you know that we all love you.

But volunteers didn't just help out in Peguis. They also ran operations in and around Arborg. Leroy Loewen from the Arborg fire department told the press that: We appreciate the community, the way they've helped out. For example, we ran a 10-hour shift doing 10,000 sandbags. We really appreciate the variety of community groups coming in to help.

\* (11:30)

But it's not just the volunteers we need to recognize. It's also the workers who've stepped up the past few weeks and have gone above and beyond what from what is normally expected of them. These groups include civil servants in emergency measures and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure; civil servants in rural municipalities; workers in local news outlets who kept community members updated on crucial information, like whether they needed to evacuate their homes; hospitality sector workers providing accommodations on short

notice to evacuees; meteorologists and other weather specialists working to provide up-to-date forecasts crucial to our flood mitigation responses and local elected officials across the province co-ordinating responses and protecting their communities.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I'm aware that there probably are some people I've missed; we can't possibly know the full extent of all the volunteerism and all the effort that has gone on across the province. But it's very clear that this has been a community-driven effort, an effort driven by the department as well as by the workers across the province. And I'm grateful to all of them, and I'm grateful for having a bit of time today to talk about that and put those words on the record.

Thank you.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield-Ritchot):** I would like to start by thanking the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) for bringing this forward. It's important, especially at a time like this where there is a lot of 'ungst,' a lot of stress, and to recognize individuals who are putting a huge effort into the flood mitigation project that is taking place in Manitoba.

I'd like to start off by thanking the rural municipalities, towns, villages, cities. I'd like to thank the mayors, Reeves, councillors, emergency measures co-ordinators, all the staff involved in those communities and all the volunteers.

I represent, amongst other communities, Ritchot and Niverville—and Niverville, although not quite as impacted, but Ritchot definitely is. I've been out basically every day on flood tour, and it is surprising the amount of water that is being accumulated. I have shown photos on Twitter; what used to be fields now basically look like lakes. It is stunning how much water there is currently coming at the city of Winnipeg.

And at that, I would like to point out the Red River Floodway, which was built by Duff Roblin, I'd point out it cost approximately \$60 million to build. At that same time, the Assiniboine diversion was built, Shellmouth Dam and then a lot of other structures.

I would suggest to the Manitoba Legislature that we get going on the Lake Manitoba-Lake St. Martin outlet. It was the final piece that was supposed to have been built. At that time, probably would have cost approximately \$40 million; today it is looking like it'll be a \$600-million project. It's time to get that project built.

As we know, in 2011, not having it meant that the Province of Manitoba, the federal government and communities put out more than a billion dollars to cover damages, and there was a lot of hardship that took place.

Just as a matter of comparison, the Red River Floodway, which cost approximately \$60 million when it was built; currently, Fargo is in the final stages of finishing basically the same kind of a structure that we have here in Winnipeg. They certainly had a good look at what we have done; they studied it—again, they have three waterways that they have to cover off—and their bill is coming in, I understand, at approximately 3.2 to 3.4 billion dollars. So had they built the same time we did, their costs would have been in around the \$60 million; now it's a 3.2-to-3.4-billion-dollar project. We will find out what the final costs are done when that is built.

And it is important to have this infrastructure. We should remind all of ourselves that we do live at the bottom of what used to be a lake, Lake Agassiz. We drained, basically, the size of Europe all the way from the Ontario border to—almost to Calgary, down south, and points in between—it is a large area that drains through the Red River and the Assiniboine into our lakes. So, we do have a lot of water that comes our way, and that's why we have the kind of pooling that's taking place behind the Red River Floodway.

I had an opportunity to get to the dam on both sides, the one in St. Norbert and then the one up by Lockport.

There is a lot of water in the floodway. If you stand on the side and you view the water flowing, it actually looks fairly benign, it doesn't even look like it's flowing that seriously. And then you get to Lockport and you can see where it's cascading back into the Red River, and it is epic how much water is going through the floodway, and I would point out that it's not even running at full capacity yet, it still has capacity to go. But it—again, it gives a visual of how much water's coming at us.

Had the opportunity to travel a lot of the community, I spent some time on the weekend, and it's very interesting how individuals are parked on the side of the road on—where their vehicles are safe, and they have little dinghies, or little boats or canoes, and they paddle to their homes because their driveways are covered with water.

There was a question that came up earlier on today, in the debate earlier on, about what do we

learn from this. And I would suggest that it was the 1950 flood that got us the floodway, that got us Portage Diversion and all the other projects.

It was 1997 that got us a lot of the flood mitigation that is in place now, and we call it the 1997 standard. So, a lot of homes now have been upgraded, there's a lot of berms. You can often drive from here down to the US border and you can see almost just the roof of houses, because they're in—basically surrounded by dikes, and they are well protected.

Every time that we have one of these serious events, there is a review that is done. By law, there has to be a complete review done on how the floodway was operated. That will come, and I believe that's within three to four months that has to be produced.

And furthermore, in the whole Red River Valley, and across the province of Manitoba, when we had the big issue of Lake Wahtopanah, and the fact that that dam was almost close to being on the verge of collapsing, we learnt a lot about a lot of those structures.

In fact, there was the one structure where it completely gave out and upon further inspection, the sense was that was a 100-year-old dam, and initially it was basically whatever was left over. There were concrete pieces and steel pieces, and they kept building on top and on top. And then when it faced a lot of pressure, it could not handle the pressure coming at it and it collapsed.

So, what do we learn? Is that we don't build back what was there; it's engineered, it's engineered to a new standard and it's engineered to withstand the kind of event, for instance, out in western Manitoba—I believe now the standard is a one-in-800-year event. So there was a lot that we learned from every one of these events. We always build back better.

I would point out that was one of the initiatives of our government, that under DFA, you could no longer take the money and just build back. You must build back better, because this isn't something that every three, four years, you get money and you just build back what existed. You must build something that can withstand the test of time, to be able to stand up to approximately 800-year event. So, that was a very important step forward.

We want to make sure that we protect our citizens. Again, this is not germane to the Red River Valley or the Assiniboine valley. This is a Manitoba issue, simply because we have built our cities and our communities and our homes in what used to be the bottom

of Lake Agassiz, so we will always be facing a lot of water coming at us.

Again, I would like to thank my colleague from Swan River for having brought this forward. Let us pass this resolution and let individuals know how much we appreciate the effort that's going in the sandbagging and a lot of people, the stress that they're under, and I think they really appreciate the fact that we recognize them and recognize what they're doing.

And I'd like to pass on the rest of the discussion to others, and hopefully we will finish it in time to let it pass.

**Mr. Ian Bushie (Keewatinook):** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the chance to share a few words about the PMR this morning, which is recognizing the efforts of flood volunteers and workers. And I, too, would like to add my sincere appreciation and gratitude and thank you to all the volunteers out there.

\* (11:40)

You maybe heard the term this is a one-in-100-years event—the winter we've had, the flooding season we've had—but Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is, we're probably going to have this same conversation next year and the year after that and the year after that.

So, when we talk about our volunteers and the numerous Manitobans from all walks of life and all parts of Manitoba that continue to step up to do their part to save not only their homes but their communities, their surrounding communities, we have to show that appreciation. And we can't be taking those volunteers for granted and expecting those volunteers day in, day out, to be quote, unquote stepping up, without having any kind of support. And we need to put that support more than just a—words of appreciation, but actual, tangible action behind those words also.

And when I say that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mean, when we're talking about flood events for homes, for entire communities, we need to look at the infrastructure of what's causing that also—not just a matter of the weather event and climate change and global warming and those kind of events that are taking place, that are continuously taking place and continuously getting worse. But we need to look at the infrastructure that we do to help thank those volunteers, so that we don't have our volunteers in Manitoba burning out; we don't have them feeling overwhelmed; we don't have them feeling like they

don't have the support of government, municipalities, reeves, mayors, chiefs in councils—because this truly affects everybody.

These events that are happening today and, in particular, when we speak about the flood here today and the last few weeks and in the coming weeks—there are events that happen, and they know no boundaries. They don't know the edge of Winnipeg; they don't know the edge of the Manitoba-Saskatchewan, Manitoba-Ontario border; they don't know the border for First Nation communities versus municipalities.

So we need to truly work as a collective group to be able to work together, and we've truly seen that over the course of these last few weeks here in Manitoba. We've truly seen volunteers and community members and individuals and groups of individuals and families step up to help each other, but we also need to support that; we also need to help that. And when I say we, I mean in terms of people sitting in this Chamber, in this Legislature, in this government, being able to show their support also. And there's more support than just getting out there and helping on the front lines, boots on the ground, but let's have support to increase and better that infrastructure so we don't have the volunteers burning out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the—it's—there's—that's a pride that all Manitobans take—their ability to volunteer, their ability to step up for each other—and we're seeing that day in, day out here right now. And unless you've had the opportunity to get out there and truly see a volunteer with no kind of incentive for them in terms of a financial incentive, no incentive for them in terms of this isn't even my community, but a volunteer that steps up and truly goes out of their way to assist, and we're seeing that, we're seeing that across all Manitoba right now in everything that we do.

We're talking about volunteers for flooding and stuff, but we've also seen that this past summer when we had fire evacuees. You've seen volunteers out there with just a packed can of water, being able to work and put out the—a small, little grass fire, to do their part. And Manitobans have always done their part. And when we—sitting here dealing with the flooding situation today, the one-in-100-year snowfall that we're coming off of—we need to support those volunteers.

And the best way we can support those volunteers are (1) by showing our appreciation in ways other than just words, but also by getting out there and truly embracing that and truly doing our part. So if you've ever had a chance to do that, you've ever had a chance

to get out and help sandbag or help, you know, whatever it may be in those communities, do that. And you'll see that satisfaction that it comes with lending assistance in a time of need.

And if you've never been impacted by the flood situation, then truly get out there and experience that. Experience that and volunteer yourself. Lend that helping hand to the volunteers that are not only out there doing their part, they're doing their part and then some. They're saving not only their homes, their families, but, in some cases, their livelihoods, because this devastation could impact them for the rest of their lives, including generationally wise.

In the question-and-answer period, in a speech, the member from Swan River had also—we—I think he made the comment, we have to start looking after remote communities. Well, that start should've happened a long time ago. We can't just be doing that now, in case of emergency. We need to look forward and look ahead and have some very forward thinking on a lot of those issues.

The member from Springfield-Ritchot also had given the tutorial about what the Infrastructure department should be doing, and it's failing. It's failing in that regard. So there is a lot more to be done. Yes, I agree: let's get the channel project done. Let's get the channel project done so we don't have entire communities being flooded out—not just individuals, not just a home here and there, but we're having entire communities flooded out. And again, expecting our volunteers to get out there and do their part. Let's support that.

And on the PMR itself, members on this side absolutely support the recognizing, the showing the appreciation for the volunteers. But, again, I do call on this government to do more, to do more than just raise a thank you, to just relay a thank you to those volunteers, to those communities. Let's get out there and do our part because there is a lot more we could do. There's a lot more tangible things we could do. We could support in many more ways too. So let's also do that.

But Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we—if you've ever had—and I mean, we've had different areas, now—we've talked the southern part of Manitoba, the Parkland region. Now we're gooding in kind of the northeast, southeast part of Manitoba.

So we're affected in all different ways, and all different times, for that matter. If you want to look at it as in terms of a fortunate way, it's not entirely all at

once. So we had had that opportunity to kind of take a breath. Let's get out there, refocus and re-energize our volunteers, because that is what's happening. A volunteer will get out there with no—looking for no thank you, looking for no show of appreciation just because that's what they want to do.

And for that we need to show our appreciation and say thank you. Thank you for doing your part. But at the same time, I'm also going to thank you by I'm going to stand there with you—not in front of you, not behind you, but I'm going to stand beside you, and we all work together.

So everybody needs to take their time to volunteer in a certain area of your community, a different aspect of your community, but in particular, with this PMR that we're discussing this morning, because it's first and foremost in our minds, is the flood workers that are out there.

I had the opportunity to drive out to Jackhead two weeks ago, and I drove through Peguis at Fisher River and truly seeing the devastation that was happening there, but also was truly inspired to see the volunteers that were out there. While there's some that had to evacuate, and some with just the clothes on their back had to get out there and evacuate, a lot of volunteers stayed behind to save the community to save homes, and you see that it was—I was so proud as a fellow Indigenous person to see an Indigenous community and the huge amount of volunteers that were out there, just sandbagging, saving roads, transporting people, transporting goods and services to make sure they still had some sense of normalcy. And that was truly inspiring, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to get out there and see that first-hand.

So I encourage members—all members of this Chamber and all members of Manitoba to get out there and show your appreciation, to also—not just do that but also lend that helping hand. If you've never volunteered before, get out there and do that. Not just for a cause of the day; just get out there and show your support for Manitobans.

So in this resolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we fully support recognizing and showing our appreciation for the flood workers and their volunteers.

Miigwech.

**Mr. Dougald Lamont (St. Boniface):** It's a pleasure to put some words on the record today in reflect of the member of Swan River's PMR.

Clearly, this is a—always a challenge. I know that there were expectations that there could be some very serious flooding this year, but as people have often said of weather on the Prairies, that if you don't like the weather, wait half an hour and it'll change. Here in Manitoba, it has been exceptional.

\* (11:50)

The only thing that I would like to flag is the fact that the—our exceptional years seem to be getting closer and closer together—that we have 100-year floods, 800-year floods and 1,000-year floods that seem to be getting closer and closer together and less than 100 or 800 or 1,000 years apart.

I do know that my colleague, the member from River Heights, was out in Minnedosa over the weekend taking a tour of some of the flooding. They experienced some extremely serious challenges a couple of years ago with, I mean, a—more than a torrential downpour that caused significant overland flooding, washed out roads and bridges and destroyed houses. They're much better organized, as—according to their own statements this year. They're doing really exceptional work, and I know that it's an—it's—it is not quite a thankless task because people are being thanked, but there is an enormous amount of gratitude and a sense of comradeship that happens when people are all working together and Manitobans pull together on these issues.

And we do have lots of work to do, in terms of both permanent and other possible solutions, when it comes to dealing with these issues. We've seen enormous changes in our engineering of the landscape over the last 50 and 60 years, and some of that needs to be considered in terms of new discoveries and new insights into climate change. We know that these extreme weather events are being driven in part by climate change, that they were predicted as being what would happen as the climate changed in Manitoba: that we would face torrential downpours in fall or summer or—fall, summer or spring. We're seeing incredible damage, and I just want to give a shout-out to folks in Ottawa and Ontario who are suffering right now as well in what was a terrible, terrible situation where the damage could be worse than the ice storm.

But these are things that—I mean, it—the response to these emergencies can only be delivered with volunteer help, it's not something that can be done entirely on our own. There's an incredible amount of great work that's being done by EMO, by

municipalities, by First Nations, coming together, co-ordinating each other and making sure that people are safe and protected. And there's no really—there's really no higher calling in service, in service to community, than to be helping people out in times of need.

So, with that, I will finish up. I will say thank you very much to the member for Swan River (Mr. Wowchuk) for doing this, and I hope that we can, as a Legislature, have unanimous support on this measure.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Greg Nesbitt (Riding Mountain):** I'm pleased to stand up here this morning and speak about the conditions in my constituency on the east side, specifically in the Minnedosa area right now.

The community rallied—the community volunteers rallied prior to the 40 millimetres of rain last Monday and had sandbags throughout the community, protected all the areas that they felt was—were at—were threatened by the water coming out of the Minnedosa Lake and through the dam down the Little Saskatchewan River; however, the extra rainfall a couple days later put them into a precarious situation.

And, again, the Manitoba government responded and, you know, brought in 2,100 super sandbags, 80,000 more sandbags and six three-inch pumps to help the community. So, Manitoba Infrastructure and Manitoba EMO certainly were big assets to the community, but the real assets there were the volunteers. People came out in droves to fill sandbags, to place sandbags; there was half-ton trucks, trailers, just working all the daylight hours they could to get the job done. It's—the Hutterite colonies—five colonies came in and helped out and offered their services. Vac trucks were on Main Street pumping water from the storm drains back into the river.

It's just—the community had some experience with this two years ago. They had 12 inches of rain in a 24-hour period; totally different flooding situation than it is today. The low-lying areas in Minnedosa, you know, really look like a war zone right now. There's been 10 people evacuated, just mostly as a precautionary measure, and I think that's thanks to the excellent work done by the volunteers and the emergency measures people co-ordinating all their actions. Reception centres been set up in the community and all these people have homes to live in right now.

I just—I guess resiliency has been talked about of rural people, and the way people come together when there's a natural disaster in the community, and Minnedosa's no different than Swan River area, eastern Manitoba, people pitch in when needed and ask questions later.

I think what these weather events do show to all of us here in the Legislature, that we need to do more to floodproof some of these communities. We need to take a look at where the vulnerable areas are now, and it's not to point fingers or anything, it's just to get ready for the future. I mean, climate seems to be changing daily here in the world, and we're seeing the effects of that in Manitoba right now. You know, we have lots of moisture now. We could have dry spells this summer, and that's why it's important to have water storage facilities as well, to store all this water now.

I just want to send a shout-out to all the volunteers in our communities and as well as provincial officials that operate our water control structures around the province. The Shellmouth Dam is a good example of that, out in western Manitoba, and I had the opportunity to represent that constituency and now it's under the MLA for Swan River, but the impacts of the Shellmouth Dam are felt downstream throughout my constituency and through the Brandon constituencies as well.

So, right now, farmers are dealing with a bit of overland flooding in the valley there, and I think it's very important that, you know, we create—we take a look at that as well and determine what we can do for those farmers moving forward in terms of, you know, making a permanent arrangement for them to allow to store water, so we can store water in the Shellmouth Dam as much as is needed for irrigation downstream.

Right now, it's a struggle because artificial flooding creates problems for the landowners downstream. So that's certainly something we have to address, and that isn't a new issue. That's been going for—since the dam was built, I guess, through successive governments, and I think I'm proud that our government's looking into that right now, to seeing what we can do.

So with that, Madam Speaker, I'd just like to—or, Mr. Deputy Speaker, sorry—I'd just like to ask if we could have the question on this important resolution and thank all our volunteers for the work they've done throughout the province this spring.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

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

Is it the will of the House—*[interjection]*—the honourable member for Portage la Prairie.

**Hon. Ian Wishart (Deputy Government House Leader):** Is it the will of the House to make it unanimous?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to make it unanimous? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Wishart:** Is it the will of the House to call it 12 o'clock?

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to call it 12 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

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



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, May 24, 2022**

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